

SHREWSBURY CHRONICLE
1750 to 1849

1 18 September 1773

Yesterday, **Elizabeth Herring**, who was convicted last Friday at the Old Bailey of the wilful murder of her husband (who plied as a waterman at Wapping Stairs) by stabbing him with a cake knife in the throat, in a quarrel while they were at dinner in a Public House in King Street, Wapping, was carried on a sledge drawn by four horses from Newgate to Tyburn, where, after she had hung 20 minutes, the faggots piled up underneath her were set on fire and her body was consumed to ashes. She confessed that her husband died of the wound she gave him in a passion, to which she was very subject, but declared she had no intention of murdering him, and seemed to be entirely resigned to her unhappy fate. Sir Watkin Lewes's under Sherriff attended the execution. A prodigious number of persons were present.

Elizabeth Herring, the malefactor executed yesterday, was a native of Scotland ; she had for a considerable time, it is said, been used very barbarously by the man she murdered, who frequently had beat her with a poker, and had turned her almost naked into the street. She declared, in consequence of his abusing her at the time the act was committed, she threw the knife, with which she was cutting some meat, at him, without any intention to kill him ; it was, however, proved upon her trial that previous to the horrid act she had more than once sworn she would have his blood, if she went to Tyburn for it.

The method of executing Mrs Herring yesterday for the murder of her husband was as follows :- She was placed on a stool something more than two feet in height, and a chain being pulled under her arms, the rope round her neck was made fast to two spikes, which being driven through a post against which she stood, when her devotions were ended, the stool was taken from her and she was soon strangled. When she had hung about fifteen minutes the rope was burnt, and she sunk till the chain supported her, forcing her hands up to a level with her face ; the flame being furious, she was soon consumed. The crowd was so immensely great that it was a long time before the faggots could be placed for the execution. Many coaches were overturned, the axle trees of others broken, and it is supposed that several persons lost their lives. The crowd extended for near half a mile, and it is supposed that more than 20,000 persons were present, not a tenth part of whom could have a sight of the melancholy spectacle. She behaved in a devout and penitent manner.

2 3 February 1776

They write from Gravesend that no ship of any consequence have passed by that place for 18 days past, a circumstance that has not happened since the hard frost in 1740.

The Thames below bridge is so much frozen over that the people walk upon the ice from ship to ship.

Wednesday morning a boat was discovered between Greenwich and Deptford, froze in, with the waterman dead and sitting upright stiff at the stern.

3 29 July 1831

INSOLVENT DEBTOR'S COURT, SHREWSBURY **John Jones** of Wem, coal dealer and boatman, was declared to be entitled to his discharge forthwith.

4 16 March 1832

MONTGOMERYSHIRE ASSIZES **Richard Lloyd** of Berriew was indicted for having stolen a bottle containing about 3 1/2 gallons of spirits of wine, the property of Samuel and Thomas Teece of Burgedin, shopkeepers. The bottle was left near Burgedin Lock to be returned to Worcester, when the prisoner, a boatman, it was alleged, had taken out the spirits and sunk the bottle, which was found in the canal. Several persons gave him an excellent character, and the Jury found him not guilty.

ASSIZES

MURDER AND EXECUTION At Hereford assize, a trial of deep interest occurred. Our readers may recollect that in April 1831 the body of Walter Carwardine, a farmer of some property living at Broxwood, Herefordshire, was found in the Wye. The marks on the body and other circumstances led to a suspicion that Carwardine had been murdered at a brothel in Quaker Lane, Hereford, to which it was known he had gone on the night of the 24th of March. The brothel was kept by a man named Joseph Pugh, and a woman from Worcester named Connop had taken to the house Sarah Coley and some other girls. Pugh and Connop were apprehended and tried at the Hereford Summer Assizes on a charge of murdering Carwardine, but they were acquitted for want of evidence. Some time, however, after the assizes, Pugh ill treated a girl named Mary Williams who, becoming in consequence very ill and believing herself to be in a dying state, made such disclosures to the Magistrates as led to the apprehension of Joseph Pugh, **William Williams**, a waterman, and John Matthews, a wheelwright, upon a charge of being engaged in the murder. Sarah Coley, who was also charged with the offence, escaped, and has not since been apprehended ; soon after the murder of Carwardine she changed a £5 Kington note at Worcester – and such a note Carwardine was known to have had about him. On Saturday last, Pugh, Williams and Matthews were tried before Mr Justice Taunton. The chief evidence was this : About 12 o'clock the neighbours heard cries of murder, and a man exclaim, “You have robbed me ; but for gracious case don't murder me”. The cries then ceased. The female Mary Williams said that she returned to the house about this time, and saw Carwardine outside, surrounded by the prisoners and a female named Coley, who exclaimed (aside), “I have got his blunt, and if you will keep secret, I'll treat”. The prisoner Williams said he would soon put him out of the way, and then struck Carwardine a dreadful blow, which felled him to the ground. Williams then perceived the witness, and he made her go away. She however came back, and heard the three prisoners and Coley talking together. Pugh swore, and said, “Go on” ; Coley said, “Don't be in a hurry – don't talk so loud”. This was all she heard, and the prisoners after a little time returned to Pugh's house. Two or three days after, the body of Carwardine was found in the river Wye near a wharf. There were several wounds on his head, and the medical men were of opinion that the deceased had been thrown into the river when insensible. The prisoners declared their innocence of the murder. The Jury however found them Guilty, and Mr Justice Taunton passed sentence of Death on them. The prisoner Pugh was an ill looking fellow, and of very bad character. On being placed at the bar, he behaved with the most disgusting levity, laughing while surveying the jury ; and such was his conduct that his own Counsel had to rebuke him for it. However, as the trial was drawing to a close, his impudence and confidence was succeeded by terror and dismay, and his countenance exhibited the most intense mental agony. The prisoner Williams was a fine looking young man, but of desperate character. He has had one brother hanged, another brother and sister transported, and a third brother at present in gaol for deserting from the Guards. His demeanour throughout the trial was firm, until Mary Anne Williams was called. His countenance then exhibited the greatest alarm. The blood rushed and receded to and from his cheeks – his lips trembled – the heaving of his chest and his short respiration showed most powerfully his internal agitation. On her being placed in the witness box, he fixed his eyes firmly upon her, and gave her a most imploring look. She was obliged to turn her head aside. The prisoner Matthews is the son of a respectable retired tradesman at Brecon. He was very well educated and always bore a most excellent character, even since he went to Hereford ; but most unfortunately he became acquainted with Williams, and his association with him brought him in his wretched situation.

EXECUTION All of them persisted in declaring they were innocent of the crime for which they were about to suffer. On Monday last, the prisoners ascended the stairs to the drop with the utmost fortitude and without assistance, Pugh leading, Williams following him, and Matthews being the last. On Pugh taking his place and the rope being adjusted, he shortly addressed the spectators, declaring in positive terms his innocence, and saying, “I never saw the man carried, and was never out of the house that night from six o'clock in the evening till five the next morning!” Williams, on

being tied up, said, "I and poor Matthews are innocent – I know nothing in the world about it!" When the rope was adjusted around Matthews's neck, he said, "I hope all will take warning by my fate, keep good company and good hours. I die innocent". The Chaplain then read the last prayers to the wretched men, all of whom trembled violently, but fervently joined in the petition to the Throne of Mercy for forgiveness of their sins. The chaplain then took leave of them, and on the usual signal the bolts were withdrawn, and the drop fell. Pugh was convulsed for some time, Williams and Matthews were dead in a few seconds. After hanging the usual time, the bodies were taken down, and by an order of the Judge, delivered to the surgeons of the Infirmary for dissection. An immense crowd assembled to witness the execution, upwards of 3,000 persons being present.

6 13 April 1832

INSOLVENT COURT, SHREWSBURY **William Mansell**, formerly of Pave Lane, farmer, maltster, victualler and navigation contractor ; and late of Lilleshall, boatman and timber haulier, was opposed in person by Mr Stanley of Newport, solicitor ; but the Court being of opinion that fraud had not been established against the Insolvent, he was declared entitled to his discharge.

7 18 May 1832

INQUESTS RECENTLY TAKEN BEFORE S P SOUTHAM ESQ, CORONER At Apley Wharf, on the body of **John Weal**, who was in a boat on the Severn with another waterman on the 26th November last, when the boat upset and the deceased was drowned ; he has left a widow and four children.

8 7 March 1834

THE ADJOURNED QUARTER SESSIONS **Eli Flakener, William Roberts, Joseph Davies and Ezekiel Willetts** (boatmen) were convicted of stealing several quantities of coal, the property of Messrs Darby of Halesowen. Flakener and Roberts 12 months, Davies 9 months and Willetts 6 months hard labour.

George Williams, a boatman on the Ellesmere Canal, was found guilty of stealing a quantity of clover from the stack of Mr John Rodenhurst of Whittington. 3 months' hard labour.

9 25 March 1836

SHROPSHIRE ASSIZES

HIGHWAY ROBBERY **Charles Freeman** was indicted for robbing John Groom on the highway. The prosecutor works for the Rev Corbett Brown at Withington, and on the 13th of January was sent to sell a horse at Shrewsbury. Having sold the horse, prosecutor went along the canal towards Uffington for the purpose of going home, being rather fresh at the time. Having arrived at Pimley Bridge he found a train of boats there, which had become entangled with some other boats. Prosecutor was about to go over the bridge when the prisoner, who is a boatman, came up and led him under the bridge and attempted to pick his pocket. Prosecutor desired him to keep his hand out and proceeded along the canal, when the prisoner ran after him, pushed him into a dingle and, having robbed him of seventeen half crowns, ran back to the boats. A man named Munslow saw the prisoner run after prosecutor and return again to the boats. Prosecutor got up and went to Uffington for a constable, who apprehended the prisoner at the boats, but only 7 1/2d was found on him. Prisoner denied leaving the boats. Guilty. His Lordship, in ordering Judgement of Death to be Recorded, said he should make further inquiries into the case.

