

NORTHAMPTON MERCURY
1846 to 1864

1 31 January 1846

BRACKLEY DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS – MIDDLETON CHENEY, MONDAY JAN 26

George Wright, a boatman charged with vagrancy by Superintendent Dewdney. Remanded in order to give Dewdney time to make enquiries respecting him, at Spalding, from which place the officer suspected he had absconded.

2 21 February 1846

BRACKLEY POLICE **George Wright** of Spalding, boatman, was charged by Police Officer Dewdney with vagrancy at Brackley. An enquiry was made at Spalding as to his character, when it was ascertained that he had been twice convicted of felony. Committed by the Rev C A Sage to prison for six weeks.

3 25 July 1846

MARKET HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY JULY 21st

Samuel Beswick of Sutton Bonington, boatman, was charged with refusing to pay, as wages, 5s to James Martin of Kibworth. Beswick was followed to Leicester, where a summons was served on him to appear here. He paid the wages due, and 10s 6d costs.

4 23 January 1847

MARKET HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, JANUARY 19

Robert Bickley, a boatman, was brought up charged with stealing two shirts and two window blinds, about half past five o'clock on Monday evening last, the property of Mrs Furnival and Mr Roades of the Union Inn. Jane Worley, the wife of the ostler, deposed that she had washed them that day, and had washed them several times, and knew them well. As soon as they were missed the policeman was informed and he, accompanied by Samuel Tebbutt, went to the boat and questioned the prisoner about them. He denied all knowledge of them, but upon searching, they found them under some straw in the cabin, and three stockings and a woman's night cap. He was taken in charge on Monday evening, and when before the Bench today, said he had nothing to say to the charge laid against him, he was therefore committed to take his trial at the next Leicestershire Quarter Sessions.

5 10 April 1847

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EASTER SESSIONS

THORPE ACHURCH **Thomas Jordan** was charged with stealing a brush, the property of James Miller. Mr Maunsell appeared for the prosecution.

Prosecutor is an inn keeper, and the prisoner an assistant to a boatman. He brought a couple of horses to the stable, and took the brush when he went away. He was apprehended by the Police-constable at Cotterstock Locks. Prisoner said he knew nothing about it ; but the constable found the brush tucked in the left leg of his trousers.

The prisoner, in his defence, said that he, and the lad with him, put the brush into a sack in mistake ; that it was in the lighter when the "gentleman" came to search, and fearing the consequences, he secreted the brush while the lighter was being searched, intending to return it to Mr Miller when he next came that way. He did not know what to do for the best. The jury found the prisoner Guilty. The prosecutor said that he had known the prisoner three years, and he had up to this time always conducted himself with propriety. He was sentenced to two months' hard labour.

6 18 September 1847

MYSTERIOUS DEATH The following inquest was taken before J W Cowley Esq, coroner for the northern division of Bucks, on the 14th instant at Aylesbury, on the body of Mary Ann Wenham, who

was found dead in the canal close to the town the previous day, under very mysterious circumstances. A jury consisting of sixteen of the most respectable inhabitants was empanelled who, after being sworn, were cautioned by the coroner to dismiss from their minds all public rumour, or what they might have heard in reference to the party in custody. Their duty was, first to be well satisfied as to the precise cause of death, as it was not a necessary consequence because the body was found in the water that drowning and suffocation was the cause, for instances were on record where bodies had been suspended, and others thrown into water after death, in order to mislead the public. If from the evidence of the surgeon they should entertain no doubt that the deceased was drowned, the next question would be, did she destroy herself, or was she forced into the water by another? The mere fact of the prisoner having been seen with her in the immediate neighbourhood at a late hour of the evening she was last seen alive was not of itself sufficient to justify them in concluding that he was in any way criminally connected with her death. After viewing the body, which presented a most appalling appearance, the following evidence was adduced. Eliza Smith deposed that she was aunt to the deceased, and had entirely supported and lodged her during the last six years. She was aware of the intimacy which existed between her and the party in custody, **Thomas Osborn**, a boatman. Witness was very much displeased at the connexion, and endeavoured all in her power to dissuade her niece from marrying him. On the previous Tuesday evening she left her house about seven o'clock, apparently in as good health and spirits as usual, and witness sat up for her until eleven o'clock, but she having before remained out all night and gone to another aunt's house, she thought no more of it. The following morning she could not learn of her having been seen by anyone since the previous night ; and as the prisoner had gone off with his boats that morning, it was generally concluded deceased had left with him. The body was first observed by a man who was accidentally passing along the towing-path on Monday morning (being a week from the time she was last seen alive). Several witnesses deposed that both were seen together as late as ten o'clock on the Tuesday night. Osborn returned to Aylesbury on the following Monday, and on being permitted to see the body, exclaimed, "God bless the poor girl! It was no more than he expected ; and wished someone would cut his head from his body, and lay him by her side. It was through her aunt and cousin that she came by her death". He said that he went part of the way home with her that night, and on parting she accused him of going to a lodging house for no good purpose ; that she took leave of him, and squeezed his hand. He said, "If that is your temper, you may go and be d---d". That finding she did not come after him, he returned in the direction she left him, whistled and hollaed, but could not find her. Mr Owen, surgeon, deposed that there were no external marks of violence ; that from the *post mortem* examination he was satisfied the cause of death proceeded from drowning and suffocation ; the clothes did not appear torn or disordered. She was *enceinte*. The Coroner then summed up, and after a short conversation, the jury returned a verdict that deceased was found drowned and suffocated, but how or by what means she became so, no evidence appeared to the said jury. The enquiry lasted nearly six hours.

7 22 January 1848

MARKET HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS **James Brooke**, a boatman, was charged by **Joseph Hughes** with an assault by pushing him into a hedge twice, and also by **William Hughes** with wilfully cutting his tow rope. Each party had two boats on the Canal at Gumley on the 28th of September last when, as they were passing each other, the ropes got entangled and Brooke's horse was hauled into the water in his endeavouring unfairly to pass Hughes's boat. He had to pay for damage and costs 17s 9d, and for the assault and costs £1.

8 11 March 1848

FATAL DISASTER AT THE CANAL BRIDGE BETWEEN ADDERBURY AND AYNHOE On Tuesday last an inquest was held at Nell Bridge Wharf in the parish of Adderley, before J Churchill Esq, one of the coroners for Oxfordshire, on view of the body of Elizabeth Townshend, aged 78, of Adderbury, who was killed on the previous Saturday when walking on the turnpike road between Adderbury and Aynhoe, and near the canal bridge. Deceased, who was staying with her son,

Richard Townshend of Nell Bridge Canal, foreman, was out for a walk on Saturday afternoon by the side of the road, and near to the canal. **Joseph Fisher**, boatman for Mr Robert Farmer of Oxford, was on his way from Banbury to Heyford with the *Tantivy*, laden with coal. On arriving at the canal bridge, instead of unfastening the boat rope as required by the laws of the canal company, he allowed the horse to ascend the turnpike road and go down to the towing-path again with the boat cord attached. The cord was consequently across the road, and was prevented from lying flat on the ground by the parapets of the bridge. At the time John Auger, servant to the Rev John Ballard, staying at Woodeaton, came up on horseback. Fisher told him to stay while he unfastened the rope, and Auger pulled up. At this instant Thomas Huxford, servant to ---- Chelstone Esq, staying at the Crown Hotel, Bicester, who was on his way home from Chipping Warden, on a hack which his master had ridden to cover, came along at a furious rate, the horse having bolted with him, and being unmanageable. Fisher and Auger both called out to him to stop, but he could not manage the horse, and he went over the bridge. The force of the horse against the rope broke it in two, and the portion of it attached to the mast flew off into the road and struck the deceased on her neck and face, and so injured her as to cause her death, before the arrival of John Griffin Esq, surgeon, Adderbury, who was quickly on the spot. Mr G described the injuries, which were sufficient to cause death. It appeared that Huxford did not see the rope or the unfortunate woman till after the disaster ; that he stopped his horse as soon as he could, and that he went back and stayed some time, and that he voluntarily attended the inquest. He expressed great regret at the occurrence, as did also the boatman who was in attendance. The jury, of which Mr James Gardner was foreman, after a consultation, returned a verdict of accidental death. Fisher was censured, and was given to understand that he would be proceeded against under the act of Parliament for having allowed the rope to be across the road. It appears that many boatmen act negligently, and endanger the lives of persons passing along the road. We understood, while at the inquest, that no less than three ropes were thus allowed to be across the road while the enquiry was going on.

