

**WALSALL OBSERVER**  
**1886 to 1899**

**1**        **STEALING A COW**    On Tuesday at a special Petty Sessions held at Willenhall before Josiah Tillesley Esq, Frederick Mustobin (30), Chapel Street, Walsall, labourer, and **Thomas Henry Harvey** (18), Stafford Street, Walsall, boatman, were charged with stealing a cow from the Roughwood Colliery, Bentley, the property of Mr Henry Thompson, lock maker, Short Heath. From the evidence of Police-constable Dodge, the two prisoners were seen to take the cow from the colliery and drive it in the direction of Bloxwich. He traced them there and on to Pelsall, where he missed them. Dodge then proceeded to Lichfield, and afterwards to Rugeley, at which place he received a message that the two prisoners were in custody at Stafford. Dodge, accompanied by the prosecutor, then went to Stafford, and the prosecutor identified the cow, which was in a very distressed condition through having been over driven. The prisoners, who admitted the offence, were remanded in custody until Tuesday next at Willenhall.

**2**        **1 May 1886**

**THE CHARGE OF STEALING A COW**    At Willenhall Police Court on Tuesday, before the Rev G H Fisher and W H Hartill Esq, Frederick Muschin (30), Chapel Street, Walsall, labourer, and **Thomas Henry Harvey** (18), Stafford Street, Walsall, boatman, were charged on remand with stealing a cow value £16, the property of Mr Henry Thompson, lock maker, Short Heath. Prosecutor stated that on the 20<sup>th</sup> inst he sent his son to put the cow into another field. Witness's son came back, and said the cow was not there. He (witness) then obtained the assistance of Police-constable Dodge, who traced the prisoners, with the cow in their charge, to Bloxwich, Pelsall, Lichfield, Rugeley and on to Stafford, where they were taken into custody. Prosecutor went to Stafford, and there identified the cow, which was in a very distressed condition through having been over driven. The prisoners, who pleaded that they committed the theft through poverty, were committed for trial at the adjourned quarter sessions.

**3**        **23 October 1886**

DAW END

**DRUNKENNESS**    At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, **Joseph Green**, boatman, Daw End, was charged with being drunk and riotous. Police-constable Morrey stated that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst he was on duty in the above neighbourhood, when he found defendant drunk and making use of very bad language. Two or three men offered to take him home, but he refused, and threatened to knock the officer's brains out if he interfered with him. It was with great difficulty defendant was got to the station. Mr James said defendant was a stupid fellow, and would not learn wisdom by experience. A fine of 10s and 7s costs was imposed, or 14 days' imprisonment ; Mr James remarking that whilst defendant was paying the fine he was robbing his family, who very likely wanted food to eat and clothes to wear.

**4**        **20 November 1886**

LONG WOOD

**WASTING CANAL WATER**    At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, before T A Negus and J Nayler Esqs, **William Griffin**, boatman, Lander Street, Saltley, Birmingham, was summoned for wasting canal water at the Long Wood locks. A gentleman from the office of Messrs Wragge, Evans, Holliday and Godlee, solicitors to the Canal Company, appeared in support of the charge. **William Moss** stated that he was lock-keeper at the above locks, and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst defendant was working his boat down the canal, and in doing so wasted a quantity of water, after being remonstrated with. Enoch Hughes stated that on the day in question he was engaged in doing some repairs on the canal, when he saw defendant come along the canal with his boat, and instead of waiting for another boat to pass, he went and emptied the next lock, thus wasting the water. Defendant contended that he did not waste the water, as the other boat was too far away for him to

wait for it. He was a permanent boatman, knew perfectly well what he was about, and the witness Moss might have called to him without his hearing him. Mr Negus said that defendant had rendered himself liable to a penalty of £5, and that Mr Moss was placed at the locks to look after the interests of the company, and had discharged his duty. Defendant was fined 5s and 14s 4d costs, or 14 days' hard labour.

## **5 5 February 1887**

### **WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**STEALING A HORSE RUG** **Henry Pemberton**, boatman, Wolverhampton, was charged with stealing a horse rug, value 5s, the property of Philip Sanders, grocer, Field Street, Bloxwich. Prosecutor and several witnesses having given evidence in support of the charge, prisoner said he did not steal it, but picked it up in the road. George Henry Bayley, in whose employ prisoner had been twelve years, gave him a good character. Prosecutor did not wish to press the case, and the Bench allowed it to be withdrawn, but intimated that prisoner had run a great risk.

## **6 26 February 1887**

### **BROWNHILLS**

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE** At the Police Court on Wednesday, before W F Gordon and L T Birch Esqs, **Orlando Mycock**, boatman, Aston, was charged with ill-treating a horse by unmercifully beating it. Inspector Sanders, of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, deposed that on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst he was passing down the main street of Brownhills, and on looking down a street leading to the canal he saw defendant strike the horse a number of times about the face with a whip. There were about twenty marks upon the animal. Witness asked him why he beat the horse, and he replied that the horse had gone on without telling, and was very stupid. Defendant pleaded guilty, and acknowledged that he lost his temper. He produced an excellent character from his employer. A fine of 10s and costs was inflicted.

## **7 2 April 1887**

### **BLOXWICH**

**FATAL ACCIDENT** On Wednesday morning, an inquest was held by Mr T H Stanley (borough coroner) at the Cottage Hospital, on the body of John Lyons (13) of Little Bloxwich, who died in the hospital from injuries received on the 4<sup>th</sup> March. The following evidence was given :-  
John Lyons, Little Bloxwich, labourer, identified the body, and stated that deceased had been insured, but the insurance had not been kept up. He saw the boy removed to the hospital, but he did not see the accident happen. He had seen the deceased in the hospital many times since he was injured, but deceased said nothing but that he jumped into a boat, and it was going that fast that his leg got caught against the side. Deceased ought to have gone to school, but he played away, and did little jobs for people about. He had not been to school for twelve months, but he (witness) wanted him to go, not thinking it time to get him a place of work. **George Flavell** deposed that he lived at Moxley and was a boatman. On the day of the accident, his boat was going to Pelsall New Colliery, and he was driving. Witness did not know the deceased lad. When the boat got to Smith's Bridge it was passing another boat, in which he saw deceased try to jump. He missed the jump, but caught his arms on the side of the boat. Witness ran to him to drag him out, and just at that moment witness's horse started to gallop. The two boats then came together, and deceased's leg was crushed before witness could get him out. Deceased did not faint, but kept shouting out, "My leg's broke". Deceased was laid on some straw at Smith's public house, and then his parents were fetched. Lads often jumped on to the boats in order to have a ride. **Henry Worrall** deposed that he lived at Heathtown, Wolverhampton, and was a boatman. On the day in question, witness was going towards Pelsall with his boat, and was driving at the time. As soon as he got his horse through the bridge he eased it, so that the boat could be squared to the bridge. The stern of the boat was to the towing-path and the stem towards the public house. The deceased was standing near the bridge when witness went through. Immediately afterwards he heard a noise, and on turning round he saw

Flavell trying to draw deceased out of the water. Before that could be done, the second boat came up and jammed the deceased's leg. James Taylor deposed that he lived in Little Bloxwich and was a labourer. He knew deceased by sight, and on the morning of the accident he saw deceased lying in the yard of Mr Smith's public house. He was not on any straw or anything else at that time. Mrs Smith asked witness to take the lad home. Deceased had a great cut in the calf of his leg, and was in pain, but conscious. Witness fetched a trap and took deceased home and left him there. Henry Worrall, being recalled, said that Flavell and he put the lad into a wheelbarrow, as Mr Smith would not have him laid on the straw. Mr Smith then went into the house, and a girl was sent to tell deceased's mother. Mr Smith and his daughter shouted to them when they took deceased up, but witness could not say what they shouted. He supposed they shouted because the lad's leg was cut so badly and bleeding profusely. Young Mr Smith was also there, and he told Flavell to put the deceased in the barrow, and he (young Mr Smith) laid a sack over him. James Taylor reiterated his statement that when he arrived deceased was lying on the ground, and not in a wheelbarrow. Patrick Lyons deposed that he lived at Little Bloxwich, and was a miner. Deceased was his nephew, and he (witness) saw deceased brought home. Witness stripped him, and afterwards took him to the hospital, by direction of Dr Somerville, who was called in to see him. The Coroner, in the course of his summing up, pointed out that there seemed considerable confusion as to the times when the witnesses had done the various things to which they deposed. Really there seemed to have been no delay, but he and the jury certainly would have liked to know how it was that deceased was removed from the barrow and laid on the ground. Of course that did not affect the inquiry as to the cause of death, but still they would naturally have liked to know about it. The jury at once returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

## 8 9 July 1887

THE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE AT WALSALL At the Police Court yesterday, before E T Holden, J Newman and W Bayliss Esqs, Jessie Andrews (31) of the Wisemore was charged with attempting to commit suicide by throwing herself into the canal at Navigation Street on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst.

**Joseph Till**, boatman employed on the Birmingham and Walsall Canal, and residing in Navigation Street, said that about half past nine on Wednesday night he was in the yard by his house, and saw prisoner walk up to the canal and deliberately jump in. Witness ran to the spot, jumped into the water, which was deep just there, and with assistance rescued her. Witness took her down to his house, and his wife saw to her and dressed her in dry clothes. It was not the first, second or third time he had jumped in the canal and rescued people.

Mr C A Loxton (magistrates' clerk) : Have you got a medal from the Humane Society?

Witness : No.

Mr Loxton : You ought to have one.

Witness, continuing, said the police afterwards came to his house, and conveyed prisoner to the Police Station. He had noticed when he rescued the woman that she had some sticking plaster on her right eye.

Mr Holden, addressing the witness, said the Bench wished him to state how very pleased they were at the admirable way in which he had saved that woman's life, and, as he said that was the second or third time he had performed such brave acts, they hoped he would get his reward some day. The Bench were very pleased at the prompt way in which he risked his own life to save the woman's.

A boatman named **Thomas Sutton**, of 12 Navigation Street, was then called, and deposed to assisting the first witness to pull the prisoner out of the canal.

Police-constable Albert Willetts said that between nine and ten o'clock on Wednesday night, from information received, he went to Navigation Street, to Till's house and, after waiting some time, saw the prisoner. She said she was willing to go with him ; but she was not going to stand that any longer, pointing to a wound on her head. If she went to prison, she should do it again when she came out. Witness and Police-sergeant Bailey brought her to the Police Station.

Dr Wood also gave evidence, and said he thought the attempted suicide was the result of drink.

Prisoner said she was sick and tired of the life she was leading, being beaten and knocked about,

and she would be very much obliged if the Bench would kindly send her to a home of some kind. The case was adjourned for a week, in order that prisoner's request might, if possible, be complied with.

### **9 9 July 1887**

#### WALSALL POLICE COURT

ALLEGED ASSAULT Walter James Chaplin (25), labourer, Little Bloxwich ; Thomas Round (21), labourer, Smethwick ; and John Hadley (22), Smethwick, were charged with assaulting **Joseph Edwards**, boatman of Spon Lane, West Bromwich. Mr H H Jackson (from Mr T H Stanley's office), who appeared for the prosecution, said that there was a strike of boatmen at Messrs Lones, Vernon and Holden's, Smethwick, owing to a reduction of wages. Prisoners and others refused to accept the reduction, and those men had been following him about and assaulting him. Two men named Edward and **Hall** started last Monday at seven o'clock to take a boat to Leacroft Colliery, and when coming away were met at Little Bloxwich by Chaplin, who used bad language to them, and got into the boat. He then began throwing the coal about, and struck complainant in the ribs. Complainant then gave evidence, but admitted that Round and Hadley had not assaulted him. The Bench pointed out that complainant had sworn that he had been assaulted by them, and had thus obtained a warrant, with the result that they were both lodged in prison. Now he admitted that neither of them had struck him. Mr Jackson mentioned that he had only been instructed in the case that morning, and it appeared to him that the real culprits had not as yet been charged. Round and Hadley were discharged, and Chaplin was remanded on his own bail.

### **10 16 July 1887**

#### WALSALL POLICE COURT

ASSAULT AND HINDRANCE Walter James Chaplin, labourer, Little Bloxwich, Joseph Turner and William Hall were charged with assaulting **John Joseph Edwards**, boatman, Spon Lane, and also with having interfered with him whilst at work. Mr H H Jackson (from the office of Mr T H Stanley) appeared for the prosecution. Complainant deposed that on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst he started with a boat from Smethwick to Hednesford, and when he got to Little Bloxwich he was prevented from continuing his work, and he had to put a corn bag over his face to protect himself from assault. **John Hall**, Smethwick, deposed that on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst he was driving his boat at Little Bloxwich, when Chaplin laid hold of the boat line and unloosed the mule. He saw Turner throw a stone at the complainant, and when the mule was loosed he immediately attached it, and went on with his business. Joseph Statham, Little Bloxwich, deposed that he saw Chaplin unpeg the mule and get on the boat, and then throw three lumps of coal off. Stones were thrown, and complainant had to seek protection. Hall was discharged, Mr Holden remarking that people ought not to be put in the box without a shadow of evidence against them. Mr Jackson said he was entirely innocent of the fact, and did not take out the summonses.

Chaplin was fined 20s and costs, and Turner 10s and costs, or fourteen days' imprisonment with hard labour.

### **11 30 July 1887**

CASE IN THE HOSPITAL On Tuesday, a Birmingham boatman named **William Lindon** was admitted into the Cottage Hospital in a drunken condition, suffering from severe bruises on the body, through which he was detained as an in patient. His statement was that owing to the sinking of a boat at the Birchills, he came with some other men into the town and commenced drinking, and received the injuries from three men, whom he states attacked him. The police, however who have made inquiries, have failed hitherto in finding that this was the case.

### **12 17 September 1887**

#### WALSALL POLICE COURT

LODGING HOUSE ROBBERY Andrew Connally, no fixed home, was charged with stealing a

shirt from a house in Bloxwich on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, the property of Ann Wrixham. The prosecutrix deposed that she kept a lodging house at Bloxwich. Prisoner lodged there on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and left on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>. After he was gone, the shirt produced, which belonged to another lodger, was missed. **James Mellors**, boatman, Forge Street, deposed that he bought the shirt produced from prisoner on Thursday afternoon at the White Horse, Birchills. Witness did not know prisoner, and had never seen him until he saw him at the public house. Prisoner wanted 1s 3d for the shirt, but witness only had 9d, but he had credit at the house. Witness therefore gave him the 9d and three pints of ale “on strap” for the shirt. Prisoner, having been several times convicted previously, was sent to gaol for three months with hard labour. Prisoner was also charged on remand with begging, but on that charge he was not sentenced.

**13 8 November 1887**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

DRUNKENNESS **Isaac Fearn**, boatman, Smethwick, was charged with being drunk in Park Street on Monday. Police-constable Webb (No 29) proved the case. Prisoner was discharged with a caution and, in reply to the Mayor's suggestion that he should be more careful in his drinking, said “that he thought the beer must be stronger in Walsall than he was accustomed to”.

**14 15 October 1887**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

A CURIOUS CASE **Thomas Hickson**, boatman of Tipton and Rosannah Bull, married woman of Bloxwich, were charged with being drunk and disorderly in High Street, Bloxwich. Acting Sergeant Curtis and Police-constables Marshall and Wiltshire gave evidence to the effect that late on Sunday night the defendants were drunk and disorderly in High Street, Bloxwich. They were taken into the house belonging to Bull, who lives apart from her husband, but afterwards came out again and repeated their bad behaviour, at the same time using obscene language. Prisoners made several allegations against the police, to the effect that they interfered with them when they were walking quietly along, and that Wiltshire also struck one of them (Hickson) with a stick. The Bench, after a short consultation, decided to dismiss the case.

**15 14 January 1888**

BROWNHILLS

CRUELTY TO A HORSE At the Police Court on Wednesday, before A E Manley and W F Gordon Esqs, **Thomas Phillips**, boatman, Wednesbury, was charged with cruelty to a horse belonging to Thomas Harvey, Aldridge, contractor for the night soil department at Wednesbury, by working it while in an unfit state on the 20<sup>th</sup> inst. W H Sanders, Burton-on-Trent, officer of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, appeared in support of the charge. Police-constable Trusswell deposed that on the morning of the day in question, he saw the horse drawing a boat along the canal at Brownhills, defendant being in charge. From something he had been told, he stopped the animal and, upon examination, found two raw wounds under the collar on the off side, one being two inches long and one and a half wide, and the other about the size of a two shilling piece, having the appearance of a boil, from which blood and matter were flowing freely. The collar was saturated with blood and matter, and the horse was not in a fit state to work. Witness asked defendant how he accounted for working the horse whilst in such a condition ; and defendant said he had no stuff to dress it with. Witness asked him who the owner of the animal was, when defendant told him, and also that the owner knew nothing about it. Alfred Salford, stoker at the Brownhills gasworks, stated that he was present during the examination of the horse, and described the wounds as a mass of running sores. In reply to the Bench, witness said the collar was a new one, and the animal could not bear the collar to touch it. In his opinion, the animal was quite unfit to work. Some days previously he had seen the horse along the canal, and called defendant's attention to it, but defendant said it was nothing to hurt. Inspector Sanders said he went to Wednesbury on the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult, and it was with some difficulty that he could get to see the horse.

When he met the defendant and the owner together, their conversation was very peculiar. Upon examination, he found that one of the wounds had been dried somewhat, but the animal was not then in a fit state to work. Fined 10s and costs, defendant not appearing until the case had been disposed of.

**16 10 March 1888**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

AN UNGRATEFUL A young man named **Joseph Haywood** of Wolverhampton was charged with stealing a whip value 1s, the property of **Francis Corsier**, boatman, Hospital Street, on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst. Complainant said that prisoner came to his house and represented that he was starving, and out of pity he took him in and found him food. On the day named, prisoner took the whip out of the house. After the robbery had been found out, prisoner offered to pay for the whip. Detective Sergeant Cliffe deposed that he took prisoner into custody on the charge of stealing the whip, when he said, "If you will let me go, I will try and recover the whip". The chief of police asked for a remand for a week, which was granted, as it was understood that prisoner was suspected of other misdemeanours.

**17 17 March 1888**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

THE CHARGE OF STEALING A WHIP The man **Joseph Haywood**, boatman, Wolverhampton, was again brought up on a charge of stealing a whip, value 1s, the property of **Francis Causer**, Hospital Street, on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst. **Elizabeth Causer**, wife of prosecutor, identified the whip ; and another witness, who purchased the whip for 3d and a good dinner, was called. The Magistrates' Clerk asked for a remand, as prisoner was at present under police supervision, and had been indicted four times for various offences. Prisoner was again remanded until Monday.

**18 31 March 1888**

DAW END

DROWNED On Wednesday afternoon, Mr E Hooper, the district coroner, held an inquest at the Royal Oak Inn, Daw End, on the body of a youth named **Ambrose Hanley** (15), of Hanley Street, Birmingham, a boat boy. The facts appeared to be that the deceased was helping a boatman named **Robinson** to take a boat to Hednesford for the purpose of fetching coal. When they got to Longwood Locks on Monday afternoon, about a quarter past two, deceased was seen on the boat, but shortly afterwards he was missed. On search being made, his dead body was found in the lower lock. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**19 21 April 1888**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

WASTING WATER **Joseph Sands**, Tyndall Street, Birmingham, was charged with wasting water belonging to the Birmingham Canal Company. Mr W Lewis appeared to prosecute, and defendant, who pleaded guilty, but said he did not waste more than he could have drunk, was fined 2s 6d and costs.

**20 21 April 1888**

WALSALL WOOD

ASSAULT At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, **William Chambers**, boatman, 264 Spon Lane, West Bromwich, was charged with assaulting Joseph Marriott, ganger, Walsall Wood, employed at the Aldridge Colliery. Mr T E Whitehouse, Wolverhampton, appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Jackson, West Bromwich, was for the defence. Complainant stated that on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst he was going about his work, defendant having a boat at the wharf, and when he was returning from the office with defendant's ticket, defendant struck him in the mouth, loosening his teeth. **Alfred George**, boat loader, was called for the prosecution, who deposed that he saw the

assault committed. Mr Jackson said defendant's boat had been kept waiting for some time, and defendant was somewhat exasperated. Mr James said that was no excuse for the assault, remarking that if what Mr Jackson said was true, defendant's employers should have written to the company. Fined 40s and costs, or one month's hard labour.

## **21 1 September 1888**

**DEATH FROM THE KICK OF A HORSE** On Thursday, Mr T H Stanley, the borough coroner, held an inquest at the Cottage Hospital on the body of **Thomas Dugmore**, Hilly Road, Daisy Bank near Bilston, who died in the hospital on Tuesday night.

Evidence was given showing that deceased was a boatman, and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August was taking his boat from Daw End to Wednesbury. When they got there, the son of deceased, who was in the boat, raised himself from a stooping position and saw his father, who had been driving the horse, lying on the towing path. He got his father into the boat, and learnt from him that he had been kicked by the horse. Subsequently, as deceased became worse, he was brought to the hospital, where he died.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and, having learned that the deceased had left a widow and eleven children in extreme poverty, they collected among themselves the sum of £1 2s 6d, which the Coroner, on their behalf, presented to the widow.

The employer of the deceased, who was present, stated that he should bear the cost of the funeral.

## **22 6 October 1888**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

**STEALING A BAR OF PIG IRON** **Peter Hill**, Blue Lane West, and **Frederick Lowbridge**, Adam Street, boatmen, were charged with stealing a bar of pig iron, the property of the Birmingham Canal Company. Mr W L Lewis appeared for the prosecution, and Mr H H Jackson was present to watch the case on behalf of Enoch Brayford. **Eli Taylor**, inspector in the employ of the company, said that on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult the locks at Walsall, near Wolverhampton Street, were undergoing repairs, for which purpose the water was let out, when a bar of iron was found. It was removed from the lock to the canal yard. Witness could not identify the iron ; but a large quantity of similar iron was frequently found in the canal. William Haden, Stubbers Green, said he saw the iron, and was ordered by the last witness to put it in the canal yard, which was enclosed. Witness did not see the iron afterwards. William Boys, publican, Braunston, Northamptonshire, deposed that on the day named he was travelling along the canal, when he saw the prisoner Hill go into the yard and fetch the iron out, and give it to Lowbridge. Witness did not see where the iron was taken to, but they made the best of their way off. Richard Boys, son of last witness, said he also saw Hill take the iron and give it to Lowbridge. Detective Cliff stated that he apprehended prisoners on the 28<sup>th</sup> ult at the house of Lowbridge, and charged them with the offence. They told him if they had known there would be any bother about it, they would have taken it back again, as they only got 10d for it at Brayford's. Prisoners said they were guilty, and were very sorry for what they had done. Fined 5s and costs, or seven days' hard labour. There was some little dispute about detaining the iron, when it was contended that there could be no end served, as it could not be identified. The matter was left to Mr Taylor, Chief of Police, who ordered it to be detained.

## **23 1 December 1888**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

**WASTING WATER** **Seth Smith**, boatman, Heathfield Lane, Darlaston, was summoned for wasting water on the Birmingham Canal on the 10<sup>th</sup> November. Mr W Lewis appeared for the prosecution, and explained that although these cases appeared trivial they were not so, as a large expense was entailed in pumping back the water that the boatmen run through to save themselves a little time. **Samuel Whitehead**, lock-keeper, Walsall, deposed that he happened to go towards the lock, and saw defendant going through with his boat. Both the paddles of the lock were up. He had repeatedly cautioned the defendant. Defendant denied that he wasted the water intentionally. The fact was that when he opened the top paddle, he found that the lower one was opened. He went to

put it down when Mr Whitehead met him. Fined 1s and costs.