10 1 July 1836

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS **John Hopwood and Joseph Hodgkiss**, boatmen on the Ellesmere and Chester Canal, were convicted of picking the pocket of **John Minshull**, also a boatman, and the employer of the first prisoner, whilst he was sleeping in the kitchen of the Black Lion in Ellesmere, of £6 18s 0d, on the 14th of June. 12 months' hard labour.

11 4 July 1834

TOWN SESSIONS

DANGER OF SOLILOQUISING ALOUD Robert Brown was indicted for stealing 24 yards of ribbon from the shop of Mr Horton, High Street. On Saturday morning June 14th, the prisoner asked to look at some ribbon to make rosettes, and after choosing some, said he would go and get change. He returned again about three o'clock, when there were several people in the shop, and asked for some broad ribbon for bell pulls for Mr Pelham of the Castle. Whilst Mr Horton was turning round, the prisoner secreted two pieces of ribbon, and then made an excuse that he had not got change, upon which Mr Horton ordered him out of the shop. Soon after, **Mr Chapman**, a waterman, was standing in a garden adjoining the King's Head Passage, when the prisoner passed by, exclaiming to himself, "D—m me, I've done them!" He then took the ribbons to a girl in the passage, when Mr Chapman, knowing that Farlow was only a few doors off, told the prisoner that a person in the house would buy them. He accordingly went in and was taken, and the ribbons were afterwards identified by Mr Horton. Guilty – one month's hard labour.

12 20 March 1835

PURSUANT TO THE ACT FOR THE RELIEF OF INSOLVENT DEBTORS IN ENGLAND

THE COURT FOR RELIEF OF INSOLVENT DEBTORS

The matters of the Petitions and Schedules of the Prisoners hereinafter named (the same having been held in the Court) are appointed to be heard at the Court House at Shrewsbury, in the county of Salop, on the 9th day of April 1835 at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

THOMAS JONES formerly of Shrewsbury in the county of Salop, barge owner ; then of Lyth Wood in the said county, out of employ ; and late of Shrewsbury aforesaid, waterman.

13 6 January 1837

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

James Wright, a boatman, was convicted of stealing a goose, the property of John Browne of Betton Coppice, near Drayton, and sentenced to six months' hard labour.

SHEEP STEALING **William Evans**, a boatman, was indicted for stealing a wether lamb, the property of Mr John Hayward, solicitor, Oswestry. From the evidence, it appeared that on the 5th of December, Mr Hayward had a flock of 19 sheep in a field at Rhosgodfa in the township of Whittington, and that next morning one of them, a yearling lamb, was missing. The principal witness against the prisoner was a little boy named Barker, who worked under the prisoner's son **Thomas Evans**, who was also a boatman on the Ellesmere and Chester Canal (which passes near the prosecutor's field), and who is at present in Knutsford gaol on another charge. This witness stated that early on the morning of the 6th of December, Thomas Evans took him into the field to assist him in catching one of the sheep, which he said belonged to his father ; but failing in doing so, they went to the cottage of the prisoner, who lived about 100 yards off, to request his aid. The prisoner accordingly came, and they succeeded in catching one, which Thomas Evans put on his shoulders and took to his boat, where he killed it. On the constable searching the prisoner's cottage, the head and pluck of the sheep were found ; the prisoner's boat was also searched, but nothing found. Whilst the search was going on in the prisoner's boat, his son pushed his boat under the Ellesmere tunnel, and sunk the mutton in the canal and directed the boy to take the skin and hide it. Other witnesses gave evidence to marks of the prisoner's shoes being seen in the field, and that the mutton found in his house was cut up in an unworkmanlike manner. The jury returned a verdict of Guilty, and the prisoner was sentenced to be transported for life.

14 20 October 1837

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

VIOLENT OUTRAGE AND ROBBERY ON THE CANAL **William Wilday** and **John Morris** were indicted for stealing five shillings from the person of David Davies on the 19th of August. The

prosecutor is a shoemaker residing near Upton Magna, and is employed as newsman in distributing the Shrewsbury Chronicle in the neighbourhood of Oswestry, Ruabon, &c. The prisoners were boatmen in the employ of Messrs Pickford, canal carriers, from this town to Wolverhampton and London. They were defended by Messrs Whateley and Phillimore. Mr Bather conducted the prosecution, and called the prosecutor, who said : On Friday night August 19th, I returned to Shrewsbury after delivering the newspapers ; the nearest way to my house from Shrewsbury is by Preston Boats, and I always go that way when it is not ten o'clock ; but after that time the boat is locked, and then I have to go along the canal to Uffington. On that night I was rather late ; and I went to the Red Lion in Castle Foregate between eleven and twelve, and saw Mr Hilditch, clerk to Messrs Pickford. He went with me to the wharf, where I saw Wilday and Morris ; Wilday was "Captain" of a boat that was just going to start. Mr Hilditch asked Wilday to let me ride as far as I could, to which he agreed. A third boatman named **McCredie** came up and challenged the captain to fight. The captain accepted the challenge, and I went to see the battle ; Morris seconded Wilday, and another boatman named **Hopkins** seconded McCredie. They fought about ten minutes, and McCredie, who was much less than Wilday, cried out that the other was biting him. I interfered, and then the three men, Hopkins, Morris and Wilday got into the boat, and it started off at a sharp rate. I followed it about a mile, and heard a man cry, "Murder". The boat stopped and I ran up and saw the captain and Morris beating Hopkins. I said they would murder him, and they replied that they would murder me if I dodged the boat. The prisoners then jumped out, and Morris knocked me down with an iron instrument. They then kicked me about the head and body, and broke one of my ribs. After that they laid hold of my head and feet, swung me two or three times, and threw me into the boat. The captain then asked for a rope and tied me round the wrists and ankles. They then searched all my pockets. I had two small bags in my coat pocket, a watch and sixpence in copper in my trousers, and eleven shillings in silver in my waistcoat pocket – all of which they took. They said that they would give me dodging them, and that I should never see daylight. I said that they had broke my ribs, and they said it would be all right before morning. They then went down into the cabin and came up again several times, repeating similar threatening language. I untied my wrists with my teeth, and afterwards my ankles, and tried to jump out of the boat, but a rope caught my leg and I fell into the canal. They drew me into the boat and tied me again, and I told them I had lost my hat. They replied that I should never want it again. The boat was by this time near the tunnel, and I heard some coal boats coming ; I shouted, "Murder", and the captain came and kicked me over, and put the bags and watch into my pocket, saying, "You see, old chap, we don't want to rob you". At the mouth of the tunnel I called for help, and Mr Brown (Mr Burton's gardener) came. I told him that they had bound me ; and the captain said I was going to rob the boat, and he would take me to Wolverhampton. Mr Brown refused to interfere, and I asked him to go and tell my wife. The captain then took the horse to the other end of the tunnel, and Mr Brown went with him. The boat then went slowly through the tunnel, which is about three quarters of a mile in length, and at the other end I saw the captain, Mr Brown and my wife. The captain said if I would own my fault he would release me. I refused, and he pushed me back into the boat until we came to Berwick Wharf. Mr Brown and my wife then helped me out, and the captain gave my wife six shillings and sixpence, and said, "You've got all your money?" I replied, "No ; you've got it". When the captain was going away, he said, "Old chap, don't say a word about this, or I shall get sent to hell". I was taken home, and kept my bed a fortnight.

Mr Andrew Brown, gardener to R Burton Esq of Longnor, said he was called up about three in the morning, and went to the canal, and heard Davies complain of ill treatment and the captain charge him with trying to rob the boat. Did not like to interfere, as there were three men in the boat, but went with the captain to call up Mrs Davies. On the way, the captain said they had taken eleven shillings and a watch from Davies's pocket, and that a poker was made use of to knock him down. When the boat came through the tunnel, Davies was standing up in the boat, with his head swelled and covered with blood. Saw the captain give Mrs Davies 6s 6d, and heard him say that if his master heard of it he should be sent to Hanover – did not recollect his making use of the word "Hell".

Mr Whateley : You thought it was the same thing, I suppose. (Laughter).

A little boy named **Roberts**, employed in the coal boats which came through the tunnel, said he saw Davies lying in the long boat with his hands tied. Mrs Davies confirmed the evidence of her husband and Mr Brown. Joseph Higgins, who apprehended the prisoners in London, and Mr Summers, carrier, Wellington, who came down from London by the same coach as Higgins and Wilday, deposed to conversation with the prisoner, in which he admitted the robbery.

Mr Whateley addressed the jury at great length on behalf of the prisoners, after which Mr Mytton, clerk to Messrs Pickford, and several other witnesses gave prisoners a good character. The Chairman then summed up, and the jury returned a verdict of guilty.

The Hon Chairman then said the prisoners had been convicted on satisfactory and clear evidence of one of the most atrocious crimes it had ever fallen to his lot to try. After hearing the detail of their brutal conduct, it would be a waste of words to try to make them feel ; but as a caution and example to others of their class, the sentence of the Court was that they be Transported for the space of 14 years.

15 27 October 1837

MONTGOMERYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS **James Jones** and Charles Jones, his son, for stealing clover belonging to Mr Meredith of Brithdir, 1 day's imprisonment, and the father, a boatman, to one month's hard labour.

16 3 November 1837

Joseph Stokes, a boatman and a resident of Kidderminster, was accidentally drowned on the 26th ult in the Birmingham Canal at the Deepfield, near Sedgley.

17 5 January 1838

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS **William Griffiths**, a canal boatman, was convicted of stealing an iron chain from Wappenshall Wharf, near Wellington, the property of Messrs Botfield ; and, in consideration of his previous good character, was sentenced to only one month's hard labour.

18 6 July 1838

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS Joseph Marston, a barber, convicted of picking the pocket of **John Parkes**, a boatman, whilst he was asleep in the Cross Anchors public house, Oldbury, on the 26th of May, was sentenced to 12 months' hard labour.

Joseph Morris, a boatman on the canal, pleaded guilty to stealing a spring mast at Whitchurch, the property of John Stanton and William Hazledine Esqs, and was ordered 3 months' hard labour.

