

BURTON CHRONICLE
1866 to 1898

1 1 February 1866

SHARDLOW A fatal accident occurred here on the evening of Friday the 12th ult. A boatman in the employ of Mr D Cowlshaw, coal merchant, named **John Thompson**, about seven o'clock on the above evening, was seen to slip through the hedge which separates the canal from the river Trent, at a place where the bank falls suddenly to the river. Instantly afterwards, a loud shriek announced that the poor fellow had fallen into the stream. In less than a minute several persons were on the spot, but no trace of the drowning man could be observed. The night was very dark, the river was bank full in consequence of recent rains, and the stream exceedingly rapid. Drags were obtained by Mr Ironmonger of the Navigation Inn as soon as possible, and the river was searched for several days, but without success, and up to the present time the body has not been recovered.

2 8 February 1866

LONG EATON On Monday last the 5th inst, Mr Coroner Whiston held an inquest at the Navigation Inn, Long Eaton, on the body of a man named **John Thompson**, a boatman who had been missing for the last three weeks. From the evidence it appeared that the deceased left a beerhouse at Shardlow, and got close to the Trent ; a splash in the water was heard and an alarm made, but after a long search nothing was seen until the morning of the 5th inst, when the deceased was found floating in the river, his head being at the top of the water. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

3 15 February 1866

BURTON POLICE COURT **Frederick Hartshorne**, boatman, arrested at Atherstone, was ordered to stand in the dock to answer a charge of stealing, on the 8th February, one flannel coat of the value of 20s, the property of William Genders of Alrewas. From the evidence, it appeared that the prosecutor keeps a public house on the canal side at Alrewas. On the 8th inst, the prisoner visited the house and left about six o'clock in the evening, and the coat, which had been hanging in the garden, was missed soon after prisoner had gone away. Information was given to the police. Edwin Chadwick, a member of the Warwickshire Constabulary, stationed at Atherstone, received information of the robbery on Saturday morning ; he immediately went in search of the coat, and on going down the side of the Coventry Canal met the prisoner wearing the coat, and which fully answered the description given of the one stolen. In reply to a question from Chadwick, prisoner said he bought the coat from (?/Rugby/Bugby?) and gave 10s for it; prisoner afterwards said that he had bought the coat from a man on the canal side. Chadwick then arrested the prisoner and charged him with stealing the coat. The prisoner, who pleaded not guilty, was committed to take his trial at the next Quarter Sessions of the Peace for this county.

4 22 February 1866

A BRUTAL ACTION A few minutes after twelve o'clock on Tuesday morning, a young man named Thomas Lefler, a bootmaker living with his father at Woodfield Place, Paddington, was with some other young men leaning over the parapet of the canal bridge near the Lock Hospital, when they heard loud noises proceeding from a barge which was on its way from the Paddington Basin to Southall. The only occupants of the barge were a boatman named **Joseph Ward** and his wife **Ellen**, both of whom were the worse for drink, and were quarrelling because the woman would not allow the barge to be stopped to enable the man to get a bottle of rum. The language used by both the man and woman was of a most beastly character, and called forth a remark from one of the young men on the bridge, which was heard by Ward and his wife. Ward, after saying, "I'll give you something to stop your talk", went into the cabin, and in a moment came out with a loaded gun, which he discharged at the young men on the bridge. The charge struck Lefler on the head and face, completely destroying one eye. He now lies in a precarious state.

5 16 August 1866

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE **John Frith**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Pegg and Harper, was charged with stealing a bag of beans, their property. It seemed that prisoner received sufficient beans for his three day's voyage on Saturday evening ; he was noticed at work earlier than usual this morning, and upon a workman named Watson entering the store room, a bag of beans was missed, which was afterwards found in prisoner's cabin, covered over with hay. Remanded.

6 27 September 1866

BURTON POLICE COURT **Henry Slater**, boatman, and Thomas Slater alias "Boxer" were charged with assaulting **George Wheeldon**, boatman, at Burton Turn on Sunday last. Fined 5s each and costs.

7 11 April 1867

INQUEST On Tuesday morning last, an inquest was held at the Navigation Inn, Shobnall, before John Richardson Esq, coroner, to enquire into circumstances touching the death of Elisha Turner, widower aged 61, who was found drowned in the canal at Shobnall on Sunday morning last. From the evidence it appeared that the deceased was at the Dolphin Inn, Paget Street, on Saturday evening, and had three pints of ale there ; he left there at about 10.30 pm and was alone and quite sober. Nothing more was heard of him until about twenty minutes to nine o'clock on Sunday morning, when his body was found in the canal at Shobnall by a boatman named **Thomas Ashley**. Deceased then had his walking stick in his hand. The body was removed to the Navigation Inn, where it was identified by Hannah Briggs, daughter of the deceased. Police-constable Wheaver searched the clothes of deceased, and found upon him a silver watch and other articles. The watch had stopped at 10.50, but had not run down. Wheaver also examined the banks of the canal near to where the deceased was found ; he discovered marks as if someone had slipped, and about a yard from these marks, there was a deep impression of a boot in the mud. The jury, after hearing the depositions of four witnesses, returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

8 18 April 1867

BURTON POLICE COURT

VIOLENT ASSAULT AT FRADLEY **George Green**, boatman, pleaded guilty to assaulting William Macbeth at Fradley on the 24th March last. It appears that the complainant is a clerk employed under Mr Bateman, agent at the Fradley Junction, and on the day in question demanded from the defendant his tonnage or passage money for his boat. Defendant demurred at paying, and desired Macbeth to alter the declaration, but he refused ; and because of this, defendant seized him by the hair of the head and dragged him round the office. Fined 2s 6d and 9s costs.

9 2 May 1867

BURTON POLICE COURT

AN INCORRIGIBLE FELON John Faulkner, an old offender, was brought up in custody and charged with stealing, on or about the 9th of April, one flannel shirt, pair stockings, pillow slip, and several pounds weight of cheese, the property of **William Wood**, boatman. From the evidence it appears that prosecutor's boat was lying in the canal near to the Welcome Inn, Branstone Road, and at the time specified he left it for about two hours in the evening. When he returned, he discovered that some person had entered his cabin and taken away a quantity of cheese ; and afterwards he missed other articles from a cupboard. The police eventually found the missing property in the possession of Mrs Penfield of the Moulder's Arms beerhouse, in whose keeping the prisoner had placed them ; and it turned out that he had sold the stockings to Samuel Shorthouse for three pints of ale. Upon the application of Mr Orwell, the prisoner was committed to take his trial at the next Staffordshire Quarter Sessions. A second charge for feloniously stealing fifty four pounds of hay was adjourned until today (Thursday).

10 29 August 1867

SERIOUS ATTACK UPON A FARMER At the Hanley (Staffordshire) Police Court on Monday, before Mr Davis, the stipendiary magistrate, three young men – **Samuel Tomkinson**, boatman, Thomas Wilshaw, collier, and Samson Bradshaw, labourer – were charged with having violently assaulted and robbed Mr John Gratton, a small farmer at Endon. The prosecutor, who is suffering from eight wounds on the head, three broken ribs and one broken finger, was unable to attend, being in a very dangerous state and not likely to recover from the injuries. The evidence of Mr William Kirkham, farmer, Downfield Side, was that, about two o'clock on Sunday morning, he was awakened by a loud knocking at the door, and heard someone calling, "Mr Kirkham, for God's sake get up ; I am murdered and robbed". He went to the window, and on ascertaining that it was Gratton who was there, he went downstairs. Gratton was literally covered with blood and nearly exhausted. He placed him in a chair, and sent for a police officer and a surgeon. Some spirits were administered to Gratton, who revived sufficiently to be removed to the North Staffordshire Infirmary at Etruria. Evidence was then given showing that the prosecutor was on the road near the Holden Bridge, a short distance from Kirkham's, at one o'clock on Sunday morning, and that the prisoners passed that way between one and two o'clock. Police-constable Birnie, after describing the condition of the prosecutor when he was called in, stated that when he and two others apprehended the prisoners, they found one of Tomkinson's and one of Wilshaw's boots were stained with blood. Before he apprehended the prisoners, prosecutor told him that two men had attacked him – one a short one and one a tall one, answering the description of the two men whose boots bore marks of blood. Prisoners were remanded.

11 9 January 1868

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE **Aaron Gascoyne**, boatman, was charged with assaulting Police-constable George Dakin, whilst in the execution of his duty. The officer stated that about half past two on Saturday afternoon, he found the prisoner drunk in Queen Street, and using very bad language ; he saw him tear his wife's shawl off her back, and as he kept threatening her, he (witness) took him into custody ; prisoner turned very "rusty", and as they were coming down Iron Gate, caught hold of him and attempted to kick his leg ; at the lock up he was also very riotous. The Bench fined him £1 and the costs.

12 30 January 1868

BURTON POLICE COURT

STEALING A LOCK **Thomas Felthouse**, boatman of Burton-on-Trent, was sent to Stafford gaol for fourteen days for stealing a lock from the premises of the Navigation Inn, Alrewas, on the 25th instant, the property of Mr Richard Ingram. The lock was safely fastened to a door at the time prisoner entered the prosecutor's premises, but in a few hours afterwards was missed, and found in his possession by Police-constable Whitehurst. Mr Wilson defended.

13 27 February 1868

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE Lucy Johnson, a prostitute, was charged with stealing 19s, the property of **John Capewell**, a Lincolnshire boatman. The prosecutor gave the prisoner a sovereign to fetch some ale, and she refused to give him any change, but said he only gave her 1s. She had 1s 9d upon her when apprehended. The prosecutor was in drink at the time, but a companion of his, who saw the transaction, was sober, and was positive about the prosecutor having given the woman a sovereign. She was remanded until Saturday morning, when she was discharged, owing to the inadequacy of the evidence.

14 23 April 1868

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS

STEALING HAY **Thomas Tomlinson**, boatman, Measham, was charged with stealing a quantity of hay, the property of Mr J Ironmonger of Measham, on the 18th instant. The prisoner was seen by

the police about twelve o'clock on the night in question at Mr Ironmonger's hayrick, taking the hay. Committed for one calendar month with hard labour.

15 11 June 1868

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE **Thomas Ferredy**, a boatman, who said he worked for the Grand Junction Canal Company, charged with being drunk and fighting in the Recreation Ground, was discharged with a caution.

16 6 August 1868

BURTON POLICE COURT

DRUNKENNESS **Matilda Roden**, wife of a boatman, charged by Police-constable Evans with being drunk and refusing to leave the street on Saturday night, was fined 2s 6d and 9s costs.

ASSAULTING A COUNTY COURT BAILIFF **William Perkins**, boatman, was fined 5s and 14s costs, with the alternative of fourteen days' imprisonment at Stafford gaol, for assaulting William Hudson, County Court bailiff, on the 29th ultimo. The offence took place while defendant and Hudson were struggling for the possession of a boat then under distraint, and it appears that Perkins struck Hudson and knocked him into the canal.

17 10 September 1868

MOIRA

FATAL FIGHT On Friday last an inquest was held at the Navigation Inn, Spring Cottage, before John Gregory Esq, coroner, on view of the body of **Edward Brain**, who was killed when fighting with another boatman named **William Butlin**. It appeared that on Wednesday night the deceased and Butlin differed and fought together, agreeing to settle the matter the following morning. On Thursday the deceased called upon Butlin, stating that "he was ready". Butlin said he didn't want to fight, and began to cry. Deceased said he could kill Butlin if he came out, and then stripped. Deceased and Butlin, together with twelve or fourteen others, went into a brick field, where they fought two rounds and fell, the deceased being underneath and his head coming in contact with a brick. They were lifted up, and in the course of the third round (during which both received blows in the chest) deceased fell, saying, "I have done ; the back of my head is so bad". He never spoke again, and after being removed into the shade, died in the course of a few minutes. The jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against Butlin, who was committed for trial on the coroner's warrant.

18 10 September 1868

ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS **William Butlin**, boatman of Oxford, was committed for trial at the Leicester Assizes for the manslaughter of **Edward Brain** at Moira on the 3rd inst. Bail was accepted, himself in £40 and two sureties in £20 each.

19 29 October 1868

CROWN COURT **William Rowe**, aged 45, boatman, and Thomas Bardal (on bail) were charged with stealing on the 1st October three hundred and fifty seven pounds weight of iron, the property of John Gilbert Crompton and others of Stanton-by-Dale. Mr Holloway prosecuted, and Mr Buzzard defended the prisoners. The evidence in this case was very voluminous, but the facts very plain. The prisoners were employed at Stanton Iron Works, and were alleged on the day mentioned in the indictment to have stolen the iron, which was subsequently traced to their possession. The prisoners were found Guilty, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment each.

20 31 December 1868

ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS **Thomas Jones**, a dirty looking fellow from Measham, was brought up in the custody of Police-constable Handley of the Derbyshire Force, and

charged with stealing a gelding, the property of **William Pickering** of Moira, on the 22nd inst. Prosecutor, a boatman plying between Oxford and Moira, stated that he bought the gelding from Mr Trussell of Moira for £10 ; but the animal was knocked up on his third voyage to Oxford, and in consequence he put him out to (ley?) at Measham. On the 22nd instant, he sent prisoner, who was in his employ, to fetch the horse from Measham, and gave him 1s to pay expenses. Prisoner did not return, and prosecutor afterwards ascertained that he had sold the horse for 14s. A witness named Saddington was called, who deposed to purchasing the horse for 14s, intending to have it slaughtered for the dogs. Having learnt afterwards that prisoner had no right to sell the horse, he went to the "Queen's" at Measham and found defendant there. He demanded his money back, but prisoner told him he had spent it. Prisoner, who had nothing to say in his defence, was committed to the Derbyshire Quarter Sessions.

21 11 February 1869

BURTON POLICE COURT

UNLAWFULLY KILLING A HARE **John Perkins**, boatman, was convicted upon the evidence of two witnesses for killing a hare at Branstone on the 24th ultimo, he not having a game licence authorising him to do so, and was fined 20s and 17s 6d costs ; in default one month's imprisonment.

22 29 April 1869

DERBY COUNTY POLICE William Straw, a rough looking lad aged 19, was brought up in custody charged with stealing, on the 17th instant at Long Eaton, a watch and chain, the property of **John Simmons**, a boatman. The prosecutor said that about five or six at night on the 17th inst, the prisoner, who had ridden with him on the boat from Mountsorrel, was left in the boat, the property being also there ; next morning the watch and chain, and the prisoner also, were missing. It was subsequently found that the prisoner had sold the watch to a boatman for 5s in a public house at Long Eaton, telling him he had won it in a raffle at Ilkeston. Police-constable Cupitt apprehended the prisoner at Sutton Bonnington ; at first he denied having taken the watch, but when he got him to Long Eaton he admitted that he had stolen the watch. The prisoner, who said he came from Somercotes, but had no friends to speak of, pleaded guilty. Committed to gaol for one month, with hard labour.