## 24 12 January 1889

### NORTON CANES

ALLEGED ROBBERY OF VICTUALS At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, two young men named **James Williams** and **Thomas Simmons**, boatmen hailing from Birmingham, were charged with stealing some bread, meat, butter, a can, a tea kettle and a basket, the goods and victuals of **Joseph Holloway**, boatman, Greet's Green, West Bromwich. From the evidence of the prosecutor, it appeared that his food was in the basket attached to the horse's harness. He did not see the things taken, but when he went for them they were gone, and some of them were found in the defendants' boat. One of the defendants pleaded not guilty. Police-sergeant Riley asked for a remand, as there was another person implicated in the robbery. Defendants were accordingly remanded.

ANOTHER BOATMAN IN TROUBLE At the same Court, a young man named **Francis Coley**, boatman, also of Birmingham, was charged with receiving 5 lbs of tobacco, the property of John Wood, grocer. Ann Wood, wife of the prosecutor, stated that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> instant a boy came into her shop and asked for a pennyworth of tea and a pennyworth of sugar, which were supplied to him. It was a frequent occurrence for boatmen to ask for a kettle of water, and she generally referred them to the pump, but on this occasion the pump was out of order, and she fetched some water herself. Whilst she was gone for the water, the tobacco was taken. Police-constable Treacey deposed that he apprehended the prisoner on Sunday morning at his lodgings in Richard Street, Birmingham. He charged him with receiving the tobacco from a youth named Vernon Rigby, knowing the same to have been stolen. He replied that he had not had the tobacco, as he did not smoke. **James Williams**, a defendant in another case, was called for the prosecution, and stated that the tobacco was thrown into the canal, but he could not say whether Coley had anything to do with it or not. Prisoner denied all knowledge of the theft. Mr James said there was not sufficient evidence to substantiate the charge, and prisoner would therefore be discharged ; but Mr James informed him that if additional evidence could be produced, he would be liable to be brought up again.

## 25 26 January 1889

### BROWNHILLS

ROBBERY BY BOATMEN At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, two young men named **Thomas Symons** and **James Williams**, boatmen, Birmingham, were charged on remand with having, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> instant, stolen a quantity of food, a tea kettle and other goods, the property of **Joseph Holloway**, boatman of Greet's Green, West Bromwich. Prosecutor stated that on the day named the things were taken from a basket attached to his horse's harness, and afterwards found in the possession of the prisoners. When they were charged with the theft, they said that they knew nothing about it. One of them threatened to knock his brains out. Prosecutor saw Symons go away with a basket, can and kettle, some of which were found in a stable. Richard Beech, Pelsall, stated that he was a watchman in the employ of Messrs Harrison, and on the night named, prosecutor called his attention to some bread which was on the canal side. Witness and prosecutor afterwards found the can, kettle and basket, which were empty. Witness did not go into the prisoners' cabin at all, but he took the number of the boat they were in. Police-constable Austin deposed that he arrested the prisoners on the 4<sup>th</sup> instant and charged them with the offence, and they were afterwards locked up. Prisoners denied the charge, stating that it was someone else who stole the things, and not them. Symons was dismissed, and Williams was detained until the rising of the Court.

## 26 2 March 1889

### WALSALL POLICE COURT

SHOCKING CASE OF CRUELTY **Thomas Smith**, boatman, Galton House, Galton Cottages, Smethwick, was charged by Inspector Ruane of the Birmingham Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, with cruelty to a horse. Defendant did not appear, and Police-constable Brough

informed the magistrates that when the summons was served upon him, he replied that he should come up if he didn't forget, but added that "if they wanted him, they'd have to fetch him". The Bench decided to hear the case in the absence of the accused, and Police-constable Brough stated that about half past three o'clock on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, he went to the canal side at Coal Pool, and found a horse lying in a helpless condition there. It was struggling to get up, and as a result one eye was protruding, and every time it moved its head this eye rolled underneath its cheek. The sight of the other eye had also gone – apparently as the result of some old injury. From inquiries made, witness ascertained that the horse had been lying there from about eleven o'clock on the Tuesday night until it was slaughtered two days afterwards. The weather was very severe at the time – it was frosty and much snow had fallen. The horse was absolutely helpless. It could not get up, and by its frantic struggles it had forced one eye out. In addition to this, it had a large bleeding wound on the hind leg. Thomas Smith of Coal Pool, a man employed by the Birmingham Canal Company, deposed that prisoner worked for Mr Downing, haulier, Smethwick, and was constantly in charge of the horse in question. Witness first saw the horse lying on the towing-path on Wednesday morning. Smith's boat was then about ten yards behind, and was drifting backwards and forwards. Smith himself was in the cabin. The horse was in a very poor state, and could not get up without assistance. Smith, however, took no notice of it. The horse struggled hard to rise, but without success. It had been lying there since 11 pm the previous day, and the night had been a fearful one. The horse's eye had been knocked out in its struggles. Defendant could see how matters stood, but he liked the warm cabin better than coming out to look after the horse. Witness and four others tried to get the horse up, but could not manage it. It lay there all day Wednesday, and on the Thursday. It was alive at six o'clock on the Thursday, and two hours before that, a man who came by gave it a feed of corn. Defendant, however, did nothing to relieve it – he neither fed it nor covered it. Witness was away the greater part of the Wednesday. When he went in the morning, defendant was in the cabin, and on returning in the evening he found that his quarters remained unaltered. The horse lay struggling on the ground all the while. The towing-path was a wide one, and the horse did not interfere with the traffic. Patrick Kelly, Coal Pool, deposed to seeing the horse struggling on the ground throughout Wednesday and Thursday. The weather was bitterly cold at the time. Witness saw defendant in the boat, and asked him to assist in getting the gearing off the boat, but his reply was, "Let the ---- stop there". He was in the cabin, and would not come out. Witness asked him several times to come out, but he would not. On the Thursday night, witness fed the horse himself. It had then one eye knocked out, its nostrils were choked with dirt, and it had a cut on the left hoof. It was nearly famished, and ate the food he gave it ravenously. Defendant could easily have got off the boat had he desired to do so. He had no excuse for staying there. **John Weller**, a Smethwick youth who was employed to drive the horse in question, stated that he and defendant were on their way from East Cannock to Birmingham when the horse slipped down. Witness could not get him up, and asked defendant to assist him. Defendant told him to get a plank to enable him to leave the boat, and while witness was looking for this, defendant got into the cabin and went to sleep. He afterwards told witness to go home to the master, to tell the master the horse was dead, and get another one. Witness did so, and returned on the Wednesday night. The horse lay on the towing-path the whole of the time, and defendant could see it was not dead. Witness told defendant when he came back on the Wednesday night that it had its eye out and a knee injured, and he (defendant) replied, "Let the ---- stay there". Defendant would not have had the slightest difficulty in getting off the boat had he wanted to do so. He and witness afterwards towed the boat away with the fresh horse. Mr Paley, veterinary surgeon, stated that he examined the horse on the Thursday night as it lay on the canal side. Its near eye was protruding. It was blind in the off eye, it had wounds on the knee and hind leg, and it was lying on its left side. It was in a very emaciated condition, and was quite unable to get up. Had it been attended to in the first instance, it might have been raised. Defendant and the boy could not have got it up themselves ; but might easily have obtained assistance, as there were two cottages near. Witness had the horse destroyed. It had been lying on its left side, and in its struggles had travelled between 20 and 30 yards on its side, the friction with the stones causing the injuries. It was not covered in any way, and must have been in

great pain. Inspector Ruane deposed that when the case was reported to him, he saw defendant at his home, and asked him if he could explain his conduct. He replied that he could not get off the boat, and added that he thought it was either dead or dying. The Bench described defendant's conduct as most brutal, and sentenced him to six weeks' hard labour without the option of a fine.

**27 30 March 1889**

**A MOTHER AND CHILD DROWNED** An inquest was held on Tuesday at the Anchor Inn, Glascote, by Dr Iliffe (coroner) on the bodies of Alice Stringer (28), a single woman, and her child (aged six months), who were drowned in the canal at Glascote on Saturday night. The woman's body was recovered by a boatman at the lock gates late on Saturday night, and several persons swore to its being that of a tramp from Coventry ; but it was now proved that she resided at Kettlebrook, near Tamworth, and that she was engaged to be married to a man named Wood, the father of her child. On Saturday she went to do some cleaning at the house he was furnishing for her, and left about half past eight in the evening with her child. When returning along the canal side, it is supposed she must have slipped in. A verdict of "Accidental death from drowning" was returned.

**28 12 October 1889**

**HEDNESFORD**

**DAMAGING CLOVER** At the Cannock Police Court on Monday, **Alfred Wasley**, boatman, Worcester, was summoned, but did not appear, for damaging growing clover on land in the occupation of Edward Britton, farmer, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September. It appeared that the complainant had been subject to a great deal of trespass through people searching for mushrooms and watercresses upon his land, and boatmen were the greatest offenders. The defendant was fined 5s and costs, or fourteen days' hard labour.

**29 26 October 1889**

**LICHFIELD**

**CHARGE OF STEALING A HORSE** At the Police Court on Thursday, Stephen Wood, hawker, Summer Hill Street, Birmingham, was charged on remand, with stealing, on the 18<sup>th</sup> instant, a horse, of the value of £10, the property of **Charles William Wall**, boatman, Alrewas. Mr B Hibbert prosecuted and Mr Cross defended. It was alleged that prisoner agreed to purchase the horse from the prosecutor for £10, and got him to make out a "bought" note, paying £1 on account. Prisoner, it was stated, afterwards decamped with the horse, and was followed by prosecutor, who travelled on foot from Lichfield to Birmingham, where accused was arrested. The prisoner was committed for trial at the Stafford Assizes, bail being allowed.

**30 30 November 1889**

**DAW END**

**IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL** At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, **William Hill**, boatman, was summoned for not sending his daughter to school regularly. Mr Garbett, school attendance officer for the Rushall School Board, stated that the girl had not been to school since June last, was 13 years of age next month, and was only in the third standard. Mr James asked whether the Board were taking advantage of the last month in which they could prosecute. Mr Garbett said the defendant had always defied the Board, and a fine was paid a short time ago. Mr James said the Bench did not make the laws, but he should think the Board would not trouble after defendant again if another fine was paid. A fine of 5s was inflicted.

**31 30 November 1889**

**WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**STEALING A NOSE TIN** An elderly man named David Maclachlan, labourer, was charged with stealing a nose tin and strap, value 3s 6d, the property of **Joseph Firkin**, boatman, residing at the

Bridge Inn, Sherbourne Street, Birmingham, on Monday last. Prosecutor identified the goods as his property, but he could give no evidence against the prisoner. Sarah Ann King, wife of the landlord of the Orange Tree Inn, Wolverhampton Road, deposed that on the night in question the prisoner came to the house, representing that he was a boatman, and wished to sell the tin and strap for 1s 6d, stating that they were his own property. She purchased the articles at the price named, and upon inquiries being made she gave information to a young man of the transaction. In reply to the Bench, witness said she was not aware that the prisoner had ever been in her house before, but she had not the slightest doubt about him being the person charged with the offence. Detective officer Smith deposed that, in consequence of information he had received, he apprehended the prisoner the same night, and charged him on suspicion of being guilty of the offence. He afterwards found out that the goods were stolen from the canal side, and that they belonged to the prosecutor. Prisoner said he had been drinking all day, and was very sorry for what he had done. Mr Beebee said being in drink was no excuse for committing a felony, and sentenced prisoner to one month's hard labour.

### **32 7 December 1889**

RUMER HILL

STEALING COAL FROM A BOAT At the Cannock Police Court on Wednesday, a young man named **Richard Evans**, boatman, Moxley, was charged with taking a quantity of coal from a boat on which he was engaged, the property of Messrs T and C Wells, Moxley. Police-constable Hodgetts deposed that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant he was on duty at Rumer Hill, and when the boat arrived near a bridge, defendant threw a quantity of coal on to the towing-path. Witness stopped defendant and took him back to the coal. John Wood, the employer of defendant, said the boat was gauged as containing 23 tons when it left the colliery, and the next time it was gauged there were 22 1/2 tons. Lord Hatherton thought the people who received coal under such circumstances should be proceeded against, as it appeared to be an understood arrangement between stealer and receiver. The witness Wood said he did not think there was any arrangement in this case. Very often boatmen were told to bring as much as they could, and when they got on the way they had to throw some off for some purpose or other. Mr Gilpin smiled, and said it rarely happened that coal had to be thrown off to keep the boat from sinking. Defendant put in a character from his former employer, and Wood also spoke of defendant in the same terms. Lord Hatherton said that as Wood had given defendant such an excellent character, and being in his employ, perhaps he would find the money to pay the fine, 20s and 18s costs, or defendant would have to go to gaol for 21 days. Wood paid the money.

### **33 22 February 1890**

DAW END

ASSAULT At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, a young man named **Thomas Hill**, boatman, Rushall, was summoned for having assaulted William Hollowood, miner employed at the Daw End Limeworks. Complainant stated that on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst he met defendant at the works, and after blackguarding him, defendant struck him a violent blow upon the chest, in consequence of which he had to play three days. Defendant stated that complainant started the row. George Booth was called for the defence, but he merely corroborated complainant. Sergeant Riley said the Hills were a regularly blackguardly lot, and constantly complaints were being made respecting them. Fined 5s and costs, and informed that if he came again, a much heavier sentence would be passed upon him.

### **34 19 April 1890**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

COAL STEALING James Jolley otherwise Allen of Harden Lane, was charged with stealing 6 cwt of coal, the property of the Birmingham Canal Navigation, on the 7<sup>th</sup> instant. Mr Barrow (of the firm of Wragge and Evans) prosecuted, and said that the canal was empty on the day in question, and defendant was seen to be taking away coal that was lying at the bottom. These cases were taken up because the boatmen frequently dropped coal on purpose for other persons to get it, so that

the company desired to protect the coalowners. Police-sergeant Mercer deposed that he saw the prisoner getting coal out of the canal, and that he had about 6 cwt gathered in a heap. When he spoke to the defendant, he said he did not know he was doing wrong. Defendant gave the name of James Jolley. There were notices on the canal side near where defendant was, warning people not to take coal or iron out of the canal. Defendant said there were plenty of others running away with coal from the canal, but he did not touch any of it. **Eli Taylor**, inspector of the canal, deposed that the coal and iron in the canal was the property of the company. The value of the 6 cwt of coal was 3s. In reply to Mr Lindop, witness said that the company did not formerly take so much notice of this offence as they did at present. Latterly they had had to take proceedings. Defendant was fined 5s and costs, or ten days' imprisonment.

Joseph Blakemore, Blakenhall Heath, was summoned for taking 10 cwt of coal from the canal on the same day. Mr Barrow prosecuted in this case also. Elias James deposed that he saw the defendant with a horse and cart on the canal side. The cart was filled with coal by the defendant, who then drove away with it. That coal he took off the road which was close by the canal. Witness did not see the coal taken out of the canal. Afterwards the defendant returned with the horse and cart and took another load. Defendant did not get the coal out of the canal himself, but another man did that and put it on the canal side. Just as defendant was driving off with the second load, Police-sergeant Mercer met him and stopped him. Police-sergeant Mercer deposed that while speaking to the previous defendant, he noticed this defendant with his horse and cart, and went across to him. When spoken to, defendant said he did not know he was doing wrong. He had about 10 cwt or 11 cwt of coal on the cart. The defendant denied that he stole any coal. He was employed to cart it away, and knew nothing about where it came from or anything about it. Fined 10s and costs, or 14 days' imprisonment.

**WASTING WATER** **Richard Sands**, boatman, Ladywood, Birmingham, was summoned for wasting water on the Birmingham Canal. Mr Barrow prosecuted in this case, and the defendant pleaded guilty. He was fined 5s and costs, or ten days' imprisonment.

### **35** 19 April 1890

**SAVAGE ASSAULT UPON A BOATMAN** A boatman named **Samuel West**, belonging to Daw End near Walsall, was on Thursday night admitted to the General Hospital, Birmingham, suffering from serious internal injuries, the effects of a brutal assault committed upon him by a man whom the police are now in search of. It appears that shortly after two o'clock in the afternoon, while West was sitting in his boat having his dinner, a man came up and quarrelled with him, knocked him down, and kicked him about the limbs and body in a most savage manner, and only made off along the canal bank on the approach of the assistance attracted by West's cries for help. West was taken to the General Hospital, where he now lies in a somewhat dangerous condition.

### **36** 19 April 1890

**CHARGE OF STABBING** At the Walsall Petty Sessions on Monday, William Joyce, Frances Street, and Annie Nockton, Wolverhampton Street, were charged with stabbing **Joseph Lowbridge** on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr R Smith defended.

Joseph Lowbridge deposed that he was a boatman living at Berry's Buildings, Adams Street. On Saturday April 5<sup>th</sup>, he went into the Engine Inn, Wolverhampton Street, and stayed until eleven. He was with four companions named Tillson, Benton, King and Challinor. When they got outside, he found his brother Frederick quarrelling with someone. They were fighting, and witness went and tried to get his brother away ; but he would not go, and continued to fight. Witness left them, but he returned, and found his brother on the ground. He stooped to pick his brother up, and as he did so he was stabbed in the back and the back of the neck. Witness did not fight himself ; but he could not say if he struck anyone or not, or if he struck at anyone. He had had two quarts of ale. The shirt and waistcoat produced, which were saturated with blood, were what he was wearing at the time. In cross-examination, witness said that he was in the Engine Inn from half past eight. He was not

sober when he came out. He did not know who his brother was fighting, and he did not see either of the prisoners there.

Mary Ann Perry, residing in a court in Adams Street, deposed that she was in the street and saw Joyce and Fred Lowbridge fighting. There was a woman there who struck at Lowbridge with a bottle. Joseph Lowbridge stopped her, and said if that was to be the game he should have to start. Then he and Joyce fought, and had two rounds – Lowbridge being knocked down twice. Joyce then said that the next round would finish it, and as Lowbridge was getting up, Joyce struck him twice with his left hand. They were two back handed blows, and Lowbridge cried out that he was stabbed. Joyce and Lowbridge were back to back at the time. Witness did not see the woman in court who struck at Fred Lowbridge with the bottle. Witness took Lowbridge home, and on undressing him found three wounds – two in the back and one in the neck. She dressed them in cold water, and he was afterwards taken away by the police. She did not see the prisoner Nockton present at the row at all. In reply to Mr Smith, witness said that Joyce struck Joseph Lowbridge first, and then they fought. She did not see anything in Joyce's hand at the time the blows were struck.

Dr Phillips deposed that he saw Joseph Lowbridge at the hospital on the night of the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. He found Lowbridge had two wounds on his back and one at the back of the neck. One of the wounds in the back was a deep one. There were cuts through the waistcoat and shirt that Lowbridge was wearing. The wounds had been, and were still at the time, bleeding profusely. Lowbridge was not sober. He was detained at the hospital four days. The wounds were apparently done by a sharp instrument, and had been caused by upward blows. In reply to Mr Smith, witness said that the wound on the neck was quite superficial.

William Perry, a boy, deposed that he was in Wolverhampton Street on the night in question. He saw Fred Lowbridge and Joyce fighting, and the former was knocked down. Joseph Lowbridge went to pick him up, and then he and Joyce began to fight. Joyce had two rounds with Joseph Lowbridge, who was knocked down. As he was getting up, Joyce struck at him twice with his left hand, striking round at him. Joyce was facing Lowbridge at the time the blows were struck. Since he first gave evidence he had been threatened, and he was afraid of the prisoner Nockton. Joyce struck at Lowbridge twice in the direction of his back, and Lowbridge fell down. As he got up, he said he was stabbed. Witness saw Nockton there, and saw her hit Joe Lowbridge on the head with a ginger beer bottle. This was while the fight was going on between Joyce and Fred Lowbridge.

A little child named Priscilla Lowbridge was called, and said that it was right to tell a lie. She had not been to school for three months, but she ought to go to Wolverhampton Street Board School. This girl was not sworn ; but, in reply to questions, she said that Joseph Lowbridge was not wearing his coat at the time of the fight.

Richard Townsend deposed that he saw Joseph Lowbridge and Tillson fighting, and afterwards Joyce came up and began to fight Fred Lowbridge. Then Joe Lowbridge hit Joyce, and they fell together with a lot of others on the top of them. Witness helped Joseph Lowbridge up, and he said, "Dick, I'm stabbed". As he was picking Lowbridge up, witness felt a knife touch his hand. Witness could not say who had the knife, as there were so many of them down at the time. They were not too drunk to fight. In reply to Mr Smith, witness said he did not see anything in Joyce's hand.

Elizabeth Paddock, 3 Adams Street, deposed that she was in the street, and saw both the prisoners. She saw the fight with Fred Lowbridge, and saw Joe run up and knock Joyce down. There was a crowd of people round. Afterwards she saw Joyce go to Nockton's house, where she (witness) took his hat and jacket. Witness heard Nockton say, when the fight was on, "The first as touches Joyce I'll put a knife into". Joyce knocked Nockton up against the palings when she said that. The two prisoners kept company.

Maria Hathaway deposed that she was present, and heard Joe Lowbridge and Joyce haggling. Then Fred Lowbridge began to fight with Joyce. Nockton was there, and had a white handled penknife in her hand. She held it up, and said that "the first that hit Joyce she would stab it up to the haft in them". Joyce then struck her. Joyce and Fred Lowbridge fought, and then Joe ran up and said, "The ---- row will soon be over now". He knocked Joyce down, and then Fred and Joyce fought again.

She did not see Joe Lowbridge knocked down ; but he was stooping down, looking to see who had hit him. Nockton ran up to him and struck him three times, saying, "Take that". The blows were in a downwards direction, and when she heard that Lowbridge was stabbed, she thought Nockton had done it. In reply to Mr Smith, witness said she did not see anything in Nockton's hand. She did not say that Nockton did stab Lowbridge.

Ellen Bassett deposed that she was in the street at the time of the fight. She stood near the female prisoner, who took something from her pocket. Witness could not see what it was ; but prisoner said, "Now let him come". Nockton then went into the crowd, and directly afterwards ran out again and went to Bing's door. When Nockton got to the door, she said, "Don't let them lock me up ; don't let them have me". While Nockton was in the crowd, Joseph Lowbridge said, " Oh, my back. I'm stabbed, I'm stabbed". In reply to Mr Smith, witness said that she thought at the time that Nockton had stabbed Lowbridge.

Mr Smith reserved his defence of the prisoners, who were committed for trial at the Sessions. Bail was fixed at £20 for prisoners, and two sureties in £10 for each prisoner.

### **37 3 May 1890**

#### WALSALL QUARTER SESSIONS

CHARGE OF STABBING William Joyce, tube welder, and Annie Nocton (19), breeze washer, were indicted for unlawfully wounding **Joseph Lowbridge** on the 5<sup>th</sup> April by stabbing him in the back. Mr Pierson (instructed by Messrs Wilkinson and Son) prosecuted, and prisoners were undefended. There was a large number of witnesses, and their evidence showed that Lowbridge and his brother both fought with the prisoner Joyce, and that Lowbridge was on the ground in a scrimmage. In that, he was stabbed twice in the back and also in the neck. No knife was seen in the hands of Joyce, but there was one seen in the hands of Nocton. It was however stated that the former was seen to strike Lowbridge on the back ; while Nocton was only seen by one of the witnesses to have struck Lowbridge, and that witness did not say that she saw anything in the woman's hand. The Deputy Recorder and the jury, after twenty minutes consideration, returned a verdict of guilty against Nocton and not guilty against Joyce. The Deputy Recorder told the male prisoner that for some reason absolutely inscrutable to him he was acquitted, and he might consider himself very fortunate. As to his sense of the verdict against the woman, he would mark that by sentencing her to one day's imprisonment only.