19 26 July 1839

MONTGOMERYSHIRE ASSIZES **Francis Evans**, a boatman, pleaded guilty to a charge of stealing a quantity of hay and grass, the property of Mr David Rogers, and was sentenced to 2 months' hard labour.

20 26 July 1839

SHROPSHIRE ASSIZES

Richard Ruscoe, a boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of tobacco, the property of Messrs Tilston and Co of Shrewsbury. The prisoner, Richard Briscoe (sic) was in the employ of Messrs Tilston and Co as captain of a boat called the *Edward*. On Thursday July 11th a cask of tobacco was delivered at the warehouse in Chester by Messrs Nicholls and Gough of that city, to be forwarded to Messrs Southall of Leominster. A ticket was delivered with it stating its weight to be 2 cwt 1 qr 4 3/4 lbs. The cask remained at the warehouse until the following morning, when the prisoner assisted to put it on board the boat *Edward*. The boat arrived at Shrewsbury on Monday the 15th inst about eleven o'clock ; on the morning of its arrival the cask was weighed. The invoice

stated its weight to be 2 cwt 1 qr 4 lbs, but the weight was then 2 lbs less. The cask had been secured by ten black seals sealed on red tape ; the tape in one place appeared to be crushed and one of the seals broken. This excited a suspicion of robbery, and on searching the prisoner's cabin, two bags containing a quantity of tobacco were found in a basket on the bed place. The prisoner was ordered to go about some other business while a policeman was sent for. Instead of doing so, he went off to Uffington, where he was apprehended by Richard Evans, police officer of Shrewsbury. Several respectable witnesses were called to speak as to the identity of the tobacco found in the bags with that remaining in the cask, and the difference of its weight and appearance in its wet and dry states.

For the defence it was endeavoured to be proved that so small a quantity as that missing might have escaped in the rolling along of the cask ; that the basket might not be the prisoner's ; that his cabin was an open cabin, and that the tobacco might have been taken from the cask and placed there by any other person besides the prisoner ; that in fact the whole prosecution hung upon possibilities, probabilities and inference ; and the Counsel for the defence hoped an English Jury would never be taught to *infer* a prisoner's guilt from merely probable circumstances.

The Judge said he hoped that in speaking to the Jury then empanelled he was speaking to a reasonable and rational set of men who, though they would not think of *straining* an inference, yet would not shrink from drawing one ; if they were afraid of drawing inferences they had at once better quit the box and confess they were afraid of doing their duty.

After some further discussion and calling of various witnesses, the Jury brought in a verdict of Guilty, and the prisoner was sentenced to be kept to hard labour for twelve months.

James Millington, a waterman, indicted for stealing four lumps of coal from a canal boat, and throwing them into his own. Witnesses were called to prove the facts. His Lordship said this was one of the too frequent cases of pilfering, very commonly practised by persons in prisoner's station of life. Several persons gave the prisoner an excellent character ; in consequence of which, and in order that he might have time to consider of the fault he had committed and how he might regain the character he had partially lost by this act, the Judge said he should only sentence him to 14 days' solitary confinement.

21 18 October 1839

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

John Pritchard, a canal boatman, was convicted of stealing a piece of coal from the wharf of Mr John Roberts, lime and coal dealer, Whitchurch, on the night of the 2nd of September. The prisoner received a good character from George Harper Esq and two other witnesses, and being recommended to mercy by the prosecutor and jury, he was sentenced to 14 days' solitary confinement. Mr Dean conducted the case.

22 10 April 1840

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

STEALING A DRAKE **Thomas Sparrey**, a boatman aged 25, pleaded guilty to stealing a drake, the property of Edward Griffiths of Halesowen. The prisoner received a good character, and being recommended to mercy by the prosecutor, he was sentenced to three months' hard labour.

ACQUITTED **Samuel Huntback, Charles Williams, Abraham Thomas and William Price**, boatmen, charged with stealing two fowls on the night of the 1st instant from the premises of William Bevan at Edstanton near Wem. Mr Corbett prosecuted and Mr Yardley defended the prisoners.

23 3 July 1840

SHREWSBURY SESSIONS

TRIAL BY JURY It has often been remarked that the clearer the case is, the better chance has a

prisoner of being acquitted, and the following trial will certainly go far to justify that assertion. **Charles Eaves**, a waterman, was indicted for stealing part of a leg of veal belonging to Mr James Lloyd. Mr F Jones stated the case. The prosecutor is a butcher residing at Llandrinio and attends Shrewsbury Market. On Saturday May 23rd, he left the White Hart for the purpose of returning home, and when near the bottom of (.....) Lane, his cart became entangled with another, and whilst he was in front endeavouring to extricate it, the prisoner was seen by a witness named Bayley to take a leg of veal from a basket at the back of the cart and bolt with it into a blacksmith's shop. The prosecutor was informed of the theft and accused the prisoner, who denied it, and collared Mr Lloyd, who thereupon went for a constable. Whilst he was away, the witness Bayley saw the prisoner carry the leg of veal from the blacksmith's into a beershop opposite called the Swan ; and another witness named Careswell, who saw Eaves soon after with the leg of veal cut into two pieces, advised him to put it back into the cart, as the owner had gone for a constable. Prisoner then followed the cart to the Welsh Bridge and put the large piece back ; the smaller piece he concealed in his breast between his shirt and waistcoat, where it was found by police officer Hamer, who apprehended him in Frankwell (.....) (.....) When taken before J Hazeldine Esq, the prisoner said in his defence, "I was drunk, and was unloading a vessel. I did not do it for want of meat. If I had not been drunk I should not have done it". This was the case for the prosecution ; and Mr Phillimore, for the defence, said he should not attempt to deny that his client had taken the meat ; but the only excuse he could offer was that he was drunk at the time, though strictly speaking that was no excuse for crime. He then called two witnesses who said that the prisoner had always borne an honest character. The Recorder then summed up, and the Jury, after a short consultation, to the utter amazement of the whole Court, returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

24 3 July 1840

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

DARING OUTRAGE ON THE ELLESMERE CANAL **Thomas Hayward**, aged 18 and **James Ruscoe**, aged 19, were indicted for robbing **John Clutton** of a pair of boots and half a crown. The prosecutor and prisoners were boatmen in the employ of the same master, and on Saturday the 12th of April, the former, accompanied by his son (a little boy) was conducting a boat along the canal near New (Marton), when the prisoners came up about dusk and cut the towing line of his boat, and went away. About midnight, Clutton and his son were in the cabin, when the prisoners came in and pressed him down on the bed, and said that if he did not give them all he had, they would kill him. Prosecutor said he hoped they would not. One of the prisoners then cut the laces of Clutton's boots and took them off, while the other picked his pocket of half a crown. The prisoners had handkerchiefs over their faces, except the eyes, but Clutton knew them well. They brought into the cabin a (broomhook) belonging to him, and laid it on the bed ; and on his little boy taking it up, one of the prisoners drew it through his hand and cut it. They then left the cabin, and on the 14th, William Badger, the constable of Ellesmere, took them into custody, and found Clutton's boots on Ruscoe's feet. He said that he held Clutton down whilst Hayward took the boots off his feet. They also offered to make it up. The Jury returned a verdict of Guilty, and the Court sentenced them to 10 years' transportation.

25 14 August 1840

SHROPSHIRE ASSIZES

HOUSE BREAKING AT HAUGHMOND **David Sheldon** and **Edward Williams**, boatmen, and Eliza Darricutt, were indicted for breaking into the cottage of Thomas Thomas at Haughmond Demeane, and stealing therefrom a quantity of clothes and a piece of bacon. The prosecutor's wife left her cottage about noon on the 10th of July, for the purpose of going to a neighbour's for some butter, and saw the prisoners in the road near the cottage. On her return in a short time, she saw Williams coming from the cottage with a large bundle, which he gave to the female prisoner, who concealed it under a flannel frock. Soon after she saw Sheldon come from behind the cottage and join the other two in the road ; he had a bundle of songs and books, and asked her to buy one. She

declined, and on reaching home found that the door had been broken open and the interior ransacked. An alarm was made, and the prisoners were followed towards Shrewsbury Heath and captured, and the stolen property was found by the Rev D James of Hadnal concealed in a plantation belonging to Sir A V Corbet. The prisoners were found guilty and sentenced to 10 months' hard labour.

STEALING GRASS AT LINEAL **John Gough**, a boatman on the Ellesmere Canal, convicted on Thursday of stealing hay grass from the premises of Mr Abraham Darlington at Lineal, was also brought up, and sentenced to 10 months' hard labour, the first and last week in solitary confinement.

EMBEZZLEMENT AT ELLESMERE **William Turner**, boatman, was convicted of embezzling £2 at Ellesmere, the property of his employer, Mr John Ellerker of Nantwich. The prisoner received a good character, and was sentenced to three months' hard labour.

26 9 October 1840

Committed to our County Gaol for trial :- **Daniel Simpson**, boatman, for stealing a quantity of porter out of casks in a boat on the canal, near Wappenshall Wharf, the property of Mr S E Walters.

27 23 October 1840

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

John Owen, canal boatman, charged with stealing a ewe sheep from the field of Mr John Davies of Maesbury, was acquitted.

William Wickfield, a navigator, was convicted of stealing a spade, the property of Richard Pearsall, butcher, Halesowen, and sentenced to three months' hard labour. The prisoner had previously been in Stafford gaol.

Thomas Bonner and **James Bevan**, canal boatmen, were charged with stealing a quantity of coal from the wharf of William Hazledine Esq at Berwick. Bonner pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 3 months' hard labour ; Bevan was acquitted.

The following prisoners were declared not guilty :- **Daniel Simpson**, boatman on the Ellesmere and Chester Canal, charged with stealing a quantity of porter from casks on board a boat called the *Endeavour*, the property of Mr S E Walter. The prisoner and another boatman named **Thompson**, who has absconded, were proved to have tapped several casks between Chester and Nantwich, which were afterwards filled up with water from the canal ; but although part of the porter was proved to have been consumed in this county, there was no evidence to show that the casks had been tapped after the boat left Nantwich, and Simpson was acquitted. He was however immediately taken into custody by Mr Superintendent Baxter, for the purpose of his being tried at Chester.