9 3 June 1848

On Wednesday last, an inquisition was taken at Stoke Bruerne in this county, before P E Hicks Esq, on view of the body of **Thomas Fisher**, a boatman. It appeared that on the previous day the deceased was assisting in legging a boat through the tunnel at Blisworth, when he accidentally fell into the water and was drowned. He was only in the water about a quarter of an hour, and every means was resorted to to restore animation. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

10 28 October 1848

MARKET HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS **Robert Ridgley**, a boatman, was charged by **William Tasker** with assaulting and obstructing him in the performance of his duties as lock-keeper at Faxton, on the 27th September. After much contention about going through the locks, "young Tasker and the defendant had a good fight". He was fined 8s, and the expenses £2 1s 10d, or two months' imprisonment.

11 3 March 1849

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS **Thomas Malin**, a boatman of Bridge Street, for being drunk and disorderly, was fined 6s.

12 17 March 1849

BRACKLEY PETTY SESSIONS

IMPORTANT TO BOATMEN **Richard Howes**, boatman, Banbury, charged by the Oxford Canal Company with wasting water from the cutting, was convicted in 40s fine and 22s 6d costs.

13 11 August 1849

FATAL CASE OF CHOLERA On Tuesday last an inquest was held before P E Hicks Esq at the Pomfret Arms, Coton End, on the body of **Thomas Hanscomb**, a boatman who died on board a

boat on the river Nene on Tuesday morning last, of Asiatic cholera.

Joseph Frost said : I am a boatman, and was employed last Monday week by Mr Whitlock of Paddington to work a boat from Westminster Bridge to this place. Deceased was also employed for the same purpose. When he went to the boat on Monday, a man named **Joseph George** was in it dead, and the corpse remained there till Tuesday. I was told he had died on Monday morning, about half past twelve. We were delayed at Westminster Bridge in consequence of the dead body being in the boat. I was told it was cholera of which George died. The bed and blankets that George had lain upon we threw overboard, and we also burnt some brimstone in the cabin. Deceased appeared very well until last night. We got to this place about half past six. I left the boat and returned about eleven. Deceased was then in bed. I slept in the same bed with him. About half past four this morning I heard him groaning. I asked what was the matter, and he said he had cramp in his legs, and exclaimed, "Oh Joe, I shall die". I then went for a doctor, Mr Woods. I am not aware that the deceased vomited before the doctor saw him. He was a native of Fenny Stratford.

Henry Newell sworn : I am a boatman. I was employed by Mr Whitlock to work some boats from Brentford to this place. Last night I slept in the same boat with deceased. About four or half past this morning, I was awakened by the deceased saying, "Jos, I shall die". Frost went for a doctor, and Mr Whitlock went and fetched some brandy, and gave some to the deceased. He complained of pain in the bowels, and was sick three or four times before the doctor came. Deceased said he had been out three or four times in the night. I was with deceased from the time I got up until he died, which was between eleven and twelve this morning. His mother told me that he was between 18 and 19 years of age. He had some bread and mutton and a cold potato for supper. He had not been drinking on the journey.

Mr F B Woods said : I am a surgeon residing at Northampton. I was called up a little after five this morning to attend the deceased. I found him in the cabin of the boat in which the body now is. He was complaining of great pain in his legs and stomach from cramp. He said he had not been sick, but while he was saying so, he began to vomit. His pulse was a good deal exhausted ; his legs and arms were colder than they should be, but his body was sufficiently warm. I directed such treatment as I thought proper, and a boy returned with me for some medicine. This was at six. At nine the vomiting had continued, but purging had stopped. The medicine had not been administered so frequently as I desired. I gave him some myself ; his pulse was more exhausted, and he was colder. At ten o'clock he was better ; he was warmer, and the vomiting had ceased. At eleven he was dying, and unable to swallow. I remained with him until he died, which was shortly before twelve. Dr Kerr and Mr William Percival jun also saw him at eleven, and they also remained with him until he died. From the violence of the disease, I am of opinion that deceased died of Asiatic cholera. Dr Kerr and Mr Percival were also of the same opinion. I also think that, for future safety, the boat ought to be scuttled, and the clothes and bedding burnt. I do not consider the disease infectious, but an effluvia will arise from the vomiting &c which had fallen on the boards, and which renders the scuttling necessary. Dr Kerr and Mr Percival were of the same opinion, that the boat ought to be sunk or scuttled for a fortnight.

The jury returned a verdict of "Died from Cholera", and Mr Whitlock undertook that the suggestion of the medical gentlemen with respect to the scuttling of the boat should be complied with.

14 8 September 1849

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

AN EXTRAORDINARY CASE Jeremiah Gaudern was charged with stealing a waggon, three horses and two harrows, the property of J P Mann, upholsterer of Stamford. Mr Mann stated he is the occupant of a farm at Thorpe Achurch near Oundle, the property of Lord Westmoreland. The prisoner formerly occupied the same farm. On Saturday morning it was ascertained that the stable door had been broken open, and three horses, a waggon and two harrows had been taken away. The prisoner was suspected and tracked to this town, where he was found at the Saracen's Head with the waggon and two of the horses, one having been sold. Mr Hicks, who appeared for the prisoner, elicited that Mr Mann had purchased these waggons and horses of two gentlemen of Stamford

named Jackson and Law, to whom prisoner had made an assignment some years back. This assignment prisoner had said was not a valid one, and had openly declared in consequence several times that he would sell the farm produce. Messrs Jackson and Law had themselves had the farm in their hands for two years. The name of Mann, which had been on the board when the waggon was taken away, had been obliterated, and that of "Jeremiah Gaudern, farmer, Boarshead" chalked in its place. Mann had been a creditor of Gaudern's to the extent of £60. Jackson and Law had advertised a sale under the assignment, and Gaudern, who was then in Northampton gaol at the suit of a creditor, was released partly by the aid of Mann in order that he might stop the sale, Gaudern assuring him that the assignment was bad. In point of fact no sale then took place, there being no buyers. He (Mann) became tenant at Lady Day 1848, and had paid the rent ever since. He denied that he had ever undertaken to pay Gaudern's creditors 10s in the pound under an arrangement with Mr Day, Lord Westmoreland's steward ; he only undertook to pay that dividend on the claims of Messrs Jackson and Law. Mr Hicks, however, produced a letter, which Mann admitted to be in the handwriting of Mr Day, to the effect that *his* understanding of the arrangement was that it should include *all* the creditors. **John Capell**, a boatman of Blisworth, deposed that, coming into market on Saturday, he saw the prisoner with three horses, which he was offering for sale. Mr Barker of Roade had bid him £12 for a horse for which he asked £20. Witness bought it for £13 and paid him the money. The horse had since been claimed by Mr Mann, and had been taken away by him. Thomas Nippin, son of Mrs Read of the Saracen's Head, deposed to the arrival of the prisoner at that inn ; to his dining at the market table, and saying that he had 70 acres of corn to get in, and no money to do it with, and to his endeavouring to borrow £20 on security of the waggon and horses. Mr Watts of Mear's Ashby was disposed to assist him, and left £20 in Mr Read's hands to be advanced to prisoner, if all was found upon enquiry to be right, Mr Watts apparently having some misgiving as to the prisoner's lawful possession of the property. On being called upon after the usual caution to say whether he wished to make any statement, Gaudern entered into a long narrative of his connexion with the farm. He had borrowed money of Messrs Jackson and Law to assist him in clearing part of his farm, which was woodland, and in 1846, being in difficulties, he went to those gentlemen and represented to them his inability to meet the demands upon him. Mr Law, in consideration of his making an assignment, desired him to bring a statement of his debts, and go round to his creditors and ascertain whether they would be willing to wait till the 1st of November 1847, when they would guarantee them payment. The creditors fell in with this arrangement, and some were paid, but others got merely the promise to pay. One of these latter, named Gibson, growing dissatisfied, threw him into gaol. Meantime Messrs Jackson and Law held the farm, although he remained the nominal tenant. An action too had been brought in the County Court, the precise nature of which we could not make out, but in which the assignment was produced and pronounced by the judge as worthless, his Honour telling Mr Law that the property should have been brought under the hammer. It was upon this view of the case that Mr Mann had acted when he helped him (Gaudern) out of gaol in the hope of getting his £60. Ultimately an agreement was entered into between Mr Mann himself and Lord Westmoreland's steward, by which Mann got the farm upon condition that he should pay Gaudern's creditors, and employ himself. He had employed him for a time, but Mann at length discharged him, and had not arranged with his creditors, who were continually annoying him. Under these circumstances he considered that the arrangement was at an end, and the property was his own.