A CASE ADJOURNED **James Hodgkinson** (31), boatman, was indicted for indecently assaulting Elizabeth Salt on the 25<sup>th</sup> February. Mr Stokes (instructed by Mr Marten of the firm of Marlow, Potter and Marten) appeared to prosecute, and Mr Vachel (instructed by Mr Tyler of the firm of Tanner and Tyler, Birmingham) appeared for the defence. As it was after six o'clock when the case was reached, the Deputy Recorder adjourned it to the next Sessions, and extended the bail accordingly.

### **38 12 July 1890**

#### HAMSTEAD

A WOMAN DROWNED E Hooper Esq, district coroner, held an inquest at the Beaufort Arms Inn, Hamstead, on Thursday, relative to the death of Elizabeth Pember (57), Aston, who was found drowned in the Tame Valley Canal, Tower Hill, Hamstead, on Monday. The deceased was seen near the canal by a man named Daniel Berry. Philip Combs said the deceased asked him to direct her to the canal side. A boatman named **Nicholls** deposed to having found the body of the deceased in the water. When the body was taken out, life was extinct. There was no evidence to show how deceased got into the water, and the jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

### **39 26 July 1890**

#### WALSALL QUARTER SESSIONS

INDECENT ASSAULT **James Hodgkinson** (31), boatman, 8 Clement Street, Birmingham, was

indicted, by adjournment from the last Sessions, with indecently assaulting Elizabeth Salt at Bloxwich on the 25<sup>th</sup> February. Mr Stokes (instructed by Mr Marten of the firm of Marlow, Potter and Marten) prosecuted, and Mr Vachel (instructed by Mr Tyler of the firm of Tanner and Tyler, Birmingham) defended. The facts of the case as stated by Mr Stokes were that prosecutrix was a domestic servant at the Canal Tavern, Bloxwich, and that on the night in question she was awakened in the night by finding a man in bed with her. She escaped to her mistress's room, and she and her mistress, by the light in the latter's room, saw prisoner going down the stairs. For the defence, Mr Vachel did not deny that an assault was committed, but contended that the man who committed the offence was not the prisoner. He called prisoner himself, and other witnesses in support of the defence, but the jury returned a verdict of guilty. Mr Vachel asked the Recorder to grant him a case as to the admission of certain evidence, but the learned Recorder said that he should pass sentence, and Mr Vachel could have his remedy in the court above. He then sent prisoner to gaol for 18 months with hard labour, commenting in strong terms on the abominable nature of the offence.

#### **40 9 August 1890**

**BATHING FATALITY IN THE CANAL** On Monday, Mr T H Stanley, the borough coroner, held an inquest at the White Lion Inn on the body of William Henry Roberts, whose parents reside in Little Street, and whose body was found in the canal on Saturday morning.

Maria Roberts deposed that deceased was her son, and was ten years of age. He left home about half past nine on Saturday morning, taking his little sister with him, and she did not see him again alive. His body was taken home about half past eleven, and was naked as though he had been bathing. Mr Hubbard, surgeon, was called to him, but life was quite extinct.

Thomas Leach, a boy of eight years of age, stated that he saw deceased bathing in the canal at the Birchills. Witness told him to come out, but deceased said that he was going to see how far he could go. Witness saw him go down in the water and did not see him come up again, and ran and told his (deceased's) mother, who at once went to the spot he pointed out.

**Charles King**, boatman, deposed that he was with his boat at the Birchills, and saw a woman running about as if something was the matter. He got a rake, and after raking in the canal he recovered the body, which was then removed to the parent's house. At the spot where the body was found, the canal was fenced in with iron fencing.

The jury returned a verdict that "Deceased was accidentally drowned while bathing in the canal".

#### **41 14 March 1891**

**WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**WASTING WATER ON THE CANAL** **Henry Anthony**, Gladstone Street, Birmingham, a boatman, was summoned for wasting water on the canal by opening one paddle of the locks before closing the other, on the 26<sup>th</sup> February. Mr W Barrow (from the office of Messrs Wragge and Co, Birmingham) appeared for the company. **Henry Whitehouse**, lock-keeper, deposed that defendant wasted the water at four locks one after another. Defendant did not appear, and was fined 10s and costs.

#### **42 12 September 1891**

**WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**COAL STEALING** Ernest Benton (12), Rollingmill Street, was charged with stealing 2 cwt of coal, the property of Walker Brothers, on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr Stanley (Stanley and Jackson) appeared for the prosecution. Patrick Gateley, employed by John Russell and Co, stated that he saw the boy on one of Walker's boats. The boy threw a quantity of coal off the boat on to the side, and afterwards took it up the bank. There was a man on the boat, and he would most likely see what the boy was doing. **Thomas Walton** deposed that he was shafting the boat along when defendant jumped on to it. Defendant threw some coal off the boat, and though told to stop it, did not stop. Police-constable Webb deposed that he went with Mr Walker to defendant's house about some coal which had been found near the canal. It was 2 cwt 1 qr 12 lbs in weight, and defendant, when

spoken to, said that a woman had promised him 9d for the coal, which he took off for her. The Bench pointed out to defendant and his mother that he had been guilty of a very serious offence. As they did not wish to convict him, they would adjourn the case for a month. The bench further said that the boatman was quite as much, or more, to blame than defendant. It was becoming a regular thing to rob coal boats, and the boatmen no doubt connived at it.

**STEALING COAL** Thomas Durkin, Queen Street ; Edward Keough, Shaw's Leasowe ; and Thomas Nisbeth, Hollyhedge Lane, were charged with stealing four lumps of coal from a boat belonging to John Russell and Co on Saturday last. Mr Elliott (of the firm of Duignan and Elliott) appeared to prosecute. It appeared from the evidence of **Thomas Perry**, the steerer of the boat, that defendants came on to the boat near the Wolverhampton Street bridge and asked for some coal. He said that the coal did not belong to him, and that he should not give them any ; but they threw the lumps on to the towing-path. They then took it away and disposed of it. **Richard Barnett**, boatman, deposed that he was in company with the last witness in charge of the boat, and that he knew defendants. Witness could not hear what they said, but he saw them throw off the coal and take it away. Sarah Perkins said that on Saturday afternoon last she saw Nisbeth and Keough, and the latter asked her to buy some coal. She asked him how he came by it, when he said that he had been helping some boats down the locks, and that he had had it given to him. Witness purchased it for 1s 3d, all three defendants carrying it. Richard Edwards, works manager to the firm, deposed that the weight of the coal was 2 cwt 1 qr 11 lb, and was worth 2s. There was more coal stolen than was weighed. Nisbeth, who was the only defendant who appeared to answer to the charge, said he was guilty of having the coal, but not of stealing it. He was very sorry, and said it was his first appearance. Nisbeth was fined 10s and costs, or seven days' hard labour ; and warrants were ordered to be issued in the other cases.

### **43 31 October 1891**

#### **ALDRIDGE**

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE** At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, **Samuel Bowdler**, boatman, was summoned for working a horse whilst in an unfit state, and **Joshua Griffiths**, boatman, both of Great Bridge, was charged with allowing the same to work whilst in an unfit state, thereby inflicting cruelty. Police-constable Myatt deposed that on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst, he was on duty on the canal side near Dumblederry Lane, when he saw defendant driving the horse along the towing-path of the canal. Witness noticed the horse from its lameness, and upon examining it he found a large raw wound upon the rear hip, about the size of a two shilling piece, from which blood and matter was flowing. On the off shoulder there was another large wound, the size of a five shilling piece, and blood and matter was coming from that also. In his opinion the animal was quite unfit for work. Bowdler said it was raining at the time, and it was the water which had got in that was coming out. Mr James said that tale would not do for him. John Ruane, officer of the Birmingham Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said he saw the horse on the following day, and it was quite unfit for work. It was unfit from lameness, and it was unfit from the sores upon it. Mr Nayler, who was upon the Bench, inquired if the case was the same he saw on the day named, and when assured that it was, that gentleman said it was one of the worst cases of cruelty he had ever seen. Charles James Dunn, assistant to R A Paley, veterinary surgeon, Walsall, deposed that he examined the animal and found it suffering from chronic disease. It was his opinion that the horse had been unfit for work for a considerable time, and he had not the slightest doubt that it had suffered great pain. It was thoroughly unfit for use. Bowdler said he worked the horse according to the instructions of his employer, and Griffiths said he did not think the horse was so bad as had been stated. Mr James said it was a bad case, and the owner ought to bear the whole of the costs of the prosecution, because the horse was worked with his knowledge as to its state. Bowdler was ordered to pay 10s 6d costs, and Griffiths was fined 20s and 33s 9d costs, Mr James remarking that Griffiths would have found it very much cheaper to have spent the money in another direction.

STEALING AND RECEIVING At the same Court, **Daniel Furber**, boatman, Great Bridge, was charged with stealing about 1 cwt of coal, the property of the Great Bridge Steel and Iron Company, and Elizabeth Hopley, Dumblederry Lane, was charged with receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen. Police-constable Myatt deposed that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst he was near the canal at Dumblederry Lane, when he saw Furber throw the coal off the boat on to the towing-path, and Hopley fetched it away, taking it to her house. Police-constable Dobson said he was on duty with the last witness, and saw four or five lumps of coal thrown off the boat, and Hopley took it to a shed adjoining the house, where there were several tons of coal. Furber said he only threw two lumps of coal off, and these were given for a kettleful of water to make tea with. He did not consider he was doing wrong, because it was often done. Edwin John Page, secretary to the Great Bridge Steel and Iron Company, said the coal belonged to his company, the boat having come from the Aldridge Colliery. The man **Griffiths** was employed by them to fetch the coal, and the man Furber was employed by him. Griffiths was the responsible man, and the company had nothing to do with Furber. Witness knew nothing about the coal being stolen until he was informed, but he might say a great deal of coal was disposed of in the above manner. Hopley said she gave the man a kettle of water for two lumps of coal, and that was all she had. She did not think it was receiving stolen property. Mr James said it was a very serious case, and a little time ago defendants would have had to have gone to gaol for such an offence, without the option of a fine. Sergeant Riley said there had been many complaints of coal stealing of late, and two officers had been put on to detect them. Mr James said Furber would be fined 10s and costs, or one month's imprisonment. With regard to Hopley, Mr James said there was little doubt that she had been carrying on the practice for some time, and she had rendered herself liable to a penalty of £20 or three months' imprisonment. He was firmly convinced that if there were no receivers of stolen property, there would be very few stealers. He should like her to know that it would in the future be cheaper to buy coal than to steal it, and fined her 20s and 20s costs.

#### 44 20 February 1892

##### WALSALL POLICE COURT

ASSAULT **Joseph Allen**, boatman, Old Birchills, was summoned for assaulting George Walker of Green Lane on the 10<sup>th</sup> instant. Mr Jackson (Stanley and Jackson) was for the complainant. The evidence for the complainant was that the parties, with others, were coming from Wolverhampton to Walsall by train, and while in the carriage, a game of "tippit" was proposed. The game was won by Walker, who stated that the defendant then struck him violently between the eyes, knocking him insensible on to the line at Walsall station. Defendant said that complainant and he had been in Wolverhampton, and as the complainant had had too much whiskey, defendant took care of him. Complainant was very quarrelsome in the carriage, and just as they were leaving the carriage, complainant hit him (defendant) in the eye. He returned the blow. After hearing the witnesses on both sides, the Bench said that there was a doubt in the case, and the defendant must have the benefit of it.

#### 45 5 March 1892

##### WALSALL WOOD

ASSAULT At the Rushall Police Court, Henry Jackson, chainmaker, was summoned for assaulting an old man named **James Beddowes**, boatman, on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mr Jackson (Stanley and Jackson, Walsall) appeared for the defence. Complainant said that on the day named he was going along the road at Walsall Wood, when he asked defendant for the money for a load of coal he owed him. Defendant then struck him in the face and knocked two of his teeth out. In reply to Mr Jackson, complainant said he did not "square off" at defendant ; neither did he call him a thief, a rogue and a vagabond ; but defendant said if he spoke to him again he would give him some more. Mr Jackson said that some time ago, defendant was put in the County Court by complainant, when a verdict was given for defendant. Ever since that time complainant, whenever he met defendant, was in the habit of calling him a rogue, a thief and a vagabond. There were no witnesses on either side,

and the Bench considered the case proved, as complainant had lost his teeth. They fined defendant 10s and 10s 6d costs.

#### **46 3 September 1892**

DAW END

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE** At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, **David Allen**, boatman, Hay Mills, Birmingham, was summoned for allowing a horse to be worked whilst in an unfit state, and thereby amounting to cruelty ; and his son **Thomas Allen** and **Charles Eadon**, Mill Street, Birmingham, were summoned for working the same whilst in an unfit state. The prosecution was undertaken by John Ruane, inspector of the Birmingham Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Mr James enquired how it was that the owner of the horse had been summoned as well as the men using it, as he thought the owner was quite sufficient unless there were special circumstances connected with such cases. Mr Rushe said it was usual to summon both parties, but there were special circumstances. Police-constable Burton stated that at 3.30 pm on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, he was on duty on the canal side at Daw End, when he saw the horse in question attached to a boat laden with slack, which it was drawing along the canal, and the two latter defendants were in charge of the same. Witness examined the horse, which was in a very poor state, and found a large wound upon the right shoulder, from which blood and matter were oozing. Sergeant Riley deposed that he was present when the horse was brought to the Police Station, and it was scarcely able to walk. Witness had the horse properly put up and provided with food, and telegraphed to the owner to come and look after it, but he failed to do so. Inspector Ruane said he was communicated with in reference to the matter, and on the following day he visited the owner of the animal. When he got there, the defendant was fetched from a public house, and took very little notice of the affair, except to make use of bad language. Mr E A Paley, veterinary surgeon, Walsall, deposed that the horse was brought to him, and he examined it. Whilst it was at his premises it died, and in consequence he made a post mortem examination in order to ascertain the cause of death. Witness then gave a full technical description of what the horse was suffering from, and in reply to the Bench said the horse had not died from want of food. The animal was in a very bad state, quite unfit for work, and very old. Death was the result of blood poisoning. Mr Allen said he was not aware the horse was in such a bad state, or he should not have allowed it to be worked. He had intended to dispense with it, but there had been a stoppage on the canal, and he was anxious to get the load through. The other defendants were called on behalf of David Allen, but they practically bore out the evidence for the prosecution. Mr James said there was not the slightest doubt that the case was a very bad one, and fined the owner 40s and £2 3s 9d in costs, and the other two were fined 5s each and 7s 3d each costs.

#### **47 13 May 1893**

INQUESTS IN WALSALL

**DROWNING FATALITY AT BIRCHILLS** Yesterday, Mr T H Stanley held an inquest at the Navigation Inn, Birchills, on the body of Percy Frederick Pritchett (18), who was missed from his home on Tuesday, and was found drowned in the canal on Wednesday. **William Pritchett**, father of the boy, living at the locks, Birchills, stated that he saw deceased, Percy Frederick Pritchett, last alive on Tuesday night. Deceased often crossed the locks to go to his garden on the opposite side. Witness made enquiries at eight o'clock, but could hear nothing of him. On Wednesday, witness drew the water off, and saw a body in the water laying face downwards. Before the water was drawn off, there would be 12 ft of water. David Astle stated that he saw the deceased on Tuesday night. Deceased was then leaving the footpath going towards his own home, about 10 yards from his own front door. He had often seen deceased cross the locks, and also get on to the boats. **Robert Turner**, 13 Kemp's Coal Yard, boatman, stated that he found the body of the lad in the canal on Wednesday. Witness was walking along the side of the canal about 3 o'clock, and someone called to him, saying that there was a nipper in the canal, and he jumped in with all his clothes on. Witness saw the body of deceased about 3 yards from him in 6 ft of water. Witness got the lad out.

Deceased had all his clothes on. Witness had known the lad for a long time. Witness had to swim some distance to get deceased out. Deceased looked as though he had been in the water for some time, his face was black. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

**48 13 May 1893**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

THEFT BY A BIRMINGHAM BOATMAN **William Fisher**, a boatman living at 4 Frederick Street, was charged with stealing £2 2s 6d, the property of **William Hill**, 2 Park Place, Store Street, Birmingham, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April last. Prosecutor stated that on the day in question defendant was in his employ, steering a boat. When near the Conduit Colliery, witness gave prisoner £2 2s 6d, together with the declaration, in a small bag, for him to pay the tonnage at Walsall. In consequence of the boat not arriving on the Saturday night, witness made enquiries, and found that it was detained at the Walsall locks. Witness saw nothing of prisoner from that day until Monday last, when he found him in Sherbourne Street, Birmingham, where he was arrested. Henry Rose, 2 Park Place, Store Street, Birmingham, stated that he was with prisoner and prosecutor on the 15<sup>th</sup> of last month. Witness saw prosecutor give prisoner the money and the declaration nearly opposite the Conduit Colliery. Witness went with prisoner as far as the Walsall locks, where prisoner left him, and the boat was detained. Prisoner left him no money. Inspector Cliffe stated that he received prisoner into custody at the Steelhouse Lane lock up. Witness cautioned him, and prisoner said, "I had it. Would it be any use saying I was so drunk at the time that I did not know what I was doing? Would it be any use bringing a witness?" Prisoner, who pleaded not guilty, made a long statement, in which he stated that he did not have the money. Prisoner had been convicted of stealing a sum of money from prosecutor in a similar manner, but prosecutor had forgiven him and took him into his employ again. He was now committed to take his trial at the next Quarter Sessions for the borough, bail being allowed at £20 for himself, and one surety for £20.

**49 1 July 1893**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

ALLEGED OBTAINING MONEY UNDER FALSE PRETENCES **Samuel Smith** (30), a labourer formerly of Worcester, was charged with obtaining money under false pretences. Francis Hale, timber merchant carrying on business in Hatherton Street, stated that a few days prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1892, he bought some hay from a man named **John Hale**. The hay was in a boat, and it was understood at the time that it would be paid for after delivery. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, the prisoner came to witness, who was in the yard, and said that he had 14 trusses of hay in a boat, and wanted to know if witness would take them. Witness refused, and went into the office. Prisoner followed him into the office and, representing himself to be the son of Joseph Hale, a man with whom witness had done business for many years, said that he would take the money for the hay which witness had had. Witness thought the prisoner's statement was correct, and gave him a cheque for £4 8s 0d, the value of the hay. Prisoner gave witness a receipt for the money, and left the office. Witness was not quite satisfied that prisoner was John Hale, so he followed him into Darwell Street and asked him to return the cheque. Prisoner refused, and witness then told him that he should stop the cheque at the bank. Witness went to the bank the same day and stopped the cheque. Witness was quite certain that the prisoner was the same man, although at that time he had a moustache. Joseph Edward Dolman stated that he was a corn merchant carrying on business in Stafford Street and also in Bridge Street. On December 5<sup>th</sup>, the prisoner came into the Bridge Street shop, and ordered several items to be sent to the boat. Prisoner tendered the cheque produced as payment for the goods. Witness saw the manager hand prisoner the change amounting to £3 10s 0 1/2d out of the cheque. Prisoner took with him one 7 lb bag of horse condiment. Prisoner had then a slight moustache. John Hale, boatman, Wellington Street Lockhouse, Worcester, stated that a few days prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1892, he brought his boat, the *Elizabeth*, to Walsall, and sold some hay to Mr F Hale. Prisoner was then in witness's employ, and had been for about two or three months. The Saturday prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, witness gave defendant a shilling to buy some

beer, and prisoner went to fetch it, but did not come back again. Witness did not authorise prisoner either to collect his money or to sign his name. James Vincent, Brook Yard, Proffitt Street, stated that he remembered the prisoner, on a Saturday afternoon in December last, coming into a beerhouse in Green Lane. Prisoner went home in the evening, and stayed until Monday, when they went together to Mr Hale's timber yard. Prisoner went into the yard, and witness stayed outside. When prisoner came out, he showed witness a note for £4 8s 0d. They were going away together when Mr Hale came up and asked prisoner to return the cheque, but he refused. Prisoner reserved his defence, and was committed to take his trial at the next Quarter Sessions for the Borough.

**50 22 July 1893**

WALSALL QUARTER SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY **William Fisher** (46), boatman, pleaded guilty to an indictment for stealing £2 2s 6d, the property of prosecutor, for whom he was acting as boatman, and was sent to gaol for six months with hard labour.

**51 23 September 1893**

WALSALL ADJOURNED LICENSING SESSIONS

THE CANAL TAVERN The Chief Constable opposed the renewal of the licence of Enoch Astley of the Canal Tavern, Little Bloxwich, on the grounds of the conviction for permitting drunkenness, that the house is of a disorderly character, and that the licence is not required.

Inspector Hamilton stated that the Ordnance map showed that there were within a radius of 250 yards two public houses and one just outside. In that radius there was one house to every 48 adult persons. He remembered Astley being fined £5 and costs for permitting drunkenness under peculiar circumstances, as the evidence showed that a man who was drunk was drowned in the canal, and that he had obtained the drink at the Canal Tavern. The house had been licensed over 21 years. Witness did not believe that until this particular time there had been any conviction against the house. There was a beerhouse 314 yards away, but the next full licensed public house was about a mile away. There was stabling for horses.

Michael Welsh, Little Bloxwich, stated that on July 6<sup>th</sup> he was stabbed by a boatman during a disturbance which had originated at the Canal Tavern. He was committed to the Quarter Sessions and found guilty of a common assault. The police were afterwards threatened by boatmen who had been at the house during the disturbance.

Mr Alfred Young said that the house belonged to Messrs Butler and Co Limited of Springfield Brewery, who were well known for the splendid manner in which they conducted their houses. This one had been a licensed house for a great number of years, and until the present year there had been no conviction of any kind recorded against it. He submitted that one solitary conviction for drunkenness was not sufficient to forfeit a licence. The licence was certainly a necessary one, owing to the quantity of boatmen who went up and down the canal. He asked the magistrates not to sit in judgement on their predecessors as to whether the licence was required or not, and not take the licence away for one conviction.

Mr Checkley (Messrs Duignan and Elliot) appeared for Mr A Stanley in opposition to the licence. The case was adjourned.