28 8 January 1841

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

Robert Edwards, a canal boy aged 13, pleaded guilty to stealing two trusses of hay at Whitchurch, the property of Mr John Wragg, and was sentenced to 1 month's hard labour.

Richard Thomas, canal boatman, was convicted of stealing a truss of hay from a field, the property of Mr John Allen of Uffington, and was sentenced to three months' hard labour.

29 22 January 1841

A FATHER DROWNED WHILE ENDEAVOURING TO RESCUE HIS SON About four o'clock on Friday afternoon last, **John Halstead**, a boy about 15 years of age, while in a boat which was near one of the locks of the canal at Ashton-under-Lyne, owing to the slippery state of the boat, fell

into the canal. His father, who was on the canal bank at the time, immediately threw off his frock, jumped into the water and endeavoured to save his son, but being unable to swim, got out of his depth. He sank and rose again two or three times, and then disappeared altogether. In the meantime the boy clung to the boat, and a boatman jumped down from the lock, got hold of him and pulled him out. Immediate search was made for the body of the father, but half an hour elapsed before it was discovered. An inquest was held on the body of the unfortunate man on Monday, where the Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

30 5 March 1841

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

Richard Danks, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing three fowls at Halesowen, belonging to Caleb Griffiths, and was sentenced to six months' hard labour.

31 5 March 1841

SHREWSBURY SESSIONS

John Moody and James Birch, charged with stealing a porter cask from the wharf of **Mr Lowe**, barge owner, were declared not guilty, although the latter prisoner had acknowledged his guilt, and the former was proved to have sold the cask for half a crown!

32 30 July 1841

INSOLVENT DEBTOR to be heard at Stafford in the county of Stafford, on the 18th day of August 1841, at the hour of ten in the forenoon precisely :-

JOHN RANDLE, formerly of Broseley in the county of Salop, Waterman, Brickmaker and Coal dealer, afterwards of the same place, Licensed Victualler, Waterman and Brickmaker, and late of Weston-under-Lizard in the county of Stafford, Brickmaker and Waterman.

33 31 December 1841

SHREWSBURY POLICE

BRUTAL ASSAULT AND ROBBERY On Monday before the Mayor, T G Gwyn, R Burton and S Tudor Esqs, two canal boatmen named **William Oakes** and **David Jones** were charged with assaulting and robbing a labouring man named George Jones on Christmas night. It appears that the prosecutor (who lives in the service of Mr Sugden near Roddington) had come to town to spend the day, and met with an old acquaintance, **William Furber**, also a canal boatman. They adjourned to the Canal Tavern at noon, and remained there until nearly midnight ; and the prisoners were also drinking there part of the time. The prosecutor went away with Furber, intending to sleep in his boat, which was loaded ready for starting and moored near to the Gas Works ; but on passing the boat belonging to the prisoners, Oakes called the prosecutor to come into his boat. He did so, and on going into the cabin found a man named John Gough and two young women of loose character. Oakes gave him a glass of something like rum or brandy, and he immediately fell asleep, and on awaking some hours afterwards, found himself lying on the towing-path, with his boots taken from his feet and 5s in silver stolen from his pocket. He made the best of his way to the Police office and gave information, and the prisoners were taken after a sharp contest. Roger Bradshaw, a workman at the Gas House, said that about half past nine on Sunday morning he looked out on the canal, and saw Oakes pushing his boat across with a long shaft ; and the other prisoner, David Jones, threw the prosecutor from the deck on to the towing-path. Prosecutor asked for his money, and one of them said, "I'll give you money, you". They both then ran at him and kicked him severely ; he groaned and shouted as loud as he could, and witness called out to ask if they were not ashamed of themselves. Oakes cursed witness and threw a stone across, and struck a fellow workman named Whitkiss. The prosecutor lay senseless on the towing-path for about an hour after the prisoners had ran away. The Court deeming it necessary that Furber should be examined and he being absent down the canal, remanded the prisoners till Saturday for further examination, when a second charge for assault will be preferred against them.

Yesterday Ellen Davies, a native of Wem, was charged before the Mayor and Mr Tudor with being disorderly on Wednesday night. Walker, a watchman, stated that he heard a desperate riot on Pride Hill about eight o'clock, and on hastening thither he found Miss Davies in a state of helpless intoxication, with a crowd of boys rolling her in the mud ; whereupon he rescued her and deposited her in the watch house. Police Officer Hunt stated that she was sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment on the 30th September for drunken and indecent behaviour in Mardol ; and that she had been keeping open the establishment of Mrs Sarah Lloyd, in Sheep's Head Shut, whilst that amiable lady remained in durance vile for want of bail. She was committed for seven days, with orders to return to her friends when she came out of gaol, unless she wished to pay another visit there of a longer duration.

34 4 March 1842

SHROPSHIRE ADJOURNED SESSIONS

William Male, boatman, for stealing a boat mast belonging to William Godfrey at Halesowen, 3 months' hard labour. Francis Male, his son, charged as an accomplice, was acquitted.

35 25 March 1842

SHROPSHIRE ASSIZES

THE WHIXALL MURDER At twelve o'clock on Tuesday, Thomas Harris, labourer, aged 38, was indicted for the wilful murder of Mary Williams by administering arsenic to her at Whixall in the parish of Prees. It will be remembered that the prisoner's wife was also committed to gaol for the same offence, but she died after childbirth in January ; and last week the poor infant, born under such disastrous aspect, died at the Wem Union Workhouse. The prisoner was undefended ; he was dressed in a smock frock, and pleaded Not Guilty in a firm voice. The Counsel for the Prosecution were Messrs V Lee, Cooke and Beadon ; Attorney Mr Walmsley of Wem. After a brief opening address from Mr Lee, the following evidence was given :-

Arthur Williams : My wife's name was Mary. The prisoner married my daughter ; he had four children by a first wife, and two of them lived with him and his wife in our house about ten months. We each found our own victuals, but sat at the same table. On the 18th of December, I asked his wife to cook a pig's fry for supper ; she took some flour from a small striped bag which hung against the wall, and put into the gravy. I eat some of the fry, and in five minutes I felt very sick, and swelled at the stomach. I went to bed ill, and was ill the next morning. About eleven o'clock, my wife made some dumplings from the flour in the bag. I went out for half an hour, and on my return the prisoner and his wife were in the house ; John Edwards also was there. A dumpling was boiled in the same pot for the prisoner and his wife. They were in one cloth and tied with string to separate them. I was too ill to eat any dumpling, but my wife eat one half of it ; and in about five minutes she ran to the door and threw it open, saying, "Oh dear, how ill I am", and began to vomit violently some green and yellow stuff, and frothed at the mouth. The prisoner's wife went to her, and brought her in, and she continued vomiting till four o'clock, when she was assisted to bed by the prisoner and his wife, and she died about half past nine. After she was dead, I went into the garden, and on my return I heard him say to his wife, "There was something in that flour". The doctor came on the Wednesday following and examined the body. I never heard the prisoner say any harm, nor had quarrels of any consequence taken place. The prisoner used to keep arsenic in a bottle in the pantry, and mix it with lard to poison mice. On the 2nd of December, the prisoner went to Ellesmere to seek for work, and I asked him to buy me some Barbadoes turpentine ; when he came back, he said that he had been to the three druggists in Ellesmere, but could not get any ; but he had got what he wanted. He was dressed in a smock frock, as he is now.

John Edwards, labourer, lives near the prisoner and went to his house on the morning of Sunday the 19th of December. Williams and his wife were in, but the prisoner was out. Williams complained of being ill, and went out. Mrs Williams took some flour from the bag and made an apple dumpling ; and the prisoner's wife also made a dumpling with flour from another bag, and put it into the

pudding bag and tied it in ; Mrs Williams then put hers on the top, and they were put into the pot. I went away, leaving the deceased in good health.

Mary Jones, lives next door, and went into Williams's house in the afternoon, and found Mrs Williams sitting up ; she was very ill, and also Arthur Williams. The prisoner's wife came to me about nine o'clock, and I went into the house, and the old woman died in ten minutes. The prisoner said the old woman often quarrelled about his children. I remember the old woman going to Whitchurch in a deep snow about three weeks before she died ; I said to the prisoner, "I'm afraid the old woman will be almost lost in the snow" ; he said he wished she might be found stiff on the road. Thomas Jones, husband of the last witness, heard the remark about the old woman being lost in the snow. They were on bad terms.

Elizabeth Minshull went to Whitchurch after the death of Mrs Williams, and came back on the Tuesday, and the prisoner's wife gave me half a dumpling, which I gave to my son, John Haycock.

John Haycock, boatman, eat the dumpling, and was very ill and sick afterwards for two days.

Joseph Williams is brother to Arthur Williams, who had a son ill about a fortnight before the old woman died. I asked the prisoner how he was. He said he was very ill, he'll not be long for this world. He died since that time. I said, "How is the poor old woman, I should think she is hurt very much about it?" He said the old woman cared nothing about her son ; that old woman ought to be poisoned.

Joseph Vaughan, shopman to Mr Lee, druggist, Ellesmere, said : About three weeks before the 2nd of December, as near as I can guess, a man in a smock frock came to the shop and asked for some Barbadoes turpentine. I said there was no such thing ; but gave him some Venice turpentine. He also bought two ounces of arsenic.

Mr Richard Jones, constable of Whixall, produced a salt box and bag of flour, which he received from the surgeon. I searched the house of the prisoner when he was out, and found no arsenic. I took his wife into custody, and the prisoner followed her to my house. I asked him where he kept the arsenic, and he said in the pantry. The prisoner and me, and Hughes, the policeman, went there ; he produced an empty bottle from a small cupboard. I asked what he had done with the arsenic ; he said he had used it to poison mice about two or three months before. The surgeon gave me the flour in a bag. After the inquest a policeman brought the prisoner to my house. *He gave me orders to value his goods and pay his debts. I said that was something like fair, and I wished he had always acted fair ; he replied that he wished he had done so. I said, "Then the Lord have mercy on you. Thomas, it's a dreadful deed that you have done (meaning to the old woman). He said, "It is!", and began to cry.*

The prisoner here exclaimed, "That's not true ; I did not say so ; I cried when I parted with my children".