The Magistrates, however, determined that the case must go to the Sessions, but admitted the prisoner to bail in two sureties of £10 each, and himself in £20. The sum of £12 11s which was found upon him when he was taken into custody, was given to Capell, the unlucky purchaser of the horse which Mann had recovered. He left the Court apparently congratulating himself upon the comparatively trivial amount of his loss.

15 12 January 1850

A MAN DROWNED On Monday last, an inquest was held at Cotton End, before P E Hicks Esq, on the body of a boatman, whose name was unknown, but who was called on the river "Old

Charley". It appeared that on Saturday last deceased came with a boat to Mr Haggar's wharf, and having unloaded it, was returning through the bridge about seven in the evening. It was pitch dark, and a little boy of 12 years of age, the only person who was in the boat with him, heard a splash, and found that the deceased was in the river. It is supposed that he had slipped in accidentally. Immediate assistance was obtained, and the body was got out of the river, but too late to preserve life. The lad exhibited such utter ignorance that the Coroner was unable to swear him. A verdict was returned of "Found drowned".

16 16 February 1850

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

A SORRY HELPMATE **Priscilla Golding**, the wife of **Job Golding**, a boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. Her husband, an industrious, hard working man, had given her money to pay the rent, instead of which she appropriated it to the delectation of her oesophagus, and was found at seven o'clock in the evening by Police-constable Arthur in Waterloo, staggering and dreamy. The constable told her to go home, but in a short time after he found her in George Row, still more staggering, and roused from her dreaminess into uproariousness, and past self control, so he took her into custody. It appeared that she was in the habit of converting her unfortunate husband's goods and chattels into drink, and the Bench sentenced her to 14 days' imprisonment in default of paying 7s.

17 13 April 1850

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

AN UNPOETICAL BACCHANTE **Priscilla Gould**, a lady among whose sins beauty cannot be numbered, was charged with being drunk and disorderly, and fetching night capped heads out of windows on Sunday night. She is an old offender, upon whom discipline and kindness have been alike thrown away. On one occasion when she was before the Magistrates, it was stated that her husband found a knife in the bed, and it was feared that in one of her drunken fits she would inflict some severe injury on him. He is a boatman, and allows her 3s a week, which he pays punctually, and with which she as punctually gets drunk. She was discharged, rather it would seem from the impossibility of knowing what to do with her than from any hope of not seeing her again.

[I would guess that this is the same individual as the one in the article above]

18 27 April 1850

BUCKINGHAM BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS **James Waters**, a boatman, was charged with having assaulted Police-constable Hunt in the execution of his duty. The accused, who pleaded guilty and expressed sorrow, was called on to pay 15s, or to be imprisoned for one month.

19 25 May 1850

SUPPOSED HIGHWAY ROBBERY A man named **John Leek**, a boatman, states he was robbed between Kibworth and Great Bowden a few days since, of two silk handkerchiefs, four shirts and two pairs of stockings. The articles were taken from him by two men who had the appearance of tramps.

20 6 July 1850

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

NORTON **William Anderton**, aged 24, and **Thomas Beresford**, 37, boatmen, were indicted for stealing three geese, value 10s, three ducks, value 5s, six young fowls, value 10s 6d and 10 old fowls, the property of Mr William Bliss ; and **Joseph Wadcock**, also a boatman, was indicted for receiving the same. Mr Miller was for the prosecution. Mr Flood defended Wadcock.

William Bliss is a farmer at Norton in this county. On Tuesday April 2, he had a quantity of poultry in his possession, geese, ducks and fowls. There is a hen-roost adjoining the house. It was never locked. On the morning of April 3, the fowls named in the indictment were missing. On the 5th, in

consequence of some information which had reached him, he assisted in dragging the tunnel of the Grand Junction Canal between Welton and Braunston. He found a smock frock containing a goose and two fowls, with a lot of coal, all tied up.

21 17 August 1850

DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS

GROSS CASE – FISHING **James Rogers**, boatman, a young man of Ensham, was charged by James Andrews, gamekeeper for W C Cartwright Esq of Aynhoe, with having on the 28th of July, at the latter parish, unlawfully taken fish from the Oxford Canal, in which Mr Cartwright has the private right of fishing. From the complainant's statement, it appeared he saw the accused, who was with a boat, throw something into the water, after which the fish in great numbers rose to the top as if poisoned, and that the defendant, with a landing net, was taking fish up, when the witness went to him and took the net from him. Andrews said that some hundreds of fish were killed. Rogers admitted that he was fishing, but he denied having thrown anything into the water to injure the fish. He was ordered to pay 20s fine and 28s costs. Mr Stratton commented upon the gross conduct of persons thus destroying fish.

22 1 February 1851

LOWER HEYFORD **Thomas Taplin**, boatman of Lower Heyford, charged before the Hon P S Pierrepont with stealing about 3 cwt of old iron, the property of Thomas Brassey Esq, from off the Buckinghamshire Railway at Warkworth, was committed to prison for trial.

23 1 March 1851

RUGBY

PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

FLY v SLOW Mr F Wood summoned a boatman named **Henry Howkins** for obstructing the Oxford Canal at Napton, by placing his boat, being a “slow boat”, in the bottom lock, and refusing to give way to a “fly boat”. The case being proved by the lock-keeper and another man, Mr Wood said the object of the company was simply to prove to the slow boatmen that they must not infringe upon the bye laws of the company by taking the precedence of the fly boats, and although the defendant had incurred a penalty of 10s per hour for eleven hours, the smallest fine would suffice. The Bench ordered him to pay 5s and 13s 6d expenses.

24 22 March 1851

MARKET HARBOROUGH

PETTY SESSIONS **Thomas Gee** of Loughborough, boatman, was charged by Mr John Watson of Foxton with stealing a bag, his property, from his boat on the 28th of February. The defendant had been for nearly two years captain of Mr Watson's boat to convey corn &c downwards, and bring coal back. He was discharged on the 28th ultimo, and went to Mr Watson to settle with him, and told him they had lost five days because he had not money to pay the tonnage. He came to Foxton for some, but Mr Watson not being at home, he went to Wigston to his brother, and there he stayed all night. He then went and brought the boat up to Foxton, and meeting with Mr Watson, told him that he, and the two men under him, had lost five days through the stoppage, and he had promised to see them paid ; but Mr Watson had refused to allow them anything. He went back to the boat and told the men who, through vexation, left the boat as it was, unloaded. He then took the horse and rode away with his great coat and smock and, as it was stated, the bag containing the wearing apparel. A gallon tin saucepan and a small tub were taken to Debdale Wharf Inn by the two men. But the evidence of Mr Barratt, the landlord, and his daughter, showed that he took the bag on the horse to their house, and requested them to forward it in a boat to his house at Loughborough. Though there appeared some doubt as to his having taken the bag with a felonious intent, he was committed to take his trial at the present Assizes.