**52 2 December 1893**

BRIDGTOWN

OFFENCE UNDER THE LICENSING ACT At the Cannock Police Court on Wednesday, **William Davies**, boatman of Wolverhampton, Robert Winfer, miner of Bridgtown and **Richard Mayo**, boatman of Gloucester, were charged by Superintendent Barrett with being drunk at the Vine Inn, Bridgtown on November 4<sup>th</sup> ; and Hannah Smith, the landlady, was charged with permitting drunkenness. Mr Vachel (instructed by Mr Gillespie) defended. Sergeant Gibbs stated that on Saturday November 4<sup>th</sup> at 9.45 pm, he was on duty near to the Vine Inn, Walk Mill, Bridgtown, in company with Police-constable Jackson, and whilst there they saw Mayo come out of the house, led

by his wife. He was very drunk, and when in the road used bad language. Police-constable Jackson was sent into the house. After he came out, they (the officers) went away, but returned at 10.10 pm, and met two boatmen bringing Davies, who was helplessly drunk, out of the house. When in the road Davies fell down twice. He was picked up and ultimately taken to his boat by the men, the officers following to get his address. They then saw that Winfer was drunk and staggering about. At 10.30 the officers again visited the house, and found Winfer sitting with other men in the taproom. He had a pint jug, partly filled, before him. Witness called the landlady's attention to him, and told her to get him off the premises. She said, "Which is he?", and the man was pointed out, whereupon Mrs Smith said, "He has only had one pint here". Witness asked Winfer for his name and address, but this was refused. Winfer was then led out by his wife, and when outside he gave his name and address upon the advice of his wife. As Davies was being led from the house, Jackson said, "That is the man I saw drunk in the taproom". Whilst in the house, witness asked Mrs Smith how she accounted for the men being drunk on her premises. She replied, "The one who went out as the policeman came in I have not supplied with anything, but I supplied his wife with a quart. The second one I had asked to go for about half an hour. I can't help him drinking with other men". Witness said, "You should get them off your premises. I had to speak to you about permitting drunkenness on Wednesday night". Witness further stated that on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> Mrs Smith came to his station and said she wanted to explain to him about the previous night. She said she was very sorry for what had happened, and hoped he would look over it, as she was but a poor widow woman. Witness told her he could do nothing with her, and he should have to report the case. She then said, "I hope you will make it as light for me as you can". She was distressed and crying. On the 15<sup>th</sup> witness served the summons upon her, when she began to cry, and asked him to make it as light as he could. On Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup>, witness visited Davies in his boat to ascertain if his name was correct, when the man said, "I am sorry, and hope you will look over it this time. I don't remember anything about it". Cross-examined by Mr Vachel, the sergeant said that he first saw Mayo coming out of the house. When Police-constable Jackson went into the house he simply looked round and left again. Davies was quiet when he came out. Winfer was about forty yards off when the men were taking Mayo away. Witness did not see Winfer enter the house. Winfer asked to be taken to Mr Gilpin's if they thought he was drunk. Police-constable Jackson corroborated the sergeant's evidence, and added that when he visited the house, he saw Davies sitting with his head on his arms on the table. Mr Vachel then addressed the Bench on behalf of his clients, laying particular stress on the wording of the Act, which used the word "permit". He contended that so far as the landlady was concerned, she did not give the men permission to be in the house. She ordered them out, but they refused to go. She threatened to fetch a policeman, but some friends of the men asked her not to do so, and volunteered to put the men out. Mrs Smith was then called. She stated that she had kept the house since June last. On November 4<sup>th</sup>, between nine and ten o'clock, about four men, three women and some children came into the house, and a woman called for a quart of fourpenny. This was supplied. Witness did not notice anything that would lead her to suspect that the men were drunk. Shortly afterwards she heard a disturbance and found Mayo and Davies quarrelling about singing. She told them she should not fill any more beer, and ordered them out. They hesitated about going, and she threatened to fetch the police, but a man named Farrington put Mayo outside, and witness then told the other men to go, and she stopped the beer for all the house until Davies had gone. As he was going, Police-constable Jackson entered the house. Witness did not consider Winfer drunk. John Farrington and Joseph Evans corroborated Mrs Smith's evidence. The man Winfer said he was in the Vine when the police-constable entered. He (Winfer) had been supplied with a pint of ale, but had not had time to drink it when the officer asked him for his name and address. He replied, "If you think I am drunk, I will go with you anywhere you like to prove it". This concluded the evidence, and the Bench considered the case clearly proved. They fined Mrs Smith 5s and 7s costs, and the licence to be endorsed ; Winfer was discharged, and the other two were fined 10s 6d each, including costs. Mr Vachel then made a strong appeal for the removal of the endorsement, and after consideration the Bench decided to withdraw it.

**53**      **13 January 1894**

**HAMMERWICH**

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE** At the Brownhills Police Court on Wednesday, **Henry Young**, boatman, Small Heath, Birmingham, was summoned for having on December 7<sup>th</sup> worked a horse whilst in an unfit state, and James Sheldon, coal dealer, Deffard Road, Lozells, Birmingham, was summoned for allowing the same to be worked. Henry Edward Osbourne, officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, appeared to prosecute, and the case was proved by Police-constable Haywood. It appeared that the animal had been brought from Birmingham attached to a boat, and on its return it was seen on the canal in a very lame state, the tendons of one of the legs being sprained ; it had chapped heels, and was quite unfit for work. In reply to the Bench, Police-constable Haywood said he knew that the animal had since been destroyed. The Bench said that as Young had appeared to act upon the instructions of his master, he would be let off upon payment of costs ; and as the horse had since been destroyed, Sheldon would be fined 2s 6d and costs.

**54**      **17 February 1894**

**BROWNHILLS**

**FOWL STEALING** At the Police Court on Wednesday, before A E Manley, G Brawn and G R Dyott Esqs, and Colonel Webb, three men named **William Hutchinson**, labourer, Brearley Street ; **Ralph Higgins**, boatman, Legge Street ; and **Thomas Devonport**, boatman, Blews Street, all of Birmingham, were charged with stealing 24 fowls, the property of George Howdell, farmer, Swing Bridge Farm, on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr Addison appeared for the whole of the prisoners. David Howdell, son of prosecutor, said that he lived with his father at Swing Bridge Farm. At the back of the house there was a brick building, which was used as a fowl house. It was about 20 yards from the canal side. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of the present month, about half past five, he fastened the fowl house up. There were about 65 fowl in it. The door of the fowl pen was fastened with a drop lock, to which was attached a wire, which rang a bell in the house. The next morning he found that the fowl house had been broken over by the door having been forced open, and some of the tiles were taken from the roof. After counting the fowls, he found there were 24 missing. On the night in question, the wire was detached from the bell. In reply to the Bench, witness said that he could not identify any of the fowl. In reply to Mr Addison, witness said that he could not identify the fowl, but he had no doubt that they were the property of his father. George Howdell said that he was a farmer, and that he occupied Swing Bridge Farm. He attended to the fowl himself, and fed them regularly. He believed that they were all right on the previous night, and that he could tell whether there were any missing or not without counting them. He visited the place, which he found had been broken open by a thick door being cut away in two places. At first he thought that 30 had been stolen, but he afterwards counted them, and then perceived that 24 had gone, and he immediately gave information to the police. On Saturday morning last at the Aston Police Station, he identified the whole of the fowl in a dead state. He did not see any footmarks leading from the canal to the fowl house. The tiles had been taken off the roof, and some of the woodwork had been cut away. In reply to Mr Addison, witness said that he heard nothing of the affair in the night ; but he anticipated that some of the boatmen had been paying him a visit. Sergeant Hollins deposed that on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst at 7.45 am, from something that he heard from the last witness, he went to the fowl pen and examined it. It was a strong brick building which adjoined the house, but had no direct communication with it except by a small hole through which a wire was run. He procured a ladder, and about eight foot from the ground he found that a wood window had been broken, and that about four courses of tiles had been taken from the roof. The door, which was very strongly made, had had great force used to break it, and there were marks of a crowbar upon it. He could not tell how the door was fastened, that being only known to the occupier. The same day he received the prisoners into custody from the Aston police at Aston. He charged them with breaking into a fowl pen on the previous night at Swing Bridge Farm, and stealing about 30 fowl, the property of Mr Howdell. Higgins said that they did not know Brownhills. Higgins also said, "We go to Fishley" ; and Hutchinson said, "That's where we go". Devonport did not say anything. Witness was near the

Jolly Collier Inn in Pelsall Lane the previous day, and saw the three prisoners in the tap room. He also saw a horse by itself on the canal side. Higgins said that it was his horse and boat. Witness told him that the horse was starving, and then Higgins went and fed it. From where witness saw the boat to Mr Howdell's premises was 690 yards, and prisoners would have to pass within 30 yards of the fowl pen. In reply to Mr Addison, witness said that he did not know that he had ever seen prisoners before he saw them in the Jolly Collier, and that he thought there would be from ten to fifteen men in the house at the time. He did not see the name on the boat. Sergeant Whitcroft, stationed at Aston, a detective in the Warwickshire police, stated that on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, from information received, he went to the Witton Canal to watch Higgins come in with a boat from Brownhills. Witness was in company with Police-constable Dawson. They stationed themselves upon Witton Bridge, and a few minutes after eleven witness saw Higgins's boat coming along from the direction of Brownhills. Higgins was driving the horse and Devonport was in the boat. When they got within 50 yards of the bridge the horse was stopped, and then they looked round. When the boat had been stopped a time, Devonport took something bulky out of the boat and handed it on to the towing-path to Hutchinson, who rolled it down the embankment. Witness and the other officer went through a field to a lock, where they took the three prisoners into custody. They were told that there had been some fowl stolen from Brownhills, and that they were suspected of stealing them. Higgins said that they might look in the boat, but that they would not find anything. They searched the boat, but could not find any fowl. The prisoners were left in custody whilst witness went along the canal to look after the bag, which he found where it had been thrown down the embankment, and it contained 24 fowl. He took the bag to the lock house and showed the fowl to the prisoners. Higgins said, "You did not find them in the boat?", and in reply witness said, "No ; I saw Hutchinson throw them down the embankment". Witness handed the prisoners and the fowl over to Sergeant Hollins on the same day. In reply to Mr Addison, witness said that he did not arrest them before he did because he might have only caught one and lost the other two prisoners. Police-constable Dawson said that he was in the company of the last witness watching the canal at Witton, when he saw the whole of the prisoners. He bore out the evidence given by Sergeant Hollins. Mr Addison was about to make some remarks, but Mr Manley said that he need not do so, as prisoners would be committed to the Quarter Sessions. Mr Addison applied for bail, but Superintendent Barrett opposed the application, which was refused. Prisoners had nothing to say.

**CRUELTY TO A GELDING** At the same Court, **James Moss**, boatman, was charged with ill-treating a horse by working it whilst in an unfit state on January 16<sup>th</sup>. Police-constable Moyle said that on the date in question he saw the animal upon the canal side, and on examining it found a large raw wound under the collar. The horse was lame, but in fair condition. Henry Edward Osbourne of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said that he examined the animal on the following day, and found that the tendons were sprained. There was a wound upon the withers, and the horse was unfit for work or to walk. Defendant told him that he had been taken in with the horse, as he had given £4 for it. Defendant said that he did not know that the horse was so bad, and that it had been destroyed. Under these circumstances, the Bench said that they should only impose a fine of 1s and costs.

## **55** 10 March 1894

### **WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**A PECULIAR PHENOMENA** **Joseph Allen**, boatman in the employ of Samuel Wall, contractor, Fishley Lane, Little Bloxwich, was summoned on a claim for £3 8s 7d for neglect of work, and also for assaulting **Walter Couldrey**, another boatman, on Friday February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr Stirk of Wolverhampton prosecuted, and said that on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult the defendant was sent in charge of a boat to Smethwick, but when he got to the Walsall locks he began "boozing", and stayed there until the next day. In this case it was also found that there was a deficiency of considerably over a ton in the weight of the coal, which the plaintiff would have to make good. It was a peculiar phenomena that when coal was sent along the canal it invariably diminished in quantity. This case

might perhaps explain that phenomena. Samuel Wall stated that on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult, he instructed the defendant to take a boat load of coal from the Fishley Collieries to Smethwick. Defendant was in his employ as a boatman, and received 15s a voyage. In consequence of a wire received on Friday, witness sent his son to look after defendant. On his son's return, witness went to the top of the Walsall locks and found the boat there. Witness saw that some coal had been removed, and sent for the gauger, who found that there was a deficiency of 1 ton 13 cwt, for which witness would have to pay about 16s to the colliery. Joseph Wall, son of the plaintiff, stated that he discovered the boat near to a public house at the top of the Walsall locks. The horse was in the stable, and defendant was drinking inside the house. Witness took with him a man named Couldrey, who was to take the boat on, but defendant was very abusive and threatened to pitch him in the canal if he touched the boat. Walter Couldrey, Little Bloxwich, a boatman in the employ of the plaintiff, stated that he went to take the boat on, but defendant would not let him, and struck him in the face. James Smith, gauger in the employ of the Fishley Colliery Company, stated that he gauged the boat on Thursday morning. It then contained 25 tons 13 cwt of coal. He gauged it again on Friday, and found that it weighed 24 tons, a deficiency of 1 ton 13 cwt. Defendant pleaded guilty to the charge of assault, but stated that his horse went lame at the top of the locks, and he had to put it in the stable. He should have sent back for another horse, but thought that the one he had got would be all right in a short time. The Bench returned a verdict for plaintiff for £2 8s 7d, and fined defendant 10s and costs for the assault.

## **56 10 March 1894**

### **BROWNHILLS**

**THE FOWL STEALERS** At the Staffordshire Adjourned Quarter Sessions on Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst, **Ralph Higgins**, 36, labourer, **William Hutchinson**, 25, boatman and **Thomas Davenport**, 30, boatman, all of Birmingham, were indicted for breaking and entering a building belonging to George Howdell at Brownhills on February 8<sup>th</sup>, and stealing 24 fowls, his property. Mr Plumptre prosecuted. The evidence showed that the fowls were missed on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> of February from a brick building at Swing Bridge Farm, Brownhills, where the prosecutor resides. The previous evening, his son had shut up 65 fowls safely in the building, the door of which was found the next morning forced open. On the night of the robbery, Police-sergeant Hollins noticed a canal boat laden with coal, and to which was attached a horse, on the canal a short distance from the prosecutor's house. Observing that the animal appeared "starved", he went to the Jolly Collier's Inn close by, where he saw the three prisoners and drew their attention to the animal. Higgins said the horse belonged to him, and he went out and fed it. Information of the robbery was given to the Warwickshire police, who stopped the canal boat on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February at Witton, where the prisoners were observed to throw down an embankment on the canal side a bag, which was afterwards found to contain the missing fowls. They then took the canal boat up to the next lock, where they were arrested. When charged, Higgins said that he and his companions knew nothing about Brownhills. The prisoners were all found guilty. Higgins and Davenport, who had been previously convicted, were sentenced to nine calendar months and six calendar months' hard labour respectively. This being Hutchinson's first offence, he was ordered to be imprisoned for 14 days.

## **57 24 March 1894**

### **WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**THEFT OF COAL** George Paine (17), Birchills, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of Messrs G and R Thomas. Mr Jackson prosecuted, and said that the quantity of coal stolen on this occasion was comparatively small ; but if the case was proved, he must ask for such a penalty as would be a warning to others. Often very large quantities of coal were taken in a single night. A boy named John Cooper stated that at twelve o'clock on the morning of March 9<sup>th</sup>, he saw the defendant work an empty boat alongside one of Messrs Thomas's full ones, take a large lump of coal from one, and put it in the empty boat. He then worked the boat back to the next wharf. Defendant said that he was sorry for what he had done, but did not think there was any harm in

taking it. He was fined 5s and costs, or seven days' hard labour.

**COAL STEALING EXTRAORDINARY** Frederick Lowbridge, Ball Street, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of the Fishley Colliery Company, on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr Stirk (Wolverhampton) prosecuted on behalf of the Colliery Company, and said that the defendant was one of those men who thought they had a perfect right to board boats and take coal from them. He thought that this case would show a reason for the diminution of coal when it was taken along the canal. **Andrew Turner**, a boatman in the employ of Samuel Wall, Bloxwich, stated that on Tuesday March 13<sup>th</sup> he was taking a boat load of coal to Swan Village. As he was passing the Bridgeman Street Bridge, defendant boarded his boat and threw a lump of coal on the footpath. Witness shouted at him, and he got off the boat. William Regan (17) stated that he was at the "Bacca Box" Ironworks in Bridgman Street on the day in question. He saw the defendant jump on to the boat and throw some coal on to the towing-path. Prisoner afterwards sold the coal to a boy named Winter for some tobacco. Prisoner was a "canal merchant". Detective-officer Clark said that he met the boys the same day with a bag containing 60 pounds of coal. Defendant was sent to prison for two months without the option of a fine. William Winter (14), Blue Lane, was charged with receiving a quantity of coal well knowing the same to have been stolen. William Regan stated that defendant bought the coal from the defendant in the previous case, and was trying to sell it when he was met by Detective Clark. Defendant pleaded "Not Guilty", and was fined 5s and costs, or seven days. Henry Benton, Margaret Street, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, value 7d, the property of the Fishley Colliery Company, on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. Andrew Turner, boatman in the employ of the above company, stated that he was passing through the Bridgman Street junction when the defendant jumped on the boat and threw a lump of coal on to the towing-path. Witness shouted at him, and he jumped off. Cross-examined, witness stated that defendant did not steer the boat for him from the top lock. William Regan stated that he saw the defendant on a boat as it was coming out of the lock. When he got to the bridge he jumped off, bringing with him a lump of coal. Luke Kennedy (13), Blue Lane, stated that he sold the coal for the defendant to a woman named Thacker for 5d. Defendant pleaded guilty, and was sent to prison for two months with hard labour. Jane Thacker, Bridgman Street, was charged with receiving the coal, well knowing the same to have been stolen. Luke Kennedy said he sold the coal to defendant in two lots ; she gave him 3d and 2d for it. She asked no questions about it. Detective-officer Harper stated that he went to the defendant's house and found the coal in the brewhouse. There was 91 pounds of coal there. He should think it would be worth about 7d. He asked defendant how she explained having possession of the coal, and she replied that she expected to get summoned for having it. The Bench said that they did not think there was any evidence of guilty knowledge, and the case would be dismissed. They hoped it would be a warning to defendant, as she had only escaped by the skin of the teeth. **Thomas Nicholls**, boatman, Darlaston, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of Messrs Tolley, Son and Bostock, and William Winter (14), Blue Lane, was charged with receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen. William Regan stated that he saw the man Nicholls give Winter a quantity of coal off his boat, and 2d for a pack of cards. Police-constable Haycock stated that he saw the defendant in Bridgman Street carrying the bag and the coal produced. He took the lad to the police station. Mr Stirk said that in this case the prosecutors did not wish to press the charge unduly against the boatman, as he had hitherto borne an excellent character, and must feel his present position keenly. Both defendants were fined 5s and costs, or seven days.

## **58** 21 April 1894

**SHOCKING SUICIDE AT GILLITY GREAVES** On Tuesday afternoon at the Engine Inn, Wolverhampton Street, Walsall, Mr T H Stanley (borough coroner) held an inquest on the body of John Mansell Darby, aged 33, of the back of 2 Wisemore, who was found drowned in the canal on Saturday night.

Mary Darby, wife of deceased, 6, back of 2, Wisemore, identified the body. He worked in the ironworks, but it was nearly two years since he had done anything there, as he was consumptive.

Deceased lived with his mother, and witness had to work as a stitcher to support herself. His state of health had been for a long time very poor, and he had complained of a pain in his head. His spirits have been very low. Witness saw him on Friday morning about ten minutes to eleven o'clock when she was going to work. Witness wished him good morning and he replied to her. Witness had not got him insured. He had never told her that he should take his life, but for the last two years he had been very low and very strange.

By Inspector Hamilton : She could identify the hat produced. It was that of her husband.

Emma Darby, Saracen's Head, Stafford Street, stated that deceased was her son. She saw him alive last on Friday night between eleven and half past. He said that he was very ill, and complained of a pain in his head. The letters produced were in her son's handwriting. He was insured by witness in the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Insurance Company.

Joseph Perry, Fullbrook, Delves, farm labourer, in the employ of Mr G Griffin of Gillity Greaves Farm, stated on Saturday he saw a body which had been fetched out of the canal. He was fetched out of the farm yard by a young gentleman named Gray, who told him that there was a man in the canal. Witness went down to the canal bridge and saw the body of deceased lying on the towing-path. There were two boatmen there, and one of them told witness that they saw him floating about on the top of the water and fetched him out. He was quite dead. The lock-keeper was sent for, and witness left. When witness saw the body, it was not cold, and could not have been long in the water. His hands were tied behind him, but not tightly. It was a running noose, and it was daylight when he saw him. Mr Gray untied one of his hands. Witness did not notice any bruise on his forehead.

Inspector Hamilton stated that in consequence of information received, he went down to the canal bridge at Gillity Greaves on Saturday evening last. Witness saw a body lying in a field adjacent with the canal. The body was not got out on the tow path side. Witness searched the body and found upon it a knife, pipe, a few matches and a black lead pencil. On the towing-path side of the canal, witness found in a hedge the hat produced, and which was identified by Mrs Darby as belonging to her husband. In the hat was a piece of paper stuck under the lining. On it he found written the following words : "You will find underneath this water J M Darby". When witness saw the body, there were no signs of violence. The bruise on the forehead was probably caused whilst witness was taking deceased to the mortuary. Witness had to take him in a cart.

**Edward Howell**, Longwood, agent for the canal company, produced the neck of a bottle. A boatman named **William George**, living at Cuckoo Road, Aston, was coming with an empty boat up the locks. At the second lock he picked up a bottle, corked, and with some writing inside, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. He showed it witness. Some of it he could read but some he could not, but found out that it had reference to deceased, and he then handed them over to the police. He thought that the bottle had been blown by the wind up to his lock. It was about a mile from the Gillity Bridge to the lock where the bottle was found.

Police-constable Pritchard, coroner's officer, produced the papers handed to the police by the last witness. The first ran as follows :- "Dear mother and wife – I hope and trust that which I done you will not be very sorry for, so give my best love to all my brothers, for I am in a deal of trouble, and this is the way to pay my penalty. God bless you all. I hope and trust that you will not think anything of me at all, because I have brought all my sorrow on myself. Only should like to see my brother Sam downstairs before this case happens. Dear wife, I should think it is a pleasure for you to be a single woman once more. Leave my kind love to all my relatives, also Tricky, Billy Edge, Charlie and all my old pals. Now I shall pick my bearers – Henry Whittaker, Charlie Morrell, Billy, Samuel Butler, Samuel Wilkinson and Tricky, and you may think of someone else I thought most about. I thought of picking the money up, but I was taken down for it somehow, but I should not like to say what was so. God bless all my relatives and friends. I am just prepared to meet death. Yours miserably, J M DARBY, Back of No 2, Wisemore, Walsall". The second letter was as follows :- "My wife – Don't put yourself about for me and all my relations, but pray to God to take me to Heaven. I was in agony and pain yesterday from half past one until this afternoon till four o'clock, when I got a little better, but I could not be still till I have competed my rash act. - John M

DARBY, back of 2 Wisemore. Goodbye, and pray to God to let me die quick. Don't mourn, for I have paid all".

The witness added that he had made diligent inquiries, but could find no trace of deceased's whereabouts from the Friday morning till his body was discovered. His wife sat up till one o'clock on the Saturday morning waiting for him. Witness had ascertained the name of one of the boatmen who pulled the body out of the canal, but the man had since gone on a voyage into Shropshire and was not able to be present that day.

The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane".

## **59 12 May 1894**

**THE WALSALL BETTING RAID** On Monday at the Walsall Guildhall, before Messrs W H Brookes, S Russell, W M Blyth and G A Phillips, John West, landlord of the Clockmakers' Arms beerhouse, Rollingmill Street, Phoebe West, his wife, and Frank Carless, 12 Paddock Lane, appeared on remand to answer charges of offences under the Betting Act. The Town Clerk (Mr J R Cooper) appeared in support of the prosecution, and Mr R C E Plumtre (instructed by Mr Robert Willcock, Wolverhampton) defended.