Witness : It is true ; and you cried for some time. My Lord (added Mr Jones) he did not shed one tear when he parted from his children.

Edward Hughes took the prisoner into custody at Jones's house. Whilst the inquest was sitting, the prisoner wanted to go out, and I went with him round the screen. He said, "You had better put the handcuffs on me, for I'm going to tell you something". I said, "I can run as fast as you". We went out and he said it was a hard thing to suffer for what another had done. I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "It was my wife that did it, and she told me of it the Monday after". I then took him back to his house. On the Saturday I took the prisoner and his wife to Shrewsbury gaol in a gig. On the road, he told his wife not to tell anything to anyone. She said she had nothing more to tell ; she was innocent. Before she left her father's house, she knelt down and put her hands upon her cheeks, and said, "It is a hard thing to go from home for a crime I am innocent of. I am innocent ; it was you, Thomas Harris, that poisoned my poor mother". The prisoner said, "Well, well, wench, thou'lt see", and added, "Thee be sure to do all thee canst for me". He said his wife told him that she bought the stuff at Gough's in Wem, the Friday before the old woman died.

Mr T N Arthur, surgeon, Whitchurch, was called in to see the body and, with Mr Groom, made a post mortem examination, and found the lungs, heart, &c perfectly healthy ; took out the stomach carefully, and placed it in a bladder. The internal coat was very much inflamed, and appearances

like the white of an egg adhering to the coat of the stomach, the internal coat was nearly destroyed, as if by some corrosive poison. Sent the stomach to Mr Blunt, chemist, Shrewsbury. When I first went to the prisoner's house, I took possession of a bag containing flour, and also a salt box.

Mr Thomas Groom, surgeon of Whitchurch, gave similar evidence.

Mr Henry Blunt, chemist, Shrewsbury, received a box containing a human stomach and its contents, and a parcel containing flour. I analysed the flour, and found a considerable quantity of arsenic. I then analysed the stomach itself and obtained arsenic ; I found minute particles of metallic arsenic in the contents of the stomach. There was sufficient to cause death.

Mr John Dawson, governor of the gaol, remembers some persons coming to see the prisoner in gaol. After they were gone, prisoner asked me what those people had been to see him for. I told him that they supposed he had been at Mr Lee's shop buying arsenic. He said he had been at a shop about three weeks before it happened, but he did not know whose it was. He went to buy some Barbadoes turpentine, but he never bought any arsenic.

This closed the case for the prosecution. His Lordship then called upon Harris for his defence, and he commenced a long story by hoping that the Judge and Jury could maintain the truth, as he had begged and prayed very hard for it ; but it had not been spoken that day. He denied having expressed a wish to have the old woman poisoned, but said that her husband often ill-used her and wished she was dead ; his own wife, also, ill-used the "poor old woman, God rest her soul", but he never had words with her save once, when he threatened to joul her head against the wall ; but they were good friends as ever the next day. Was it likely, if he had known that rubbish had been boiled in the same pot with his pudding, that he would have eaten it or given it to the children? His little son in the Workhouse at Wem could tell how Arthur Williams used to ill-use the poor old woman, and something more than that, but he had been refused leave to come by the master of the Workhouse. He concluded by saying that was all he knew about it ; and that what he had said was a bit of as good truth as ever was spoken by a Christian.

His Lordship asked who had told him that his son had been refused at the Workhouse.

The prisoner then called his brother-in-law, Samuel Egerton, who said the child had been refused by the officer of the Workhouse.

His Lordship asked Harris what the child could prove in his behalf.

Prisoner answered that the boy was in the house when the old woman was ill, and heard Arthur Williams say that she had got it now – she had got something that would stick to her, adding, "See what becomes of old jealous devils". The old man also used to threaten his wife for not getting him tobacco to smoke, and she was jealous of his going after another woman ; which made him threaten to serve her out. The boy heard Arthur say to his (prisoner's) wife, on the Thursday before the old woman died, that he wished her mother was poisoned ; and that the daughter asked why he did not do it, as he had plenty of poison in a teapot ; and that finally the daughter agreed to do it, and the old man promised her a shilling for her pains. Prisoner added that the witness Jones and his wife were in two different tales about his wishing that the old woman was stiff ; and concluded that he could tell no more without telling lies, and he was sure he would not do that on any account.

It now being four o'clock, his Lordship said he would adjourn the trial three hours to give time for producing the prisoner's son in his behalf. An officer was immediately dispatched in a post chaise to fetch the boy, and the Court proceeded with some minor offences.

About seven o'clock, it was announced that the boy had arrived ; and the prisoner was again placed at the bar.

The Counsel for the prosecution were sent for, but owing to some most reprehensible neglect, not one of them appeared in Court during the remainder of the trial. His Lordship requested Mr Graves to undertake the act of examining the little boy ; and that gentleman kindly consented to do so. After consulting the prisoner for a short time, the learned gentleman examined the little boy from questions suggested by his father. The following is his statement :-

My name is John Harris ; I am son of the prisoner ; I remember grandmother and mother living with father and grandfather ; I recollect grandmother being taken ill, but I do not remember my grandfather and mother having any talk three or four days before. Mother and grandmother used to

have words, swearing at one another, but I don't know what about. I heard cross words between my grandfather and grandmother sometimes. I know Mary Ralphs ; grandmother went to her one evening, and I heard grandfather say if he was behind he would kick her forward. Mother said nothing to that ; I heard no more ; he was not in good temper when he said it. I was up when she came home ; he said nothing to her then ; I never heard grandfather said anything to mother about giving grandmother something. I remember her going out sick ; and grandfather said she would be dead in two or three hours. I don't recollect him calling her a jealous old devil, nor any quarrel about tobacco. Mary Ralphs is grandfather's daughter.

Arthur Williams was then recalled and examined by his Lordship. He said : I had no words with my wife a week or ten days before she died ; we lived as comfortable as man and wife could do. My daughter and her used to have words sometimes. I never said she would only live a few hours ; I was ill myself at that time, and unable to go for a doctor. I never had words with her about tobacco ; she always fetched it when I asked her. I did not know where Harris kept the arsenic, but I saw him fetch it out of the pantry. I had some sugar of lead in the house to dress cows with. I don't ever recollect saying that I would kick my wife if I was behind her. I had a bitch poisoned at the Brookbank, but I don't know who did it.

Mr Blunt, recalled, said there were no signs of lead in the stomach of the deceased. The arsenic in the dumpling would impregnate the water in which it was boiled to a certain degree ; perhaps not to produce any visible effect, but he thought it might affect the children.

Mary Jones was recalled by prisoner's desire, and said the deceased and the prisoner's late wife used to quarrel frequently ; but she did not recollect a quarrel near the time the old woman died.

His Lordship then summed up the evidence carefully and said, if they thought the prisoner put the poison into the bag, it did not matter whether he intended it for the deceased or any other person, so that death ensued. If the statements said to be made by the prisoner to the two constables were accurate, they formed, jointly with the expressions of ill will used towards the old woman prior to her death, a very suspicious case. And the evidence of the little boy had not borne out what the prisoner had urged in his defence. But the jury must not let the fearful and horrible accusation made by the prisoner against his late wife and her father prejudice their minds against him. They must be satisfied that he was the guilty party ; if they had any fair or reasonable doubt, he was entitled to the benefit of it ; on the contrary, if they were satisfied of his guilt, they were bound to do their duty.

From the time of the little boy's examination, the prisoner began to display great anxiety ; and when the jury turned round to deliver their verdict after ten minutes consultation, he called out frantically, "Oh, gentlemen, pray have mercy on me, do!" The foreman gave in a verdict of Not Guilty! The verdict excited much astonishment in the Court, in which both the Judge and the prisoner seemed to share.

It being near nine o'clock when the trial finished, the prisoner requested the governor to allow him to sleep in the prison that night, which was granted. About seven o'clock next morning he was discharged, in company with several others ; and in about two hours afterwards, he was seen reeling about the vicinity of Chester Street and Cotton Hill, in a state of uproarious intoxication and decorated with blue ribbons, as if he had achieved a victory!

36 30 September 1842

SHREWSBURY POLICE Richard Davies, cow keeper, Frankwell, charged **Thomas Hurdley**, waterman, with having assaulted him in the street on Wednesday last. Defendant said he was first struck by a stone which Davies had thrown at some fowls, and that the latter was always sweeping the manure from before his door. The Mayor said that if Davies took any other person's manure, he was liable to be indicted, but that was no justification for an assault, and defendant must pay a fine of 2s 6d and 7s 6d costs.

37 21 October 1842

SHREWSBURY SESSIONS

Thomas Davies, boatman aged 31, was convicted of stealing a quantity of coal from a boat belonging to the Shrewsbury and Shropshire Coal Company. The prosecution having been instituted rather to deter others from similar offences than to punish the prisoner, he was sentenced to only 14 days' hard labour.

38 21 October 1842

James Clifton, boatman aged 21, was indicted for stealing two notes of the value of £5 each, belonging to **James Griffin**, a master boatman. The notes were stolen from out of a cabin in prosecutor's boat ; but an objection having been taken by Mr Phillimore that the notes were not described in the indictment as "Bank Notes" but merely as "Promissory Notes", the Court held the objection to be good, and the prisoner was acquitted.

39 25 November 1842

DEATH BY DROWNING A few days ago, **Samuel Beard**, waterman, was accidentally drowned near Worcester, at Gregory's Mill lock on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, while navigating a boat through the lock. He was a native of Gloucester, and has left a widow and six children.

40 6 January 1843

SHREWSBURY SESSIONS

STEALING COAL **George Griffiths**, boatman aged 20, was convicted of stealing a large piece of coal from the wharf of Mr W H Griffiths. The prisoner was recommended to mercy by Mr Griffiths, who merely wished an example to deter others from a practice which of late had become very common. The Recorder therefore only inflicted a punishment of 14 days' hard labour.