23 6 May 1869

DETERMINED ATTEMPT AT MURDER On Tuesday at the Derby Borough Police Court, before the Mayor and H Darby Esq, Sarah Boccock, a widow 37 years of age, was brought up in custody, charged with having attempted to destroy herself and her child, a little girl apparently five years of age. The prisoner is the widow of a policeman who died of consumption whilst engaged as a private officer in the Nottingham police force. The Head Constable said, on Monday night about half past nine o'clock, a young man came to the Police Station asking for assistance, stating that a woman had been found lying on the railway, and he believed she intended to destroy herself, as well as her child, which she had with her. He drove her away from there, he said, and she went by the side of the water, leading past Young's stables, and down to the water's edge. She was then heard by some boatmen to say to the child, "Don't cry", and directly afterwards jumped into the canal. A boatman at once dived into the canal and rescued the prisoner and her child. He could not say whether or not she was out of her depth, but she was in such a drunken state that the child would have been drowned if the boatman had not rescued it. Inspector Fearn said the prisoner lived in Talbot Street. She has a daughter fourteen years of age not altogether right, the child she attempted to drown, and a younger child about fifteen months old. When she was brought to the lock up, she was in a very drunken state. **James Mead**, a boatman, said about a quarter to ten o'clock on Monday night, he was engaged with some boats on the canal, when he saw the prisoner come over the bridge in a very intoxicated state with a child in her arms. She got by the side of the water and, after telling the child "not to cry" and walking twenty yards or so, he noticed her jump into the water with the child. He dived off the boat, got the child out, and having laid it on the bank,

plunged into the water again and rescued the prisoner. She was then very drunk. The Mayor : Was she out of her depth at the time you got hold of her? Witness : No, sir, but the child was. It would be about five feet deep where she got in. The Clerk : Did she cry for assistance on getting into the water? Witness : No, sir, she was splashing about. Mrs Fearn (who had taken charge of the child) : The little child says her mother had two pints very near where she jumped into the water. Prisoner : The child fell in, and I jumped in to fetch it out. James Sawyer, a young man, said about half past nine o'clock he found the prisoner lying across the railway near the cattle dock with her child on the top of her. She was screaming at this time. He told her he should fetch a policeman, whereupon she went away saying she should go and drown herself. The Bench remanded her for a week.

24 24 June 1869

A MAN AND HIS SON CUT TO PIECES ON THE RAILWAY On Friday, Mr E Hooper, district coroner for Wednesbury, opened an inquest at the Plough and Harrow Inn, Lea Brook, on the bodies of **John Mann**, aged 45, and his son **George**, aged about 12 or 13, both of whom were killed on the line of the Great Western Railway on the preceding night. It seems that the elder deceased, who is supposed to have followed the calling of a boatman and to have lived at Tewkesbury, was at the Bush Inn on Thursday evening with his son ; and it is conjectured that, after having left the house, both father and son were making their way across the line when they were overtaken by the 10.30 train from Wolverhampton, and cut down and killed on the spot. The dead body of the elder deceased, with his head severed from his trunk, was found at about a quarter to twelve o'clock by a shunter named Richard Walton, but the corpse of the lad, whose right arm and leg were broken, was not discovered until four o'clock on Friday morning. The bodies of the hapless pair were conveyed to the inn where the inquiry was held. On the elder deceased was found £2 18s 1 3/4d in money, two pieces of gutta percha piping, knife, key and some other small articles. The inquiry was adjourned for the attendance of witnesses connected with the railway company.

25 8 July 1869

DERBYSHIRE SESSIONS **John Prince**, 15, boatman, was charged with stealing 784 lbs weight of iron, the property of Joseph Woolley, George Tomlinson and Joseph Tomlinson, at Heage on the 25th of June last. Mr Bristowe prosecuted ; Mr Greatorex defended. Not guilty.

26 8 July 1869

ATTEMPTED MURDER NEAR HANLEY A most horrible and determined attempt to murder was perpetrated on Saturday morning at Etruria. The would-be murderer is **Thomas Vaughan**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Williamson, coal and iron masters, Goldenhill, and the victim is his wife, **Emma**, who was but 15 years of age when he married her, and who is only 29 now. She has two children who have been living in the boat with their parents ; and only three weeks ago her husband, by his ill-treatment, brought on a premature confinement. On Friday the boat was at Longport, when Vaughan had been staying on a two days drinking "bout", and was taken on by the children to Etruria. The wife walked on from Longport late on Friday night, and came up with the boat at Etruria locks. The husband, who was in the cabin, on seeing her, declared he would kill her, and took up a windlass handle (an iron key carried in every boat for the purpose of opening the locks), and struck her with it on the head several times. He again declared he would "do" for her, and said if he could have dragged her out of the boat, he would have drowned her. She fell upon her knees, and begged him to spare her till morning. He rejoined he would kill her, and put her head into a stove of the cabin, remarking that if there had been any fire in it, he would have burnt her to death. As she lay upon the floor, he got upon the hatches, and kicked her violently on the throat and lower part of the face. She screamed "Murder", and someone coming up, she managed to get away from the boat and drag herself to the house of **Mr Glass**, the canal inspector, who had her conveyed to the Infirmary. The injuries she had received were pronounced by the house surgeon (Mr Taylor) to be very dangerous, and it was deemed necessary to take her deposition. On Saturday the Mayor (Mr Ridgway), with the Magistrates' Clerk and Superintendent Baker, went to

the Infirmary for that purpose. The poor woman presents a most horrible spectacle. Her eyes are puffed up so as almost to exclude sight, a terrible gash ran across her cheek, and her face and head generally were a mass of bruises. The sight was too much for one of the officials engaged in taking the deposition, and he fainted ; while his Worship himself found it necessary to retire for a short time. The husband, who was apprehended at Stoke about eight o'clock on Saturday morning, was present, and appeared utterly indifferent to everything that was going on. In fact, on coming into the presence of his wife, he gave a sort of chuckle on seeing her. She made a statement, in which besides what is given above, she said after her husband struck her with the windlass he looked about for a grass hook (or hay cutter) and said if he could find it, he would cut her head off. She also said that her son was in the cabin while this was taking place, and that he was in great fear of his father, who had ill-treated him. She was married to the prisoner fourteen years ago at St Mary's, Wolverhampton. He had but recently returned from seven years' penal servitude for horse stealing. She was tried with him, but acquitted. She made a statement against him at the trial, and ever since he had borne her spite. The poor wretch added that she did not think she should recover, and that she was dying. The prisoner, who put no questions and said nothing, was remanded on a charge of attempted murder.

27 30 December 1869

ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS **Joseph Reed**, boatman, Berkhamstead, was charged by W Robinson, butcher, with stealing a beast's heart on the 23rd instant. The case was proved by Mary Birkinhead, who said she saw two beast's hearts hanging in Mr Robinson's shop, and on missing one, she saw the prisoner near the shop with a bundle in his hand. She asked him what he had got in the bundle, and he said "groceries". She caught hold of the bundle and found it contained a beast's heart. She took it from him and called for assistance. The bundle was then examined and found to contain the beast's heart which had been taken out of the shop. Inspector Ward said he took the man in custody, and in answer to the charge, the latter said, "I did not take it ; my mate took it, and gave me his bundle to hold". Sentenced to fourteen days' hard labour.

28 16 March 1871

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE **Samuel Gregory**, a boatman, was convicted of drunkenness, and was fined 5s and costs.

29 6 April 1871

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE **William Barber**, a boatman, was convicted of having cruelly treated a horse, by causing it to work when it had a large flesh wound on its shoulder, and was ordered to pay a fine of 10s and costs.

30 11 May 1871

BURTON POLICE COURT

VIOLENT ASSAULTS AT SHOBNALL **John Mears**, **Jesse Parks** and **Edward Parks** of Tatenhill surrendered to their bail to answer a charge of violently assaulting **James Duggan** at Shobnall on the 1st inst. Mr R A Stevenson appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Wilson for the prisoners. For the prosecution it was stated that complainant, who is a shepherd at Sinai Park Farm, attended Mr Dickinson's sale on Monday the 1st inst, and on returning home between six and seven in the evening, called in at the Britannia Inn, Shobnall. Edward Parks was there, and threatened to strike Duggan if he did not have a jug filled with ale. Duggan, however, did not oblige him, and on his being further threatened by Parks he ran off towards Sinai Park. On his way, he met with Jesse Parks, who hit him on the side of the head with a large stick, and knocked him down. Edward Parks and Mears not only struck and kicked him several times, but stabbed him on the left arm with a pocket knife. Mr Cameron, manager at Messrs Robinson and Co's brewery, happened to be walking along the road at the time, and hearing a confused noise, turned round and went to Duggan's assistance. The men then desisted, and on Duggan being raised from the ground it was ascertained

that he had received a severe cut on the left arm, from which blood was flowing profusely. Mrs Stone, a person residing close by, washed his arm, and Mr Capewell, farm bailiff at Sinai Park, assisted him home. On the following morning, he went to have his arm dressed at the Infirmary, and it was there attended to by Mr C H Lowe, surgeon, who found that he had an incised wound on the left arm, about an inch long and an inch and a half deep, which must have been done by some sharp instrument. **Charles Warrington**, boatman of Barton-under-Needwood, George Whateley, waggoner at Sinai Park, and Daniel Harrison, another waggoner, were also witnesses for the prosecution, but none of them spoke with any certainty as to Edward Parks and Mears. The defence set up was that in the afternoon a disturbance occurred at the Britannia Inn between some of the Parkses and a man named Martin, and that Duggan was a sympathising friend of Martin's, for shortly before six o'clock a bricklayer named Litherland met with Duggan in the fields leading to Sinai Park, and was then informed that these men had been beating Martin. Duggan also said, speaking with reference to the men Parks, that he would make them right before morning, and when Litherland left him, he appeared as though he was going to Mr Meakin's to fetch some men to assist him. It was also sworn by William Scattergood, John Hood and William Astle, all of Tatenhill, that Duggan, after the occurrence, accused Mears of having stabbed him. Edward Parks and Mears were discharged. Jesse Parks (against whom Mr Stevenson was anxious to proceed for wounding with intent, but which indictment could not be supported by corroborative testimony) was fined 20s and 19s costs.

31 18 May 1871

DERBY COUNTY POLICE A boatman named **Hurd** was summoned for having cruelly worked a horse whilst in an unfit state on the 28th April. Mr Temperley, agent of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, attended for the prosecution, and said he saw the defendant in charge of a horse which was drawing a boat heavily laden with coal. The animal was in a very wretched condition – it seemed one mass of skin and bone – and evidently suffered great pain. Having examined the horse he found a large sore on its back, underneath the collar, which was one mass of matter. Independent of the sore, the animal was quite in an unfit state to work. The Inspector told the defendant to take the horse away and to desist working it, but had subsequently ascertained that the defendant had not done so, but had actually worked it as far as Shardlow, which is a considerable distance off. Defendant denied that the horse was in an unfit state to work. The Magistrates convicted the defendant in a penalty of 20s and costs.

Thomas Widdowson, a boatman, was summoned for a similar offence on the 28th of April, and Edward Smith, coal merchant, Newark, was also charged with causing the horse to be worked whilst in an unfit state, he being the owner of the horse. Mr Temperley also preferred these charges, which were denied. The Inspector saw the horse drawing a heavily laden coal barge on the Erewash Valley Canal at Ilkeston, whilst suffering from a suppurating sore on the off shoulder. The animal, unlike the previous one, was in good condition. On questioning the former defendant, he admitted that his employer (Mr Smith) was aware of the sore before his starting. At Newark the inspector had an interview with Mr Smith, who said that the horse's back had been bad about a fortnight. Both the defendants denied their intention to ill-treat the horse. The Magistrates thought the case of cruelty to be clearly established, and fined the former defendant 2s 6d and costs ; the latter defendant was fined £1 and costs.

32 17 August 1871

DERBY COUNTY POLICE **Joseph Turner**, boatman, Sawley, was summoned for having damaged certain gravel at Shardlow on the 22nd July. Mr W Briggs, solicitor, appeared on behalf of the defendant. Police-constable Billings saw the defendant about two o'clock in the morning of the day in question getting gravel from a bank in the river Trent, running through property belonging to Mrs Sutton of Shardlow Hall. The bank in consequence had given way, and the damage was now estimated at £4 10s. Defendant said he was in the employ of the Navigation Canal Company, and was performing the work in conformity with the instructions he had received. He was fined 1s and

costs.

33 24 August 1871

TAMWORTH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

TRYING TO RIDE ON THE BUFFER OF A RAILWAY CARRIAGE **William Fox**, boatman of Birmingham, was charged by Charles Sawtell, detective inspector, with trying to get on a railway train while in motion, at the Tamworth station on the Midland Railway, at 8.35 on the 16th inst. It appears that the prisoner had not sufficient money to pay his fare to Birmingham, and after the train had started, he tried to get on the buffer of the last carriage. He was fined 5s and 13s 6d costs.

34 5 October 1871

BURTON POLICE COURT

HIGHWAY OFFENCE **John Perkins**, boatman of this town, was fined 4s and 9s 6d costs for allowing his horse to stray on the Tatenhill and Branstone highway on the 17th of September.

35 26 October 1871

BURTON POLICE COURT

ASSAULT AND ROBBERY **John Scales** of Wolverhampton and **William Henry Allis** of Brockmore, two youths in the employ of boatmen, were brought up in custody charged with assaulting and robbing William Macgregor at Shobnall on Friday evening. Mr Stevenson defended. From the evidence for the prosecution, it appeared that Macgregor, who is an itinerant bagpiper, was walking along the canal side from Tatenhill to Burton on Friday evening, when a boatman's lad threw a stone at him and hit him on the right shoulder. He ran after the lad, and threatened to warm him if he did that again. The boy lay down against the bridge, but prosecutor did not lay hands on him. Allis then came from the flat boat then lying in the canal, and began to "thump" prosecutor in the face, and presently Scales came to his assistance and also beat him. They knocked him down and kicked him on the right hip and breast. He had half a crown, two sixpences and a threepenny piece in a small pocket in his waistcoat, which fell to the ground in the tussle, and he saw Scales pick up the half crown. He said to him, "That is my money, and if you don't give it me, I'll punish you". Scales swore at him, and Allis began to thrash prosecutor a second time. Prosecutor gave information to the police, and when Sergeant Gilbride and Constable Heaton returned with him and the prisoners were charged with the offence, Scales said, "We'll give him back his money and have no more bother". Allis replied, "You can give it him. I haven't got it". The sergeant told them to make haste with their work, as they must go along with him, whereupon Scales said several times, "We'll give it him back ; it's all right, master". The prisoners were with difficulty apprehended, and on Allis being searched at the police station, a shilling, two sixpences and a halfpenny were found upon him. Scales had no money. For the defence, Ann Shepherd, wife of John Shepherd, who resides on the canal side, swore positively that Macgregor kicked the little boy, and that when Allis interfered with him, he pulled off his coat and fought with him. Sentenced to twenty one days' hard labour.