Mr Loxton stated that there were now two charges against Carless, and were (1) between the 24<sup>th</sup> April and 2<sup>nd</sup> May using the Clockmakers' Arms for the purpose of betting upon certain events and contingencies of and relating to horse races, and (2) on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> April and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May using the same house for the purpose of money being received by him or on his behalf, as a consideration or an agreement to pay thereafter certain money on horse races.

Mr Cooper, in opening the case, said that he wished to take the cases separately, and he proposed to go into the one against Carless first. He wished to add the 28<sup>th</sup> of April as one of the dates in the second charge. The two charges against the defendant Carless were both preferred under sections 1 and 3 of the Betting Act 1863. The first section prohibited the use of the house and the other imposed the penalty. The facts of the case were that on April 24<sup>th</sup> a man named Foster went to the house of John West, who kept the beerhouse known as the Clockmakers' Arms, situated in Rollingmill Street. The house was in a populous district known as the Pleck, and in the neighbourhood of large works, where a number of workmen were employed. Foster would tell their worships that this was not the first time he had been to the house, but had been there on some eight or nine occasions previously, and had there met the defendant, John Carless. On the day in question, Foster went into the house, taking with him a slip of paper on which there were written the names of several race horses, with the amount that Foster was desirous of staking upon them in certain races. He handed this paper to West and asked for Carless. The latter was sitting in the inner room at the time, and West handed the paper to him, and Carless, who was making entries in a book, held out his hand and received the money. The bet, the Town Clerk explained, was what was known on the turf as a double up, the meaning being that a man placed money on horses in two races, and provided he won on the first race his winnings were taken at starting price and placed upon the second race. On the 25<sup>th</sup> April, Foster went again to the house in question to make inquiries as to whether any money had been left for him, because he had ascertained that one of the horses he had backed on the first day had won. The amount was disputed, which Mrs West said was given to him as the result of the previous day's transaction. Then Mrs West said, "Well, you must wait till Carless comes". He waited for some time and Carless did not come. He went outside on to the canal bridge and asked Carless for the money which was due to him. Carless said, "I will see if it's on the card. If it is not you'll not have it". Defendant then went along with the man to the Clockmakers' Arms, and the card referred to was then given by Mrs West to Carless who, along with witness Foster, looked down it. There were the names upon it of several persons in addition to the name under which Foster had been betting. He did not bet in his own name but in that of "Toms". That name was upon the card. There was some dispute as to whether Foster had backed one horse which he said he had backed, and he requested Carless to produce to him the slip of paper upon which the horses' names had been written. The practice in laying these bets was to write the names of the horses on a slip of paper with the amount which it was desired to place on them, and

hand the paper to the bookmaker, who worked on “starting prices”. In consequence of the dispute of the amount due to Foster, he said, “I have my plan, I will go and fetch a policeman”. Consequently he complained to the police that he had “been done out of his money”, and the police sent in another person to make bets with the defendant. The other person would prove that on April 30<sup>th</sup> he went to the Clockmakers' Arms and asked for defendant. He was told he was not there, but would be up again about twelve o'clock. He asked Mrs West to take the bets which he wished to make. She declined at that time, saying she had received strict orders not to take “double ups” or anything else. The man (whose name he should say was Nicklin) left the house and went back to the man Foster, under whose instruction he was acting, and the paper was altered.

Mr Loxton interrupting, said that the defendant had a right to be tried by jury, if he wished to be so tried.

Mr Plumtre said that was so, and elected to be tried by a jury.

Mr Cooper admitted the right of defendant to be so tried, and continuing said that ultimately Mrs West took the paper and the money deposited. The amount was a shilling. That particular paper was found upon defendant when he was arrested. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, Nicklin again visited the Clockmakers' Arms, and offered to Mrs West another paper containing bets, which he wished her to take. She again declined to receive the paper from him, saying “you must see him”, meaning Carless. Subsequently he saw Carless and made the bet, and two bits of paper containing the particulars of the bet were found upon defendant when arrested. He should say that the money was then paid outside the public house, but immediately after its payment defendant went into the public house.

Mr Plumtre said that it had been held that betting outside a house did not constitute a betting house, and referred to a case to support his argument.

Mr Cooper continuing, said that coming to May 2<sup>nd</sup>, a man named Nicklin, whom he would call as a witness, went to the Clockmakers' Arms, and seeing Mrs West, inquired if the defendant had left any money for him, and she said, “He will be out in a minute, he is in the back, you will see him”. He had something to drink, and presently Carless went out and he followed him into the street. There was an adjustment of the previous day's transaction, and fresh bets were made. Then he would have to call another witness – a policeman – who resided in the neighbourhood, on whose beat the house was situated, and would tell the Bench that he had seen the defendant almost daily at the house, and that on April 28<sup>th</sup> he was standing on the steps at the house, and saw two men go up to him and hand slips of paper over, which he placed in his pocket. If he proved the fact, they would be satisfied that a *prima facie* case had been made out, defendant using the house for the purposes of betting. His learned friend Mr Plumtre had referred to a case in which it had been held that if a bookmaker made bets outside the house, and simply sent the money received outside into the house, that this was not using the house for the purpose of betting. The case was very different from this one. He (the Town Clerk) quoted a case heard in the Queen's Bench Division, in which Mr Justice Mathew held that “to make a bookmaker liable to be convicted it was enough to show that he was in a room for the purpose of inviting people to come and bet with him”. He would submit that this would exactly cover the case against Carless. Before the completion of the case, no doubt some strong remarks would be made by counsel for the defence upon the police having done what was very objectionable to them, namely laid a trap, but there were some creatures who could only be caught in traps, and the bookmaker was one of them. He could be caught in no other way, and therefore, though it was objectionable to the police to employ these persons outside the force, it was the only way in which so deep rooted and widespread an evil as betting could be stamped out. The police felt they ought not to hesitate in a case where the evils were so great as those which resulted from the practice of betting – a practice which he (Mr Cooper) felt was undermining the character of the English working class population who, instead of living by honest labour, tried to live by chance. They would bet their last shilling and then the next week would go to a relief committee for relief. The police felt the time had come when they should try to stop this kind of thing, and it was for that reason that he (the Town Clerk) was present that day.

**William Foster**, boatman, Bentley Road, Darlaston, stated that he knew the Clockmakers' Arms.

He had been there several times previous to the 24<sup>th</sup> April. On that day, he saw Carless and West there in the passage. Witness took with him a piece of paper on which was written the names of the horses he wished to back. He gave the paper to West and the money to Carless. West gave the paper to defendant. Afterwards he looked at it and saw what it was. Next day witness claimed 3s 9d from Carless, but he refused to give it him and witness said there was a bit of a row. Witness told him he would get the money somehow or other. He asked Carless to produce the paper, but he said he had burnt it. The piece of paper was marked "Reliance and Golden Arrow", a "tanner double". "Oatlands and Golden Arrow" 6s a piece single, and 1s double up. There was a "tanner treble" on Oatlands, Golden Arrow and La Sagesse. There was another tanner double on Dick and La Sagesse, making it 3s 6d. The names he had given were the names of horses. The races were to be run on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April. There were several people in the house who, if they wanted a tanner on, would have it on. He only saw his own bet made. Witness next went to the Clockmakers' Arms on the 25<sup>th</sup>, where he saw Mrs West. In consequence of a conversation with Mrs West, he went outside and saw Carless on the Bridge near the Clockmakers' Arms. Witness asked him for what he had got coming. He had got 3s 9d coming, but defendant said he had got a tanner only. Witness refused to take it, and defendant went up to the house on to the steps with a book in hand, and after referring to it said that witness had only 6d coming back off Golden Arrow. He did not see defendant speak to Mrs West, or see her give him anything. Both Mrs West and Carless looked at a card which the former fetched down from the back of the counter, and said that he had only got sixpence coming. Witness knew a man named Nicklin. Last Monday, witness wrote out a piece of paper and gave it to him to take. The paper produced was the piece of paper which he wrote.

Detective-inspector Cliffe was examined. He had, he said, a warrant to execute on Wednesday last, which authorised him to make a search of the house named. He found the landlaord West and wife, and Carless. Defendant lived at quite the other end of town to where he was then. On searching Carless he found nineteen small pieces of paper, cards and *Sporting Life* for that day. The piece produced was in his pocket, and it read :- "6d Berwyn, 6d Confederate – Signed Toms". On the card were several names including Confederate and Berwyn, with 1s 6d against Confederate. He saw Foster write a slip marked at the bottom "double up". Another paper had on it "6d Dr Talmage" - (Laughter). Amongst the things he seized were four betting cards, a *Sporting Life* for May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and *Sporting Life Companion* 1894. There were under the counter a number of sporting papers, including *Sporting Chronicle*, *Backer's Guide 1894*, *Walsall Sporting News*, and so on. There would be 14 or 15 in the house eating and drinking.

Cross-examined : He found no betting cards in the house. He found nothing relating to betting except the sporting papers under the counter. Witness instructed Foster to put 1s 6d on horses at this house. He wished to test the house to see if the accusations against it were true. He did not know if Mr Plumtre could call that a trap. Witness should not call it a trap. West must have kept that house for nearly fifteen years. He did not know Foster prior to this case, but for all he knew he bore a good character. It was Foster who laid the information, and arranged with Nicklin to take the money to the house.

Foster was then recalled to speak to other transactions with Carless. He identified a piece of paper as one filled in by him, adding, "They went down the nick" - (Laughter).

Cross-examined : When witness handed Mr West the betting slip, Mr West opened it, looked at it, and handed it to Carless, who also received the money. He had given Carless money in the Clockmakers' Arms on several occasions. He had 2s due on Spindle Leg now – (Laughter). That first bet with Carless in the Clockmakers' Arms was at the time of the Wolverhampton Races, when he lost, but he afterwards won on Banker.

**Thomas Nicklin**, 15 Bentley Road, Darlaston, stated that on 30<sup>th</sup> April he saw Foster, and received from him a piece of paper. There was a double up on the piece of paper, and Mrs West refused to take it. Witness took it back to Foster, who tore the double up off. Witness took it back, and Mrs West then took the paper and 1s which was with it, and put it at the back of the counter.

Police-constable Cave stated that he knew the Clockmakers' Arms. He passed it at least three or four times a day. Witness saw Carless almost daily. Witness had seen him in the house and on the

steps of the house. On the 28<sup>th</sup> April he saw the defendant on the steps of the public house. Two men went up to him separately, gave him something which he put in his book and then in his pocket. This was about a quarter past two.

Mr Plumtre said that he had no questions to ask, there was no evidence of betting. Defendant might have been collecting subscriptions for an orphanage – (Laughter).

For the defence, Mr Plumtre said that he must submit that there was no evidence of any contravention of the Betting Acts. They were most puzzling and complicated, and he contended that the defendant had not brought himself within reach of the Act. That defendant was a bookmaker he did not deny, and frequented the house, but there was only evidence of three bets, two of which were denied by Mrs West. He contended that the Act did not prevent occasional betting, but was only intended to deal with habitual betting. For instance, if a person in South Hackney that day was to go into a public house and there make a bet on the result of the election without premeditation, no prosecution would lie, but it would if the place was habitually used for betting and the person went to the house on purpose to make the bet.

Phoebe West stated that she had seen Nicklin at the house on one or two occasions. She had never taken bets from him for Carless, and had never seen a bet made in the house. He had tried to give her money for bets repeatedly, and she had always told him to go into the street.

Cross-examined : She knew Carless well, he was at the house almost every day but Sunday, at all times of the day. He took dinner at the house. Eight, nine or ten workmen also took dinner at the house. There was no betting in the house during the dinner hour. Foster had never given her money for bets.

John West stated that he had kept the Clockmakers' Arms for fifteen years. He had never seen any bets made in the house.

Cross-examined : He knew Foster. On Saturday he went to his house at Darlaston to inquire about his character. He took a man named Beresford with him, but did not threaten to give Foster a d--- good hiding if he gave evidence against him. He did not threaten to get a gang together to make it hot for him. He merely went to inquire about his character.

Defendant Carless was committed to take his trial at the next Quarter Sessions for the Borough, but the case against the Wests was adjourned for three weeks.

The case lasted for five hours.

## **60     23 June 1894**

### **WALSALL QUARTER SESSIONS**

#### **THE RECORDER ON GAMBLING**

**THE CHARGE** The learned Recorder addressed the Grand Jury at considerable length. He said that with respect to the business which was before them that day there were few prisoners, and the offences were not at all complicated. He then went on to say that the last case he would mention to them was a prosecution for gaming, which he must describe as a case of importance. It was his duty – with the words of the Royal Proclamation still ringing in his ears, as they no doubt were in the ears of the Grand Jury – sitting there to administer the law, respectfully to acquiesce in the view taken by the head of the law, the Sovereign, as to the gravity of offences of that kind. Betting offences were offences which did a vast amount of mischief, and tended, as they were all very well aware, to opportunities for a vast amount of crime and wickedness. He was not going to attempt to do what he was sure was distasteful to himself, and would be, he was sure, to twelve English gentlemen, to talk in any sanctimonious tone about the sin of betting. It was said by moral teachers and ministers that it was wicked, and an offence in many ways against the moral law ; but he left it to those who were better qualified than himself – to the ministers of religion – to deal with it from that point of view. He was dealing, and he proposed to deal, with it in the few words he would address to them from the plain, practical point of view which promoted the stern language of that proclamation. That point of view was that if licensed victuallers – who have premises given to them for the purpose of retailing drinks to the community, given to them on the condition that they carry on their trade in accordance with the law, if they take the opportunity of making their houses a

public place of meeting for persons, and encouraged them to come to it, or even permitted them to come for the purpose of betting with other persons, or even using the premises themselves for the purpose of betting, they are violating the condition on which their licence was granted. They are making use of that privilege, of that condition on which that licence was granted to them, for the purpose of doing harm instead of doing good, and it is plain that there was no class of business which had greater facilities for bringing together, for circulating betting, and fostering betting habits, and giving opportunity to it, than those who had licensed premises. The danger of it in the eyes of the law was that – especially in a town like Walsall, a town large and wide, and varied mercantile interests, where the different trades employed a variety of hands at a variety of different wages – a place used for the fostering and the encouragement of betting gave opportunities to people in a humble station of life, who could not afford it, to indulge in what was an unlawful hazard, and to try and get by the irregular and dangerous and uncertain process of betting that money which should be got by all wise and prudent citizens in the honest and honourable paths of decent labour and industry. The danger of it was, he would point out to them, from the point of view of a plain practical minded magistrate – which was all he desired to be considered – the danger of it was that, if that sort of thing was allowed to go on, those who could not afford it were tempted into increasing their means by this illicit enterprise. Failing, as they must do at times, the too frequent – the unhappily too frequent – consequences were that, in order to replace their losses they were tempted to put their hands into other people's tills, to acts of dishonesty towards their employers, and he doubted not – for he saw gentlemen of age and experience among their body – that there had been instances known to more than one of them of men who were living a reputable steady life of honourable industry that got drawn into the net. Proceedings like those were the commencement of their downfall and the cause from which sprang all the misery involved, both to themselves and their families all their lifetime. He had put it as shortly and as plainly as he could. He did not desire to speak in any aggravating language, but to put it in practical form, and point out why it was that the law used the stern and severe and serious language of the Royal Proclamation, and why it was the duty of those who had to administer the law – had to apply that law to the case. There was very little difficulty in these cases. It seemed that the accused persons, Phoebe and John West – who were man and wife and were the keepers of the Clockmakers' Arms - and the man Frederick Carless, were indicted for offences against the Gaming Acts. More strictly speaking, he should say offences against the Licensing Acts, because under the section – he thought it was the section 17 of the Act of 1872 – if any licensed person suffered any gaming or any unlawful game to be carried on on his premises, and opened, kept or used for that purpose, in contravention of the Act for the Suppression of Betting Houses passed in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> years of the present reign, such a person should be liable to certain penalties. They were charged on a great number of different counts, which he would not trouble them with. It had been sufficient trouble for him to go through them and distinguish them. They were numerous, and so bewildering that if he handed them to them they would probably not be much helped by them. The accused were charged, each of them, with using the house for betting purposes, and the wife, as being manager and in charge, with permitting it to be used for the purpose of betting, with betting with others, allowing others to come and bet there, and allowing money to be received and kept there for those who had made bets. That, in plain short English, was what the charge was, and the evidence would appear to be that on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, in this year, a man named **William Foster**, a boatman, went there – he believed he had been there on previous occasions – to receive some money, which he said was owing to him. On going there he saw Mr West and Carless who, he believed, there was no doubt was a betting man. They were standing in the passage, and Foster gave a paper to Mr West and gave Carless some money. It appeared that subsequently that man Foster went to the same place to claim some money which he asserted was due to him in respect of some bets. The amount he asserted was due to him was, he thought, 3s 9d, and the amount that Carless owned was due to him, and was only due to him, was no more than 6d. Well, they quarrelled about it, and Foster said that he would have it one way if he did not get it another. Carless said that he had not backed the particular horse which Foster said he had, and he refused to pay him. The result of that was that Foster went and told the

police that this was a place used for betting, that Carless lived there, and carried on betting transactions there ; and it would appear pretty plain to them that in consequence of that, the police felt it their duty to take steps to ensure a conviction – the arrest and conviction of all three. Under the direction of the police, a man named **Nicholls**, also a boatman, and who appeared to have had previous dealings in betting at the Clockmakers' Arms, was sent with a piece of paper and some money to invest in betting. He was told to bet a “double” on some horse, but Mrs West, the wife, declined to have anything to do with any bet or double, and it was right that he should call their attention to that, as they might see fit to make a distinction between the three. It certainly was his duty to point out to them that if they were of opinion when the witnesses came before them that the wife had not been taking part in this, and that whatever part she did take must have been taken, as the law presumed in favour of the wife, under the direction and orders of her husband, they would be at liberty to return a true bill against Carless and the husband, and no true bill against her. It was entirely for them, and he only pointed out what were their powers if they chose to exercise them. It was convenient and right that he should point out that she said on that occasion that she would have nothing to do with it, and something to the effect that he must wait until Carless came, but that on a previous occasion when Foster went for his money, when neither West nor Carless were in, she took a card from some place in the bar and read from that card some information with regard to bets that were made by Carless and Foster. They might, of course, if they so thought, look on that as taking a part in betting, or they might look on it as a sort of thing which a wife might naturally, and perhaps innocently, at any rate excusably, do without partaking in the betting which was going on. It was capable of either explanation, and it was his duty to lay both before them, and they could take either the more severe view or the more lenient view that, being a wife and in the business of her husband, and naturally taking an interest in all that affected him, she might have done that without partaking in the illegal act in which her husband was engaged. Later on Nicholls went, and Carless being in, Nicholls invested with him some money. He should mention that Mrs West declined a “double” or to have anything to do with betting, and on the way back to the police Nicholls tore off that part of the paper on which the word “double” was written, and he took the rest to the Inspector and gave the message that she declined to take the bet. He said other things which they had better hear from the witness himself. The result of it was that this interview, at the instance of the police, having taken place on the Monday, on the Wednesday the police made a raid on the premises. They found here some fourteen or fifteen persons, some of them dining, as it was about 1.30. It was right that he should point out that when arrested Mr West offered no resistance whatever. It might well have been that such resistance would have been idle and useless, but still people should have credit for their actions when they were not discreditable. West at once said that Carless was in the habit of having his dinner there, and paid his wife for it, and they would notice that there were several persons dining there at the time of the arrest. The premises were searched, and under the bar, put aside – he did not desire to suggest with any intention of concealment – were some sporting papers, but he believed not betting books or sporting lists. Carless was directed to empty his pockets, and there were certain things – he would not take time or trouble to tell them what, but they were papers and documents, and telegrams and lists and the like, such as a man engaged in betting would have. He believed also telegrams from a certain well known tipster – he believed his name was Stilton, of Manchester. The parties were arrested and taken before a magistrate, and were before the court that day. He had told them shortly the facts, and he thought it would be an affront if he were to detain them any longer in a case which was easy – extremely easy – and the witnesses as to which would be called before them. If they were satisfied that the husband or wife jointly or severally permitted their premises to be used for betting, for persons to meet there for the purpose, for money to be deposited there for the purpose of betting ; if they were of opinion that the husband and the wife were both impeachable on that account, they would return a true bill against both. He had pointed out to them that if they chose to differentiate between them, they were at liberty to return a true bill against the husband and not about the wife. As to Carless, he could not help thinking that he had been guilty of conduct that at any rate needed explanation.

**THEFT OF COAL** Joseph Mills, labourer, Birchills, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, value 5s, the property of John Russell and Co. Mr G Lewis (instructed by Messrs Duignan and Elliot) prosecuted. Prisoner pleaded not guilty. Evidence was given that on the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, the prisoner was seen by Edward Gittings, manager for Messrs J Russell and Co, in the canal at the bottom of the works. He shouted to prisoner and asked him what he wanted, when prisoner replied that he and another man were having a swimming match. Gittings, however, saw a quantity of coal which had been taken from the firm's boat on the other side of the canal. He went across, and was going to take the coal back, when the prisoner threw a piece of coal at him and threatened to cut his b---- head off if he threw another piece in the boat. He told a man who was with him to throw it into the canal, and this was done. Prisoner said he was sorry for what he had done, and having been found guilty, he was sentenced to one month's hard labour.

**THE BETTING RAID** John West, publican of Rollingmill Street, and Phoebe West, his wife, both on bail, were charged that on and between the 24<sup>th</sup> April and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1894, at the Borough of Walsall, then being the occupiers of the Clockmakers' Arms, did unlawfully and wilfully permit the same to be used by certain other persons for the purpose of betting upon certain events relating to horse races, and on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1894 did unlawfully use the house for the purpose of money being received by or on behalf of one Frank Carless relating to horse races. Frank Carless, on bail, Paddock Lane, was charged that on and between the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1894 and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1894, at the Borough of Walsall, did unlawfully use a certain house for the purpose of betting, and on 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> days of April 1894 and on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1894, did unlawfully use the said house for the purpose of money being received by him or on his behalf relating to certain horse races. Mr W J Disturnal (instructed by the Town Clerk, Mr J R Cooper) appeared to prosecute, and Mr Plumtre (instructed by Mr R Willcock of Wolverhampton) for the defence. The charge against Carless was first proceeded with. At the outset, Mr Plumtre objected to the indictment on the ground that there was no local description in any one count of the indictment. Until the present Queen's reign, there was no indictment ever held good that was not alleged to be made in a certain parish, but that was altered early in the present reign. By the 14 and 15 Vic Chap 100, venue was abolished, or at least the necessity for a special venue, and it was only necessary to put it in the margin of the indictment. But, in addition to venue at common law, it was necessary to put in the indictment the local description. That was abolished in general cases, but not altogether. Under Section 23 it was provided that in cases where local description was required, such description should be given in the body of the indictment. This was an omission which, he contended, would be fatal to the prosecution. There was no reference in the present indictment to any parish, and the question remained. Was the indictment framed upon any Act of Parliament which gave the penalty to the poor of the parish? Mr Disturnal, in reply, said the indictment was framed on Sections 1 and 3 of Vic Chap 119. Those tried sections constituted offences which were made and framed in this indictment, and enacted what penalties might be inflicted by the justices upon conviction, and how the justices might deal with the costs. That Act contained provisions with regard to the issuing of search warrants by the justices. The justices might issue search warrants for betting houses within Sections 1 and 3, but the offence charged was keeping a betting house within the meaning of these two sections. The Recorder said he must hold with Mr Plumtre, and he did this with the greatest reluctance. But the case, in his opinion, was too clear to justify his battling against it. He was confronted with authority that, although misdescription in matters of local description had been so far dealt with and aided by Statute 14 and 15 Vic Chap 100, that in many cases the judge might amend, yet there were a series of exceptions to that power of amendment. Mr Disturnal had said that only half the penalty was paid to the poor of the parish and, therefore, that what had been urged by the other side did not apply. Now, although the objection was a technical one, yet there was a reason for it apart from mere technicality. The reason why the parish where the offence was committed was required to be said in the body of the indictment was because that appearance of the name of the parish in the indictment constituted the sole and title of the parish to its part of the penalty. He must therefore hold in accordance with the opinions of Mr Plumtre that the objection

must be held good, and that he had not the power to amend. If he had the power he should certainly amend, but he had not. Mr Plumptre said that it applied to all the indictments, and he took it that they were all quashed. The Recorder said that this was so, and that as this was a committal by the magistrates in the discharge of their duty, and it was one of those slips that the wisest and most experienced were liable to, he did not think that the prosecution should be left with their costs unprovided for, and he made an order that all the necessary expenses be allowed. Addressing the jury, the Recorder said they were relieved of the necessity of trying this case, but whether it would come up in another form he did not know, but if it did he trusted their parish would get the benefit of it.