41 3 March 1843

SHROPSHIRE ADJOURNED SESSIONS

William Wilcox, boatman aged 21, for stealing a quantity of potatoes from the premises of Mr John Tranter, innkeeper, Wappenshall, 3 months' hard labour.

Against the following the bills were ignored by the Grand Jury :- **Richard Lloyd**, boatman, charged with stealing hay from Mr George Wilson of Ellesmere.

42 31 March 1843

SHROPSHIRE ASSIZES

ALLEGED BURGLARY IN SHREWSBURY **Thomas Poulson** aged 15, **William Brown** aged 23, and **Alexander Bills** aged 19 were indicted for a burglary in the house of **Joseph Gittins**, beerseller, near the Factory in this town. A boatman named **Peplow** saw the prisoners about midnight on the 27th of November go into the cellar of the house, the door being open, and two watchmen at the Factory saw them in the cellar with a light, and one of them was drinking. They were charged with stealing upwards of 30 gallons of ale, a jug and two napkins ; but none of the property was found upon them. His Lordship did not think the burglary was made out, when the first witness saw them the door was open, and there was no proof they had taken the property further than that one had been seen drinking. Verdict – Not guilty.

HIGHWAY ROBBERY AT ELLESMERE **William Knight**, boatman aged 18, and **Joseph Thomas**, labourer aged 18, were indicted for assaulting and wounding **John Gough** on the highway at Ellesmere, and stealing 10s 9d from his person. **Richard Thomas**, charged as an accomplice, had been admitted to bail, and had since absconded ; but it appearing that his sureties had done all they could to recapture him, their recognisances were held over till next Assizes. Mr Corbett conducted the case. The prosecutor is a butcher of Duddleston, and attended Ellesmere market on the 6th of

September. He went to Paddock's spirit vaults, and left about nine o'clock at night, having two pieces of beef in a cloth under his arm. He met the prisoners at the door, who tried to throw him down as he went out ; but he got away, and went on towards Timperley Gate. A shrewd little boy named Edward Jones heard one of the gang say, "Let's go after old Gough, he's got some beef", and another answered, "If he's gone into Burrough's public, it is of no use". The other said, "No, he has not gone there" ; they went after him. The boy followed closely, and saw Mr Gough enter the toll house ; the prisoners went on through the gate and the boy, thinking Mr Gough was safely housed, went back to Ellesmere. Prosecutor stayed a short time at the toll house, where he was joined by a neighbour, Mr Rogers of Ifton Heath, who was riding home. They proceeded together in conversation for about 100 yards, when Mr Rogers said "Goodnight" and galloped off. Soon afterwards prosecutor saw a man coming towards him, and also became aware that two men were following him. One of them (Joseph Thomas) struck a violent blow and cut his head with a heavy weapon. He fell, and was kicked and beaten by the gang until they broke two of his ribs and a small bone in his back. Prosecutor cried for help, and begged of them not to kill him. Thomas took his money ; and looking in his face said, "You'll know me again". They then ran away towards the town. Davenport, the gate keeper, saw the prisoners go through the gate ; and soon after Mr Gough was gone, he heard what he called "a most doleful dreadful sound" as if some person was being killed. He went out and met two men running, and on going further he found Mr Gough covered with blood and nearly senseless. A market woman, going home, also saw the prisoners in the road, and soon afterwards heard a frightful noise that made her hurry home as fast as possible. The Learned Judge summed up, and said the prisoners were indicted for robbing and wounding, which was still a capital offence. If the Jury had any doubt as to the entire charge, they could find a verdict for robbing only. The Jury however found a verdict for the capital charge ; and his Lordship, in ordering Judgement of Death to be recorded, said that a very short time ago their lives would have been forfeited ; in fact they were liable to it now ; but their sentence should be commuted only on condition of their being transported for life, or at the very least for 15 years.

43 12 May 1843

SHREWSBURY POLICE **John Anstow**, a boatman in the employ of **Benjamin Wollaston**, the captain of a canal boat, was charged on suspicion of stealing a sovereign belonging to his employer from out of the cabin. The money was missed soon after the defendant had been seen in the cabin, and a quantity of silver was found upon him next day ; but there being no means of identifying the money, the defendant was discharged.

44 2 June 1843

SHREWSBURY POLICE John Wynn junr next charged Thomas Bevan, clerk to Mr W H Griffith and **R Spakeman**, boatman, with an assault. On Saturday week, Spakeman was fined 10s for throwing a stone at Wynn and hitting him in the mouth. On the same afternoon, the defendants, it was alleged, interrupted complainant on the Coal Wharf, and Bevan put his fist in his face and also snatched a cap from a labourer's head and rubbed it against his snout. In the defence, it was stated that Wynn first began the quarrel by using insulting language, and that he was in the habit of using disgusting language and gestures to females who came to Mr Griffiths's wharf for coals. The court fined Bevan 5s and 9s costs for the assault and dismissed the case against Spakeman ; and added that if Wynn repeated such conduct, they had a legal remedy against him.

45 7 July 1843

MONTGOMERYSHIRE SESSIONS William Thomas aged 22 of Llandrinio, rope maker, and **Edward Thomas** aged 18 of same place, boatman, were found guilty of stealing a watch, the property of James Dudley. Edward Thomas was sentenced to four months' imprisonment and hard labour, and William Thomas, being convicted of stealing another watch, the property of Edward Williams, to be transported for seven years.

46 27 October 1843

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS **Job Rawlins**, canal boatman, aged 35, was convicted of stealing a boat shaft and a tin bowl, belonging to George Bishop of Halesowen ; and as he had been convicted on a previous occasion, the Court sentenced him to 7 years' transportation.

47 8 December 1843

SHREWSBURY POLICE

BEGGING LETTER IMPOSTERS **Thomas Hurdley**, waterman of Frankwell, and David Pitchford Reece, a Welshman, were charged by Johnson the watchman with being drunk and fighting on the Raven Road on Saturday night. Each party was covered with mud, and Reece had a severe gash on his head. The Court fined them 10s each ; Hurdley paid his fine and was discharged, but Reece having only a shilling in his pocket, he was committed for 14 days. Police officer Thomas produced to the Court a document which he found on Reece's person, concealed between his short and skin, written in an Attorney's hand on brief paper, and to which was appended a list of signatures with various sums attached to their names. The petition set forth that the bearer was the son of William Ellis, farmer of Gaer Gerrig near Denbighshire, whose property had been maliciously set on fire by an incendiary ; and it concluded by recommending him to the notice and sympathy of a generous public. The signatures were admirably imitated – and included among others Lord Dinorben, Lady Gardner, Lady Hesketh, Lord Mostyn, Lord Bagot, the Hon T Kenyon, W O Gore Esq, &c, &c. The Magistrates directed the officers to make diligent inquiry whether the defendant had obtained any money by the petition, in order that they might make an example of him. Reece stated that he had not shown it to anyone, and that it was given to him by a man at Wellington, who told him that he could get oceans of money with it at Shrewsbury.

48 5 January 1844

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS Thomas Jones, labourer aged 47, was convicted of stealing three geese at Adderley, the property of Messrs T H Hudson and Samuel Thompson, and sentenced to three months' hard labour. **Samuel Thompson**, boatman aged 54, charged with receiving the same knowing them to have been stolen, was acquitted.

49 22 March 1844

SHROPSHIRE ASSIZES

STEALING COAL AT HALESOWEN **Thomas Smith**, canal boatman, was convicted of stealing six pennyworth of coal belonging to John Cutler at Halesowen. The prisoner was caught in the act of stealing the coal from a stack on a wharf adjoining. Sentenced to two months' hard labour.

50 5 July 1844

SHROPSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING COAL AT HALESOWEN William Rock alias Guest was charged with stealing on the 5th February last, at the parish of Halesowen, two hundred pounds weight of coals, of the value of one shilling, the property of James Smith.

The coals were found in prisoner's possession by a boatman in Mr Smith's service, and on being taxed with the theft, he offered to return the coals if there was to be any row about them. Another boatman, **John Brooks**, saw prisoner take the coals from the boat, in the absence of the captain of the boat, and he said he was to have them and a shilling for taking the boat through a tunnel. The Jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

51 23 August 1844

WELLINGTON PETTY SESSIONS **Daniel Simpson** of Wappenshall, boatman, was brought up before T C Eyton Esq at Donnerville, charged with being drunk and disorderly. Fined 5s and 8s 6d costs.

52 25 October 1844

SHROPSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

HOUSE BREAKING AT NEWPORT **John Savage**, canal boatman aged 23, pleaded guilty to breaking into the counting house of Mr George Joseph Ward at Newport on the 11th of October, and stealing therefrom a coat, a cloth cap and a purse. The Hon Chairman said the prisoner had rendered himself liable to 15 years' transportation ; but as this appeared to be his first offence, and as the place which he had broken into was a distinct building from the dwelling house, he should not carry the law out to its full extent, but would sentence him to 2 years hard labour.

53 21 February 1845

FOWL STEALING On Monday last Thomas Hene, an old offender, was taken before Charles Morris Esq at Newport, charged with stealing ducks, turkeys, &c from the premises of Mr Green of the Day House Farm near Cherrington. It appeared from the evidence that the prisoner, knowing himself to be suspected of the above felony, absconded, but was at length traced, and after considerable difficulty captured on Wednesday last by police officer Richards, while at work in a pit a short distance from Walsall, Staffordshire. **William Bonner**, a boatman, deposed to buying a couple of ducks from the prisoner, and an accomplice named Hughes (whose examination and committal were noticed last week) and Mr Green having sworn to the ducks, the prisoner was committed for trial.