25 21 June 1851

MURDER AT WOLVERHAMPTON Saturday. On Friday morning a young man named James Jones was brought up in custody and placed before Mr Joseph Walker, the mayor, and Mr William Warner, charged with the wilful murder of Catherine Morris, with whom he had cohabited, by cutting her throat. The accused is about 32 years of age, a labourer or navigator. The following is a summary of the evidence taken :- **John Lawson**, a boatman living at the back of the Brown Bear, Lichfield Street, said that the prisoner in the dock and also the deceased lodged in the same house, as well as three other women. Matthew Whitehouse was the landlord. He had known the prisoner about ten or eleven days. A few days since, he heard the deceased tell the prisoner that she did not want to have anything more to do with him, but added that she would never see him want a meal of victuals. They were then at variance with each other, and he said if she did not mind her P's and Q's he would make a public show before he went out of the town. On Monday night last, witness was in the kitchen of the Brown Bear, when the deceased was sitting at the side of him. The prisoner then came in and asked for his things. The deceased took off a handkerchief she was wearing and, placing it on the table, said, "Here's your handkerchief ; now go into the house, and Sally will give you the remainder of the things belonging to you". The prisoner replied, "No, I shan't go ; you come and go along with me". The deceased then got up and went with him. Witness followed, and in half a minute's time saw the right arm of prisoner round deceased's neck, and he pretended to kiss her, when he drew his left arm over her neck very sharp. Deceased gave one scream, and partly fell. Witness went up and laid hold of the prisoner, and said, "So you've done the job, have you?" He replied, "Yes, I have". Witness added, "Why, she's dead!", when he replied, "I hope so, and I don't care how soon I am also dead". Witness dragged him to the police office, and on going back found a large clasp knife stained with blood, which he had seen the prisoner eating his dinner with on the previous Sunday. The prisoner was quite sober when he entered the house, and was not in the least excited. Other witnesses gave corroborative testimony in support of this statement. The prisoner who, when called upon, said he had nothing to say, was fully committed on the capital charge of wilfully murdering the deceased.

26 4 October 1851

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

THE HOP STEALING CASE **William Sherwin** of Green Street, publican and boatman, was brought up charged with being the receiver of the hops stolen from the Grand Junction Canal Company. It will be remembered that a man named Butler was committed last week for the robbery. It appeared by the evidence of Police-constable Pack that he found three pockets of hops in the house of the prisoner. They were in the garret. The prisoner was absent, but was apprehended on Saturday last by Police-constable Howe at a house in Spring Gardens. Nothing further transpired, the case being remanded till Friday. Prisoner declined saying anything in the absence of his attorney, but said he should be able to give a very correct account of how he came by the hops.

YESTERDAY **William Sherwin** was this morning fully committed for trial as the receiver.

27 6 March 1852

BANBURY An inquest was held on the body of **William Peesley**, son of a boatman, on Monday last at the Hawks and Partridge, Cherwell Street, before J Churchill Esq, coroner. Verdict : "Died by the visitation of God".

28 15 May 1852

ROTHERSTHORPE An inquest was taken yesterday week at the Chequers Inn, before P E Hicks Esq, on view of the body of **Henry Gee**, boatman, and a native of Leighton Buzzard. It appeared that the boat belonged to Mr Muddeman, and was going into Derbyshire, and that when it arrived at one of the locks near Blisworth deceased went across it to draw up the paddles, but on returning slipped and fell into the canal. His companion immediately went to his assistance, but in

consequence of both paddles of the lock being up, the rush of water drew deceased through the paddle hole into the lock, and about 10 minutes elapsed before the body was extricated. Verdict – Accident.

29 14 August 1852

MARKET HARBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

COAL STEALING William Spriggs and John Tebbutt of Harborough were charged with stealing coal from the wharf yard of Mr G W H Furnival of the Union Inn, and with embezzling some money. Mr J L Douglass appeared for Mr Furnival, and Mr Fisher for the defence. Mr Douglass wished the evidence to be taken privately, but Mr Fisher said it ought to be taken publicly, as the character of his clients, who were poor men, depended upon the issue ; and the magistrates decided not to clear the court. Mr Furnival said he was the trustee of the late Mr Rhodes, who was the trustee of his late father. He had had the entire management of the business since the 6th July. The defendants were in his employ. Tebbutt was head porter, and it was his duty to see that the coal was properly weighed from the boats. When parties came for coal the porters loaded it, and sent them to the office with the ticket for it to be booked or paid for. When a few cwt were fetched on a barrow or truck, they did not go over the machine, but it was the duty of the defendants to report these small quantities to the book keeper, as well as the larger quantities. It was not their duty to take money for any coal. Mr John Furnival was book keeper for some time, but on the 28th July, John Smith, the present book keeper, took the situation, and any money received by the defendants on the 3rd of August ought to have been paid to Smith. On the 29th or 30th of July, he received no money from the defendants, or from a man named Burnall. He had been shown some coal at the Harborough Police Station, and it corresponded with coal in his yard. There were two sorts – one of them was Swanwick coal, for which he was sole agent in the neighbourhood ; and the other a commoner sort. He had never sold the defendants any coal, nor allowed them to take any home. (By Mr Fisher) He first missed some coal from his yard last Thursday. Tebbutt is tally man. It is customary for the tally man to take the balance coal home as his perquisite. Sometimes the porters beg coal of the boatmen. The balance coal would not amount to many pounds. He would have some Swanwick balance coal as well as other sorts. Was not aware that the late Mr Rhodes used to give coal to his men. Did not make a fresh agreement with them when he took the business on the 6th of July. Thomas Mitton of Harborough said he had been employed by Tebbutt and Spriggs to take coal from Mr Furnival's wharf yard to their homes. The first time was when Mr Rhodes was buried. Spriggs put about 3 cwt on a truck and told him to take it to his house ; and Tebbutt told him to come back and take some for him, which he did. Both defendants took their coal from one heap. On Tuesday the 3rd instant, he again went to the wharf with a truck, when Spriggs called him and emptied a barrowful of coals into his truck, and told him to take then to his (Sprigg's) house, which he did. He afterwards took the same quantity to Tebbutt's house. Tebbutt went to the same heap as he did before, and in both cases the quantity was the same. (By Mr Fisher). It was about half past two o'clock in the afternoon. Several persons were about. Joseph Frie, superintendent of police, deposed that from information he had received he went to the house of Spriggs on the 5th inst. He found 3 cwt of coal, part of which was in the pantry and the rest under the stairs. He had it removed to the police station. Shortly afterwards he met Tebbutt, and told him the police had gone to his house to fetch some coal which had been taken from Mr Furnival's stack, and he was charged with stealing it. Tebbutt said he was allowed his coal, as that was the agreement which he had made with Mr Rhodes eight years ago. Witness then went to the wharf to Spriggs, and told him that he (Mr Frie) had fetched the coal from his house which had been taken from Mr Furnival's stack on the previous Tuesday. Spriggs said, "Wasn't it paid for? You don't know it came from his stack". (By Mr Fisher). The coal was not at all concealed. PC Thomas Burton deposed to fetching the coal from Tebbutt's house. Tebbutt told him the same tale as he told Mr Frie. The depositions were then read over to the defendants, after which **George Mason**, boatman of Sawley, was called. He stated that he had frequently seen Tebbutt take coal on his shoulder and under his arm. It was balance coal. Had seen him take coal from the stack when Mr Rhodes was standing by. About three years

ago, he asked Mr Rhodes to allow him to bring himself a ton of coal in the boat, but he would not, as he said he found his two men coal, and that was plenty. The defendants were his only men. Mr Fisher then addressed the Bench for the defendants in a very able manner ; after which the defendants were asked if they had anything to say in their defence. Spriggs said that when he re-entered the service of Mr Rhodes about five years ago, he was to have 14s a week and a cwt of coal. The prosecutor was standing by when this agreement was made, and he had continued to receive it up to the present time. This statement was confirmed by the master whom Spriggs worked for before going to Mr Rhodes. Mr Furnival was recalled, but would not swear that no such conversation took place. Tebbutt said he was not guilty, for coals were part of his wages. After a short consultation, the magistrates dismissed the case, as they thought there was not sufficient evidence to send it to a jury. Mr Douglass said next week he would endeavour to be prepared with evidence to go into the embezzlement case ; and the defendants were bound in the sum of £20 to appear.