HEAVY PENALTY FOR ASSAULTING POLICE **Thomas Sherwin**, boatman in the employ of Messrs Cockshot and Gander, Derby, and **John Littlemore**, boatman in the employ of Mr William Beckett, Leicester, were charged on remand with assaulting Sergeant Gilbride and Constable Heaton while in the execution of their duty on the 20th inst. Mr Stevenson defended. It appears that while Sergeant Gilbride had hold of the two prisoners in the last case, Sherwin went to the boat to him, and swearing at him, asked what he was doing there ; he told him his business, and showed him his handcuffs, but Sherwin persisted in his going off the boat, asked him for his warrant, and said he had orders to throw any policeman into the canal if he should come on his boat without a warrant. The sergeant told him that he should not go without Scales and Allis, when Sherwin took hold of him, pulled him about, and after some struggling pushed him into the canal. He got out again, pulled out his handcuffs, and took Sherwin into custody. Littlemore struggled with constable

Heaton when he was going to Gilbride's assistance, and eventually pushed him back from the boat to the canal bank. Mr Stevenson produced evidence of good character, and pleaded for a mitigation of punishment. Sherwin said that the sergeant slipped off the boat into the water. Mr Oswell reminded the Bench that the police had always great difficulty when arresting boatmen, and were invariably assaulted. The Magistrates said that it was a bad case, and felt that they should not be doing their duty if they inflicted a smaller penalty than £5 and 9s 6d costs each ; in default, three months' imprisonment.

36 14 December 1871

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE **Joseph Burgess** and **Samuel Pickering**, two boatmen, were charged with stealing 2 cwt of bones, the property of the Grand Junction Canal Company. The prisoners had had charge of a fly boat laden with bones from London to Leicester, and on Wednesday night the prisoner Burgess went to a second hand shop in Siddals Road, Derby, kept by a person named Parker, and asked the price he gave for bones. Parker suspected from his manner and appearance that he had obtained some bones illegally. He communicated with Mr Cantrill, the local agent of the company, who told him to detain the bones if the man returned with them. The boatman returned to his shop with the bones, which he accordingly kept, and the men were taken into custody. Mr Cantrill communicated with the company's agent at Leicester, and received information that there were two cwt of bones short of the amount invoiced at London. The Mayor was of opinion that it would be more regular to prosecute the men where the theft was committed and not where the bones were offered for sale, and the prisoners were remanded to be given up to the Leicester authorities.

37 11 January 1872

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS **Thomas Jones**, boatman of Measham (who failed to appear, was fined 10s 6d and costs for (being drunk) and riotous at Measham on the 19th ultimo.

38 16 May 1872

ATTEMPTED WIFE MURDER AT BIRMINGHAM On Thursday afternoon last, a boatman named **Whitehouse** from Hereford was charged at Brierley Hill, Staffordshire, with brutally assaulting his wife and endangering her life. A policeman hearing screams ran to the boat, and found defendant's wife covered with blood, and Whitehouse violently assaulting her. Upon the officer interfering, defendant thrust him away and threw his wife into the canal, from whence she was rescued, apparently in a lifeless condition. Whitehouse was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Upon hearing the sentence, Mrs Whitehouse cried out loudly and fainted in court.

39 20 June 1872

OAKTHORPE

INQUEST On Monday last an inquest was held at the Steam Mill Inn before William H Sale Esq, on the body of **Fred Hayes**, aged 11 years, who was found drowned in the canal at Oakthorpe Colliery on the previous day. Deceased was the son of **William Hayes**, a boatman trading to Brinklow, Warwickshire, who was waiting at the colliery for coals. He was last seen alive in the cabin at midnight on Saturday, and at seven o'clock on the following morning, he was found drowned near to his father's boat. From the evidence of deceased's father and a boatman named **Frederick Taylor**, it appeared that the boy was in the habit of going to sleep in another boat, and it is surmised that he was going from one boat to the other and fell into the water. Verdict "Found drowned".

40 12 September 1872

BURTON POLICE COURT

DRUNKENNESS **Maria Taylor**, wife of **William Taylor**, boatman of Woodside, near Dudley, charged by constable Bishop with being drunk in Green Street at eleven o'clock on Saturday night,

was fined 5s and 8s 4d costs.

41 24 October 1872

BOROUGH POLICE COURT **Jemima Bancroft** pleaded guilty to being drunk in the Market Place on Saturday night. Information had been given to the police that the prisoner, when intoxicated, had attempted to drown her child. She had been seen going down Exeter Street in a very excited manner, beating her breast and saying that she was in great trouble. On being asked to explain the cause of her trouble, she made an indistinct statement respecting a daughter she had had before she was married ; and she was proceeding towards the river when the police were sent for. The prisoner now complained of being ill-treated by a grown up daughter. The prisoner's husband said he was a boatman, and his wife had never attempted to take her life. After having been cautioned, she was discharged.

42 14 November 1872

ACCIDENTS On Saturday, a case of accident was received at the Infirmary, that of **Samuel Till**, a boatman belonging to Derbyshire who, while walking along the plank of his boat at Horninglow, fell amongst granite stones lying in the body of the boat, and suffered a compound fracture of the right leg. Under the care of Mr Lloyd, he is doing well.

43 21 November 1872

SUPPOSED SUICIDE OF A MIDLAND RAILWAY INSPECTOR About seven o'clock on Wednesday morning, as a boatman named **John Hiley** was proceeding along the canal from Derby to Chellaston, on approaching Parson's Bridge, about 300 yards below the Navigation Inn, he observed something floating in the water, which on closer examination proved to be a dead body. He procured assistance and got it out of the water, and conveyed it to the Navigation Inn, where it was subsequently identified as that of Thomas Smithells, an inspector in the Locomotive Department of the Midland Railway Company. On the towing-path, under the hedge, were found an umbrella and a portion of a broken bottle, and a hat was found about fifty yards from the place where the body was taken out of the water. There were no marks of violence on the body. The deceased was about 23 years of age, and was very respectably connected, his father being general manager of the Caledonian Railway. He lodged at the Clarendon Hotel, Station Street, and was last seen on Tuesday night, when he retired to rest apparently depressed in spirits. He had been much troubled about having been removed from the inspection of of the southern (....) of the Locomotive Department to that of the (.....) ; but he had become reconciled to the change (.....) pecuniarily was for the better. From the evidence given at the inquest, which was held by Mr Sale on Thursday, it appeared that the deceased was a most (.....) young man, and no one was aware that he (.....) any disappointment, nor could any explanation be given as to the cause of his taking his own life. The jury returned a verdict that "the deceased was found dead without any marks of violence on him, in the water of the Derby Canal, in the (.....) of Alvaston, but as to the state of the mind of deceased, and how or by what means the body (.....) into the canal, there is no evidence to show".
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44 21 November 1872

INQUEST On Saturday last, an inquest was held at the Infirmary before Mr Bagshaw, deputy coroner, on the body of **Samuel Till**, aged 50, a boatman belonging to Shardlow. The particulars of the accident were given in last week's Chronicle ; and the evidence today showed that deceased went on well until Tuesday, when lockjaw set in, and he died at about four o'clock on Thursday morning. Verdict "Accidental death".

45 17 April 1873

RUGELEY

SAD SUICIDE OF A YOUNG WOMAN Last week an inquest was held at the White Lion Inn,

before Mr W Morgan, coroner, on the body of Elizabeth Barker, a young woman nineteen years of age, daughter of the landlord. Police-sergeant Goddard deposed that about midnight on Saturday he heard that the body of a young woman had been found in the canal, and on going to a spot about five hundred yards on the Haywood side of Palmer's Bridge, he found the deceased's body floating in the water. There were no marks of violence upon it. The deceased had taken off her dress, waterproof cloak and hat, and left them on the towing-path. Witness had known the deceased personally for some years, and for the last eighteen months she had appeared much altered, and hardly seemed to him to be sane. He believed that she was addicted to drink. **Mr W Woodworth**, canal agent, deposed that about half past eleven on Saturday night, a boatman informed him that he had seen some female clothing lying on the towing-path, and on going to the spot, witness found a dress, a waterproof cloak, a woollen scarf and a straw hat. He saw what he supposed to be a human body lying in the canal, and went and informed the police. Witness always considered the deceased to be of peculiar temperament. Catherine Barker said she had been married to the landlord about eighteen months. The deceased was her step daughter, and they had always lived very comfortably together. Lately the deceased had seemed very low spirited. Witness heard the deceased go upstairs on Saturday night, and thought that she had retired to rest, but afterwards found that she had gone out, and imagined that she had paid a visit to her sister at Ingestre. The deceased had been drinking on Saturday, but witness considered that she was sober when she left the house. The jury returned a verdict of "Temporary insanity".

46 17 April 1873

LICHFIELD COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

ROBBERY AT CHASE TOWN, AND GALLANT CONDUCT OF A POLICEMAN **Henry Baker** (20), boatman of Birmingham, was charged with stealing, on the 10th of April, a flannel shirt, the property of **Walter Mason** of Birmingham. The prosecutor, prior to a recent illness, worked as a boat loader at Chase Town, where he again visited yesterday seeking work, but failing to find any he slept all night in a large cabin there, used chiefly by boatmen. At 10 am today, he said he saw his flannel shirt safe in the cabin, but two hours afterwards, when he awoke from sleep, the shirt was gone, and the prisoner, who had been there, was gone too. He at once went with Police-constable Johnson and found the prisoner with his boat near Brownhills. He told the prisoner he gave him into custody for stealing his shirt. After some words the prisoner, who was standing on the boat in the middle of the canal, threw the shirt ashore to the prosecutor and the policeman, and then pushed the boat towards the opposite side from where they were, and with the aid of a long pole, leaped off the boat to dry ground on the other side, and then ran off across the fields. Police-constable Enoch Johnson of Brownhills said he went with the prosecutor to the canal near Brownhills, two miles from where the shirt was said to have been stolen. After the prosecutor spoke to the prisoner, the latter threw the stolen shirt to them, and then pushed the boat off, jumped ashore on the contrary side to them, and ran away. Witness at once jumped into and swam across the canal, and followed the prisoner nearly a mile across fields to another canal, to cross which the prisoner did not venture, and consequently the policeman, in his wet clothes, arrested him. Superintendent Hill having informed the magistrate of a previous conviction for felony against the prisoner, he was committed for trial at the next Quarter Sessions.

47 1 May 1873

INDECENT ASSAULT AT SPONDON On Wednesday the 23rd ult, before W T Cox and C E Newton Esqs, **Thomas Beck**, boatman of Ockbrook, was charged with indecently assaulting Mary Ann Gill, a respectable middle aged female. It appeared that the prosecutrix was returning from Derby to Ockbrook about nine o'clock on Monday evening, and was on the Nottingham Road in the parish of Spondon, when the prisoner overtook her, threw her down, and attempted to commit the assault complained of. She screamed for assistance, and when two men were proceeding towards her, the prisoner ran off. Information was given to Acting Sergeant Mills, who procured a warrant and apprehended the prisoner. Fined £1 and costs.

48 26 June 1873

ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH

PETTY SESSIONS **W Butlin**, boatman late of Moira, was fined £1 1s and costs, or one month's hard labour, for assaulting William Gibbons at Moira on the 9th inst. Defendant did not appear. Complainant's witnesses proved that defendant went up to complainant and without any provocation struck him three or four times.

49 10 July 1873

BOROUGH COURT **John Smith**, Eagle Street, was summoned for neglecting to comply with the bye-laws of the School Board and to send his child to school. Defendant, who has been twice summoned by the School Board, did not appear on this occasion. It was stated that defendant is a boatman and receives the wages of two men, but to save the wages he would have to pay a man to steer the boat, he has his lad (who is ten years of age) employed at the work. Fined 5s or seven days' imprisonment.

50 16 October 1873

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS **Job Clifton**, boatman, was summoned by Sergeant Taylor for being drunk and riotous at Measham on the 4th instant. Fined 10s 6d and costs, or fourteen days.

51 27 November 1873

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS **Andrew Twigg**, boatman of Measham, was summoned by Sergeant Taylor for being drunk and riotous at Measham on the 2nd instant. Defendant, who did not appear, was fined 10s and costs, or fourteen days.

52 25 December 1873

ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH

PETTY SESSIONS **Thomas Bossom** the younger, boatman of Moira, was fined 10s 6d and costs for having, on the 4th instant at Moira assaulted Mary Butlin. Mr Dewes defended.

53 15 January 1874

BOROUGH POLICE COURT **Benjamin Thomas** was brought up on a warrant charged with assaulting his wife, **Elizabeth Thomas**. She said her husband was a boatman, and they lived in the Morledge, Derby. A few nights since, while drunk, he shamefully ill-used and pulled her out of bed, and caused the fearful black eyes with which she appeared. The prisoner was convicted, and fined 20s and 12s 6d costs, or in default twenty one days' imprisonment with hard labour.

54 19 March 1874

COUNTY POLICE COURT **Robert Bancroft**, boatman, was charged with stealing six pieces of plaster, worth 5s, the property of Messrs Pegg and Harpur, Aston-on-Trent. Seven days' hard labour.

55 23 April 1874

BURTON POLICE COURT

FISHING IN THE CANAL **John Nixon**, boatman in the employ of Messrs Fellowes and Co of Tipton, was charged with unlawfully taking fish from the canal by means of a net on the 4th instant. A keeper in the employ of F Gretton Esq (who has the sole right of fishing in the canal) stated that he caught the defendant fishing with a net in the canal near the lock at Branstone. He asked him if he was aware that the right of fishing with a net was vested with the lord of the manor, and defendant appeared ignorant of it. He then took possession of the net, and subsequently received instructions to summon him. Nixon today stated that he had borrowed the net, and was very sorry if he had done any harm. If he had done any, it was done in ignorance. He handed up to the Bench a written character from his employers. Mr Lyon said it was a satisfaction to the Bench to receive so

very good an account of the defendant as to his honesty, sobriety and industry, and they should therefore only fine him 6d, and 6s 6d costs – the lowest penalty they could impose.