54 16 May 1845

NEWPORT On Thursday **John Yates**, a tramping boatman, who stated that he was a native of Worcester, was taken before Charles Morris Esq charged with housebreaking under the following circumstances :- It appears that on the previous Wednesday, the prosecutor, a horse dealer named Madders, who resides near Ellerton Grange about four miles from Newport, together with his wife, left home for the purpose of attending Drayton Fair ; but in consequence of it beginning to rain when little more than a mile from home, they returned, and on approaching the house their suspicions were excited by seeing the prisoner, who had previously been noticed lurking about, running away from the house. On arriving they found the door, which they had left properly secured, wide open, and on searching the premises it was discovered that several articles were missing, but most fortunately a sum of £150 in notes and gold, which had been concealed among the bedclothes, was untouched, the only money missing being 5d in copper, which had been left on a shelf. The prosecutor, assisted by some men in the employ of Valentine Vickers Esq, immediately gave chase in the direction taken by the prisoner, and after a smart run succeeded in capturing him in the bay of a barn, where concealed among the straw they found several articles belonging to the prosecutor, comprising a coat, a pair of women's new boots, two handkerchiefs and two pairs of stockings. He was immediately conveyed to Newport and handed over to the custody of Police officer Richards who, on searching him, found in his pocket 5d in copper, the exact sum taken from the house of the prosecutor. The prisoner was committed for trial at the Sessions.

55 23 May 1845

WELLINGTON PETTY SESSIONS **James Wood**, boatman, charged by Elizabeth Bailey as being the father of her child, was ordered to pay the expenses since 6th March, £1 12s 6d, and 1s per week towards the support of the child.

COMMITMENTS **John Yates**, boatman, for breaking into the house of Thomas Madders at Cheswardine, and stealing a coat, two pair of stockings, a pair of boots and a handkerchief.

56 24 April 1846

SHREWSBURY POLICE

NUISANCES IN PUBLIC STREETS **Richard Jones**, a canal boatman, was fined 10s for committing a disgusting nuisance in Castle Foregate near the Crown and Anchor on Monday night.

57 15 May 1846

SHREWSBURY POLICE

CHARGES OF FELONY Yesterday, **Joseph Ashworth**, boatman, better known as “Joe the Pitcherman” was brought before the Mayor and J Watkins Esq on suspicion of having robbed the counting house of Messrs Crowley and Co, canal carriers of this town. The roof of the office was broken through on the night of Wednesday week, and a cash box stolen therefrom, containing about £16 10s in gold, silver and copper, and a cheque for ten guineas dated May 6th, drawn on the London and Western Branch Joint Stock Company. Another person who had been employed by Messrs Crowley was taken up on the same charge a few days ago and discharged ; and the present prisoner was remanded until Saturday in order to procure evidence from Wolverhampton.

58 26 June 1846

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS commence on Monday next, when the county business will be transacted. On Tuesday the trials of prisoners will commence ; the following is a calendar :-

Thomas Davies, boatman, for stealing at Llanymynech one hundred and three quarters weight of cast iron, the property of E Ward Esq.

Thomas Evans, boatman, for stealing a quantity of wearing apparel at Wellington, the property of James Oakes.

59 3 July 1846

SHREWSBURY SESSIONS

FELONY AT LLANYMYNECH **Thomas Davies**, boatman aged 20, was indicted for stealing nearly 200 weight of cast iron, value 8s 9d, at Llanymynech, the property of Thomas Edward Ward ; also for stealing 3 1/2 cwt of cast iron at the same place on the 15th of April, the property of the Hon F W West. The prisoner pleaded guilty to both charges ; and the Hon Chairman, in passing sentence, said he was a very bad character, and had been four times in custody on charges of felony, but had the luck of being acquitted. The sentence therefore should be 12 months' hard labour, being six months for each offence.

LARCENY AT WELLINGTON **Thomas Evans**, boatman aged 30, pleaded guilty to stealing at Wellington a quantity of wearing apparel, the property of his employer, Mr James Oakes, and was sentenced to 6 months' hard labour.

60 4 December 1846

SHREWSBURY POLICE

ASSAULTING THE POLICE On Saturday, **George Bedward** and **William Evans**, canal boatmen, were charged with assaulting Theodore Price, police officer. Bedward was found after eleven o'clock on Friday night, knocking at the door of the Globe on Castle Hill, and vowing he would have drink. The officer tried to remove him quietly, for which he got knocked down. Several persons came to help Price, and after a severe struggle in the mud which completely stuccoed them, the defendant was taken down the hill, and near the Castle Inn Evans came up and nearly succeeded in rescuing his companion. With great difficulty they were removed to the cell. The Court fined each of them 20s and 4s 6d costs, and in default Bedward was committed for a month.

61 12 March 1847

SHROPSHIRE ADJOURNED QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING HAY AT HALSTON **John Owen**, boatman, 61, was charged with stealing 50 lbs of hay, the property of Richard Jones.

Mr Boughey prosecuted ; Mr Sandford defended.

The principal evidence against the prisoner was that of the policeman who arrested him, who stated that the tracks near the hay rick corresponded exactly with the boots the prisoner had on when

arrested, one of which had a patch on the sole. When the prisoner was taken he had some hay in his boat, which he said he got from home.

Two small bundles of hay were produced by the policeman. The prosecutor swore that one of those samples corresponded with the quality of his own hay ; the other sample was of a different kind.

The prisoner was found guilty ; and it appearing that he had been convicted of felony at Montgomery Sessions in 1836, the Chairman sentenced him to three months' hard labour.

STEALING HAY AT WHITTINGTON **John Griffiths**, boatman, aged 30, pleaded guilty to stealing a quantity of rye grass and clover from a stack belonging to Mr Edward Jones of Whittington. Prisoner was employed to navigate boats on the canal, and stole the fodder for the purpose of feeding his donkeys. 14 days' hard labour.

62 30 March 1849

MANSLAUGHTER At Stafford assizes, **William Williams**, a boatman, 54 years of age, was charged with killing and slaying **Thomas Cartwright** on the 20th of January in the parish of Sedgley. The deceased was a boat boy, and was in his master's boat on the canal in the parish of Sedgley, when the prisoner's boat being about to pass, he threw his towing rope over the deceased's boat, and it caught the poor boy and dragged him into the water, when he was drowned. Acquitted.

63 8 June 1849

DARING HIGHWAY ROBBERY AT LLANDRINIO, MONTGOMERYSHIRE At Llandrinio Petty Sessions on Saturday last, held before John J Turner Esq and the Rev John (Russell?), two of the ruffians who robbed and nearly murdered Mr Henry Pugh, shopkeeper, seedsman, &c, of Llanymynech on the night of the 21st of last month at Llandrinio were brought up for final examination. They gave their names as **John Roberts**, native of Carreghofa, and **William Jones**, native of Stourport. They are both canal boatmen. From the levity they evinced during the whole of the proceedings it is feared that they are both old and hardened offenders. The first witness called was Mr Henry Pugh, the prosecutor, who appeared in a very weak state, being unable to walk without the assistance of his surgeon and another person ; he had several plaisters on his head, part of his clothes were tied on, being unable, owing to the injuries received, to wear his usual dress ; he was seated during the time he gave his evidence, and deposed to the following effect :- That between ten and eleven o'clock on the night in question he was returning from Llandrinio, in the direction of (???????) on horseback, after having that evening received several sums of money ; that three men rushed out of the turn that leads to Mr David Jones, the shoemaker's, one of whom seized the reins, and the others unhorsed him ; he then received several blows on the head with bludgeons, and then fell to the ground, when they all knelt upon him ; he cried "Murder" several times, and begged of them to spare his life ; on that, one of the ruffians thrust his hand in his mouth ; he then felt them rifling his pockets, and felt his purse go out ; one of the men said something which he did not understand, and then got up off him ; he then felt his eyes and mouth fill with blood, which nearly suffocated him ; used his fingers several times to clear it away ; got up and cried, "Murder – help!" On that, one of the men returned and struck him several times over the back with a bludgeon; he crawled up to his father's house with great difficulty, which is about a quarter of a mile from where he was attacked ; Police officer Strefford was sent for. The prosecutor said the purse now produced by Strefford was his purse, and the one stolen from him on the night in question ; when his purse was stolen it contained two £5 bank notes and about £10 in cash ; there were several half crown pieces amongst the cash ; about an hour before he was robbed, he received a £5 note of the Dudley and Westbromwich Bank from Mr Edwards of the Rhos, and in that gentleman's presence wrote on the back "Mr Edwards, Rhos, 21 May 1849" ; examined the note produced by Strefford, and swore it was the same note and his own handwriting ; the other note which was produced by the policeman was his property, it was of the Shropshire Banking Company; received it from Mrs Lloyd, Lyon Inn, Llanymynech ; the purse when it was taken from him was tied with a silk string ; identified the prisoners present as being two of the men ; has been under the care of Dr

Davaston ever since, and is yet in a very weak state ; delivered all the clothes he wore at the time he was robbed to policeman Strefford.

The next witness was Dr Davaston, who proved that he had the prosecutor under his care ever since the night in question ; explained the nature and extent of the injuries received, and stated that his patient was yet in a weak and precarious state.

Mr Edward Edwards, Rhos, Llandrinio, was then called. He swore to the note produced by Strefford as being the note he paid to Mr Pugh, the prosecutor, on the night in question.

Mr William Ellis, landlord of the Boat Inn, Llandrinio, swore that three men came to his house about four o'clock on the evening in question, and left about half past nine o'clock, by his time, the same night ; that they had meat and about four quarts of ale, for which they paid ; that the two prisoners were two of the men ; swore to them by their dress and features ; that the prisoner Roberts played several tunes on two Jew's harps.

Eliza Pritchard, servant to Mr Ellis, corroborated her master's evidence.

A boy named John Davies proved seeing the prisoners near the place where the robbery was committed ; that they cursed him, and told him to be off home.