30 21 August 1852

LONG BUCKBY WHARF On Tuesday last an inquest was held before P E Hicks Esq at Long Buckby Wharf, on the body of Thomas Marriott, a child of 20 months old. The parents are labouring people residing close to the canal. On Sunday evening the mother had left it in the care of an older sister about 13 years of age, while she went to attend to her household duties. It was suddenly missed, and in about ten minutes after was discovered in the canal. A boatman named **William Greening**, hearing the screams of the mother, ran to the spot and without hesitation jumped into the water and brought it out. It was then dead. Verdict – Accidentally drowned. The jury regretted that they had no means of rewarding Greening for his ready humanity and courage.

31 27 November 1852

BUCKBY WHARF On Saturday last, an inquest was held before P E Hicks Esq at Buckby Wharf, on the body of a boatman named **Bridgwater**. It appeared that on Friday last it was the duty of deceased to steer the boat through Blisworth tunnel ; but the captain, observing his eyes roll and that he looked unwell, told him to lie down, saying that he would himself manage the boat. At Brockhall the driver ran away, taking with him a jacket and some other things belonging to another man, and the captain went into the cabin to call deceased. He found him on his knees with his head against the bed side, and remembered that he had noticed that he had tripped against the ledge at the entrance when he went to lie down. It did not occur to the captain that anything was the matter, and he contented himself with urging deceased to get on the bed ; but he answered indistinctly and did not move ; the captain, however, afterwards finding him in the same position, called to another boatman, and they discovered he was dead. It was said that he was subject to fits, and the jury found he had died from natural causes. There were so many bruises about his face that the surgeon who was called in had at first been led to suppose that violence had been used, but he was said to have been a man of drunken habits, and constantly fighting.

32 15 January 1853

YELVERTOFT Yesterday week, an inquest was held at the Boat Inn, Yelvertoft, before P E Hicks Esq, on the body of **Edward Barwell**, a boatman in the employ of **William Slym**, the captain of a boat voyaging between Northampton and Leicester in the coal trade. On the Wednesday previous they had arrived at Yelvertoft on the Grand Union Canal about eight o'clock at night, the captain steering and the deceased driving, when the former heard a sort of gurgling noise, and after turning his head, observed floating in the water what appeared to be a billycock. He called out to deceased, but receiving no answer, he called to the captain of a neighbouring fly boat to know whether deceased was there, and hearing he was not, instantly concluded that he was in the water. Search was made, and in about ten minutes the body was got out of the canal. No evidence being produced as to how he got into the water, a verdict of "Found drowned" was returned. Deceased was 32 years of age, a very sober man, and a steady and excellent servant.

33 21 May 1853

DAVENTRY An inquest was held at the Boot Inn in this town, on the 17th instant before Chr Hughes Esq, deputy coroner for this division, on the body of **Edward Jones**, a boatman in the employ of the Grand Junction Canal Company. He was drowned on the previous night in the Welton canal tunnel about nine o'clock. The only witness was the "legger" who propelled the boat which deceased was steering through the tunnel. He heard the splash caused by deceased when he fell into the water, but knew nothing more as to the accident with certainty. The body was removed after three hours had elapsed. It is conjectured that the deceased fell in being overcome with fatigue and sleep. This boat was worked by only three men ; four is the proper crew. The tunnel, 1 1/4 mile in length, appears a most dangerous place, and escape would seem nearly hopeless in case of an accident like the above, the place being dark and having no ledge at the sides, in addition to which the motion of the boat would tend to draw anyone under the water in case of his falling in. Nothing was known of the family of the unfortunate man who was, it is supposed, about 35 years of age, and a remarkably well built muscular man. Verdict – Accidental death.

34 31 December 1853

DAVENTRY On the 16th instant, an inquest was held before P E Hicks Esq at the Boot Inn, Daventry, on the body of **Edward Duffield**, a boatman, a native of Dudley Port. Deceased was captain of a canal boat, and was assisting to leg the boat through Braunston Tunnel. Within about 600 yards of the Daventry end of the tunnel, he fell from the plank into the water, and was drowned. His wife was at the time steering, and with the assistance of the other legger endeavoured to get the deceased out, but the body was in the water above an hour, and of course life was perfectly extinct. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned.

35 4 February 1854

PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY LAST James Priest, residing at the Old Crown Inn at Newbold-upon-Avon, charged **Thomas Howes**, a boatman, with stealing a pair of India rubber goloshes, value 4s, on Friday last. It appeared the prisoner had been drinking at the Old Crown ; that the prosecutor's wife saw the goloshes on the settle in her house ; and that they were not there when he left. Police-constable Allen was sent for, and he proceeded to search *The Sophia*, then lying on the Oxford canal. There was no one aboard but the prisoner who, upon being told the cause of the visit, denied any knowledge of the goloshes and invited a search, which ended in the missing property being found in the hold. The prisoner, who denied any knowledge of the theft, was committed to the ensuing Coventry assizes.

36 1 July 1854

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

AYNHOE **John Allen** was indicted for stealing a watch, value 50s, the property of **Samuel Bonner**. Mr Maunsell was for the prosecution. Prosecutor is a boatman on the Oxford Canal, and prisoner was in his employ. On the evening of the 8th of May he left the boat in charge of the prisoner and another boatman named **Emmanuel Beasley**. His watch was then hanging on a hook in its usual place. Prisoner's trousers being in a dilapidated condition, he took them off in order to mend them, and put his master's on instead. The change seems to have inspired him with a desire of exhibiting himself for a while as a "glass of fashion", and taking down the watch he put it in his pocket, telling his companion that he meant to cut a bit of a swell. He cut the swell accordingly, but appears to have tempered his amusement with discretion, and to have got back to his berth in the boat before ten o'clock. According to his own statement, he restored the watch to its proper hook, but when in the morning the prosecutor enquired after it, it was not to be found. What had become of it did not appear. The jury found him Not Guilty.

37 1 July 1854

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

AN ESCAPE John Howes, who was apprehended on suspicion of having stolen a bushel and a half of beans, the property of a boatman named **Thompson**, was brought up this morning. It appeared that the prisoner had been directed to carry the beans from Thompson's brothers in the Towcester Road to Thompson's own house in Bridge Street, and that he was apprehended in Cow Lane. He had offered them for sale, but luckily for him had not "broken bulk". As he had lawful possession of them, although he had wandered with them so far out of their proper track, he was discharged with a caution as to his future conduct. At the suggestion of the owner, that as the beans had come there through his misconduct he ought to carry them to their proper destination ; he undertook to do so, as a matter of course.

38 16 September 1854

BRACKLEY PETTY SESSIONS

George Castle v James Hone. This, an assault charge preferred by a boatman of Banbury against another boatman of the same place, was, on the application of Mr Francillon on the part of the defendant, adjourned to the next sessions at Middleton Cheney. It was stated that the alleged assault took place at the Elephant and Castle near the railways at Banbury.

39 30 June 1855

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS will be held on Wednesday and Thursday next. The following is in the calendar :-

William Warwick, 41, boatman (bailed 2 June), charged with stealing a quantity of tea, value 1s, at Cosgrove on the 25th May.

40 1 September 1855

WEEDON BECK Yesterday week, an inquest was held before P E Hicks Esq at the Fox and Hounds, Weedon, on the body of **John Bartlett**, a boatman aged 68. He had been for some time in a low, desponding way, and the surgeon, Mr Swann, cautioned the family to look after him. On the 23rd he was seen going to the railway by the viaduct shortly before the arrival of the up express train. When the train arrived, the stoker saw him lying across the rails, and before it was possible to check the train it had passed over him and completely severed his head from his body, and tearing away with it his lungs and heart, carried them some distance up the line. There was no question that deceased had placed himself there with a view to self destruction, and the jury found that he had committed suicide while in a state of temporary insanity. He had been taken out of the canal only a week previously. He had been a boatman, and was in independent circumstances.

41 24 November 1855

BANBURY A boatman named **Humphris** was ordered to pay 7s fine and expenses, for assaulting and offering to fight the landlord of the Leathern Bottle Inn, Banbury.