56 28 May 1874

DERBY

INQUEST On Monday, Mr Vallack, coroner, held an inquest at the Town Hall, touching the death of an infant child, the name of which was unknown. A boatman named **Lester** was with his boat in the Derby Canal near Messrs Pegg, Harpur and Co's colour works on Friday, when he found the body in the water and communicated with the police, who conveyed it to the dead house. In the meantime, Mr Wright, surgeon, had examined the body, and found that it was a full grown child. An open verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

57 25 June 1874

BOROUGH POLICE COURT

REFRACTORY BOATMEN **George Bird** was brought up on a warrant, charged with assaulting **Joseph James Cantrell**, the local agent for the Grand Junction Canal Company. The defendant is a boatman in the employ of **Samuel Nutt**, the captain of one of the Company's boats, and it appeared that there had been some unpleasantness respecting the orders which Nutt had received. On Wednesday morning, the defendant and another boatman named **Ramsden** interfered several times with the loading of a boat, and because the complainant remonstrated with them, they pushed him about and put their fists into the face of his foreman. The complainant picked up an iron bar, and said if any of the men touched him he should strike them ; thereupon the men rushed at him, and he fell to the ground. Bird then took up a heavy iron bar and threatened to strike him with it. Defendant was fined 10s and costs, and a similar fine was imposed upon a man named Ramsden, who had been charged with taking part in the assault.

58 2 July 1874

BOROUGH POLICE COURT

DRUNKENNESS **Frederick Harrison**, a boatman, was charged with being helplessly drunk in Exeter Street on Saturday evening. Prisoner, who has been convicted five times previously, was fined 5s and costs.

59 9 July 1874

BURTON POLICE COURT

ASSAULT **Thomas Palethorpe**, boatman of Barton-under-Needwood, was charged with assaulting his father, Robert Palethorpe, on the 1st inst. The defendant was bound over to keep the peace for six months in his own recognisances of £10.

60 16 July 1874

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS **John Bird**, boatman of Measham, was charged by Superintendent Sharpe with riding without reins at Oakthorpe on the 16th ultimo. Defendant, who did not appear, was fined 1s and 9s costs.

61 13 August 1874

ELFORD

A YOUTHFUL THIEF Frederick Carthy, a lad of twelve, son of a labourer of Alrewas, was charged with stealing a pair of boots, value 5s 6d, the property of **Charles Wall**, boatman, on the 1st inst. It appears that prisoner, whose family bear a very bad character in the neighbourhood, went to the prosecutor's house at Alrewas, and asked for the loan of some matches, and whilst these were being fetched, purloined the boots from the coalhouse. He had been previously caught in similar acts, but on promising to mend, no proceedings were taken. It was stated by Inspector Woollaston that the lad was unable to read, having never been sent to school. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and was

sentenced to one month imprisonment with hard labour.

62 10 September 1874

BURTON POLICE COURT

A BRUTAL HUSBAND Robert Palethorpe, an old boatman of Barton Turn, was charged with using threats towards his wife, **Ann Palethorpe**, on the 6th inst. On the day in question, the defendant told his wife that if it were not for the law he would take away her life. He had repeatedly threatened and assaulted her, and she was in danger of her life. The same parties were before the Bench a fortnight ago, but the woman withdrew her charge of assault against him on his promising to behave himself in the future. He was now bound over to keep the peace for six months in his own bond of £10, and two sureties in £5 each. The sureties not being forthcoming, the defendant was removed in custody.

63 15 October 1874

DERBY COUNTY POLICE COURT

A DISHONEST BOATMAN John Day was brought up in custody, charged with stealing a pair of trousers and a boat line, the property of **Charles Ward** of Alrewas. The prosecutor was with his boat at Swarkestone on the 26th September, and before leaving it, locked the cabin door. When he returned to the boat on the 28th, he discovered that the cabin door had been broken open, and his coat had been stolen. He missed the boat line two days afterwards. The prisoner was apprehended at Barton-under-Needwood, when he was in charge of a boat on Wednesday, and was then wearing the trousers. He pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment.

64 12 November 1874

HORNINGLOW

FATAL OCCURRENCE On Friday, an inquest was held at the Navigation Inn, Horninglow, before **A A Flint Esq**, coroner, on the body of **Jesse Moore**, aged 52 years, a boatman in the employ of the Grand Junction Canal Company. It transpired that at about nine o'clock on the morning of the 5th inst, the deceased was steering a boat on the canal between Stretton and Horninglow. The boat was in tow of a steamer, which suddenly stopped, and the deceased was caught on the head by the tiller of the boat and knocked into the water. He was immediately got out, but he died in a few minutes. There was a large cut on the left side of his head. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

65 24 December 1874

BOROUGH POLICE COURT

ALLEGED ROBBERY BY BOATMEN Thomas Whitby and William Miller, two boatmen, were charged with stealing a coat, vest and pair of braces, the property of **Henry Green**. Prosecutor said that he was a boatman, and on Saturday night missed his coat, vest and braces from a cupboard in the cabin of his boat. John Allsop, second hand dealer, Morledge, proved that Miller offered the coat and vest to him, but he refused to purchase them. Police-constable Robinson saw the prisoner Whitby walking along Bag Lane with the braces hanging carelessly over his shoulder, but thinking they were his own property, took no further notice of the matter. From information since received, he, with Sergeant Spibey, apprehended the prisoners in charge of a boat between Breaston and Sandiacre, but the clothing had not been found. The prisoners were remanded.

66 22 April 1875

ALLEGED MANSLAUGHTER AT HANLEY An inquest was held on Tuesday on the body of **Eliza Mellor**, aged 53, who had died on the previous Friday from the effects, as supposed, of injuries inflicted by **Samuel Chandler**, a boatman, who had been paying his addresses to her, but quarrelled with her a fortnight or three weeks since. Chandler, who is charged with the manslaughter of the deceased, was present, and Superintendent Kelly watched the inquiry for the police authorities. The deceased had been living with her sister, who is landlady of the Foxley Inn,

Milton, where the prisoner had visited her. He saw her on the night of the 29th ult, and on the following day a bruise was noticed on her face by some neighbours, who inquired the cause. She said she had had a quarrel with the prisoner, and he had struck her in the face, but she begged that her sister might not be told of it. One of the persons to whom this statement was made mentioned it to the prisoner, who said he had only given the deceased a slight tap on the face. A *post mortem* examination had been made by Mr Oldham, surgeon, who said the deceased had a fracture of the skull, causing an abscess and resulting in compression of the brain, and death. Mr Oldham believed the fracture to have been caused by a kick or blow, and said a fall would not have produced it. The inquiry was adjourned for further evidence.

67 6 May 1875

BURTON POLICE COURT

A CURIOUS CASE **Richard Bradnock**, a boatman, and **Joseph Lacey**, lock-keeper, were charged with stealing 152 lbs weight of coal, value 1s 7d, on the 29th ult, the property of John Smith, inkeeper and coal merchant of Barton-under-Needwood. Mr Briggs of Derby appeared for Lacey. The hearing of the case occupied the Court a considerable time, but the particulars may be briefly summarised as follows :-

At about a quarter past five on Thursday morning, a tramp named Willett overtook the prisoner Bradnock (who was in part charge of a canal boat) on the towing-path of the canal between Alrewas and Wichnor. The boat was loaded with coal, and the prisoner invited Willett to assist in unloading it when it arrived at Barton. The witness consented, and on the arrival of the boat at Wichnor lock, Bradnock called up the other prisoner, whose house adjoins the towing-path there. After the boat had passed through the lock, Bradnock and Willett got on the boat, and Lacey was then standing on the bridge. Bradnock walked along the boat, and as he did so, threw eight or nine large lumps of coal into the canal. He asked Lacey if that would be enough until he came back, and Lacey replied, "Yes, and I will make it all right when you come back". The boat then went on to Barton and was unloaded. When the work was finished and the boat had gone away, Willett told the prosecutor what he had witnessed, and this led to Sergeant Harrison being fetched. After hearing Willett's communication, the officer, the prosecutor and Willett went to Lacey's house, where they found 124 lbs weight of coal of the same description as that which had been conveyed in the boat, some of it being wet and muddy. On the bank of the canal, in a spot indicated by Willett, traces of coal were found, and the officer also dragged a lump of coal weighing 28 lbs from the canal. Lacey was not at home, and the officer with Willett thereupon started in pursuit of Bradnock, whom he overtook at Fradley Junction. In reply to the charge of stealing the coal, he said he knew nothing about it, but when he was confronted with Willett he became abusive. Subsequently Lacey was arrested, and he likewise denied all knowledge of the affair. Bradnock today simply denied the truth of Willett's statement. For Lacey, Mr Briggs contended that Willett had concocted a story, probably for the purpose of gain, and that if any coal got into the canal it was because it had been dislodged by the rope ; and urged his client's good character during the twenty seven years he had been lock-keeper. He also called two boatmen – **Benjamin Hollingshead** and **Thomas Ashley**, who stated that they had recently given Lacey coal of the same description as that he was now charged with stealing, and that it was covered with mud. Both prisoners were committed for trial at the quarter sessions ; Lacey was admitted to bail.

68 13 May 1875

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS **John Wolf**, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing, at Oakthorpe on the 6th instant, six cauliflower plants, the property of John Young, and was ordered to pay 6d damage, 10s 6d fine and 14s 6d costs ; or fourteen days.

69 1 July 1875

STAFFORDSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

STEALING COAL AT WICHNOR **Richard Bradnock** (57), boatman, and **Joseph Lacy**, on bail,

were charged with stealing, on the 29th April at Wichnor, 152 lbs of coal, the property of the Earl of Shrewsbury. Mr Underhill prosecuted, and Mr C Smith defended. On the date mentioned, Bradnock steered a boat laden with coal from Brereton to Barton-under-Needwood, and, according to the evidence of the prosecution, when at Wichnor Lock the steerer threw several lumps of coal into the water, at the same time attracting Lacy's attention. Lumps of coal corresponding with that with which the boat was laden were subsequently found at Lacy's house. For the defence, it was contended that the coal was accidentally forced into the water by the tightening of the tow rope. The prisoners were found guilty. Bradnock, who had been twice previously convicted, was sent to gaol for twelve months ; Lacy was sent to prison for six months.

70 15 July 1875

BURTON POLICE COURT

HIGHWAY OFFENCE **William Perkins**, boatman, was charged by Police-constable Sands with allowing his horse to stray on the highway leading from Branstone to Tatenhill on Sunday the 4th instant. Fined 1s and 9s 6d costs.

71 19 August 1875

ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH POLICE COURT

LARCENY OF A CLOTHES LINE **Eli Collett**, a lad, was charged with stealing a clothes line, value 1s, on the 12th inst, the property of **James Butlin**. The prosecutor is a boatman, and the prisoner is also employed in a canal boat. On the day in question, while the boats were at the "Cut End", Ashby, the prisoner stole the line for the purpose of making some reins for his horse. He was however seen by another lad named Wilkes, who gave information to the prosecutor, and the prisoner was arrested on the following day by Police-constable Taylor. The prisoner, in consequence of his youth, was only sent to gaol for seven days.

72 16 December 1875

DERBYSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

CROWN COURT – FRIDAY

THE ALLEGED MURDER AT BULL BRIDGE **James Walker**, aged 23, boatman, was placed in the dock, charged with wilfully and of malice aforethought killing and murdering William Thurman at Crich on December 4th. On being arraigned by the Clerk of the Court, the prisoner in a firm voice pleaded "not guilty" and handed over a large envelope, requesting His Lordship to read its contents. After perusing the enclosure, the learned Judge said it was an application of the prisoner for the adjournment of the case until the next Assizes on the ground that sufficient time had not elapsed since his committal for him to prepare his defence or communicate with his friends. Mr Horace Smith said he had been instructed for the prosecution, and should offer no objection to an adjournment. His Lordship therefore adjourned the trial until the March Assizes, remarking that he considered the request a most reasonable one.

73 13 January 1876

ALREWAS

CAPTURE OF A SUPPOSED HORSE THIEF During the night of the 2nd instant, a horse, valued at £18 and belonging to **William Thompson**, a boatman of Coventry, was stolen from the Junction Inn, Fradley Junction. On the following day, information was given to the police, and Sergeant Harrison was speedily on the track of the thief. The officer traced the horse as far as Wolverhampton, and there found the animal in the possession of a Birmingham dealer, he having just completed the purchase of it from a young man, whom he pointed out. The officer took the young man into custody and questioned him about his possession of the horse, but his answers were vague and unsatisfactory. The man, who gave the name of Zachariah Parkes and said he belonged to Wednesbury, was brought away by the officer, and on Thursday was remanded by the Tamworth magistrates on the charge of stealing the horse.

74 20 January 1876

FRADLEY

THE HORSE STEALING CASE At the Tamworth Police Court yesterday week, Zachariah John Parkes, buckle-maker of Ringshill, Wednesbury, and who had been arrested by Sergeant Harrison, was charged with stealing a horse belonging to **William Thompson**, canal boatman, Coventry, on the 2nd instant. The prosecutor stabled his horse on the evening of January 2nd at the Swan Inn, Fradley Hill, and early next morning it was missing. On the following Wednesday, he saw the horse in the prisoner's possession at Wolverhampton market, and gave him into custody. Mr J Shaw adduced evidence for the defence, proving that the prisoner bought the horse for £2 10s from a boatwoman at Wednesbury, on the 3rd instant, and had no reason to think it had been dishonestly obtained. The prisoner was discharged.

On Friday, a woman named **Elizabeth Wood, alias Bevan**, was arrested at Derby by Sergeant Gilbride. Information reached the Burton police station that the woman referred to by Parkes was residing in Derby, and this induced the officer to proceed at once to that town. Having procured the assistance of Detective Spibey of the Derby force, he proceeded upon his round of inquiry, and ultimately found Mrs Wood, who answered the description given by Parkes, at the Angel Inn, Corn Market, where she was acting as servant. He charged her with stealing the horse, but she denied it, and further stated that she had never left Derby. Subsequent inquiries, however, proved that she was away from Derby during the night of the robbery, and that on her return she made several purchases of wearing apparel, concerning which she made some contradictory and inaccurate statements to the officer. She was brought to Burton, and has since been confronted with and identified by Parkes. On Monday, she was brought before R S Tomlinson Esq, and remanded to Tamworth. The prisoner has been a boatwoman, and some time ago was in custody at Middlewich on a charge of stealing a horse.