The Court then rose.

### **61 15 September 1894**

#### **PENKRIDGE**

**CHARGE OF CRUELTY** **Thomas Hollier**, boatman, was summoned for causing a horse to be worked in an unfit state at Penkridge on August 9<sup>th</sup>. Inspector Osbourne said that in this case the horse was only fit for the slaughter yard. Defendant, who produced a paper to the effect that the horse had since been slaughtered, was fined 5s and costs.

### **62 22 December 1894**

#### **DARLASTON**

**THEFT OF COAL** At the Wednesbury Police Court on Tuesday, **Michael Naughton**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with having, on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, stolen 81 cwt of coal, the property of Tolley, Son and Bostock, ironmasters, Darlaston. Early on the morning of the day named, one of the prosecutor's watchmen saw the prisoner and two other men loose an empty boat from the side of the canal, drag it close to a loaded boat, and transfer a quantity of coal from the latter to the empty boat, which they afterwards took some distance along the canal to a secluded place, where they landed the stolen coal and secreted it in a hollow. The other two men were apprehended at the time and dealt with, but the prisoner kept out of the way until the 11<sup>th</sup>, when he was apprehended at Tipton. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and was committed for trial at the quarter sessions. He was also committed on a second charge of stealing coal, under similar circumstances, on the 16<sup>th</sup> June.

### **63 29 December 1894**

**SINGULAR DEATH OF A BOATMAN** On Christmas Day, a boatman named **William Bates** met his death at Tyburn near Erdington in a somewhat extraordinary manner. With other men, Bates went from Birmingham in the morning to fetch a boat which was on the canal near Tyburn. In the course of their progress along the towing-path, the horse of which they were in charge, from some unexplained cause, fell into the canal, and in attempting to rescue the animal it was so injured that it had to be destroyed. So far as can be ascertained, the men then went to the public house known as Tyburn House, where they spent some time, and later in the day Bates left for the purpose of fetching some food from the boat, which was close at hand. Almost immediately afterwards, some men who were passing the canal saw him in the water, and although he was promptly got out, life was found to be extinct.

### **64 16 February 1895**

#### **WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**COAL STEALING** James Owen, 22 Adams Street, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of Messrs J B and S Lees, from a boat on the canal on the evening of February 5<sup>th</sup>. **Charles Hawkwood**, lock house, Wolverhampton Street Bridge, stated that about seven o'clock he was on duty on the side of the canal, and saw a boat in charge of **Joseph Worsey** pass along. The boat belonged to Messrs Lees, and the prisoner and another man were in the stern of the boat. It was a moonlight night, and witness was quite sure that he had made no mistake in the identity of the man. Detective Williams stated that on the day in question he was on duty on the canal side by the

Bridgman Street Bridge. He saw a boat going under the bridge, and the prisoner and another man jump off and take some lumps of coal off the boat. A man named Joseph Worsley was in charge of the boat. Witness arrested prisoner, and charged him with stealing the coal. In reply to the charge, prisoner said, "Let me go. I have been out of work for eleven months. The boatman told me I could have another lump or two". The man who was with prisoner escaped, owing to witness tripping over the coal. Police-constable Hay (16) gave similar evidence. Joseph Worsley, boatman, Great Bridge, stated that he was in the employ of Messrs J B and S Lees. He was steering the boat past the Bridgman Street Bridge, when the driver called out there were some lumps of coal in the way, so much so that he had some difficulty in getting the horse past. There was no man on his boat he was sure. Mr Loxton : What is the good of telling lies? Do you suppose that the officers would come here and swear that they saw two men on the boat if there were none? The Chief Constable said that the steerers were at the bottom of this coal stealing. They had the greatest difficulty in proving these cases, owing to steerers wilfully shutting their eyes to the fact that coal was being stolen from their boats. This was defendant's first appearance, and he was fined 5s, including costs.

**65 16 February 1895**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

DRUNK WHILST IN CHARGE OF A HORSE **William Purcell**, a boatman, Charles Street, West Bromwich, was charged with being drunk whilst in charge of a horse, in Lichfield Street on Saturday night. Police-constable Moore stated that he saw the prisoner in Lichfield Street on horseback. He was very drunk, and fell off his horse, and also drove the horse upon the footpath several times. He had no control whatever over the horse. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and said that he was frozen out, and had had a quart of beer with one or two of his mates. Prisoner was fined 5s, including costs.

**66 30 March 1895**

RUSHALL

DRUNKENNESS At the Police Court on Monday, before F James, W H Cooke and T A Hill Esqs, **Joseph Green**, boatman, Mill House, Coal Pool, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. Police-constable Wood stated that on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 11 pm, he was on duty in the Lichfield Road at Rushall, when he heard defendant making a noise in Pelsall Lane. Witness went to defendant, who was very drunk, did not know where he was going, where he was, or what his name was ; but he informed the officer that he was going to kill him, although he was a "bobby". Defendant pleaded guilty. Mr James said the Bench could not think of letting him off with a nominal fine, as he came into court with "such a character", and fined him 5s and 7s costs, or seven days' hard labour.

**67 13 April 1895**

DAW END

CRUELTY TO A MULE At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, **Frederick Woodward**, boatman, was charged at the instance of Inspector Ruane of the Birmingham Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, with cruelly ill-treating a mule on the 17<sup>th</sup> ult by beating it in an unmerciful manner. Mr Harold Smith, Walsall, appeared for the defence. Police-constable Lovatt stated that at 2.40 pm on the date in question, from information received, he went to a field near the Daw End Limeworks, where he saw a mule belonging to defendant, and it was bleeding from its thighs right down to the hocks. Woodward came into the field, and before witness could speak to him, he said, "He (the mule) has done that by kicking. He would not work, and I put the tackle on him to pull some of the wheels of a timber wagon about". Witness asked defendant if the wounds upon the shoulder had been caused by kicking, when he said he only knew of one, and that the mule had not been at work since the previous Friday. Witness then accused defendant of having thrashed the mule, when defendant said, "What am I to do if he will not work?" Sergeant Riley said he had received complaints about the mule being beaten, and he went to the field and saw the animal fastened down to a stake in the ground. After examining the mule, he found that it was raw right

down the hind thighs to the hocks. The wounds were covered with blotch, and when he touched them the mule flinched. Witness sent for defendant and asked him if that was his mule, which he said it was. Witness then asked him how he accounted for the condition it was in, and he replied that it had been done by kicking. Witness called defendant's attention to the sores on the shoulders, and said they could not have been caused by kicking. He told defendant that complaints had been made about him beating the animal unmercifully with a whip. The defendant replied, "Not unmercifully, it has not been at work since Friday, and I have been trying to break him to work". Witness stated that the collar had been cut in various places, and it was much too big for the mule. In reply to Mr Smith, witness said he could not tell whether the collar had been cut for the comfort of the mule, but he knew it was an unsuitable one. Inspector Ruane said he went to see the mule on the 19<sup>th</sup> ult, and the wound on the near shoulder was as large as a five shilling piece, and had been there some time. In his opinion it would be cruelty to put a collar upon it, and the thighs down to the hocks were simply raw. Thomas Hogan, veterinary surgeon, Walsall, was called, who bore out the statement of the previous witnesses, and said the sores upon the shoulders were sufficient not to allow of a collar being placed upon the mule. The animal was in fair condition. **John Turner**, boatman, was called for the defence, and stated that he was present when the mule was being broken, but he did not think it had been ill-treated, defendant only hitting it three times with the whip. Mr Smith then addressed the Bench for the defence, and contended that there was no case to answer, as the punishment was only such as it was usual to inflict when animals were being broken. Dr Cooke said the Bench were of opinion that it was not a very bad case ; at the same time they thought that the collar ought not to have been put on whilst it was suffering from sores. There was no doubt that the mule was a very incorrigible one, but that was no reason why it should have been punished in the way it had been. They recommended the defendant to slaughter the animal, as it would very likely get him into trouble again. Defendant was ordered to pay the costs, which amounted to 20s.

## **68**      **8 June 1895**

### INQUESTS IN WALSALL

**TWO CHILDREN DROWNED IN THE CANAL**    On Tuesday afternoon, Mr Stanley held an inquest at the Engine Inn, respecting the death of two children named George Pittman (10) and Thomas Collier, who were drowned in the canal at Wolverhampton Street on Saturday morning. Mary Pittman, wife of George Pittman, 42 Farringdon Street, identified the body of George Pittman as that of her son. She saw him alive on Saturday last at about five and twenty minutes to eleven, when he was in one of the neighbour's houses, and she sent him away to play. Deceased was insured. Ann Collier, a widow, 62 Burrowes Street, identified the body as that of her son, and stated that she saw him alive last at about half past ten on Saturday, at the end of Burrowes Street. Witness then told him not to go away, as she wanted him to go an errand. Deceased was insured in the Royal Liver. George Rogers stated that he had known the deceased lads for some years and went to school with them. He lived at 85 Burrowes Street with his parents. He met the boys on Saturday morning in Rupert Street, and Collier asked him to go to the canal with them, and witness went with them to the third pound. They undressed and got into the water. Witness could swim, but the other two could not. A boy named John Burkin could also swim, but he did not go into the canal. They had been in the water about a quarter of an hour when a boat came into the pound on the opposite side to where witness and the other boys were. They all three got out and stayed on the bank until the boat got into the lock. They then got into the canal again, but soon after Collier got jumping in. This was the third time that he had jumped in, and witness the time previously had told him not to jump so far. The third time that Collier jumped, he got out of his depth, and the other boy, Pittman, tried to save him. They were both drowned. They were close to the locks. The bodies were got out of the canal by the lockman and the boatman. **Joseph Lowbridge**, boatman, Adams Street, stated that at about a quarter past eleven on Saturday he was going out of the hovel by the lock of the canal, and saw some boys coming through the palings. They went into the next lock, and shortly after, he heard some of the children shouting that a boy was drowning. Ben

Russell was following, and witness called to him to run back, as he was nearer to the place. He was just going into the lock where the children were drowning. He was below the children, right down in a hole, and could not possibly have seen the children. They both ran back with shafts, but both children had then gone down. A juryman : Do you mean to say that you did not try to render assistance? Witness : They had both gone down. A juryman : Do you mean to say that Russell could not see them, being only 25 yards away? Witness said he was down in a hole and could not possibly see them. A juryman : You can easily understand that. **Samuel Binns**, lock-keeper, stated that on Saturday morning he heard that two lads were in the water. He at once went to the spot and found several persons there. He took the rake, and with it pulled one of the lads out at the second drag. Soon after, he pulled the other one out. One of the boys on the bank and a police officer tried to restore the lads by means of artificial respiration, but both were dead when he got them out. Some of the people said that the first lad was alive when pulled out, but the last lad must have been dead because he was in the canal longer than the other. There was six feet of water in the canal where the lads were. There were several boatmen round, but they had nothing to get the boys out with, unless they had dived for them. A juryman : And they were afraid of wetting their clothes? Witness : I don't know about that. **Benjamin Russell**, Forester Street, boatman, stated that he heard some boys shouting, and went back as fast as he could. He was about 60 yards away, but when he got there the lads had gone down and there was no sign of them anywhere. There were 20 persons there before him. Witness could not swim, and the water was too deep for him. In reply to a juryman, witness said he could not have saved the lads if they had been his own sons. A juryman : Do you call yourself an Englishman after that? Witness : I do ; I did all I could. Witness, continuing, said there were quite 20 people there, but no one went into the water. When the first child was fetched out, he was quite dead. As the lads were in the water and so many round, he thought they were dead, or he should have gone in. When the bodies were fetched out he rubbed their arms and did all he knew. A juryman : I don't think there is any blame attached to this man. Witness : I have been reared on the canal, and should have gone in if there had been any chance. So you need not say I'm no Englishman. Police-constable Glover stated that he tried to resuscitate the deceased lad Pittman, but all his efforts were unavailing. Dr McKinstry stated that he was called to the canal as he was passing on Saturday morning. He found the officer engaged in artificial respiration, and to relieve him continued the work for a quarter of an hour. The officer was exhausted. The child was quite cold, and showed no sign of life whatever. After carefully examining it, he thought it had been dead for about an hour. As he ran up, he called Mr Hardam, assistant to Dr Oliver, and he took one child whilst witness took the other. Both had been dead for some time. He thought that everything was done after the lads were got out of the water that could be. They must have been in the water for some time. The Coroner, in summing up, said that everything possible seemed to have been done by the police officer and the medical men. As to some strictures by jurors on the boatmen, he drew attention to the men's excuse that they did not know where they were, and thought it better to fetch the lock-keeper. Something had been said to the effect that the first boy was drawn down by the rush of water into the lock, but if Rogers's evidence was to be relied on, the first boy got out of his depth and the second, on going to his rescue, was drowned. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and expressed an opinion that if the boatmen had properly exerted themselves, the boys' lives might have been saved.

## 69 15 June 1895

### LEACROFT

A DISHONEST BOATMAN At the Cannock Police Court on Monday, a man named **Samuel Jesse Bowen** and a lad named **Arthur Parkes** of Greet's Green, West Bromwich, in the employ of Messrs J Bagnall and Sons, Wednesbury, were charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of their employers, on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Police-constable Gunn stated that on the date named he was standing upon Kingswood canal bridge near Leacroft when he saw a boat coming towards him from Hednesford. When the boat got to the bridge, Bowen commenced throwing the coal off on to the towing-path, and some he threw into the canal. Witness spoke to Bowen, and informed him he

should have to take him to Cannock and charge him with stealing the coal, which he did. The coal weighed 342lbs. Police-constable Rudd was called, and stated that he saw both prisoners throwing the coal off. Edward Essen, clerk in the employ of the firm, said defendants were employed to do the work by the contractors to the firm, and he was aware of the boat in question coming from Hednesford to Wednesbury. The boat was No 6, and marked " J B and S". Bowen said the boat was leaking, and he threw the coal off to lighten her. Mr Forster told Bowen he had been guilty of a very serious offence, and had set a bad example to the lad that was with him. Fined 20s and 22s 6d costs. With regard to Parkes, the Bench dismissed the charges against him, as they had no doubt he had been under the influence of Bowen, and advised him to get another situation, and not be trained in such dishonesty. Charles Bott, farm labourer, Kingwood Farm, was charged with receiving the stolen coal. It was said that about 12 o'clock the same day, defendant was seen to fetch the coal from the canal side and take it to his cottage. There was no defence. Mr Forster said there was no doubt that Bott knew full well the coal was stolen, and he was fined the same amount as Bowen, with costs.

## **70 14 December 1895**

### **WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**COAL STEALING Joseph Bird** (27), boatman, Oldbury, was charged with stealing, and Ann Wood, 68 Long Row, Coal Pool, with receiving, a quantity of coal, the property of the Bromford Iron Co. Inspector Alden stated that on Thursday morning last he was in a field near the canal at Coal Pool. He saw Bird throwing some coal off the boat, and the female prisoner picked it up and carried it away. Near Pratt's Bridge witness arrested Bird, who said that he was sorry, and asked to be forgiven. Mr J Mason, manager of the Bromford Ironworks, stated that prisoner Bird worked on one of the company's boats. Both prisoners pleaded guilty, and it was their first offence. The Chief Constable (Mr Taylor) said that he had put special men on duty, and now could not cope with this method of coal stealing. There were complaints coming in daily from the owners of boats and the Canal Company. The magistrates said that, as this was the first case of the kind, and as there was nothing else against the prisoners, they were disposed to take a lenient view of the offence. If any other case of this sort came before the Bench, the result would not be the same, as they thought it was their duty to see that this kind of thing must cease to exist. Defendants were each fined 5s and costs, or seven days' hard labour.

## **71 21 December 1895**

**SAD SUICIDE AT GILLITY GREAVES** On Wednesday afternoon, Mr T H Stanley, the Borough Coroner, held an inquest at the Engine Inn, Wolverhampton Street, respecting the death of William Osborne (60), a (?hame) maker of Whitehouse Street, who was found drowned in the canal at Gillity Greaves on Monday.

Elizabeth Smith, sister-in-law of the deceased, identified the body. At 9.53 on Monday morning, she received a telegram. It ran : "Come at once, trouble for Caroline. William Osborne". Caroline was her sister, and deceased's widow. Witness saw him alive last on Saturday night. The last thing he said to her was, "If I send a message, come at once". **George King**, lock-keeper at Five Ways Bridge, Birmingham Road, said on Monday a boatman named **Smith** said he thought that there was a body in the canal. Witness saw the body floating in the middle of the canal, and borrowing Smith's boat hook, he drew the body to the side and pulled deceased out with his hands. The man was to the best of witness's belief quite dead, but he did not look as though he had been in the water long. A hat and a coat were afterwards found under the bridge. Inside the hat was an address. On the envelope was "I am in the water, William Osborne, 86 Whitehouse Street, Walsall". The police were sent for, and the body was removed by them. Caroline Louisa Osborne, widow of the deceased, stated that she saw him last at about a quarter to eleven, when he said that he was going to see her sister, Mrs Smith. That morning, she had a letter at about a quarter past eleven. It contained three pieces of paper and three postage stamps. The letter was as follows :- "My dear wife, I hope you will forgive me for what I am about to do. I cannot ask your friends for money when my own

have refused me. You know the last £4 has not been paid back. Do not fret for me, I think my brain will burst. If I had been ruled by you, it would never have come to this. I remain, your unfortunate and affectionate husband, William Osborne". There was a second note to his children asking for forgiveness for the trouble he was bringing on them, and stating that it was in no way due to his wife. On the third sheet were some instructions as to payments to be made out of the insurance and club money. On the receipt of the letter, she went to the Police Station. He had been short of work and very low spirited in consequence. Samuel Charles Osborne, eldest son of deceased, who lives in Manchester, stated that he saw him last in August and told him that he did not look well. Deceased had been through the Indian Mutiny, and ever since had suffered from pains in his head. He constantly told witness that his head seemed on fire, and on more than one occasion he had asked witness to cut it open and see what was in it. In August he said that his head was driving him silly. William Osborne, another son, stated that deceased had not done a full week's work for two years. His father had been very strange in his manner, and had two bad turns with his head on Thursday last. Police-constable Shipley gave evidence as to removing the body to the mortuary. He found deceased lying on the canal bank. The Foreman of the jury : I think it is a very inhuman thing to leave a body lying on the bank of the canal like that. King was recalled, and stated that he had to attend to the lock but had the body in view all the time. The Foreman of the jury then expressed himself satisfied. Mrs Smith was recalled, and stated that deceased was in monetary difficulties with his club, of which he was secretary. Last year she lent him £4 to make up the deficiency, and she believed that there was another deficiency of a like amount this year. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane".

## 72 25 January 1896

### LITTLE BLOXWICH

A BOATMAN DROWNED The dead body of **Charles Hodgetts**, a boatman of Little Bloxwich, was recovered from the Birmingham Canal at Heath Town on Tuesday morning. The deceased was not with a boat at the place, but had a daughter living in Albion Street, Wolverhampton, and was seen walking along a street in Heath Town on Monday morning. At a quarter to ten o'clock on Tuesday morning, a boatman was passing along the canal when he saw Hodgetts's body in the water, and recovered it. Deceased was about seventy years of age, and it is supposed that he accidentally walked into the water during the fog. An inquest upon the body was held on Wednesday at Heath Town, before Mr Archer B Smith. The deceased's widow said she saw her husband alive for the last time on Monday morning, when he left home saying he was going to get some work, and that he should not come back until he found some. She could not tell where he went to that day but thought, as he did not return, he had gone to some relations at Wolverhampton. He had no thought of committing suicide she knew. He was always the other way. Deceased had been out of work for four months, through no fault of his own. He had not been despondent. **Samuel Douglas**, boatman, High Street, Smethwick, deposed to conducting a boat along the canal at Heath Town on Tuesday. The line of the boat brought the body to the surface. Witness communicated with the police. Police-constable Shaw spoke to being called to deceased. There were no marks of violence on the body. The place where deceased was drowned was a very awkward spot on account of the steam rising from the water. It was dangerous, and the officer that was passing along the canal side could not see the towing-path. One of the jury said that a good many people got into the water at that spot, the officer concurring. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

## 73 4 April 1896

### WALSALL POLICE COURT

EXTRAORDINARY COAL STEALING BY BOYS Thomas Rathbone (19), labourer, 5 Checketts Street ; Harry Rowley (14) and Thomas Rowley (10), both of 187 Queen Street, were charged on remand with stealing a quantity of coal from a boat on the canal, the property of William M Lester, Bradford Ironworks, on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Joseph Lester stated that on the day in question he saw

Rathbone in a boat, and the other two prisoners were carrying it away from the boat. When they saw witness, they ran away. Witness saw some coal on the towing-path and some more in a barrow. The coal was the property of his brother, and was worth 4d. Witness did not wish to press the case. The Chief Constable said that he must object to any withdrawal of the case. This sort of thing was giving the police much trouble. In the next case no less than 20 cwt had been stolen, and although it was a very sad thing to do, he must press for a conviction if the case was proved. There was not a week passed but what he received a letter complaining of coal being taken away by tons, and it was all done by boys like these. It was very kind of Mr Lester to forgive these boys, but he must press for a conviction. Detective Harper stated that he arrested the prisoners and cautioned and charged them. Rathbone said, "There was more than we had the coal", and the other two said, "Yes". Mr Beebee said that he should like to know who they were taking this coal for. They had known cases where the lads were encouraged by their parents to do this sort of thing. The father of Rowley said that he did nothing of the sort. He had got a good job and there was a good home for the boys. Mr Beebee said that Rathbone had been coming into that Court ever since he was eleven years old, and he did not believe that the two younger boys would have been there had they not been drawn in by Rathbone. The prisoners, with another lad named James Hawkins (15), Adams Street, were also charged with stealing a ton of coal, value 10s, the property of Hunt and Son of the Chemical Works, Wednesbury, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March. The Chief Constable said there were one or two other boys in this robbery, but as yet the police had not been able to arrest them. **Daniel Thomas Stephens**, a boatman living at Darlaston, stated that on March 25<sup>th</sup> he brought a boat load of coal down the locks and left it at the bottom, tied up to an empty boat. He went to get another boat down the lock, and when he came back he saw some boys on the boat. He ran them and caught Kennedy. He found a barrow ready for the coal to be wheeled away. John Kennedy, back of 3 Blue Lane East, stated that on the day in question he was standing on the canal side when the prisoners came up and put the coal off the full boat into an empty one. Rathbone then went and fetched a barrow from the Corporation Yard. Police-constable Grainger stated that Stephens brought Kennedy to him. Witness arrested the two Rowleys, but they made no reply. Mr Hunt said that it was part of his duty to constantly visit the locks, and he found that they were inundated with lads of this description every time he went there. He had complained to the Birmingham Canal Company, but they said that it was the duty of the Walsall authorities to look after this sort of thing. He thought that the canal authorities should protect their traders. It was no uncommon thing for the boats to be a ton short when they got to the works, but the boatmen could not be blamed for it, as they were afraid to do anything for fear of being set about by large numbers of boys. He publicly commended the action of the boatman Stephens, and should reward him for the way in which he acted. He would do all in his power to help the authorities to stop this sort of thing. Hawkins denied the charge, and as he was given a good character, his uncle was bound over in the sum of £5 for prisoner's good behaviour for six months. Rathbone was sentenced to 14 days' hard labour in each case, one case to follow the other. Thomas Rowley was ordered to receive six strokes of the birch rod, and Henry Rowley was sent to a reformatory school for five years.