Thomas Strefford, police officer, was then called, who deposed that about 11 o'clock of the night in question, he was called up by Mr Elijah Pugh (brother to the prosecutor), who informed him that his brother Henry had been robbed and almost killed by three men near the Malthouse on the Rhos common ; witness went to see Mr Pugh ; found him sitting in his father's back kitchen covered with blood, which appeared to be fast flowing from several wounds on the head. Mr Pugh gave a description of the missing money and a general description of the men ; went then in the direction of Llandrinio, and near the Malthouse saw Mr Pugh's horse running loose in the road, having on it a bridle and a saddle ; tried to catch it, but failed ; went to the Boat Inn, Llandrinio, called up Mr Ellis, the landlord, and was informed by him that three men having the appearance of boatmen or navvies had left his house and went in the direction of Llandysilio ; witness then called up the parish constables, and sent two of them out on each of the roads in the directions of each of the nearest police stations, with written information ; witness went himself on foot to Oswestry, and there called up John Richardson of the county police ; they went towards Gobowen Railway Station, and when about 500 yards from that place could see the train coming up from Shrewsbury in the direction of the station ; they saw the two prisoners sitting in the carriage shed near the platform ; the police were both in plain clothes ; they passed by the two prisoners and said nothing, expecting to find the third man, but could not see him ; they then went to the prisoners, and asked them where they came from that morning, when Roberts replied, "From Porth-y-waen" ; they were both very wet, and night was all through very rainy ; witness asked Roberts where the other man was ; he made no answer ; witness repeated the question ; Roberts replied, "He has just gone into the train". Richardson then collared the two prisoners, and witness searched the train ; witness was told by a boy that he had seen a man run off before they came to the station ; witness looked about to try if he could see anything of the other, but could not ; he then went into the booking office and handcuffed the prisoners, and Richardson started in search of the one missing ; witness then told the prisoner Roberts that he must search him ; he showed reluctance ; witness took from his left hand trousers pocket the purse now produced ; witness held the purse in his hand and said, "What have you got here?" Roberts replied, "My own money, which I worked hard for" ; witness told him that he should keep it safe until they went before the Magistrates ; Roberts said, "Well then, you must count it first" ; witness then emptied the contents on the floor of the booking office and counted it – it contained a £5 note of the Shropshire Banking Company, numbered 15798, a £5 note of the Dudley and Westbromwich Bank, numbered 15540, and having the words "Mr Edwards, Rhos, 21st May 1849" written on the back, 1 sovereign, 10 half crowns, 6 shillings, 2 sixpences, 1 four penny piece, 2 pence and a half penny. The purse was not tied when witness took it from Roberts's pocket, neither could he find the string. In Roberts's other pocket, witness found two Jew's harps produced, and other articles ; witness asked the prisoner his name and address ; he said, "John Jones of Shift End, near Bilston". Witness then searched the prisoner William Jones, and found in his pocket 17 shillings, a sixpence, 7 pence in copper and other articles ; witness told him that he should take all

from him ; he replied, "Well, you are taking my own money which I worked hard for, but you must count it first". Richardson and witness conveyed the two prisoners towards Oswestry ; witness saw fresh blood on Jones's shirt bosom and waistcoat, and on the trousers ; he told him he had got blood on his clothes ; he made no reply ; they conveyed them to Oswestry, and next day conveyed them from Oswestry towards Pentreheyling, and on the road thither met Mr Robert Baugh ; witness asked Mr Baugh in the presence of the prisoners if he knew either of them ; Mr Baugh said, "Yes", and pointing to the one who had given his name as John Jones, said, "His name is John Roberts of Carreghofa – he is a boatman, and the other is a boatman ; I know him but don't know his name" ; witness then asked Roberts if his name was Roberts ; he said it was ; witness then took them before John J Turner Esq, who remanded them until today ; the witness then produced the whole of the articles of dress which Mr Pugh wore when he was attacked – they were completely saturated with blood.

John Richardson of the Shropshire Police, stationed at Oswestry, was next examined, and corroborated the last witness ; when they brought the prisoners to Oswestry, witness told the prisoner Jones to take his clothes off (at the same time supplying him with others), as they were all blood ; he said, "It is from my nose bleeding" ; the officer here produced the trousers and shirt worn by the prisoner Jones ; the bosom was all blood, as also was the trousers round the front and in side of the thighs and knees ; witness then said, "I don't ask either of you to say you are guilty of any crime, but give us a description of the other man that was with you". Roberts replied, "I should like him to be found, for it was from him that I had the papers". The prisoners being duly cautioned as the law directs, stated that they were at the Boat Inn, and went in the direction of Oswestry, and met with the man who is not found near Llynglass Gate that morning, and he gave them the money. The prisoner Roberts acted as spokesman, and in making his statement was elbowed by Jones several times, which was observed by the police officer who had charge of the prisoners, and he then stood between them ; at this period the Court was crowded to excess, and the prisoner Jones fancying that some person intentionally pushed him from behind, turned himself round and addressed himself to Mr John Trevor of Newbridge, who happened to be next him, and said, "I say you will catch a smack in thy face if you push me again". The police then cleared all persons from that side of the court. Their Worships then committed the prisoners to take their trials at the Midsummer Assizes, which will be held at Newtown. So great was the excitement on this occasion, and the interest evinced by the inhabitants to hear the examination, that the room was densely crowded. It required the united efforts of three policemen to keep proper room for the magistrates. The Rev John Poole, Rector of Llandrysilio, before the rising of the court, presented Strefford, the police officer, with a purse containing nearly £20, which was a subscription made (under the management of Mr Lewis Whittingham of Hendre, Llandrinio) by the magistrates, clergy and gentry of Llandrysilio police section. The Rev Rector observed, in presenting the purse, that it was given by subscriptions of the inhabitants of the district in which Thomas Strefford exercises the duty of police officer, in order to mark their sense of his exemplary conduct in general ; but more especially for his great activity in apprehending two of the persons concerned in this brutal outrage and robbery, as a small remuneration for his great exertions and services ; that such an outrage had not been committed in this part of the country for a century ; that until Strefford was stationed here the ratepayers had some doubts whether in the police system they had enough for their money ; but he could say now that that feeling had quite disappeared ; that crime was prevented, and in cases where crime was committed the perpetrators were pretty sure to be detected. The Rev Gentleman spoke favourably of the working of the Montgomeryshire constabulary in general.

Mr William Baird, the chief constable, returned thanks, stating that it gave him much pleasure to find that the services of the Force were appreciated.

Strefford returned thanks for the munificent manner in which the magistrates, the clergy and the subscribers in general had rewarded his services.

64 3 August 1849

TWO POUNDS REWARD

WHEREAS **JOHN EDWARDS**, boatman, late in the employ of the Ellesmere and Chester Canal Company, has deserted his wife and three children, and left them chargeable to the parish of Holy Cross and St Giles, Shrewsbury. He is about 5 feet 7 1/2 inches high, rather thin, black hair, sandy whiskers, brown eyes, one tooth out in front of upper part of mouth ; had on, when he left, a blue striped frock with white bone buttons and blue cloth trousers ; supposed to be working in the neighbourhood of Coventry for the Grand Junction Canal Company.

Whoever will apprehend the above John Edwards and place him in any of her Majesty's Gaols, shall receive the above reward, on application to Mr Thomas Harwood, Vestry Clerk, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury.

July 23 1849

65 10 August 1849

LLANIDLOES PETTY SESSIONS **William Speakman** of Chester and **Thomas Peak** of Welsh Pool, boatmen, on the complaint of Thomas Strefford, police officer, for boating on the canal in the township of Carreghofa on the Lord's Day, were fined 5s 6d each, costs included.

William Jones, waggoner to Mr Baugh of Carreghofa, and **John Roberts**, boatman, of the Pant, were charged by the same police officer with fighting a pitched battle at Carreghofa on the 28th ult, and were ordered to find two sureties in £5 each to keep the peace for twelve months, and to pay 12s each costs.

66 19 October 1849

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

FELONY AT WIGMORE Elizabeth Hordley was charged with stealing a plaid shawl, flannel petticoat and a pair of cloth boots, the property of Mr John Pugh of Llandiloes.

Mr Boughey prosecuted, and Mr Phillimore defended the prisoner.

It appeared from the evidence that Mrs Margaret Pugh, wife of Mr John Pugh, took a parcel to the railway station, Oswestry, to be forwarded by canal to Newtown. It contained a plaid shawl, flannel petticoat, cloth boots and various other articles of apparel.

Robert Price, a boatman on the Shropshire Canal, had two parcels at Maesbury Wharf (the station for Oswestry) ; they were put in the boat with a tarpauling tied over them by ropes ; witness slept in the boat all night, and in the morning observed that the tarpauling had been partly removed, the ropes cut, and the two parcels gone, but found them in a field close by.

Francis Whittaker, police officer, Cardiston, in consequence of some information he had received, went to prisoner's house, where he saw the prisoner, and asked her if she had bought any articles of apparel, which she denied. Witness then told her that a shawl, flannel petticoat and pair of boots had been bought by someone in the neighbourhood, and they had been stolen, and whoever held them were just as blameable as those who stole them. Prisoner next day went to witness's house, and said she came about the things he had been talking about the previous day, and she thought she knew who had them ; that a woman came to her house and bought the things ; she did not know her, but knew her friends, and she (prisoner) had lent the woman the money to buy them ; but if they had been stolen she would give them up, which she did when witness went to her house.

Six or seven witnesses were called to prove the prisoner's good conduct, some of whom had known her upwards of 30 years.

The Jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty ; and the Chairman told her he entirely concurred in their verdict, and that she left the Court without the least stain upon her character.

67 26 October 1849

MONTGOMERYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS **Joseph Martin** aged 24, of Droitwich, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing a smock frock, value 5s, from the premises at Crowther's Hall near Pool

Quay, belonging to Thomas Rogers, the farm bailiff. Thomas Strefford, police officer, apprehended the prisoner, who was concealed amongst some packages in a trading boat when passing under the Arleen Bridge, and the smock frock on his person. He stated that he did not know the prisoner before apprehending him ; that he was a tramp. The Chairman, in passing sentence, told the prisoner that his was an aggravated case ; that he called at the house to beg victuals, and was given bread and cheese and beer, and that on leaving the premises he stole the first thing he could conveniently put his hand on. Sentence 2 months' imprisonment and hard labour.

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