75 19 October 1876

THE INSPECTION OF BRICK AND TILE YARDS AND CANAL BOATS On Tuesday, a paper was read on the above subject by Mr Smith of Coalville. Mr Smith says :- It is quite time something was done to improve our system of factory inspection. The Royal Commissioners did not begin one minute too soon. I have visited brick and tile works and potteries in various parts of the country over and over again, and especially during the last few weeks, which have been in operation for years, and an inspector had not at the time of my visit set his foot upon the place, nor had any papers been sent to the employers advising them that they were under the Act. When I questioned one man as to whether an inspector had been to the works at which he was working, his answer was, "We don't want an inspector to come to our works as we don't use machinery, we grind our clay with a horse". So throughout the same or a similar tale is told a hundred times over – men, women and children working on the same works as they did years ago. On a number of works they have an idea that a law has been passed, and that I am at the bottom of all the mischief, and the girls and children get out of my way as fast as possible to prevent me seeing them, and the masters resort to language not the most refined.

I find as a rule it is the selfish employers, and not so much the men, that are opposed to the Act. For the life of me I cannot see the reason, for in taking the whole country through, making bricks, tiles &c, does not cost one penny per thousand more than it did before the Act was passed, at least, so far as regards the children, and this fact was brought out in evidence before the Commissioners, and appears in their report. If the children are older and get more wages, they do more work without doubt ; in fact the brick and tile makers are receiving from 7s to 8s per thousand more now for their goods than before the passing of the Act, out of which a penny goes to the children, 10s or 1s to the men, and the remainder between the colliery owner and the brickmaker. In many cases the cry raised about the hardships of prohibiting the employment of children and girls in making bricks is only to throw dust into the eyes of the public, and make the Commissioners believe "the moon is made of green cheese". The Brickmakers' Act has been a peg upon which to hang all sorts of complaints, such as high prices, scarcity of labour, and a host of other things which, when looked at,

will not bear the light of day.

I see from the Commissioners' reports some of the sub inspectors have allowed children to be worked for fourteen hours per day in making bricks and tiles. I say emphatically that the official who allows it has neither the interests of the children nor the welfare of the nation at heart.

With regard to the inefficient manner in which the system of inspection is carried out, Mr Smith says :- An inspector stated before the Commission that he has 10,000 factories and workshops in his district, and he has only been able to visit 4,000. A few of the new inspectors, "respectable busy-bodies overflowing with philanthropic zeal", are wanted here. But few things have done more to cause annoyance to both parents and employers alike than the "piecemeal hit and miss" kind of inspection which has been going on for so long. They say, and with some reason, "We should not mind if the inspector came to all places alike ; we don't like this making fish of one and flesh of another". I shall be sorry if our sub inspectors by this uneven action should throw into the cup that portion that will make our Factory and Workshops' Acts distasteful and unpopular to the working and other classes of this country.

It will never do at this time of day for any man, or number of men, to seek to upset Acts of Parliament, and employ children of tender age and females under sixteen in such heavy and unfeminine occupations as making bricks, tiles and at collieries, ironworks, salt works and similar places. They who do these things seek to serve their own selfish ends, and care nothing for the health and education of the children, the chastity of the women, the comfortable and happy homes for our artisans, and the welfare of the nation. They are worse than infidels and heathens, for they aim at destroying national life and moral virtues.

On the subject of the inspection of canal boats, Mr Smith observes :- Not 5 per cent of the men, women and children who spend their lives on the canal can read or write ; and I have it from the men themselves that nine out of ten are drunkards – they buy rum by pints, and drink it like water. In the little village of Branston, near Rugby, there are ten public houses adjoining the canal in a distance of little over a mile, at which the boatmen, their wives and children are to be seen at any time of the day. One boatman, who has worked between the Potteries, Birmingham and London during the past forty years, does not know of half a dozen boaters who are members of a Christian Church. He further says that two parts out of three of the men and women living as husbands and wives are unmarried. If my estimate of 100,000 be true, and I am led to believe it is under the mark, we have 22,400 men, 22,400 women and 72,000 children, which may be termed "our canal population" ; out of this number we have 13,000 men and 13,000 women living together in an unmarried state, and 40,000 illegitimate children living, floating and working in connection with canal boats.

A governor of one of our large gaols states that they are the worst class of criminals he has had to do with. Be it said in their favour, for honesty they will contrast favourably with many of our labouring population, especially when we take into account that their wages are less than many other occupations. During the whole of my inquiries and travels among them, I have not found one that has spoken disrespectful of either the Bible, religion, or the Queen. Owing to our canals being narrower and the locks shorter than in any other country, it follows that the boats and cabins must of necessity be smaller. The cabin is scarcely the size of a gentleman's dog kennel, into which are stowed, or huddled together, man, woman and six or seven children of both sexes, big and small, to live, sleep and die in. In Ireland and Scotland they are a long way ahead of us. The boats are bigger, and the boatmen's wives stay at home with the little ones, and the result is a steadier and better educated class of workmen. In Holland the boats are large enough to have cabins with two compartments ; and yet we, in England, with our canals running through the centres of civilisation, such places as Paddington, Oxford, Worcester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the Potteries and so on to Liverpool, we have allowed eight men, women and children to sleep and die in these holes like so many pigs, in a place not big enough for a man and two boys during the last century, without endeavouring to bridge over the fearfully wide cataract that separates the boater and his family from the rest of the civilised world. I advocate the entire prohibition of women and children living and working on canal boats. The work can be done cheaper without them. The men would become

more sober and industrious if “the women and children were out of the way”. There is a general feeling through this country that something should be done, and now is the time to do it. The boatmen and their children have been left to themselves too long already. As one said to me, they might live and die like dogs on pieces of old sacks, and in the stables with their horses, and the Government does not notice them. They have been supplying inmates for Workhouses and Hospitals long enough. They have neither the money to pay nor accommodation for the poor weakly sickly children in their cabins. We have a law that prevents our crowding in houses and in berths on ships, and yet we have had in our midst during the last century blacker and darker spots than the blackest in our towns, and the inspector has not had power to lift the latch, much less look into those “hell holes” of filth and disease, actually swarming with the most sickening and loathsome vermin, which might almost at times be taken out of the cabins by shovelfuls, causing a stench unbearable for some distance. A case occurred at Wirksworth a week or two since, where a man, woman and eight children were living in two rooms – places compared with a boat cabin, and six times larger – and the nuisance was ordered by the authorities to be stopped ; but whoever heard of an inspector stepping in to prevent overcrowding in boats? The boaters seem to think, many of them, that they are under no law, everybody must stand out of their way and let them do as they like. In conclusion, Mr Smith said : What I want to see is, the children educated, and the women good wives, happy homes for their husbands, and I do not care what plans are adopted, whether it be the Royal Commissioners' plan, or Mr Baker's plan, or my plan. I am hoping it will come to the same in the end. No inspection could be carried out so effectively and cheaply as the inspection of canal boats. With the assistance of the lock tenters or boat gaugers, two inspectors will be sufficient, and if they are stationed at proper places, they will be able to see the 28,000 boats on our 4,800 miles of river and canals twice a year, much easier than a Factory Inspector would visit 1,000 factories and workshops. I would station one at Birmingham, and give him the Black Country and all the canals south and east ; I would station another at Manchester, and give him all the canals north and west of Birmingham. The time has now come when overcrowding in canal cabins must be stopped, Sunday travelling – except in special cases – done away with ; the cabins cleaned as if they were on land not on the water, and the children educated. Anything short of this will not be satisfactory to the country.

76 29 March 1877

A MAN FOUND DROWNED AT DERBY About half past four o'clock on Monday afternoon, a boatman named **Bold** was with his boat on the canal near Derby, when he observed something floating in the water, and on nearing it found it to be the body of a man. He recovered it, and with the assistance of a waggoner conveyed it to the dead house. It is the body of a man between 35 and 40 years old, and dressed in the garb of a navvy. There was only a knife in his pockets, there being no papers or anything else which would lead to identification. He has apparently been in the water a fortnight, and there are no marks of violence.

77 6 September 1877

BURTON POLICE COURT

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS **James Elsley**, boatman, was charged by Inspector Harper of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, with cruelly ill-treating a mare by working it while in an unfit state on the 29th ult. On the day in question, the officer met the defendant in charge of the animal on the towing-path of the canal, between Alrewas and Barton. The mare was in very low condition, and was lame, insomuch as it was not fit to walk. It was, however, drawing a boat load of stone weighing about 20 tons. The officer stated that the defendant was very civil, and he did not therefore press the charge. Fined 1s and 9s 6d costs.

78 29 November 1877

HAZELWOOD

A BOATMAN FOUND DROWNED An inquest was held on Saturday, before Mr Whiston, at the

Canal Tavern, Bull Bridge, near Belper, touching the death of **George Barker**. Deceased, who was a native of Hazelwood and seventy two years of age, had been a boatman for forty years. On Thursday evening about nine o'clock, he called at the Lord Nelson Inn, Bull Bridge, and was supplied with beer. After staying for some time he left, and went in the direction of Cromford Canal bridge, being quite sober. He was never seen alive again. About twelve o'clock on the following day, a boatman called the attention of a labourer named Emmanuel Hunt, who was passing over the canal bridge, to a body in the water, his boat in passing having brought it to the surface. Hunt obtained the assistance of William Hinds, who went into the canal and brought the body to the bank. The body was identified as that of the deceased. It is supposed that deceased, in stepping into a boat, lost his balance and so fell into the canal. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

79 19 December 1878

TAMWORTH At the Tamworth Petty Sessions on Friday last, before the county bench, a case of gross cruelty to a horse was heard. **Henry Broadfield**, boatman, and Alfred Harding, coal merchant of Fazeley Street, Birmingham, were charged – the former with working and the latter with causing a horse to be worked when in an unfit state, at Fazeley on the 10th instant. The case was proved by Inspector Harper, Police-constable Riley and Mr Oliver, veterinary surgeon. The animal was in a wretched state, was very old, lame and scarcely able to walk, and had sores on various parts of its body. Its hip bone had been broken, and when walking, large quantities of matter constantly dripped to the ground. The animal had to be lifted up in the stable. Inspector Harper produced the horse at court, and it was examined by the magistrates. The inspector said that Broadfield had been locked up for three days, and the society which he represented did not wish to severely punish him because he must either work the wretched animal or leave his employment ; but he felt it his duty to ask the Bench to impose the highest penalty allowed by law upon the owner. The Chairman said it was the worst case of cruelty that had come before them. Broadfield must pay the costs, 7s, and Harding would be fined £5 and £2 6s 6d costs, or two months' hard labour. Inspector Harper had the animal destroyed shortly after the decision of the Bench.

80 20 March 1879

DERBY COUNTY POLICE COURT

ASSAULT BY BOATMEN **Samuel Trowell** and **John Trowell** were charged with assaulting **Charles Wall** at Shardlow on the 4th March. Mr Hextall defended. Wall said he was a boatman, and on the day in question he was at Shardlow with his boat, when he called at a public house. The defendants came in, and in a short time they commenced to ill use him. They kicked him and knocked him down. They were pulled away from him, and he proceeded to his boat. When he was near the canal the defendants again came up to him and struck him with the tiller, and knocked him into the canal. He was rendered insensible. In answer to Mr Hexall, Wall admitted that he threw some stones, but it was in self defence. John Trowell was discharged, but the other defendant was fined 10s and costs, or two months' imprisonment with hard labour.

81 8 May 1879

ALREWAS

MALICIOUSLY KILLING TWO MARES **Henry Theobald** (25), boatman, was indicted at the Staffordshire Assizes on Saturday, before Mr Justice Hawkins, for having feloniously and maliciously killed a mare, the property of John Jones, and a mare, the property of Joseph Ralph, at Alrewas on the 12th of April. Mr Bowen prosecuted. The case was one of disgusting cruelty. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and a previous conviction was recorded against him. His Lordship said the prisoner had been convicted of about as cruel and barbarous an act as he had ever heard, and he only wished that, in addition to the punishment he was going to inflict, he had power to order the prisoner to be flogged, for he as richly deserved it as a man ever did. He would be sentenced to ten years' penal servitude.

82 29 May 1879

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS Hannah Redfern of the Steam Mill Inn, Oakthorpe, was charged by Police-constable Grace with permitting drunkenness in her house on the 26th ult. Mr Argyle of Tamworth appeared for the defendant. The officer went into the house at 10.5 pm on the day in question, and saw a man named **Joseph Bond** sitting in a chair, who, he alleged, was drunk and asleep. He called the landlady's attention to it and roused the man up, who was helped out of the house. Mr Argyle, for the defence, said they admitted the man was asleep, but denied that he was drunk, and produced four witnesses who all positively declared that he was sober. Bond is a boatman, and one witness said he saw him walk over a plank from the bank of the canal to his boat after he came out of the public house. The Bench were of opinion that there was not sufficient evidence to convict, and therefore dismissed the case.

83 5 February 1880

THE CASE OF SHOOTING AT BARTON-UNDER-NEEDWOOD At the police court on Tuesday, before C J Clay, J H Griffiths and H Wardle Esqs, William Duddell, a youth of Barton-under-Needwood, was charged with maliciously wounding another youth named **Thomas Wood** on the 5th November.

The prosecutor's deposition was taken a few days after the occurrence, and the facts were as follows: The prosecutor is the son of a boatman residing at Wolverhampton. On November 5th, he and his brother were at Barton with a boat, and between eight and nine o'clock he saw the prisoner and other youths on the canal side. The prisoner had a pistol, which he fired off several times. They then went into the railway lane, and soon afterwards the prisoner went to him, put his hand on his shoulder, and said he wanted his life. The prisoner fired the pistol off, and he (the prosecutor) felt that he had been shot and began to cry out "murder". The prisoner took him to his (the prisoner's) home and went for a doctor. He was then sent to the cottage hospital, where he had remained ever since. He had not known any of the boys before that night.

Alfred Prince, farm servant at Barton Turn, said he knew the prisoner, and on the night in question he heard him ask Wood where he would have it, and he almost immediately afterwards pointed a pistol at Wood's neck, and then lowered it and it went off.

Mr Clement Palmer, surgeon at Barton-under-Needwood, said that Wood was brought to his surgery on the 5th November. He was suffering from injuries. He sent him to the cottage hospital, and then examined him. He found a gunshot wound in the lower part of the body. The charge had passed out at the side. There had not been any shot used, but the injury had evidently been caused by the gunpowder and wadding. For many days, the boy was in great danger, and he will be at least a month before he is fit to leave hospital. The pistol at the time it was fired must have been close to the body.