42 5 January 1856

HILLMORTON – A MOTHER AND HER INFANT DROWNED On Monday last, an inquest was held at the Bird in Hand Inn, Hillmorton, before J Poole Esq and a highly respectable jury, of whom Mr Fall was the foreman, to inquire touching the death of **Elizabeth**, wife of **John Malin**, and of his infant son, who were drowned in the second rising lock between Newbold and Hillmorton on the morning of Saturday last. The jury, after examining the place where the sad catastrophe happened, viewed the bodies as they lay side by side. The sight was truly appalling – the more so as it was known that the mother, in endeavouring to rescue her child from a watery grave, had failed and perished in the attempt. John Malin examined : Is a boatman for Mr Eydon of Napton Old Wharf. Left Napton about a fortnight since for the Hartshill stone quarries near Nuneaton ; when there, generally stopped about the Punch Bowl ; was hindered by the late frosts ; started from the

quarries on Friday last. The boat was an old one, and had leaked during the two previous journeys. Had told his master so when the boat was empty, but upon looking at it, he said he did not see much the matter. The boat leaked during the last down journey. Did not stop the leaking when at Nuneaton but, perceiving that a good deal of water came through the boat between Nuneaton and Newbold, he baled the water out twice ; and as is the custom when a boat takes water through her seams, he run her several times into the mud which, by stopping up the crevices, checked the entrance of the water. He baled the water out once between Newbold and Hillmorton. Has been a boatman 35 years, and never had an accident before. Believed the boat did not leak when he left Napton. A juror remarked, "If all the leaky boats were to be stopped, there would be very few on the canals". Witness continued : I am sure that the load in the boat would not cause it to sink. When we entered the lock, my wife was steering, and three of my children were in the cabin. My son, a youth 13 years of age, was assisting to close the gates of the locks. Will swear the moment the boat entered the lock, my son said, "Drop the paddles ; the boat is sinking". I looked and saw the cabin going down. The lock was now half full of water. My wife rushed into the cabin, which was filling rapidly. I saved two of the children by pulling them, one in each hand, out of the cabin by their hair. The water was up to my middle. The boat now went down, and my wife and little one perished. **T J Smallwood** examined : I am a servant in the employ of the Oxford Canal Company. My duty is to gauge the boats. On Saturday morning last, about daybreak, I saw the boat in the act of entering the lock. I was making out an invoice at the time. I heard an alarm, and upon running out of the office, I saw the last witness holding two of his children by their hair, and I had the greatest difficulty to land them. The locks are constructed upon an improved principle, and admit the water by side tunnels. The woman was in the water about ten minutes, and when taken out she was quite dead. I have examined every mark, and cannot find the least dent which will lead me to account for the accident. Great care is required in passing a leaky boat through the locks. It is usual with boatmen to run a leaky boat into the mud to keep out the water. The locks are in excellent condition. The boat had 28 tons 15 cwt of Hartshill stones in it. Mr Gilcott, the engineer of the company, here said there was no restriction as to what a boat should carry as regarded weight. Witness said it is the case with an old boat as with an old horse – it was used for rough work. The child was washed out of the lock through the paddle. A witness named Hewett said he had examined the boat, and found a plank sprung under the bulkhead. Could not say, unless the boat was out of the water, whether the plank was rotten or not. Believed the boat had a deal of water in her when she came into the lock, and if the boat was struck on the nose it would cause the water at the bottom to run to the stern, and cause it to sink first. The coroner here said it was of importance that the boat should be properly examined ; he also thought the owner of the boat should be present. The jury were asked their opinion individually as to adjourning the inquest, when seven were for the adjournment and five against it. The jury, after once more examining the lock, returned, and it was agreed to adjourn the case till Thursday, and in the meantime to thoroughly examine the planking of the boat and summons Mr Eydon to be present at the next investigation.

43 **1 March 1856**

BICESTER

POLICE OFFICE On the 26th, before Captain Style RN, **Job Wilkins** of Kingsutton, boatman, was charged by Felix Trafford, a corporal in the 15th Lancers, with having stolen a whip at Gibraltar in the parish of Bletchington. The prisoner was remanded.

44 **23 May 1857**

RUGBY PETTY SESSIONS

STEALING FROM A BOAT **H Woodward**, a captain of a canal boat, and who said his home was at Willoughby, charged **W Rose** and **James Wright**, boatmen, with stealing a cap, his property. According to the statement of the prosecutor, he moored his boat on Saturday evening last on the Old Oxford Canal. About four o'clock on Sunday morning, he left it for about an hour, and on his return he saw Rose leaving it with prosecutor's cap on his head. The prisoners ran away together.

On examining the cabin he found his wardrobe had been ransacked. He called for help, and after a chase of three miles the delinquents were taken in tow and handed over to the police-constable. There not being sufficient evidence against Wright, he was discharged. Rose said he was guilty, and if he had followed the advice of Wright, who begged and prayed of him not to go near the boat, it would not have been his fate to have been brought up ; he wished to be tried now, and hoped the gentlemen would be merciful to him. He said he was out of employ, and came from Sandgate in Derbyshire. He was sentenced to six weeks' hard labour.

45 27 March 1858

HARDINGSTONE Thomas Stephenson was charged with stealing six sovereigns, the property of **John Griffiths**. Griffiths is a boatman, and on the 22nd of February was with his boat in the parish of Hardingstone. Having occasion to leave for a time, he gave it in charge to the prisoner, and when he returned, he found he had absconded with six sovereigns from a drawer in the cabin. He was apprehended at Bolton on the 16th inst. He said he was guilty, and he couldn't think what had caused him to do as he had done. He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

46 29 May 1858

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

THREE PINTS TOO MUCH John Price, a boatman, was charged with being drunk and creating a disturbance. Defendant said some time ago he had the brain fever, and a little took effect on him. He had had three pints on the occasion in question, a thing he was not used to. He was fined 5s and 2s expenses.

47 6 November 1858

BICESTER DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS

CHARGE OF OAT STEALING AT LOWER HEYFORD Thomas Wills, boatman, Lower Heyford, and **William Darby**, boatman from Staffordshire, were brought up on remand charged with having, on the 27th of October at Lower Heyford, stolen 16 bushels of oats, the property of Mr Richard Coggins of the Red Lion Inn at Lower Heyford. Mr Mills attended for the prosecution, and Mr G Brunner for the prisoners. It appeared that on the night in question Mr George Coggins, one of the constables of Lower Heyford, when on his way home from Steeple Aston, overheard a conversation which induced him to go to the bottom of his garden ; what he saw there caused him to go to Mr Bishop, the landlord of the White Horse Inn, and call him. They went together and, by a boat, crossed over to Mr R Coggins's yard. By the side of the yard they saw Wills, and in the granary Bishop found Darby, busied filling oats from a bin into a sack. Three sacks were filled ready for removal. Darby was forthwith taken into custody by his unlooked for visitors. Wills was apprehended the next morning. They were committed to Oxford gaol for trial.

48 23 July 1859

RUGBY

PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY Thomas Barrett, a boatman, was charged with stealing 100 lbs weight of coals from Rugby Wharf, the property of Mr Liggins. There was also a charge against the prisoner for stealing a quantity of coals, the property of T Dipper, which was gone into first. Thomas Dipper deposed that he missed two hundredweight of Williamthorp coals worth 1s 8d from the Railway Wharf on the 7th of July. From information he received, he went to the prisoner's boat, and there found some Williamthorp coal. Did not charge him with stealing it. Charles Smith, labourer : I work for Mr Liggins of Rugby. On Sunday evening the 3rd of July, while I was on board a boat which was alongside my master's boat, I saw prisoner take about 20 lbs of coal from Dipper's stack. I was about 50 yards from him at the time. Barrett's boat left the next day, and returned the following Tuesday, and went away again the day after. Cross-examined by Mr Smallbone : The next time I saw Dipper was on the next Thursday. I charged the prisoner on Wednesday with stealing my master's coals. I did not see him take the coals. I received half a crown from the

prisoner for my master's coal. I did not ask him for the half crown. The prisoner, upon being asked if he preferred the case to be heard now, by the advice of his solicitor said he would rather it should go to the Sessions. He was admitted to bail.

49 17 September 1859

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

DRUNK **George Blackham**, a boatman, was charged with being drunk and incapable of taking care of himself. Prisoner admitted he was "fresh". Fined 5s and 2s costs.