#### **74 15 August 1896**

**DROWNING FATALITY** Mr T H Stanley (borough coroner) held an inquest on Tuesday afternoon at the Engine Inn, Wolverhampton Street, touching the death of Charles Davenport, aged five years, son of Charles Davenport, a carter of Bridge Cottage, Rollingmill Street. The father now stated that the last time he saw deceased was about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon. A search was made for him at half past seven, but without avail, and information was given to the police. The canal was dragged by the police on Sunday evening, but it was not until next morning that the dead body of the deceased was found in the canal. The back of the cottage adjoined the towing-path of the canal. Emma Tinsley, aged eleven years, spoke to seeing deceased about half past four o'clock on Sunday afternoon on the canal side with a stick with some string on, dashing it into the water. James Plant of 24 Countess Street, a watchman at the Alma Tube Works, deposed to seeing a lad, whose description tallied with that of the deceased, close to the back of deceased's father house

about twenty eight minutes to six, “dabbling” a whip in the water. Deceased was by himself. Witness wondered that a number of children were not drowned there. There was always a lot about at that place on Sundays, and if anyone spoke to them they got insulted for their pains. **George Cooper**, boat steerer, East Street, Winson Green, spoke to recovering the body from the canal near Lester's Works, which was about eighty yards from Rollingmill Street Bridge, at about a quarter to eleven on Monday morning, with a boat shaft. The Coroner having summed up, the jury returned a verdict of “Found drowned”. The father of the deceased asked the jury to have some representation made with a view to getting the canal fenced off at the spot in question. At present there were only some upright stumps and a row of fencing under which children could easily get. Through one unprotected place a horse and cart could pass. When anyone threatened some of the children playing about there, they would swear like troopers. A juryman : They can do it in Walsall. The jury recommended that the Coroner make a representation to the Canal Company, and the Coroner said that he would do so.

**75 15 August 1896**

**BROWNHILLS**

**DRUNK IN CHARGE** At the Police Court on Wednesday, **George Beck**, boatman, was charged with being drunk while in charge of a horse and boat on the 19<sup>th</sup> ult. Police-constable Williams and Police-sergeant Hollins proved the case, and defendant was fined 1s and costs.

**76 22 August 1896**

**THE SENSATIONAL DEATH AT GREAT BARR** On Saturday, Mr E Hooper (coroner) held an inquest at the Law Courts, West Bromwich, respecting the death of William Milton (32), formerly residing in St Martin's Place, Broad Street, Birmingham, who died on the Thursday night previous from the effects of injuries sustained the same day. Joseph Deakin, furniture dealer, Great Hampton Street, Birmingham, uncle of deceased, identified the body. Deceased was a polisher, and resided with his mother. Witness last saw deceased alive about a month ago, when he was in good health. Deceased had often complained of pains in his head, and sometimes owing to their severity, he had to leave his employment. Witness did not hear of his nephew's death until the Friday night. Deceased was in the habit of taking long walks when he was attacked with the pains in his head, and witness had no reason to suppose that anyone was responsible for his death. Deceased was in regular employment. John Thomas Deakin, furniture dealer of Five Ways, Birmingham, said he last saw deceased alive about a fortnight ago. Witness had seen deceased's mother, who was unable to be present, and she said that her son left home on Thursday morning to go to his work in Leopold Street about a quarter past six. She also informed witness that deceased's head was very bad on Wednesday night. Witness had noticed that sometimes deceased was peculiar in his manner. He was a sober man. For the pains in his head, deceased had been compelled to see a doctor. The Coroner reminded the jury that there was no direct evidence to show when deceased left home on the morning of his death, and Arthur Kinder, gardener in the employ of Mr Wilkes, Great Barr, said that on the Thursday morning about 8.30, he saw deceased walking past his employer's house towards West Bromwich, and he wished witness good morning. The distance from his master's house to where deceased was subsequently found was about 300 yards. About five o'clock witness heard that a man had fallen over the high bridge at Newton, and the description given him corresponded with the man he saw earlier in the day. Arthur Holmes, labourer, Great Barr, said on the Thursday about 3.30, a boatman named **John Higgins** informed him that a man had fallen over the high bridge. Witness went alone to the place indicated, and there found deceased lying on the embankment of the Birmingham Canal, about two feet from the bridge which crosses it. Deceased was about nine feet from the water, and his legs were underneath him. Deceased was unconscious, and witness fetched a doctor, who ordered his removal to the West Bromwich Hospital. The boatman informed witness that deceased fell from the bridge just as he was passing under it. Police-constable O'Leary said every effort had been made to get the man Higgins to attend the inquiry, but it had been unsuccessful. Police-constable Sherley said about 4 pm on the Thursday

afternoon he was informed of the occurrence. He went to the place, and saw about four boatmen with the deceased, who was then alive. A vehicle was procured, and deceased was placed in it, witness intending to take him to the hospital. Deceased however died on the way, and his body was conveyed to the mortuary. About a quarter of an hour before witness was called, he noticed a man who he thought was deceased, looking over the high bridge. The man seemed restless, and witness saw him cross the road. The railings on the side of the bridge were about five feet high. Police-constable Smith said he had made every inquiry, and could not discover that anyone had ill-used deceased. Deceased had in his possession £1 1s 5 1/2d. Police-constable O'Leary said he examined the bridge, and found footmarks upon the railings and on the ground, which were indications that the man had made an effort to get upon the bridge. The height of the bridge was 69 ft. The Coroner said there was no evidence to show whether deceased threw himself over the bridge or whether he fell over accidentally. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that death was due to the injuries deceased sustained, but added that how they were caused there was not sufficient evidence to show.

**77 23 January 1897**

**ACTON TRUSSELL**

**CRUELTY TO A PONY** At the Cannock Police Court on Monday, a boatman named **John Edwards**, of no fixed abode, was summoned by Inspector Jones of the RSPCA for cruelty to a pony by working in whilst in an unfit state on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Inspector Jones stated that on the date in question he saw the animal on the canal side. It was very lame and in a most emaciated condition, and quite unfit for work. Defendant told him he had only had it a week, having purchased it at Wolverhampton for a sovereign. Witness asked him where he lived, and he said he had no home, and lived anywhere. Police-constable Elks said he saw defendant driving the pony, and followed him to a public house, where he stopped. Witness examined the pony, and found two raw wounds upon the shoulders about the size of a five shilling piece. There were also sores on both knees, and it was very lame. Witness told him the pony was not fit to work, and took out a warrant against him. The horse had since been slaughtered. Defendant was fined 10s and costs, or 14 days' hard labour.

**78 6 March 1897**

**WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**CRUELTY TO CHILDREN** **Samuel Nash** and **Julian Nash**, 6 house, 4 court, Wisemore, were both charged with neglecting their children in a way likely to cause them unnecessary suffering and injury to health. Mr J N Cotterell (J N and E A Cotterell), who prosecuted on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, stated that the house was a two roomed one and in a filthy condition. The children were ill clothed. There were four children (Rosannah, Anna Maria, Ellen and William). The latter had been sent to a truant school. He thought it was the woman who was to blame, but he was compelled to prosecute the man because he was responsible for the welfare of his children. The woman was always getting drunk, and was so as late as last Saturday. Inspector Cooke, SPCC, gave evidence as to the effect that he visited the house where defendants lived on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, and found the children ill clad and filthy, and the house with little or no furniture in it, and it was almost possible to shovel the dirt from the floor of the house. The children had little or no clothing on them. The food he found in the house was hardly fit for a pig to eat. He first visited the house of defendants on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, and again on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, when they lived in James Street, Ryecroft, and had repeatedly warned the wife. Samuel Nash was a boatman, and could not be at home as often as other men. He gave his wife about 10s a week, his wages being about 18s. Witness thought that the man worked very hard, and that it was the woman who was to blame. Dr Willmore stated that he visited the house of the defendants on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the request of the inspector. He had visited the house several times, and found it in a condition of filthiness that it was difficult indeed to describe. He thought that only a personal visit by the justices would give them any idea of what the house was like. The children were well nourished, but living in such a terribly insanitary condition must of necessity have an injurious effect upon

their health. He found vermin on all three of the children. Detective Haycock said that he visited the house on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, to convey the boy William to a truant school, when he found four children sitting on bricks around the fire. They had hardly any clothing on them, and the house was in a filthy condition. The mother used very bad language. Mr Cotterell said that he need not call the two other witnesses, who could testify to the drunken habits of Mrs Nash, and also her continual smoking. The male defendant stated that if he gave his wife any more money, she would spend it and not provide for the children. The Bench sentenced Julia Nash to three months' imprisonment. Samuel Nash promised to see to the children and go into lodgings with them during the time the mother was away, two neighbours volunteering to look after the children until the father could make arrangements for lodgings. On this promise, the case against him was adjourned for 14 weeks.

## **79 13 March 1897**

**SAD SUICIDE OF A YOUNG LADY AT ALDRIDGE** Mr A A Betham, Deputy Coroner for South Staffordshire, held an inquest at the Red Lion Inn, Aldridge, on Monday afternoon, on the body of the young woman Ada Tonks, who had been missing from her home, the Laurels, Barr Road, since Tuesday March 2<sup>nd</sup>, and whose body was found in the canal near Longwood canal bridge on Saturday morning, a short distance outside the Walsall borough boundary.

Mr J Craddock, Walsall, watched the case in the interest of the relatives.

Mr Edward Butler was foreman of the jury.

George Herbert Tonks, currier, stated that deceased was his sister, who lived at home with her mother and the family at The Laurels, Barr Road. She was twenty six years of age. Witness last saw deceased alive on Tuesday March 2<sup>nd</sup>, at his mother's place of business in Goodall Street. She was book keeper, and her duties occupied her about six hours. He saw her between three and four, and she then left the place. He had not noticed anything peculiar about her either on that day or on any preceding day. Witness got home about nine o'clock, but it was not until Wednesday night that the family began to get alarmed. Deceased occasionally stayed for a night at an aunt's house in Walsall. She had been in good health to all appearances, and witness did not know of any trouble. She never complained of the work she had to do. The handwriting in the letters produced was that of his sister, and the first letter was written to the young gentleman to whom she was engaged to be married.

Mr J Craddock objected to the letters being read if there was nothing in them bearing on the case.

The Deputy Coroner : I don't see what you have got to do with it. The matter is in my discretion. I hope I shall do nothing wrong, but I shall certainly exercise my discretion.

Witness, proceeding, said he had never heard his sister threaten to commit suicide, nor did he know of anything that would be likely to cause her to do so.

By Mr Craddock : His sister had occupied her position about four or five years. The work was not heavy.

By the Coroner : He did not notice that his sister was depressed very greatly last November.

Eleanor Mabel Tonks, sister of deceased, stated that in November her sister seemed very queer, but witness was not aware of the cause. One day she came home early from work, and commenced to cry. She said she felt very melancholy, and that she had not felt well for some time. She stayed at home about five days. No doctor came to see her. Deceased had not complained since. She was engaged to a young gentleman.

**Thomas Mansell** of 10 Leabrook Square, Wednesbury, canal boatman, stated that on Wednesday March 3<sup>rd</sup> he saw on the Longwood Wharf the hat and gloves produced. This was about nine o'clock in the morning. He took the things home, as he did not think anybody had been drowned. He gave information on the Friday, when the paragraph concerning the missing girl came under his notice.

The Coroner : Why did you not give information earlier? You might have been certain, finding the hat on top of the gloves, that something unusual had happened.

Witness admitted that he ought to have given information earlier. He informed the sergeant of police at Wednesbury. He thought it was his duty to have taken the things to the lock house.

The Coroner : It looks very much as if you desired to appropriate the things.

A Juror : Don't you think you ought to be severely censured? If you had found any money, would you have taken it home?

Witness said he thought he was doing right in giving the things up when he heard of the missing girl.

A Juror : Then why did you not do right before?

Police-constable Henry Jones (41) of the Walsall borough police force stated that he saw the deceased about 4.30 in William Street, the Butts, Walsall, on Tuesday. He did not notice anything unusual about her. She was wearing the hat produced and a green jacket. The way she was going would take her to Aldridge.

Alfred Caleb Rose, a young lad, stated that he saw deceased about 6.25 on Tuesday evening, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, on the Aldridge Road near the Longwood Canal Bridge. She stopped against the palings as soon as she got over the bridge. She looked the same as usual.

Police-constable Rixon (281) of the Staffordshire Constabulary, stationed at Aldridge, stated that he received some information on Saturday morning from Superintendent Salt of the Wednesbury police, in consequence of which he and some other officers dragged the Birmingham Canal. They commenced about one hundred yards away from the Longwood Bridge, and found the body about twenty yards from the bridge, in the parish of Rushall. The body was in the middle of the canal. He searched the body, and found a watch and chain, the former having stopped at twenty two minutes to eight. She had three rings on her fingers, and was wearing a brooch. She had on a dark green jacket. In her purse was 23s 10 3/4d. There were no marks upon her, with the exception of a slight graze on the chin. There were also the two letters produced in her possession.

The Coroner here read the two letters, which were as follows, and the first of which was addressed to Mrs Tonks (her mother), the second being addressed to Mr A E W Aldridge, the young gentleman to whom she was engaged :-

*March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1897*

*My dearest mother – Just a line to say goodbye for a time. My dearest mother, it pains me to give you this trouble, and all of you, but I have such a weakness of feelings at times ; and this time I feel I cannot get over it. There is no blame attached to anyone. I send my love to your dear self, and all my dear sisters and brothers, and I trust to meet you, my dear father, and all in heaven. You have always been such a good mother to me. If it had not been for all those I love so much, yourself and Arthur, I don't think I could have kept up so long, but I hope to meet you all in heaven. The money I have in the Post Office, I want you to have half, and my dear Arthur the other half.*

*Your loving daughter, ADA*

*PS Don't grieve much, dear mother, for my sake and all the others. All those amounts in statements in the cash box are to be entered into the ledger, and some of the receipts on the table are not marked off in the bought day book and want entering up. It would be better to have a clerk.*

The Coroner said that from the last part of the letter it seemed as if she had found the work too heavy for her. The last thing she did was to suggest having a clerk. Some women could not stand desk work as well as others.

*March 2 1897*

*My own dearest Arthur – It grieves me very much to give you such a shock as this, for I am going to leave you for a time. We love each other very much, which makes it so hard, but, my dearest Arthur, my only wish is to meet you in heaven at the last. Your ever loving ADA.*

Dr J Scott Wilson, Walsall, stated that the deceased came to see him at his surgery on December 6<sup>th</sup> last. She complained of having pains in her head and feeling very depressed and melancholy. He concluded that she was suffering from melancholia, so he prescribed for her. He had known her fourteen years, but he had not heard her complain about the work.

The Coroner, in summing up, said that they would have to be guided a good deal by the fact that the doctor had told them that the deceased girl had been attended by him for melancholia. He did not

think that there could be any doubt that she did commit suicide, and he did not think that she could be in a sound state of mind at the time. Her hat with her gloves underneath it were found on the canal side, and she was seen hanging about the bridge. He thought that they were bound to say that she did commit suicide. She was suffering from melancholia, and he thought perhaps that the work she had been doing was too much for her. Some women could not stand desk work like men. If the jury were not satisfied that deceased committed suicide, they could bring in an open verdict. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane", and the Coroner at their request censured the boatman for not giving information as to the finding of the hat and gloves immediately, and disallowed his expenses.

**80 17 April 1897**

**WALSALL POLICE COURT**

**ONE WAY TO LEA BROOK** **John Parnum** (49), boatman of no fixed address, was charged with being drunk and disorderly while in charge of a horse and cart, on Sunday night. Sergeant Ingram (6) said that prisoner was by the Townsend Bank drunk, and driving round a lamp post. Prisoner asked him the way to Lea Brook, and witness told him he would drive him there. Witness got in the cart and drove him to the Police Station. Prisoner was fined 10s and costs, or 14 days' hard labour. The magistrates said this was a very bad case, as it was so dangerous to be drunk whilst in charge of a horse and cart.

**81 5 June 1897**

**DAW END**

**HORSES STRAYING** At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, before F James, T A Hill and J Clare Esqs, **Frederick Woodward**, boatman, was summoned for allowing five horses to stray. Police-constable Wood stated that on May 16<sup>th</sup> he was on duty in Bosty Lane when he saw the horses grazing. Defendant said the horses were not straying, as he was with them himself. He had not got a field, and he thought it would be a treat to them, as they were always kept in the stable. He was not aware he was doing wrong, or he should not have done it. Defendant was fined 1s and 7s costs.

**82 27 November 1897**

**DROWNED THROUGH THE FOG**

**RECOMMENDATION FOR THE HUMANE SOCIETY'S MEDAL** On Wednesday afternoon, Mr T H Stanley (Borough Coroner) held an inquest at the Engine Inn, Wolverhampton Street, respecting the death of Cornelius Chaloner (16), labourer at Hamstead Colliery, residing at Ten House Row, Great Barr, who was found drowned in the canal near the Bell Inn, Birmingham Road, on Monday night.

Cornelius Chaloner (father of deceased) stated that he lived at Great Barr. The last time he saw his son alive was at 7 o'clock on Monday night. Deceased did not say where he was going.

George Cox, residing at Burnside, Walsall, a groom and gardener, said that he had known deceased for two years and a half. Witness met him on Monday night at the Bell Inn, Birmingham Road, at about a quarter after nine o'clock. They, and a man named Bradbury, left together at about a quarter after nine, leaving a boatman at the public house. As they were going up the road towards Barr, the boatman came out and shouted, and in consequence of that they went back. He asked them to show him his road to the boat, as he could not find it, as it was so very foggy. The boatman had previously told them that he had a boat on the canal, near the hovel. They all went with him, and witness went to the lock to see if the boat was there and he fell into the water. Chaloner fell after him, and Bradbury nearly fell after them. It was so foggy that they could not see the canal at all. They walked on as if they were on the path. His top coat kept him afloat a little, but when it got wet it began to pull him down, but Bradbury caught hold of him. Chaloner was quite sober. It was the lock into which he fell, which was very deep. He did not hear anything of Chaloner when he was got out by Bradbury. The Coroner : Where was the boatman? Witness : He was standing by the

hovel. Coroner : He left you fellows to find out his boat? Witness : Yes. Coroner : A little bit of discretion. Witness, continuing, said they told him to go and change himself, but before he left, King the lock-keeper came up.

John Bradbury of Great Barr, farm labourer, said he was in the Bell Inn on Monday night, and left with Chaloner and Cox, and they went to look for a boat in consequence of Latham, the boatman, asking them to do so. They found the hut, and they left the boatman there, and Cox and Chaloner walked into the canal. Hearing the splash, witness threw himself on his back, which prevented him also falling in. They both shouted, "Jack", and witness lay on his stomach on the curbstone and caught hold of the first he could, and that happened to be Cox. Witness had a lot of trouble in getting him out, as Cox's weight nearly pulled him in. As witness caught hold of his collar, Cox laid hold of his arm. Witness shouted for help for he could not hear anything of Chaloner after he had got Cox out, although deceased was shouting while he was getting Cox out. King, the lock-keeper, came up with a light and got deceased out with a rake, and witness went for a policeman. The boatman was close to but offered no assistance.

**George King** of Five Ways Bridge, Birmingham Road, said he was a lock-keeper in the employ of the Birmingham Canal Company. On Monday night he was attracted from the 8<sup>th</sup> lock down by a shout for "help". Witness got up to the 7<sup>th</sup> lock as quick as he could, and when he got there, there was a man lying on his stomach with his legs over the canal. Witness lifted him upright on his legs with the assistance of Bradbury. He then unlocked the hut door and took Cox into the hut and pulled his top coat off, when Cox said, "There's another one in there". Witness asked who it was, and he said, "Neil Chaloner". Witness reached the drag from the hut and searched the lock, but failed to find the body. He then went for the lock rake and recovered the body in No 7 lock. It would be nearly half an hour from the time he heard the call for help to when the body was recovered. Latham was standing by the hut all the time, but did not offer to help witness. He had had some beer but was not drunk. The lock was about 15 feet deep. Witness did not ask him to help because he knew it was not safe for anyone to be there. Witness himself could not see with his lamp, although he had known the locks for about 16 years. To find the place, he had to go by the sound of the water. Witness saw Latham at the Bell Inn at nine o'clock, and had offered to take him to his boat, but he would not go.

Inspector Hamilton said that at 1.5 on Tuesday morning, he was informed of the accident. He proceeded with the police ambulance to the Birmingham Road, and to King's, the lock-keeper's house, and King took witness to the hut. There he found the body in the hut, which had been locked up by King. Witness saw Latham at about 3 o'clock in the morning, and he certainly had had beer and was not in a fit condition to be about the canal on a night like that.

**Edgar Latham** of 4 Park Place, Mount Street, Nachells, Birmingham, said that he had a boat on the canal on Monday night, and had to put up there on account of the fog. The three young men offered to take him to his boat. The two fell in and witness stopped, he did not know where to move, so he stood still.

By a juror : Witness said he was not drunk and the young men were walking faster than he was, and if he had gone on he would have gone in also, but he did not go to their assistance because he could not see.

The Foreman of the jury : I think if I was to express my opinion, I should say it would be one of the most dastardly acts a man could commit to stand there and never attempt to render assistance.

Witness : I could not see anything.

By another juror : You might have tried to do something.

The Coroner having summed up, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and highly commended Bradbury for the heroic part he played in getting the man Cox out.

The witness Bradbury was recalled at the request of the jury, and the Coroner complimented him, and stated that if the other man had been as plucky, the deceased also might have been alive then.

Witness : I only did my duty, sir.

The Foreman of the jury said the jury had requested him to ask the Coroner to make a recommendation for the Humane Society's medal.

The Coroner said he would do so.

**83 8 January 1898**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

POLICE SUPERVISION **Edward Bowdler** (39), boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with being a person convicted of crime after a previous conviction for felony, and being subject to police supervision did fail to notify his change of residence on December 1. The Chief Constable said that on November 13 the man reported himself. He stayed a fortnight and then left, without giving any notice whatever. He was arrested on a boat. There were a number of convictions, including two terms of penal servitude of five years each, against the man. A majority of the Bench sentenced him to 21 days' hard labour.