Sergeant Harrison deposed that, in consequence of the dangerous state of Wood, he arrested the prisoner on November 7th. In reply to the charge of shooting Wood, the prisoner cried very much and said he did not intend to hurt him.

The Bench retired, and on returning into court Mr Clay said it was a very serious case, and one which had very properly been brought before the Bench for investigation. At the same time, after careful consideration, the Bench were unanimously of the opinion that no malice or intention to do harm had been proved, and they must therefore dismiss the case. They hoped that it would be a warning to the prisoner and other boys not to play with dangerous weapons for, if the injuries had proved fatal, Duddell would have had to answer a charge of manslaughter. The prisoner was then acquitted.

84 4 March 1880

BURTON POLICE COURT

CRUELTY TO A DONKEY **Allen Scattergood**, a boy, and his father, **Samuel Scattergood**, a boatman of Stratton, were charged by Inspector Campbell, RSPCA, with cruelly ill-treating a donkey on the 12th ultimo. The donkey was attached to a boat on the canal near to Shobnall Bridge.

The boat was loaded with twenty five tons of iron, and the donkey was unable to draw it. The younger defendant was therefore endeavouring to urge it along by the free use of a ponderous stick, and the father was encouraging the boy. When the animal was examined by the inspector, it was found to be in a most exhausted condition, and to be marked with weals all over the body. The younger defendant was fined 6s and 9s 6d costs, or seven days' imprisonment ; and the father 20s and 19s 6d costs, or one month's imprisonment.

Joshua Street, a boatman of Borrowash, was charged by the same officer with cruelty to a horse, on the 21st ultimo, on the canal towing-path near to Shobnall. The animal was in a very emaciated condition, and was too weak to draw the boat, containing twenty five tons of iron, to which it was attached. The defendant had since disposed of the horse, and the penalty was mitigated to 5s and 12s costs, or seven days' imprisonment.

85 1 July 1880

BURTON POLICE COURT

SHOCKING CONDITION OF A HORSE **William Sharpe**, boatman of Barrow-on-Trent, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it while in an unfit state on the 10th June. Inspector Campbell, RSPCA, found the defendant on the canal towing-path near the Shobnall Road. He was in charge of a horse attached to a boat carrying twenty five tons of iron. He (the inspector) examined the animal and found that it was in a very weak state. Its body was one mass of sores, and the animal was suffering from mange. On the near shoulder the collar was chafing the sores, and on the off shoulder there was a raw wound the size of a two shilling piece. The defendant at once removed the horse from the boat, and it had not since been used. The defendant was represented by his father, and Sir Tonman Mosley told him that, in consequence of the defendant having at once taken the horse from the boat and not used it since, the Bench would mitigate the penalty to 5s and 12s 9d costs, or fourteen days' imprisonment.

86 14 April 1881

THE SHOOTING CASE AT BARTON-UNDER-NEEDWOOD Before a jury at the Burton County Court yesterday, an action was brought by **Thomas Wood**, the son of a boatman belonging to Wolverhampton, to recover £50 from William Duddell of Barton-under-Needwood, as damages for injuries received on November 5th 1879, from being shot. Mr Mears appeared for the plaintiff and Mr Argyle of Tamworth for defendant. The particulars of the case were reported at length at the time, and it will only therefore be necessary to give a summary now. On November 5th 1879, the plaintiff was with a boat on the canal near to Barton Turn, and saw the defendant and other boys near keeping Guy Fawkes' day. The defendant was principally involved in loading and firing off a pistol, and after he had fired it off several times he went to the plaintiff, took hold of him by the back of the neck, and asked him where he would have it. The plaintiff said, "Nowhere", and the defendant then dropped the pistol down and it went off, and the plaintiff shouted out that he had been shot. He ran away for a short distance, and the defendant said that he had shot the plaintiff. He (the plaintiff) was removed to the defendant's father's house, and afterwards to the cottage hospital, where he remained for five months. On being examined by Dr Palmer, it was found that he was seriously injured in the lower part of the body, and Dr Palmer now stated that he was permanently injured. In cross-examination, the plaintiff said he had been playing with the boys for about an hour before he was shot, and a boy named Prince stated that the defendant did not wish the plaintiff to join them. Dr Palmer admitted that the injuries had been caused by powder and paper only, and not by bullets. Mr J Deaville, farmer, also gave evidence to show that the defendant had admitted that he had shot the plaintiff. Mr Argyle pointed out that the injuries to the plaintiff – which all would deplore – were the result of as pure an accident as ever happened from fireworks on the fifth of November, and that the case had been before the magistrates and dismissed by them because it was not proved that there was any malice or intention to hurt the plaintiff. The defendant was now engaged by the Midland Railway Company at Sutton Coldfield, and was getting 12s per week. If, therefore, the jury believed that the defendant was liable for any part of the amount

claimed, they must take into consideration the position of the defendant, and not give damages which could not be paid. His Honour carefully summed up, pointing out that it was for the jury to decide whether the pistol went off accidentally or was deliberately fired. If they believed the latter, the damages would, of course, be larger than if the pistol accidentally went off. The jury retired, and after a brief deliberation gave a verdict for the plaintiff for £15 ; at the same time, they expressed an opinion that the injuries were the result of accident and not of intention. His Honour made an order for the payment of £15, to be paid in three months into the savings bank in the name of the registrar of the court, and to be there kept until the plaintiff is eighteen years old.

87 9 June 1881

BURTON POLICE COURT

ASKING IN THE WRONG QUARTER **William Ward**, boatman of Hartshill, was charged with begging in Guild Street on the previous night. Police-constable Whitehouse was on duty in plain clothes, and the defendant solicited alms from him. Instead of receiving relief in coin, he was accommodated with a night's lodgings. The defendant said he was a cripple, and had no other means of getting a living. He had never been in trouble before in his life. He would leave the town that day if his Worship would permit him. Mr Wardle : Yes, you must leave ; you must go to gaol for fourteen days.

88 6 July 1882

BURTON POLICE COURT

CRUELTY TO A BOATHORSE **Charles Wall**, boatman of Alrewas, pleaded guilty to working a horse whilst in an unfit state on the 10th ult. Inspector Lucas said he saw defendant driving a brown horse, which was drawing a loaded boat, on the Branstone towing-path. The horse was very lame, and was suffering from a very severe injury to one of the joints of its legs, the tendon of the leg being also much damaged. The animal was caused much suffering in being worked. Witness had had several complaints about defendant working the horse. Police-constable Garratt of Alrewas proved cautioning defendant on two occasions not to work the horse. Fined 10s and 10s 6d costs.

89 30 April 1885

BURTON POLICE COURT

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **David Tolley**, boatman, no fixed abode, was charged with cruelly ill-treating a horse. Inspector Craigie, RSPCA, said that on the 15th inst he was on duty near the canal side at Horninglow when he saw defendant in charge of a horse which was towing a canal barge. Noticing that the animal was walking exceedingly lame, he examined it and found it was suffering from disease in both fore feet, and there was a sore under the collar which appeared to cause intense pain. The animal was old and in low condition, and unfit for any work. He drew the defendant's attention to the animal, and he said, "I know it goes lame. It has been so since I bought it. The sore has been caused by a nail. I won't work it any longer and will get another". The inspector added that the horse had since been destroyed. A fine of 10s and 10s 6d costs was imposed, fourteen days' imprisonment being the alternative.

90 28 May 1885

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS

DRUNKENNESS **Samuel Pearson**, a boatman, was charged at the instance of Sergeant Lester with being drunk and guilty of riotous behaviour at Measham on Whit Monday. Fined 10s 6d and costs 12s, or fourteen days' hard labour.

91 18 June 1885

TAMWORTH

ILL-TREATING HORSES At the petty sessions at Brownhills on Wednesday, **John Gorton**, boatman, Birmingham, and William Parker, his employer, were charged with cruelty to a horse by

working it while in an unfit state. The case was proved by Inspector Craigie, and Gorton was fined 10s 6d including costs, and Parker 10s 6d and 15s 6d costs.

92 5 November 1885

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS Thomas Leversage, collier of Church Gresley, was charged by **Samuel Brayne**, a boatman, with unlawfully stealing some money and a strap from him on the 28th ult. It appeared from the evidence that complainant had been, with two companions and a woman named Sarah Fletcher, in three or four public houses. He had 14s when he started, and about 6s 6d left when he alleged Leversage robbed him. He said, on being cross-examined by Mr Mears, that he was neither drunk nor sober, that he was not flourishing the strap about with half a brick in it, and that defendant did not take it from him to prevent him from hurting anyone, but struck him and then took the strap and money. Frederick Moreton said he was with Leversage when he took the strap from Brayne, who was flourishing it about with part of a brick in it, and he then gave it to witness. The strap produced he believed was the same. Witness and defendant were coming together from the market, and heard the row and went up. The strap was taken to keep him from hurting anyone. He (Moreton) was not there all the time. The Bench considered that no case was warranted by the evidence, and dismissed it.

93 17 December 1885

ILL-TREATING HORSES At the Penkridge petty sessions on Monday, **Thomas Stanley**, boatman, Tipton, was charged with working two horses when in an unfit state at Weston-under-Lizard, on the 4th ult, and **Henry Thomas**, boat owner, was charged with causing them to be worked. It appeared from the evidence that the horses were suffering from lameness and sores, and were in a weak state. The owner, who agreed to have one of the animals destroyed, was fined 10s and 10s 6d costs, and the driver was fined 5s and costs. Inspector Craigie, RSPCA, prosecuted in both cases.

94 1 April 1886

TAMWORTH

DRUNK **S Hopkins**, boatman of Birmingham, was brought up at the police court on Wednesday, charged with being drunk and assaulting William Carter at Glascote on the 23rd inst. From the evidence it appeared that a stone had been thrown at defendant (who was lying down asleep) by a lad who happened to pass that way, and he (defendant), thinking it was Carter, rushed up to him and struck him several times in the face, giving him a black eye. The Bench characterised the assault as monstrous, and fined defendant 5s and £1 1s 10d costs or, in default, one month's hard labour.

95 13 January 1887

SHOCKING OUTRAGE IN A CANAL BOAT At the Stipendiary Court at Stoke-on-Trent on Friday, **Thomas Forsbrooke** (17), a boatman, was charged with having committed a rape upon a child named Martha Ann Colclough, aged three years and eight months. The evidence showed that the prisoner was employed by **Albert Colclough**, the captain of a boat lying in the Chatterley arm of the Trent and Mersey Canal near Tunstall. The previous afternoon, Colclough and his wife were away from their boat a short time, leaving two children, one of whom was the girl Martha Ann, in charge of the prisoner. On their return, the child named made a complaint as to the conduct of the prisoner, and upon examination it was found that she had been grossly outraged. The prisoner was given into custody, and the child was taken to Mr May, surgeon, who stated that she was in a dangerous state from the violence to which she had been subjected. The prisoner was committed for trial at the Assizes.

96 18 August 1887

THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF AN EX TUTBURY POLICEMAN The enquiry into the circumstances attending the death of Police-constable Henry William Brown, 28, stationed at

Codsall, whose body was found in the Shropshire Union Canal at Pendeford on the morning of the 7th inst, was resumed on Tuesday by Mr W H Phillips (borough coroner) at the Bull Inn, Codsall. The Deputy Chief Constable of the County (Captain Oswell), with Detective Inspector Wheaver of Stafford and Inspector Cook of Tettenhall, were present on behalf of the police. Mr Frederick John Hawthorn, surgeon of Codsall, detailed the results of a *post mortem* examination which, in company with Dr Cooke of Tettenhall, he had made on the 8th inst. He deposed that there were no marks of violence, except a slight swelling below the left ear. Death was the result of suffocation, probably occasioned by drowning. The fact that the stomach contained but a little more water than was usually present in the organ indicated that drowning occurred while deceased was insensible. In reply to the Coroner, witness said that if deceased had been sensible when he entered the water, he would not have been drowned without swallowing a considerable quantity of water. The circumstances showed that death must have occurred very quickly indeed after deceased got into the water. There was no appearance upon the body of the man having been held. Witness added that the swelling on the left side of the head, which he observed upon his first examination of the body on the 7th inst, was not present when he examined it the second time. Its disappearance might very possibly be the result of decomposition. Witness further said that he had examined the deceased's cap, and found upon it the appearance of having been struck sideways on the left side. He could not say that the indentation so produced in the cap would correspond with the swelling upon the head to which he had referred. It was possible, supposing deceased to have worn a cap at the time, that he might have been rendered insensible by a blow which would not have left any distinct external or internal appearance. At this point of the doctor's evidence, Captain Oswell called his attention to a tear of the breast pocket of the serge tunic of deceased, just above the two buttons which were found unfastened when the body was taken from the canal. Mr Hawthorn concluded by stating that the clothes of the deceased were covered with dust. Thomas Hancocks, ironworker of Monmore Green, Wolverhampton, deposed that on Saturday night he went fishing with four other men – Emmanuel Goncher, Isaiah Fletcher, William Whitmore and Benjamin Whitmore. About four o'clock on Sunday morning, witness's companions commenced to fish in the canal at a spot two bridges away from the place where the body was afterwards found. Edgar Tomkinson, the gamekeeper who was employed to watch the property, came up and, after some altercation, he offered witness an hour's fishing in the canal by Pendeford Bridge. After fishing some time at the place pointed out to him, witness was informed by a man named Peake that a policeman's hat and a portion of a stick had been found by Mr Tomkinson. After another hour or so, a boatman came to the spot from the direction of Autherley and, getting into the canal, brought out the body of a policeman. In answer to a jurymen, witness said that before they started fishing, and just as it was becoming light, he and his friends had a drink from the brook near Pendeford Bridge, and close to the point in the canal at which the body was found. They passed a boat tied up in the wharf, which is some forty yards from the scene of the discovery. There were no signs of anyone being on board. **John Jinks**, boatman of Brewood, testified to the body having been drawn to the surface by the boat *Emily*, which he was steering on Sunday morning. Of the men whom witness saw on the towing-path, he could remember only one – a dark man with a small moustache, who was carrying a rod in a sort of bag, and who was rushing along at a great speed. He noticed this man particularly, because he appeared to be rather “fluttered”. He was sure that he could identify him if he saw him again. Mr White of Newbury Junction (inspector to the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company), stated, in reply to a question from the Coroner, that the company knew the name of the boat which had been tied up during Saturday night at the wharf near Pendeford Bridge. John Star, a lad of North Street, Wolverhampton, said that he went bird catching near Pendeford Bridge on the morning of the 7th inst. He gave testimony corroborative of the other evidence as to the discovery of the body. He added that to three young men who passed him he stated that there was a man in the water, and that they made no remark on receiving the information. Those three were the only persons whom he saw going towards Wolverhampton. After witness had told them of the body in the canal, one of them said that he had been molested by a poacher. They were carrying fastened up fishing rods. Another fisherman whom witness met between the powder magazine and the bridge