50 22 October 1859

NORTHAMPTON DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS

ROTHERSTHORPE **Thomas Williams**, a boatman, was charged with stealing some turnips, value 6d, from a field of Mr Dunkley's at Rothersthorpe on the night of the 14th October. The prisoner, in pleading guilty, said it was true he fetched them, as others did. He was fined 20s and costs 10s 6d, or in default a month's hard labour.

51 19 November 1859

A CHILD DROWNED AT LINSLADE On the 11th instant, **John Dale**, aged six years, son of a boatman plying on the Grand Junction Canal, when passing through Linslade, fell overboard, and was drowned in sight of his parents. The father threw a rope to the boy three times before he sank, but the poor little fellow did not assist himself by it, and the father did not get into the water after him, his excuse being that he was not able to swim. On the 12th instant, an inquest on view of the body was held at the Ship Inn, Linslade, before T Parrott Esq, when a verdict of "Accidental death" was recorded. The father was censured.

52 25 February 1860

WEEDON BECK – FATAL ACCIDENT WITH A GUN An inquest was held on Monday last at Weedon Beck, before P E Hicks Esq, on the body of **George Castles**, aged 18, a boatman. It appeared that on the previous day the deceased was in his boat, which was in the canal basin for the purpose of unloading goods. He was in the cabin with a fellow boatman. In this cabin, there was hanging up a loaded gun, which deceased took down. His companion warned him that the gun was loaded, but deceased replied that he was used to guns, and that as the one he had wanted cleaning, he would dust it. The other man then proceeded to take his rest. Some minutes afterwards, from some unexplained cause, the gun went off, the contents being lodged in deceased's forehead, producing a wound about 3 inches in circumference, through which the brain protruded. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

53 14 April 1860

DAVENTRY PETTY SESSIONS

FELONY **Thomas Berry**, boatman, was charged with stealing £5 10s, the monies of **George Burke**, boatman, Braunston, and **Henry Wright**, boatman, was charged with receiving a portion of the same, well knowing it to be stolen. After hearing the evidence of the prosecutor and the policeman, Berry acknowledged taking £4 10s from prosecutor, and giving half to Wright. Committed for trial.

54 30 June 1860

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

ROBBERY FROM THE PERSON Henry Adams, shoemaker, 41 Kingswell Street, William Coombs, shoemaker, 12 Adelaide Street, Thomas Maloney and Oswald White, two drivers in the Royal Artillery, one of whom was severely damaged about the face, were charged with stealing from the person of **Henry Golding**, a labourer of 61 Bridge Street, two half crowns, a shilling and sixpence, on the Leicester Road on the 27th inst. The prosecutor said : I live in Bridge Street. On

Tuesday last I went to Boughton Green fair. On my return home, in company with John Jones, we went into the Saracen's Head Inn in Lawrence Street, kept by Mr Read. While we were there, the four prisoners came in. We left there between one and two on Wednesday morning. The prisoners came out about the same time as we did, and when I got outside the prisoner Maloney came up to me and knocked me down, and the other prisoners began to kick and punch me. I got up again, and got away from them. I went up to the public house door again, and just as I got hold of the door they came up again and knocked me down again. I told them to let me be, and I would give them anything they required ; but they would not, and the prisoner Maloney took my purse and money, which were in my side coat pocket. I took it out and held it in my hand, and Maloney knocked it out of my hand, and the other three prisoners all came round me and scrambled for the money. The prisoners then ran up to the racecourse gates, and a constable having come up, I told him of what had occurred, and we went after the prisoners. We did not find them then, but they were afterwards apprehended. On cross-examination, he said : I took my purse out to give them something to let me alone. I was jumping on a table in the house. I was not fighting with the soldiers. I was not drunk. I saw the prisoner Oswald White outside, but I did not see him strike or kick me. John Jones, a labouring man, said : I went with the witness Henry Golding into the Saracen's Head Inn. Before we left, the prisoner Maloney said that he would give him (Golding) a good hiding, and began to quarrel with him. When we attempted to come out, they tried to stop us, and when we went out, the prisoner Maloney came up and knocked Golding down, and when he got up I heard him call out, "They have got my money". The prisoner Coombs came up to me and knocked me down. I saw the prisoner Adams kick Golding, and when I said, "Don't kick him", Coombs said, "I'll serve you the same", and then knocked me down and kicked me on the head. I did not see the prisoner White outside at all. I saw him in the house. The prosecutor, recalled and examined by the Mayor, said the prisoner White was in the room with them, but he was the quietest of the lot. He however came outside with the others. Police-constable 12, Thomas Smith, said : I was on duty in Royal Terrace on Wednesday morning, a few minutes after two o'clock. I heard someone near the Saracen's Head call out, "Murder". I went to the place. Before I got there, I saw two soldiers and two civilians run up the Leicester road. When I got up to the place, I saw Golding and Jones, the latter of whom was lying on the ground against the palisade. They appeared to be sober. It was not quite daylight then. Golding came to me and said that he had been knocked down and robbed by some soldiers and shoemakers. I then went after them. We did not find them then. They were apprehended some time afterwards by another constable. Golding was not drunk ; he was excited, but he walked and talked very well. Mr Joseph Parkins, licensed victualler of Bridge Street, said : I keep the Pheasant public house. About half past four o'clock on Wednesday morning, five men and a woman came to my house. The moment the door was opened, they went into the kitchen. There were three soldiers and two civilians. I cannot recognise any of them, as the place was dark. One of the civilians came up to the bar, and wanted half a pint of rum. He offered two half crowns in payment. Could not say whether there were other persons in the house, as the door was left open. This witness fenced the examination very much, and the Mayor said it was quite clear he had made up his mind not to tell the whole of what he knew. Sergeant Smith said : I went to the Pheasant public house in Bridge Street about half past four on Wednesday morning. I found the prisoners there. I had previously seen them coming down the Horsemarket about half past two. I told them I apprehended them on suspicion of a highway robbery, and stealing from the person of a boatman six shillings and ninepence. Coombs and Adams said they were innocent, Maloney said, "Highway robbery be -----". White said, "That's strange". The prisoners were then taken to the station house. While there, Adams and Coombs asked me the nature of the charge, and when I told them, they said they wished they had not seen the artillerymen. The prisoner Adams said that they fell in with the boatman at Read's at the Saracen's Head. On searching the prisoner Adams, I found upon him two shillings, two sixpences and a fourpenny piece. Coombs had upon him sixpence and two keys. In reply to the Mayor, Sergeant Smith said : Mr Parkins stood there all the time. I afterwards went to ask Mr Parkins what money he had changed. He said they had knocked him up before the usual time, and he let them in as he thought they would have broken his door down. It was so dark that he

could not recognise them. He added that they had changed one half crown for half a pint of rum, and another half crown for some beer and tobacco. He believed that person to be a shoemaker. Mr Francis Read, son of Mr Richard Read, landlord of the Saracen's Head Inn, was next called, and said : I saw Golding and Jones in our house. I should think it was about twelve o'clock. They were both perfectly sober. I remember seeing the prisoner Maloney there, but I cannot speak to the other prisoners. I let Golding and Jones out, but did not notice the time. I believed Golding had lost a pint of beer over some jumping, but did not take particular notice of the matter. The four prisoners went out immediately after Golding and Jones. I closed the door upon them and some others, about six or eight, and would not let them in again. I am quite sure Maloney was one of those who went out. After I closed the door, I heard some disturbance, but did not go out. None of them entered my house again. I did not hear any distinct cries ; I heard a man cry out, but do not know what he said. Could not say that Golding and Jones were sober, as they had had several glasses to drink, but they knew perfectly well what they were doing. On cross-examination, Mr Read said the prisoner Maloney was quarrelling with Golding about some jumping, and he (witness) told Maloney to go quietly away, as he thought they would fight together. The evidence and the charge having been read over to the prisoners Adams, Coombs and Maloney, the usual caution was read by the Mayor. The prisoner White was ordered to stand back. Adams observed that he had nothing to say more than Sergeant Smith told a lie in saying he said he was sorry they fell in with the artillerymen at Boughton Green fair. Coombs said he was quite innocent. Maloney said that Golding came and emptied out their quart of ale. He was not guilty of the robbery. The Mayor : That's to the purpose. Prisoner : No, it's not to the purpose at all. (Laughter). Adams, Coombs and Maloney were then committed for trial at the next assizes for highway robbery. The magistrates were of opinion that there was not sufficient evidence against Oswald White ; they therefore discharged him. The magistrates agreed to accept substantial bail, themselves in £50 and two persons in £20 each, the usual notice to be given.