**84 12 March 1898**

DAW END

REFUSING TO QUIT At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, **Harry Murphy**, boatman, Adam Street, Birmingham, was summoned for refusing to quit licensed premises when requested to do so. Mary Ann Clare said she was landlady of the Royal Oak Inn. On the 14<sup>th</sup> February defendant came into the house and commenced to use bad language. She told him she would not have such language there, but he still persisted in using it. She requested him to leave, but he would not, and ultimately he was ejected. Defendant, who did not appear, was ordered to pay 19s 9d.

**85 17 September 1898**

KICKED BY A HORSE On Thursday morning a boatman named **Arthur Parkes**, aged about 18, residing at Greet's Green, West Bromwich, was taking a boat belonging to Messrs East and Nephew of the Staffordshire Ironworks, West Bromwich, along the canal near to the Pelsall New Plant Colliery, on his way to West Bromwich, when the horse which was drawing the boat kicked him behind the right ear. The youth was picked up in an unconscious condition, and the aid of Dr Whitehouse of Pelsall was obtained. After attending to his injuries, Dr Whitehouse ordered him to be conveyed to the Walsall Hospital by Police-constable Snow of Pelsall, his injuries being such that he still remains there.

**86 24 September 1898**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF STEALING A WATCH AND CHAIN **Edward Bowdler** (41), boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with stealing a silver watch and a gold chain, valued £5, the property of James Astley, on April 25<sup>th</sup>. **James Astley**, a boatman living at Birchills, stated that the watch and chain produced were his property, and were worth £5. The prisoner, whom he knew well, was engaged by him to work as a boatman. He lodged with witness, who then lived in Dalkeith Street. On April 25<sup>th</sup> his watch and chain were safe on the washstand upstairs. They went out together, leaving witness's wife at home. They went to a public house where the man left him. He had not seen accused since until now. He missed his watch that same night, and reported the matter to the police. He afterwards saw the watch at a pawnshop in West Bromwich, where he went with Sergeant Harper. Polly Harris, Neal Street, West Bromwich, said that she knew the prisoner from his coming to the house where she lodged. She first saw him on a Monday night, a week or a fortnight after Easter, and he stayed the night there. She saw the watch and chain produced in the possession of the prisoner, who said he had had it from his aunt's in the Potteries. He said he was going to pledge it. He left the pawn ticket at the house and came for it on the Thursday. Philip Lewin Samuel said that he was a pawnbroker in High Street, West Bromwich. Prisoner on April 26<sup>th</sup> pledged the watch produced at his shop. He asked if they belonged to him, and he said, "Yes". He lent him 30s on them, and afterwards handed them over to Sergeant Harper. Prisoner gave the name of Edward Jones, Bromford Road, West Bromwich. Detective Harper said that he arrested the prisoner on the canal side between Norton Canes and Hednesford, after searching up the canal for twenty miles

with Sergeant Riley of the Staffordshire Constabulary. When he read the warrant over to him, prisoner said, "All right, I took it ; Mr Astley has been a friend of mine". Afterwards he said, "I hope they won't give me a stretch". He was committed for trial at the next Quarter Sessions for the borough.

**87 24 September 1898**

**BREWOD**

**OBSTRUCTING AN INSPECTOR** At the Penkridge Police Court on Monday, **William Challoner**, boat steerer, no fixed abode, was summoned for obstructing an inspector under the Canal Boats Act, at Brewod. Mr H M Whitehouse said he was appointed to examine boats under the Cannock Rural District Council. He was inspecting boats at Brewod on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Defendant was steering the steam tug *Leader*. Witness asked him to stop for him to see his certificate and examine his boat. Defendant refused to stop. Witness again asked him to stop or deliver up the certificate. Defendant said he dared not stop the tug then ; if they had there would have been an accident. Defendant was fined 10s and costs.

**88 15 October 1898**

**MUCKLEY CORNER**

**THEFT FROM A BOAT** At the County Police Court, Lichfield, on Thursday, **James Cartwright**, boatman, Shelfield, was summoned for stealing a boat tiller at Muckley Corner on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst, the property of Mr H G Mantle. William Hall, bailiff to Mr Mantle, said he saw defendant take the tiller from the boat, which was tied up by the canal side. Defendant put it into his own boat and took it away. Police-constable Wilcox deposed to arresting defendant. On charging the latter, he admitted the offence, saying that someone had stolen his tiller a few days previously, and he wished to replace it. The Bench bound defendant over under the First Offenders' Act, to come up for judgement if called upon.

**89 22 October 1898**

**WALSALL QUARTER SESSIONS**

**ROBBERY FROM A BENEFACTOR** **Edward Bowdler** (40), boatman, was indicted for stealing a silver watch and gold chain, the property of John Astley, on the 25<sup>th</sup> April. Mr Stokes (instructed by Messrs Stanley and Jackson) prosecuted. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and put in a written statement in which he said that he was drunk at the time, and that though he was a bad character he had lived an honest and sober life 18 months. Prosecutor, being called, said that the prisoner had had some drink, but was not drunk at the time of the offence. Detective-officer Harper was also called, and stated that the prisoner had been complained about during the last 18 months, but had only been convicted for neglecting to report himself under his police supervision. Police-sergeant Drakeley of Yardley stated that he held a warrant for the apprehension of prisoner on a charge of robbing his lodgings under circumstances similar to those in this case. The Recorder said that he might be innocent in that case, and he could be tried on it when he was again at liberty. Police-sergeant Drakeley said that there was an order by the Home Secretary to the effect that when a person was charged with several offences in different counties, if he was tried on one all should be taken into consideration, and there should be no subsequent proceedings. In passing a sentence of 12 months' imprisonment and 12 months' police supervision, the learned Recorder said that he took no notice whatever of the warrant held by Sergeant Drakeley, and no number of Home Secretaries would have any control over him in dealing with the case. The practice might be quite correct, and no doubt was so, but it was his duty to deal with the prisoner on the charge which was before them.

**90 19 November 1898**

**GREAT BARR**

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE** At the Rushall Police Court on Monday, **Joseph Fisher**, boatman, Glebe Street, Ladywood, Birmingham, was charged with cruelty to a mare by working it while in an unfit

condition. Police-constable Jackson stated that on October 20<sup>th</sup> he was on duty on the Birmingham Road near the canal, when he saw the horse attached to an empty boat. He thought there was something the matter with it, and on making an examination found a sore under the collar on each shoulder. Witness asked him how he accounted for working it in that condition, when defendant replied that he knew it had a sore, and that he intended to give it a rest on the following day. In reply to the Bench, witness said the animal was in fair condition. John Ruane, inspector of the Birmingham Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said that defendant kept a number of horses, and plied between Birmingham and Cannock Chase. William Tart, assistant to Mr Paley, veterinary surgeon, Walsall, said that he examined the horse, and found a sore on each shoulder about the size of a two shilling piece or half a crown. The wounds were of a very painful nature. Defendant did not appear, and he was fined 20s and 22s 10d costs.

## 91 24 December 1898

### WALSALL POLICE COURT

THREE MONTHS EACH FOR THEFT **Enoch Astley** (29), boatman, Wolverhampton Street ; **Henry Billingham** (21), boatman of 49 Old Birchills ; and **John Dyoss** (48), boatman of Upper Rushall Street, were charged on remand with stealing a gold watch, a gold chain, a gold locket, a silver watch and half a sovereign, valued altogether at £11 10s, belonging to Thomas Davies, a carter of Old Birchills, between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December. Mr H H Jackson (Stanley and Jackson) appeared for the prisoner Astley. Mrs Davies identified the watches and chain, which she valued at £11. On the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst she left the articles safe on the dressing table in the bedroom, and in the afternoon went into the Navigation Inn, a public house kept by Astley's mother, leaving her house unattended for about ten minutes. She missed the articles from the bedroom, and the same day informed the police, who showed her the articles on the Saturday. Annie Maria Bickley, manageress for Mr Thomas Vaughan, pawnbroker of Cannock Road, Hednesford, deposed that on Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, Astley offered in pledge the silver watch, gold chain and locket, asking 30s on them. She offered him 25s, but, as he begged hard for money to pay his way, she gave him 28s. He pledged the articles in the name of "Fred Smith, Queen Street, Smethwick". Next day, Detective-sergeant Harper called at her shop, and she handed the articles over to him. She then went to Walsall, where she identified Astley. Louis Jackson (manager to Mr Vaughan, pawnbroker of High Heath, Brownhills) stated that the prisoner Dyoss pawned the gold watch with him, stating that it was his wife's. He asked 25s, but witness lent him £1 2s 6d on it. Prisoner gave the name of "John Wood of Oldbury". Sarah Cresswell, barmaid at the Station Hotel, Brownhills, spoke to seeing Dyoss and Billingham come into the vaults, and said that they were served with a glass of whisky and a pint of ale. Detective-sergeant Harper stated that he received the property from the witness Bickley, and arrested Billingham ; but, not knowing that Dyoss was implicated, he did not arrest him. Witness afterwards charged Astley and Billingham, the latter replying, "There was no half sovereign there ; I am guilty of the rest". Astley said, "I pawned the watch and chain, but I did not steal them". Billingham denied the charge. On Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> inst, Dyoss was arrested and, when cautioned and charged together, Dyoss said, "I know nothing about it". Astley said, "Tell the truth ; he knows all about it". Billingham said, "Ah! Go on". Mr Jackson, on behalf of Astley, pleaded guilty ; but pointed out that he had never been before the Court before, and that perhaps he would not have been in such a position had he not been a companion of the other men. There were previous convictions against Billingham. The magistrates sent the prisoners to gaol for three calendar months.

## 92 15 April 1899

### DARLASTON

ASSAULT On Monday at the Police Court, **David Brace**, boatman, Church Street, Moxley, was sentenced to a month's hard labour for being drunk and disorderly, and assaulting Police-constable Horton at Moxley on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst.

**93 15 July 1899**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

**OBSTRUCTING THE CANAL** **Joseph King junior** of Forrester Street was summoned for obstructing the Birmingham Canal, and with refusing to desist when requested to do so, on June 27<sup>th</sup>. Mr Walter Barrow (Wragge and Co, Birmingham) appeared for the Canal Company, and stated that this obstruction was caused at the Birchills “stop”, the place where the tolls were taken. It was usual where there were boats at each end of the “stop” for them to take their turns, but on the day in question the defendant went out of his turn, and he and the man whose turn it was blocked the “stop” for an hour and a quarter, keeping about 26 boats waiting. **Frederick Bladen** said he was a toll clerk in the employ of the Company at the Birchills “stop”. On the morning of June 27<sup>th</sup>, he saw a number of boats waiting to get through the “stop”. The rule was for the men to take their turn. The defendant insisted on going out of his turn, and this caused the “stop” to be jammed by the defendant's and another boat. They remained like this for an hour and a half, and at last decided which should go first by tossing up, and as defendant won he went through first. By this time 26 boats were waiting to go through, thus causing a serious stoppage of traffic. All the boatmen knew this rule. Corroborative evidence was given. Defendant denied that there was any obstruction, and called his mate, known as “Cleggy”, to give evidence for him. When given the Testament to take the oath, “Cleggy”, who said he was 18 years of age, exclaimed that he could not read it – (laughter) – and when told that he was not required to read it, but to take the oath, said he knew nothing about an oath – (laughter). A fine of 10s and costs was imposed.

**A CONVICTED THIEF SENT TO GAOL** **Thomas Beresford** (49), boatman of Rix's lodging house, West Bromwich, was charged under the Prevention of Crimes Act with frequenting a public road under such circumstances as to lead a person to believe he was going to commit a felony. The Chief Constable said that this man was a well known thief, and was known as a “roaming” one, because he went to a different place to steal, and then went back to his home in another town. Sergeant Broadhurst (5) said he arrested the prisoner last August for stealing two rabbits, and was present when he was convicted at the West Bromwich Quarter Sessions and sentenced to eight months' imprisonment and two years' police supervision. He was aware that the man had failed to report himself at Walsall. Sergeant Harper (8) said that early on Monday morning he saw the prisoner loitering near Victoria Terrace. When he saw witness, he walked down Lichfield Street. Witness went up to him and asked what he was doing. Prisoner replied, “Nothing”. He then enquired his name, and he replied, “Thomas Batford”. Witness replied, “You haven't forgot me have you? You are Thomas Beresford”. Witness then asked how he came to be there, and he said he had been to Brownhills to see his sister. He could not give her name, and had not got his papers on him. He also made contradictory statements as to where he reported himself and where he had been living. The Chief Constable said he had endeavoured to trace the man's residence, but could not find it. The prisoner said that every word that had been spoken was a lie. The magistrates sentenced him to three months' hard labour. Prisoner : It's a shame to give it me. It's more than a shame. No man would give it me.

**94 5 August 1899**

**CHARGE OF ATTEMPTED MURDER AT DAW END** At a special sessions of the Rushall Bench, held at the office of the Clerk (Mr W L Lewis), Leicester Street, Walsall, on Monday – before A W Greatrex Esq – **Charles Print alias Browning**, a boatman of 12 Court, Daw End, was charged with attempting to murder his mate, **Joseph Monk** of 7 Henry Street, Greet's Green, West Bromwich, on Saturday night at Daw End.

Joseph Monk, boatman, stated that he was employed by John Turner, Daw End, as also was the prisoner. Witness and prisoner were working together on Saturday, when they went to Muckley Corner with the boat, and on their return Mr Turner paid their wages, giving witness £2. He was to give prisoner £1 of the money. When he paid prisoner, the latter did not say that it was not enough. Shortly afterwards prisoner went away, and witness met him in the evening at Daw End. At about

nine o'clock, witness went to the cabin of the boat, which was lying at Daw End limeworks, and went to sleep. Prisoner came to the cabin between ten and eleven, and witness was awakened by feeling a knife at the back of his neck. He got up and ran out, and felt blood running down his back. Prisoner said nothing whatever, and witness got out of the cabin as soon as he could and went to Turner's house. He was not in, so witness returned to the wharf, but before going to the cabin he saw a man named Smith and showed him his condition. He went to the cabin for his shoes, and found the prisoner there, who struck him on the jaw, and when he left the boat, prisoner shouted, "I'll give you some more", and threw the iron top bar of the stove at him. It hit witness on the back of the head, and caused a wound. Prisoner also threw some bricks and a poker after him. Prisoner ran after witness and Smith, but fell over a plank and so they got away. Witness went to the Walsall hospital and had his wounds dressed. Witness had had no quarrel with the prisoner, and they had worked very "friendly" together. Prisoner must have been drunk. He had not been drinking heavily the previous week. Witness could not give any reason for this.

Samuel Smith, lime burner at Daw End Lime Works, stated that he was at work on Saturday night last, and saw the prisoner go toward the boat cabin. He came back to witness and said that he had lost his shoe. He added, "There's only one man on the ground ; it seems funny". Prisoner went to the boat, and witness heard a noise there. Shortly afterwards Monk came to witness and showed him his neck. Blood was flowing from it. He corroborated the remainder of the evidence given by Monk, but did not think prisoner was drunk. Prisoner struck witness with some sharp instrument on the face, and made it bleed. It was not much. He had seen the prisoner using the knife produced.

Police-constable Lovatt stated that on Saturday night last, Monk and Smith came to Police-constable Wood and himself in the Lichfield Road, Rushall, and complained of being assaulted. Witness went with them to the Daw End Lime Works. Monk's neck appeared to be badly cut, and his hair was matted with blood. When they got to the cabin they found that the prisoner had gone, but they found him on the works an hour afterwards. On the way to the station he said, "Is it for setting about Monk you have got me? I wish I had got him here ; I would b---- well finish him. I know I have got to go down the rails to Stafford this time. The b---- owes me eight shillings". At the Police Station, when charged with unlawfully wounding Monk, prisoner remarked, "That's about Sessions then". Later on he charged prisoner with attempting to murder Joseph Monk at Daw End Lime Works. He made no reply. When witness arrested prisoner he found the knife produced on him. There was blood on the blade.

Monk, recalled, said he did not owe the prisoner any money at all.

Dr Smith, house surgeon at the Walsall hospital, stated that Monk came to the hospital about three o'clock on Sunday morning. He was suffering from an incised wound on the back of the neck about an inch in length and about an eighth of an inch deep. He also had a clean cut wound on the back of the head about an inch and a half in length, deeper in the centre than at the ends, not completely penetrating the skull. There was a small scalp wound, the edges of which were ragged, which completely penetrated the skull. There was also a large abrasion. There was a good deal of blood on the clothes of Monk. Witness put two stitches in the wounds. The wound in the neck might have been caused by a knife, and the bar would account for the small scalp wound. The third wound might have been caused by the knife or by the bar.

Prisoner, in answer to the charge, said that he had nothing to say, and was committed for trial at the next assizes for the county of Stafford, bail not being asked for.

## 95 30 September 1899

### WEDNESBURY

**SHOCKING NEGLECT** At the Police Court on Friday, **Thomas Holmes**, boat unloader, Jowett's Lane, Hill Top, was summoned for neglecting his child John, aged six years, between June 27 and the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. Mr Thompson (Dudley) prosecuted. Inspector Percival and Police-sergeant Owen gave evidence that defendant lived with his father and mother, and that 16 persons, including two illegitimate children, occupy a house with only two bedrooms. Defendant's child had been systematically kept in a dirty condition, and although the grandparents had been proceeded against

by the society, and defendant himself had been warned, there had not been the slightest improvement. Defendant was in regular employment, but spent his money in drink. He had no excuse to make, and was fined 40s and costs, or a month's imprisonment.

**Alfred Jones**, boatman, Chapel Street, Swan Village, was summoned for neglecting his five children. Mr Thompson prosecuted. Inspector Percival and Police-constable Cartwright gave evidence that the children had been practically deserted, being left alone in an empty house, where they were found in a wretched and half starved state and removed to the workhouse. Defendant had been previously warned by Police-constable Cartwright, who found the children wandering about at night. The Stipendiary characterised it as a very bad case, and sentenced defendant to a month's hard labour.

**96 28 October 1899**

CANNOCK

OBSCENE LANGUAGE At the Police Court on Monday, **William Lindon**, boatman of Birmingham, was fined 2s 6d and 8s 6d costs for using obscene language.

**97 28 October 1899**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

DAMAGE BY BOATMEN **John Meek** (18) of Salop Street, Bradley, was charged with destroying radishes in a garden occupied by William Pemberton of Coal Pool, a market gardener, on the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. Evidence was given that this youth got over the fence which bordered on the canal, and walked along inside the garden, damaging a quantity of vegetables, until he came to the radishes, some of which he pulled up and put into his pocket. Mr Pemberton jun said that they had pounds worth of damage done by these boatmen. The magistrates fined defendant 10s and costs, or 14 days.

**98 2 December 1899**

WALSALL POLICE COURT

A BOATMAN AND HIS BOAT **James Mallows** of 4 Little Street, Green Lane, was summoned by Samuel Tift of Green Lane, who claimed £2 2s for neglect of work between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of November. Plaintiff's case was that this boatman was in his employ, and was engaged to take a boat to Willenhall, where he lost the horse, having gone on the drink. He was sent for the next voyage to Birmingham, where he left the horse and boat and came back to Walsall by train. Witness paid his fare back, but he did not fetch them ; witness had to fetch them himself. Judgement was given for plaintiff for two guineas and costs.

**99 9 December 1899**

WALSALL WOOD

THE MANSLAUGHTER CASE At the Staffordshire Assizes on Tuesday, **Thomas William Barnes** (20), boatman, was indicted for the manslaughter of **Thomas Bowdler**, at Walsall Wood on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr A Graham was for the prosecution and Mr B C Brough defended the accused. In opening, Mr Graham said that on the date named the prisoner and the deceased were working a boat. It would be shown that during the afternoon they called at a public house known as the "Manor House" and had some drink. After they left they were both on the boat, and sounds of quarrelling were heard, and it was observed that the tiller was not in its usual place. Prisoner was heard to say that he would give him using the tiller on him. When the boat got to Walsall Wood, the prisoner was heard to remark, "You commenced it, and I've finished it". Subsequently deceased was found lying in the boat in a pool of blood. It would be for the jury to say how he came by his injury. Thomas Anson, the landlord of the Manor House public house, stated that the prisoner and the deceased visited his house about five o'clock on the afternoon of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Witness overheard Bowdler say to prisoner, "You went in such a passion ; I said nothing to cause it". When they went away, they appeared perfectly friendly. William Halford, Rushall, said that on the date

named he was on the canal side. He saw a boat going cabin first, and two men – a young man and an old one – on it. He could not say that the prisoner was one of the men. They were quarrelling, and he heard the younger of the men say, “I’ll give you using the tiller on me ; I’m as good a man as you”. Other witnesses were called to the same effect. Ann Brooks of Walsall Wood stated that on the night of September 11<sup>th</sup>, she saw a man lying in the bottom of a boat. She got a candle, and found that he was in a pool of blood. She and Susannah Hall got the man out of the boat and bathed his head. Susannah Hall, sister to the last witness, said she saw the boat come in. Prisoner was with the horse. As he was unfastening the horse, he said, “You ---- well began it, and I’ve ---- well ended it, and here’s the knot end”, at the same time throwing the rope into the canal. Subsequently the prisoner came up whilst they were attending to the deceased, and said to deceased, “Don’t you know me ; I’m Bill. How have you done it?” Police-constable Lockley deposed to meeting prisoner outside the Beehive Inn, Walsall Wood, and the latter told him that his mate was lying in a house near with his head badly cut. Witness asked how he had got it done, and the prisoner replied, “I don’t know ; unless it has been by falling in the boat”. Prisoner afterwards fetched a doctor, and assisted witness to take deceased to the workhouse infirmary. Witness found a pool of blood in the boat at the end furthest from the cabin. There was blood also on the tiller. Herbert Bratt, porter at the workhouse, said that prisoner told him that he and Bowdler had words, and that Bowdler struck him on the chest and he fell back into the boat, and caused the injuries to his head. Dr Wolverson deposed to being called to deceased. The injuries he found on deceased’s head could not have been caused by one fall. He must have had at least half a dozen falls to account for the injuries, and then in different directions. In reply to Mr Brough, witness said that the deceased was evidently very drunk. Dr Fox, medical officer at the workhouse infirmary, deposed to the injuries which deceased had sustained. There were extensive fractures of the skull, and he thought it was almost an impossibility for these to have been caused by falls. In reply to Mr Brough, witness admitted that some of the wounds might have been caused by falls, but it was not likely. Prisoner was called to give evidence. He said that when he joined the boat in the morning, Bowdler cursed him because he was too late. They visited several public houses during the day. When they left the Manor House, deceased again commenced cursing him for his late arrival. Afterwards he wanted to fight him. Then deceased snatched the tiller and attempted to strike him with it. A struggle ensued, during which witness took the tiller from deceased and threw it into the boat, and Bowdler fell to the bottom of the boat. He did not know that deceased was bleeding until the women told him. By Mr Graham : Prisoner admitted that he was “in beer” at the time of the occurrence, but deceased was more drunk than he was. The jury found the prisoner guilty under great provocation. His Lordship said that there was no doubt that he took the man’s life. It was a horrible weapon to use against him, but he agreed with the jury that he had been provoked. The prisoner would be sent to nine months’ imprisonment with hard labour.