said that he had lost the bag in which he kept his rods, and which he had with him when Star first saw him. Witness could not identify the (?rodding) now produced as the one. Thomas Peake, labourer of Coven, said that on the morning of the 7th instant he was engaged in assisting Edgar Tomkinson. He saw from fifteen to twenty men running along the towing-path of the canal, pursued by the keeper. One of these was Hancocks, whom witness caught hold of. Tomkinson and himself left Hancocks in order to pursue three other of the men, who were defiant. Coming back from the pursuit, they met the boy Star, who told them there was a body in the canal. Disbelieving this statement, they continued their way, and after passing over the bridge, came upon a policeman's cap and a portion of a stick lying in the road. The appearance of the road gave witness the impression that a struggle had taken place. There was also a quantity of loose hay scattered about the spot. The keeper went for the police, and witness, who remained, was soon afterwards informed by a labouring man who came up from Lane Green that there was a freshly caught eel lying on the road. Edgar Tomkinson, a gamekeeper on the Chillington Estate, deposed that he came to the canal early on the morning of the 7th instant, and saw five young men fishing on the Wolverhampton side of Hatton's bridge. Witness and two men who were with him came upon them. At the approach of the keeper and his assistants, they decamped. Witness came upon a large number of men subsequently, who were engaged in fishing, in bird catching, and in merely looking on. He caught hold of one man who was fishing, and who gave the name of Gowcher. He left him with one of his men and went after the others, but did not succeed in capturing any. When he came back, Gowcher had been liberated by the man in whose custody he had placed him, and the two had another man. That was Hancocks. Witness told him if he wanted to fish to go further up the canal by Pendeford Bridge. Witness then related his subsequent proceedings, and gave an account of the circumstances under which the cap and stick were found, corroborative of the story told by Peake. Witness deposed in addition to giving these particulars, however, that on the evening of the 7th instant he went to the Wheel Inn, and afterwards to the Woodman public house, Lane Green. At the latter place he was in company with White and Kettle, the men who were with him on Sunday morning. At ten o'clock, several men left the Woodman, among them one named Lee and another named Medlicott. The former lived in Stewart Street, Wolverhampton. Medlicott, when witness accused him of poaching a fortnight or so ago, denied any participation in such practices. There were a number of other witnesses to be examined, and for that reason, and to allow the police to make further enquiries, the inquest was adjourned until the 30th instant.

97 1 September 1887

THE MURDER OF A TUTBURY EX POLICEMAN An adjourned inquest was held on Tuesday at the Bull Inn, Codsall, by Mr W H Phillips (borough coroner), touching the death of Henry William Brown (28), a police-constable in the Staffordshire constabulary, whose dead body was found in the Shropshire Union Canal at Pendeford, near Codsall, on August 7th. The police authorities were represented by Mr B T Oswell, deputy chief constable of Staffordshire, Detective inspector Wheaver and Inspector Cook. George Wrighton, groom and coachman in the employ of Mrs Martin, The Birches, deposed that at half past eleven on the Saturday night he was sitting on a wall adjoining his cottage, which was situated at The Birches, when he heard a cry proceeding across the fields in the direction of Pendeford, as of a man halloaing to another. George (?Sneade), waggoner of Pendeford, who lived within one hundred yards of the spot where the body was found, said that he heard no cry in the neighbourhood at the time, and that he knew nothing of Brown's death until the following day. Thomas Whie, enameller of Paradise Street, Wolverhampton, deposed to having visited Codsall on Saturday August 6th, with a view to assisting Mr Tomkinson, gamekeeper on the Chillington Estate, who was on the look out for suspicious characters whom witness had seen in the neighbourhood. Mary Tomkinson, wife of Edgar Tomkinson, gamekeeper of Gunston, said that White and a man named Cattell visited her house on Saturday August 6th, and after they and her husband had gone out on the following morning, her husband returned, saying that he had found a hat on the canal side, and that he was going for a policeman. **Richard Hammond**, boatman in the employ of the Shropshire Union Canal Company, stated that on the

Saturday night before the finding of the body he tied up his boat at a spot near where the body was found and, on the following morning he saw several men fishing, some of whom were being chased by gamekeepers. Nothing occurred during the night which would lead him to believe that a man had been drowned, and the only intimation which he had of Brown's death was when he was told of the fact after he had removed from the spot the following morning. Ann Eliza Parker, wife of Edwin Parker of the Greyhound Inn, said that on the evening of Saturday August 6th, the deceased called at the house, and after enquiring for a man named William Medlicott, he left. He had at the time a knotted stick in his hand. He seemed in a hurry, but was not excited. William Tomkinson (14), son of Edgar Tomkinson, stated that early on Sunday morning the 7th of August, he went out with his brother and another youth to watch for poachers. He subsequently met his father on the canal bridge in company with White and Cattell. It was not until some time afterwards that he was told of the discovery of a body in the canal. Emmanuel Goncher, ironworker of Monmore Green, Wolverhampton, said that at daybreak on Sunday August 7th he went, accompanied by other men, to fish in the canal at Pendeford Bridge. During the time that he was there, he heard no cry, nor did anything occur which would account for the deceased being drowned. There were some boats in the neighbourhood, but there appeared to be no one upon them. The Coroner, in directing the jury in their verdict, said that according to former evidence the death of Brown had occurred under somewhat peculiar circumstances. The stomach, comparatively speaking, was empty, which suggested to medical men that when he died he was in an insensible condition – in other words, that he was stunned ; for had he gone into the water by accident or for any suicidal purpose, the presumption was that he would have swallowed a considerable quantity of water. Had he, on the contrary, been put into the water in an unconscious condition, the appearances would have been precisely similar to those revealed at the *post mortem* examination. Then again, he had been found with his clothes buttoned up, with the exception of a button or two at the top and bottom of his coat. His right thumb was upon his handcuffs, which would have been the only weapon available, his staff having been found at a distance, his walking stick broken, and his hat lying crushed in the road some distance away. It was quite possible that the hat, from its peculiar construction, might have protected the head of the deceased from any visible marks – either external or internal – and one surgeon had expressed an opinion that there was a slight swelling on the head, but this was not borne out by the *post mortem* examination. But, at the same time, the deceased might have been stunned without any marks being perceptible. Under those circumstances, he would have no alternative but to direct the jury to return a verdict of “Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown”. With one exception, the jury, after a deliberation lasting more than three hours, agreed in returning a verdict of “Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown” ; and they recommended the offering by the Government of a substantial reward for the discovery of such murderer, or a pardon to any accomplice who may give evidence leading to the conviction of the actual murderer.

98 28 June 1888

FRIDAY'S THUNDERSTORMS – LOSS OF LIFE Severe thunderstorms visited Nottingham on Friday, and a boatman on the Newark canal was struck dead by lightning at five o'clock in the afternoon.

99 4 October 1888

MOIRA

SAD SUICIDE OF A YOUNG WOMAN An inquest was held at the Navigation Inn, Moira, on Monday afternoon, before Mr Deane, coroner, touching the death of Elizabeth Newbury, aged nineteen years, daughter of **John Mellor** and Eliza Newbury, whose body was found in the canal at Moira on Saturday morning. From the evidence, it appeared that the father of the deceased is a boatman living at Moira, and the deceased had been living with the other members of the family. The girl was subject to fits, which seemed to affect her temper, and on the morning of her death she had had a serious quarrel with her mother and sister, and soon after the quarrel her body was found

in the canal. Dr Williams (Ashby) said he was sent for on Saturday morning to see the deceased. He examined the body. There were no marks of violence, but the usual appearance of death from drowning. There was nothing about the condition of the body which would lead him to suppose that the deceased had had a fit just before getting into the water. John Thornley, a roadman, said he was working on the road between Ashby and Moira on Saturday morning, between nine and ten o'clock, when he saw the deceased on the road near the canal. She was coming from the direction of Ashby towards the canal bridge. Witness noticed that the deceased had been crying, and appeared to be in trouble. Shortly after, he saw deceased walking on the towing-path of the canal, and she was looking in the water. About an hour after this, he saw deceased taken out of the water close to where he had seen her. Eliza Newbury, mother of deceased (who appeared very distressed) said that she and another daughter were going to Ashby on Saturday morning, and the deceased wanted to go too. But as she had had two very bad fits during the night, she told her she could not go, but that she must go back with her father. Instead of going back, however, she kept following on, and used bad language towards witness. After this, the two girls had a quarrel, and witness told the deceased she would go to the policeman. Shortly after this, the deceased went towards the boat, and witness thought she had gone home. She followed on just after and made enquiries, but found that she had not been home. The deceased thought that witness took more notice of the younger sister than she did of the deceased ; but it was not so. She was always a good girl except after these fits, which seemed to affect her temper. From information given her, witness went to the bridge and looked over into the water, and saw the deceased's hat in the water. By the Coroner : These fits came on the girl very frequently. By Dr Williams : She had been having fits for two years. Sometimes she had as many as six in a fortnight. When in these fits her hands and face were drawn, and her face would become purple. After further evidence, the jury at once returned a verdict of suicide whilst in a state of temporary insanity.

100 20 December 1888

DERBY

A BOATMAN IN TROUBLE At the borough police court on Thursday, **J C Wood**, owner of a canal boat, was summoned for allowing a male over the age of fourteen years to sleep in the same cabin as himself and wife, on the 22nd ultimo. Mr A Clarke (acting chief sanitary officer) proved the case. Defendant denied the offence, and said that the men slept in a cabin at the other end of the boat altogether. He was fined 10s and costs.

101 15 August 1889

A YOUTH DROWNED The police on Monday received information that **Edwin Williams** (18) had fallen into the river near Messrs Pegg and Harpur's colour works in the Morledge. Sergeant Robinson and Police-constable Hamblay proceeded to the spot, and after procuring a drag from a building near, commenced to search for the body, which they found shortly afterwards. Dr J Lister Wright, who examined it, pronounced life to be quite extinct, and the body was removed to the mortuary. The deceased was in the employ of a boatman named **George Commander**. He fell into the water whilst assisting to unload a barge. An inquest was held at the Town Hall on Tuesday, when the jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

102 5 September 1889

NOTICE I, REUBEN MELLOR, Boatman of Oakthorpe, hereby give notice that I will not be responsible for any Debts that my Wife, SARAH ANN MELLOR, may contract after this date.

(Signed) R MELLOR

August 29th 1889

103 24 October 1889

LICHFIELD

A LONG CHASE AFTER A HORSE STEALER At the Guildhall on Monday, before the Mayor

(Mr S Haynes), Stephen Wood, a hawker of Birmingham, was brought up in custody charged, on remand from Birmingham, with stealing a horse of the value of £10, the property of **Charles William Wall**, boatman, Alrewas. On Friday last, prosecutor attended the horse sale at Lichfield, and purchased a horse. Finding that the animal did not suit him, he disposed of it and bought another. The second horse was taken to the stables of the "Bald Buck", and there the prisoner examined it with the view of purchase. Prosecutor agreed to sell the horse for £10, and prisoner paid £1 on account, saying that he would pay the balance at the Smithfield. The parties went in the direction of the place named, the prisoner riding the horse and the prosecutor leading it. When in Church Street, the prisoner snatched the reins out of prosecutor's hands, turned the horse round sharply, and galloped away. Prosecutor followed him on foot all the way to Birmingham, where he gave information to the police, and prisoner was arrested. A remand until Thursday was asked for and granted, bail being refused.

104 31 October 1889

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS

QUARREL BETWEEN BOATMEN AT OAKTHORPE **Rueben Mellor**, boatman, Oakthorpe, was summoned for assaulting another boatman named **Mark Cashmore** on the 30th September. The case for the complainant was that defendant's fowls were in his garden. He told defendant about his fowls going astray, and this was the cause of high words passing between them, resulting in defendant calling him names and striking him with his fist. Defendant, who did not appear, was described by the police as being a quiet man, and was fined 2s 6d and costs, 13s 6d, or seven days.

105 19 December 1889

LICHFIELD

OBTAINING A HORSE BY A TRICK At the Stafford Assizes on Monday, Stephen Wood, hawker (on bail) was charged with stealing a horse, value £10, the property of **Charles William Wall**, at Lichfield on October 18th. Mr Boddam prosecuted, and Mr Kettle defended. The prosecutor, who is a boatman living at Alrewas, bought a horse at an auction sale at Lichfield, and afterwards took it to a hotel in that city. The prisoner came there after him, and arranged to buy the horse from him. They went into the hotel, and at prisoner's request prosecutor made out a receipt for £10, the amount arranged to be paid for the animal. The receipt read, "Bought, brown cob of C W Wall at £10, Received £1". The receipt bore a stamp, but it was not cancelled. Wood paid £1, and asked prosecutor to accompany him to the Smithfield, where he said he would pay him the remaining £9. On the way to the Smithfield, prisoner asked to be allowed to get on the horse's back. Prosecutor consented, but he held the bridle. Suddenly, however, prisoner snatched the bridle out of his hand and then galloped away. He was followed to Birmingham, and arrested at 32 Summer Hill Street by Detective Taylor. Prisoner then said he had bought the horse, and was willing to pay for it as soon as he had the money. Wall could not get blood out of a stone. Mr Kettle submitted that the transaction was a *bona fide* one, and that the prisoner intended to pay for the horse when he had sold it. His Lordship said the trick was a very old one, and it had been held, as long as two centuries back, that it was a theft to obtain anything by a trick. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and his Lordship, in sentencing him to six months' hard labour, said that if the prisoner had stolen the horse in an honest way, so to speak, his offence would not have been so bad, but he had tried to defeat the law by a trick.

106 19 December 1889

SAD CASE OF DROWNING NEAR MOIRA A sad circumstance occurred on Sunday afternoon in the neighbourhood of the Reservoir colliery, situate between Moira and Measham, a man named William Coley, sixty four years of age, losing his life in a painful manner. The deceased was on his way to work at the colliery, where he was employed as a horse tender, and went as usual by the canal bank, the distance from his home at Acresford, near Oakthorpe, being about an hour's walk. A dense fog was prevailing at the time, which rendered walking dangerous for a man of his age. At

the Spring Cottage Bridge, he walked into the canal and was drowned. The bridge is without a gate or fence and, as there is a gateway, it is presumed that the unfortunate man became bewildered on the top of it, and made the sad mistake of turning in the wrong direction, thus dropping into the water. Some boats were near, and after the lapse of a short time, the deceased's body was found and conveyed to his home at Acresford. An inquest was held on the body at the Crickets' Inn on Monday afternoon before Mr Coroner Deane, where Mrs Coley, deceased's daughter-in-law, gave evidence to the effect that deceased left home about five o'clock in his usual health. **Joseph Clements**, boatman, said that on hearing a splash in the water, he went to see what was the matter. He worked his lamp about, and at last saw something in the centre of the water underneath the bridge. Not being able to reach it, he was compelled to go about two hundred yards for the boat hook, and with that he took hold of the rope surrounding deceased's body, which was apparently used to secure his food basket. After succeeding in getting the body out, he sent to Overseal for Police-constable Allen, who at the time was in church. This was about five minutes to seven. On arriving at the spot, and being a member of the St John's Ambulance Association, the sergeant took measures to ascertain if life was extinct, but found him to be quite dead. The jury returned a verdict of accidental drowning, recommending that the gates, which were there twenty years ago, be replaced, in order to prevent further disaster, which recommendation the coroner said should be forwarded to the Midland Railway Company.

107 4 September 1890

DIED On the 30th ultimo, at the Workhouse, **William Perkins**, boatman of Shobnall, aged 75.

108 18 December 1890

SWADLINCOTE PETTY SESSIONS

INEBRIATE **John Summers**, boatman, Measham, was summoned for being drunk at that place on the 22nd November. Sergeant Lester stated the case, and defendant, who did not appear, was fined 24s including costs.

109 19 February 1891

A BOATMAN CHARGED WITH THEFT A boatman named **Richard Hunter** of Coventry has been arrested at Moira by Police-sergeant Allen on a charge of stealing a large quantity of oats, beans and chaff, the property of Lord Donington. He was brought up at the occasional court house before Mr H E Smith on Saturday, and remanded till the Ashby petty sessions.

110 26 February 1891

PETTY SESSIONS

THEFT AT MOIRA **Richard Hunter**, boatman, Coventry, was charged on remand with stealing a quantity of oats, beans and chaff belonging to Lord Donington, at Moira on the 10th inst. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and considering his advanced age (72), and that he had already been locked up for ten days, the Bench ordered him to be imprisoned for one day only.

111 16 July 1891

TAMWORTH

A DISPUTED ACCOUNT At the Tamworth county court yesterday, **George H Dennis**, a boatman of Burton-on-Trent, sued Samuel Kinson, market gardener, Tamworth, for £1 12s 10d, balance of account for the sale of manure. Mr Atkins appeared for the plaintiff. A verdict was given for plaintiff.

112 22 October 1891

TAMWORTH

ALLEGED FALSE SWEARING At the County Court on Monday, **Frederick Sefton**, boat builder, Polesworth, was sued by **George Henry Dennis**, boatman of Barton, for £17 in respect of a

boat hired by the plaintiff who, according to the terms of the agreement, was to pay £8 in instalments, after which the boat would become his property, he having paid £5 at the signing of the agreement. The instalments were not paid, and the boat had been detained by Sefton. Dennis now swore that the agreement produced, which had been written by Mrs Sefton and subsequently forwarded to him, was not the one he signed, and the signature was not his. Thomas Wright, the father-in-law of Dennis, gave similar testimony, and said Mrs Sefton wrote both his and the plaintiff's name on the agreement. The defendant Sefton swore that Dennis wrote both the names, and that the signature on the agreement produced was his own. The Judge requested Dennis to sign his name and, after examining the signature, said he had no doubt as to the handwriting being the same as that on the agreement. The evidence and the legal terms of the agreement also favoured the statement of Sefton, and he considered both Dennis and Wright had come there with the intention of committing perjury. He gave a verdict for the defendant, with costs.

113 18 February 1892

DIED On the 14th inst at Barton-under-Needwood, **Edward Baddley**, boatman, Birmingham, aged 70.

114 1 September 1892

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

115 13 October 1892

BOROUGH POLICE COURT

CRUELTY **Thomas Bannister**, a boatman of Wolverhampton, was summoned for ill-treating a mule. According to Inspector Hellier, RSPCA, he was on the canal side at Dallow lock on the 10th ult, when he saw a mule drawing a boat laden with coke. The animal appeared to be very lame, and an examination showed that among other affections it was suffering from ringbone. The inspector advised the defendant not to work the animal any longer, but he persisted and used very foul language. Ultimately the services of Police-constable Dunn had to be secured. There was practically no defence, and the magistrates imposed a fine of 10s and 11s 6d costs.

116 15 June 1893

ALREWAS

CRUELTY TO A HORSE Before the Fenton Stipendiary on Wednesday, **William Henry Slater**, canal boatman of Alrewas, was charged with cruelty to a horse by causing it to be worked in an unfit condition. It was lame on three legs, in a very poor condition, and quite unfit for work. The lameness was due to disease of the bone, and the animal was in a very emaciated and incurable condition. The defendant had persistently ill-treated the horse by causing it to be worked in an unfit condition. He had neglected to give it sufficient and proper food, and on the Tuesday prior to the date of the offence, the defendant beat the horse with a boat hook in such a savage manner that it fell down three times on the journey. He had also kept the horse in a stable for three days without food. The Stipendiary said the evidence showed that the defendant was a very cruel man. It would be a waste of time to say more. He sentenced defendant to six weeks' imprisonment with hard

labour.

117 10 August 1893

PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY

DRUNKENNESS **George Wildsmith**, boatman, Coventry, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. Police-constable Lane stated that on July 27th, Mr Faulkner, Lord Donington's cashier at Moira, went to witness's house and complained about defendant. The constable went with Mr Faulkner down the road, where they found the defendant, who was drunk, swearing. Defendant threatened Mr Faulkner whom, he said, he would kill before the night was over. A fine of 2s 6d and 10s 6d costs was inflicted, defendant expressing regret at what had happened.

118 15 February 1894

OAKTHORPE As a result of the recent gale, a boat laden with slack was sunk near the Oakthorpe colliery on Tuesday night. It is reported that the boatman avoided total immersion by sitting on the cabin chimney. He is said to have regarded his unenviable position with perfect equanimity, observing that only a lazy boatman would be likely to be drowned in a canal. The boat was recovered in a few days after the occurrence of the incident.

119 7 March 1895

MEASHAM

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING A boy named George Wileman was crossing the canal near to his home on Friday, when he got in where the ice had been broken round the boats lying there. According to the account given by the boatman who rescued him, the lad must have perished but for his timely aid.

120 10 June 1897

ALLEGED THEFT BY A LOCAL BOATMAN At the Derby county magistrates' clerk's office on Monday, **John Skidman** (28) was charged with stealing two sacks of wheat, value 8s, the property of Messrs Fellows, Morton and Clayton Limited, Nottingham, on the 5th inst. It was alleged that the prisoner, who is a boatman, was with his boat at Swarkestone on Saturday. In another boat there were six sacks of wheat belonging to the prosecutors. The sacks were safe at six o'clock on Saturday night, and on Sunday morning two were missed. Prisoner's boat was searched at Horninglow, Burton, and a quantity of the wheat was found on it. He was remanded till Friday, bail being granted.

121 17 June 1897

A BOATMAN DROWNED AT MOIRA Early on Tuesday, **Abel Lamsden**, a boatman from Oxford aged 32, was found drowned in the canal near the (?Batha) Hotel, Moira. It is supposed that he was walking across a plank from the bank to the boat, when he fell in. Police-constable Hyman was brought to the spot, and found the body standing upright in the water, held in that position by the man's pilot jacket. On Tuesday afternoon, the inquest was held at the Moira Arms Hotel before Mr Coroner Deane. The first witness was Mary Jane Lamsden, wife of the deceased, who said she last saw her husband alive about 6.30 on the previous evening. He then went to put up his horse, and appeared to be in his usual health. She returned to the cabin, and soon after retired to rest, expecting her husband to follow later. She awoke about 2.30 in the morning, and then missed him. She got up, and on looking in the canal, saw what appeared to be her husband's coat in the water. Witness then called the assistance of **John Humphreys**, another boatman, who now stated that he was a boatman from Oxford, and had known the Lamsdens all his life. At about 11.15 on the previous night he saw deceased on the swing bridge, which was about forty yards from the boats. Witness was called up by Mrs Lamsden about 2.30 next morning, and he saw the body of the deceased in the canal. He got a boat hook and got the body out. Deceased was dressed, but not so fully dressed as when witness saw him on the previous evening. Police-constable Hyman, stationed

at Moira, said he went and examined the body, and found life quite extinct. The coroner, in summing up, said there was no doubt the deceased met his death by accident, and the jury at once returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

122 12 August 1897

THE THUNDERSTORM IN DERBY

LACE FACTORY STRUCK BY LIGHTNING The storm which passed over Derby on Thursday evening was comparatively slight, but at the south side of the town there were noticeable, at about seven o'clock, several very vivid flashes of lightning. It was at this period that the lightning struck the extensive premises of Messrs William and Thomas Fletcher, lace manufacturers of Ormaston Road, and although the damage was not great, the factory experienced a very narrow escape from destruction by fire. The electric fluid first attacked the roof of the south wing, tearing up the slates for several yards, and charring the rafters slightly. It then ran along the steel shaftings and danced upon the machinery in extraordinary fashion. The cotton threads which were being converted into lace were set on fire, but were promptly extinguished, and by means of the shafting the lightning found its way to the bottom storey, where its force was soon spent. It was on the ground floor that the engineman, named John Hood, who resides on the Uttoxeter Old Road, was standing, he having gone there with the night watchman to close the windows when the rain commenced. Hood was struck by the lightning, which scorched his right eye and paralysed his right arm. He was conveyed home in a cab, and afterwards treated at the Infirmary. He is likely to recover, but the doctor's opinion is that he was fortunate to escape with his life. As the factory is on full time, there are two "shifts" employed, and but for this there would probably have been no one in the place at the time, as the day "shift" leaves at six o'clock. If that had been the case, a big conflagration would have been inevitable. When it is mentioned that there are 30 lace machines in the building, and employment is found for about 400 persons, it is a happy circumstance that affairs are no worse than they are.

Severe thunderstorms, accompanied in some places by a downpour of large hailstones, broke over the Midlands on Thursday, doing great damage to the corn crops. A heavy thunderstorm visited Clitheroe, and Mr William Marsden, a farmer in the neighbourhood, was killed by lightning, which in another part of the district set fire to a hayrick and killed a cow. **George Putnam**, a boatman, and his sweetheart, were killed by lightning at Tring. They were taking shelter under a tree. They were to have been married shortly. During a severe thunderstorm at Bury, a young man named Booth of Ramsbottom was struck by lightning and killed. At Chorley, a farm labourer named Thomas Bretherton, who was conveying produce to Blackburn, was struck by lightning and instantly killed.

123 16 September 1897

SAD SUICIDE OF A LICHFIELD BUILDER'S MANAGER On Monday, Mr S W Morgan, deputy coroner, held an enquiry at the Swan Inn, Fradley, on the body of William Henry Wright, manager for his father of the firm of Wright and Sons, builders, Lombard Street, Lichfield, whose body was found in the canal at Fradley Junction on Saturday morning. Charles Wright, brother of the deceased, said deceased lived at home and was unmarried. He had been on friendly terms with the family. Witness last saw him alive on the preceding Wednesday, when he left home and did not return. **Thomas Morgan**, employed by the Coventry Canal Co, said that on Saturday morning he was at work repairing the towing-path when a passing boatman called his attention to some clothing which could be seen in the canal on the opposite side. Witness went round and could see something in the water, and he secured a drag and got the body out. It did not appear to have been long in the water. Police-constable Morrey gave evidence that he was called to the spot by the last witness, and in a pocket book on deceased found a letter in which deceased stated that he could not stand it any longer. Things might have been so different if they had been settled honourably. His mother was an angel on earth, and his brothers Charlie and Harry were both good lads, and he hoped the things he left behind him would be divided amongst them. He would like the men in the workshop to

carry him to the highest point on Greenhill to be buried. Mr Chinn (a Lichfield solicitor) knows more about his life's history than anyone else. Witness also spoke to having ascertained that deceased was seen on Friday evening at Alrewas, afterwards at Streethay, and in Lichfield at ten o'clock at night. He was also seen on the Old Burton Road at 5.30 on Saturday morning. The jury returned a verdict of suicide whilst temporarily insane.

124 14 April 1898

TAMWORTH

WASTING CANAL WATER At the county petty sessions on Tuesday, **Joseph Parker**, boatman, Birmingham, was fined £2 including costs for having opened one lock gate of the canal at Curdworth before the other was properly closed, thereby occasioning a great waste of water.

125 22 December 1898

EXECUTION AT DERBY

“HE HAS KILLED TWO WIVES BEFORE” A Derby correspondent telegraphs : **John Cotton**, aged 66, a boatman, who was sentenced to death at the recent Derbyshire assizes for murdering his wife at Bugsworth, near Stockport, on October 26th, was executed in Derby gaol this morning. The deceased woman was only 36 years of age, and the evidence tendered at the trial showed that jealousy was the cause of the crime. Cotton beat his wife about the head with a poker, fracturing the base of her skull. The defence was that the prisoner had received provocation. Prisoner, since his conviction, had exhibited the utmost contrition, and had paid deep attention to the ministrations of the prisoner chaplain, to whom he more than once admitted the justice of his sentence. He received Holy Communion on Tuesday, and throughout the day the chaplain was in frequent attendance in the condemned cell. Cotton retired to rest early on Tuesday night, but his sleep was constantly disturbed, and early this morning he again welcomed the presence of the chaplain. He partook sparingly of breakfast, and just before eight o'clock the Sheriff's representatives presented themselves to summon him to his doom. The usual procession was quickly formed, and half way to the scaffold the party was met by Billington, the executioner, who was assisted in the preliminary process of pinioning prisoner's arms by his son. Cotton, who remained perfectly silent, walked firmly to the scaffold, where the younger Billington strapped the culprit's legs whilst the executioner put the noose round the prisoner's neck. All this was accomplished in the most expeditious manner, and while the chaplain was repeating the words, “Remember not the offences of Thy servants”, the bolt was drawn, and the body disappeared from view. Subsequent examination showed that death had been instantaneous. Although it was not completely light, a large crowd gathered outside the prison to watch the hoisting of the black flag, but no sympathy was exhibited for the prisoner, whose boast had been that he had killed two previous wives.