55 30 June 1860

COMMITMENTS TO THE COUNTY GAOL AND HOUSE OF CORRECTION **Thomas Berry**, 15, boatman, charged with stealing five sovereigns and one half sovereign, the property of **George Birt**, at Braunston on 8th April.

56 7 July 1860

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH QUARTER SESSION

BRAUNSTON **Thomas Berry** was indicted for stealing five and a half sovereigns, the property of **George Birt**, at Braunston on the 8th April. Prisoner admitted that he took £4 10s from the pocket of prosecutor. George Birt said he was a boatman living at Braunston, and in the employ of Mr Samuel Mason of that place. On the 8th of April last he was coming out of a public house, when he met the prisoner Berry. Berry went and fetched some beer, and the two went to the house of a man named Wright to drink it. While he was there, he took out £5 and half a sovereign. A man named Gerner helped to drink the beer, and then he went away. After this, he (prosecutor) went to sleep, and slept till half past two. He woke, and went down to the boat, and on the way discovered that he had lost his money. He went back to the house, but Wright said he knew nothing about it. Prosecutor then went to a policeman, and they went after the boat, where Berry was aboard, and which had started. The policeman searched Berry. Police-constable Tye stated that on the 9th April prosecutor came to him about three am and told him he had lost some money. They went after prisoner, and came up with him in the boat. Witness told prisoner his suspicion, but he replied that he knew nothing about it. He took him to the lock up at Weedon. Witness asked prosecutor if he had got his money, and prisoner replied, "It's on the deck". On searching the deck, he found £2 10s lapped up in a bit of paper under two cwt of coal. He went back to prisoner and told him he could only find that. Prisoner said he had given the rest to his father-in-law, Wright. Wright said his mother had given it him back. Berry replied, "No, she didn't". "Then", said Wright, "I'll make her when I get back to Braunston". Witness went to Braunston and searched the house. Wright was

very violent, and said he shouldn't search, so he took him into custody and completed his search. He found in a piece of paper £2 10s among Wright's clothes. The jury, on examining the pieces of newspaper in which the two parcels of money were found, said they were from the same paper. Berry's statement before the magistrates was the same as that he made now – that he took only four and a half sovereigns. This was the case. The jury found the prisoner Guilty. Henry Wright pleaded guilty to receiving the said five and a half sovereigns knowing them to have been stolen. The prisoners had been in gaol three months already, and the Court sentenced Wright to three months, and Berry to two months' imprisonment to hard labour. They thanked the Court, and said they were very much obliged to them.

57 24 November 1860

DAVENTRY PETTY SESSIONS

ATTEMPTED RAPE William Bachelor alias Dawson, boatman, Oxford, was charged by Christina Boys of Braunston with assaulting her and attempting to commit a rape on Saturday the 3rd inst. It appears that on Saturday afternoon about four o'clock on the 3rd November, complainant, a very respectable young woman, was returning from Daventry to Braunston. When about half a mile from Daventry the prisoner overtook her and entered into conversation, saying he had been to Daventry to draw £350, and wished her to go into the Royal Oak public house, which she refused. After they had passed the Royal Oak they met two men, and prisoner stopped to light his pipe, complainant walking on alone. Near the toll gate he again overtook her, and walked a little in advance of her until near the gate leading to Braunston covert, when he suddenly turned round, threw her on the ground, and committed the offence complained of, the details of which are unfit for publication. Very shortly after, Mr Jones of Braunston appeared in sight, when she broke away from him, ran to Mr Jones and asked his protection. She was quite positive as to the identity of the prisoner. She was unable to take out a warrant until the 12th inst, in consequence of the injuries she had received. **William Henry Jones**, clerk to the Grand Junction Canal Company, Braunston, said that on Saturday afternoon the 3rd inst he was returning from Daventry to Braunston. When about a mile from Braunston he heard a scream, and on turning a corner of the road he saw a man and woman struggling in the road. They were about 200 yards off. The woman ran towards him, and asked him to protect her from the man who had been interfering with her. He did not know complainant then. She was very agitated, her arm was scratched, her mouth bleeding and her dress muddy and torn. He asked the man how he dared insult anyone on the turnpike road, but did not recollect what reply he made. To the best of his belief, the prisoner was the man he saw on the road. After the usual caution, the prisoner said his name was William Dawson ; that he was not the person, and that he was innocent of the charge. He asked for a remand until Friday to produce a witness who would prove that at the time the offence was committed, he was having tea in his boat about half a mile from Braunston Wharf. This the magistrates refused, saying that if the witness had been there now, they would still be obliged to commit him. He then asked for bail, which was also refused. Committed for trial at the assizes.

58 15 December 1860

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

ALLEGED OUTRAGE AT BRAUNSTON William Dawson, 22, labourer, was indicted for assaulting Christian Boyes at Braunston on the 3rd of November last. The prisoner pleaded not guilty. Mr Wake appeared for the prosecution, Mr Merewether defended.

It appeared that the prosecutrix was proceeding about four o'clock in the afternoon of the day in question from Daventry to Braunston, and meeting a cow in the road, at which she was much frightened, waited at some distance until a man came up, when she asked him to see her safely along. They proceeded along the road together, until they met two men who were proceeding in the opposite direction. The man stopped these two men and asked for a light for his pipe, which was supplied, and they observed him overtake the young woman, who had in the meantime walked on for some distance. Soon after this, the man threw the prosecutor down on the path, and thence

dragged her to the middle of the road, where he knelt on her. He was prevented from proceeding further by the arrival of Mr Jones, a toll clerk on the canal, to whom the prosecutrix appealed for assistance, but said nothing of the violence to which she had been subjected. Both the prosecutrix and the witness Mr Jones swore that the prisoner was the man. The prosecutrix, however, was further questioned by his lordship respecting the identity of the prisoner and how he was apprehended. It appeared that on the Saturday she went home and kept her bed until the following Thursday, when she went to the house of a female friend to tea. Surprise being expressed at her absence for several days, the prosecutrix narrated what had befallen her, and gave a description of the man. Her friend then said a man of similar appearance was courting a girl next door, and would be there that night. In the evening the prisoner was seen in the garden, when prosecutrix immediately said he was the man. She applied to Mr Lamb for a warrant, and several days afterwards the prisoner was apprehended. She also said that in the conversation she had with the man on the turnpike road, he said he was worth a great deal of money, and represented that a little boy in a pinafore, who was with him, and who was apparently about four years old, was his brother. Mr Merewether, in defence of the prisoner, said he should prove an alibi, and called **John Seymour**, a boatman, who said that the prisoner came to his boat on the afternoon in question, at about half past three. They had tea together at four o'clock, and prisoner left about ten minutes to five. Prisoner had a brother, but he was eight or nine years old. Never saw prisoner with a pipe in his mouth. Thomas Brightman said he gave a light to the man who was with the prosecutrix on the road, but the prisoner was not the man. John Marriott, who was in company with the last witness, corroborated, and said that the prisoner was not the man. The learned Judge having summed up, the jury acquitted the prisoner.

59 26 January 1861

MARKET HARBOROUGH

PETTY SESSIONS **Samuel Haywood** charged **John Newton**, boatman, with refusing to pay £2 4s 4d, the amount of wages due to him. The complainant was engaged as boatman at 14s per week, but they had been frozen in for several weeks at Husband's Bosworth, and now defendant refused to pay his full wages. The magistrates wished the parties to arrange, but they could not, so £1 2s 2d was ordered to be paid as wages, and the costs by defendant.

60 6 April 1861

COUNTY POLICE, APRIL 1

ASSAULT WITH INTENT **Thomas Gardener**, boatman, Braunston, was charged with a felonious assault upon Mary Ann Gardener, a child under ten years of age, in February last. Mr Gery appeared on behalf of the prisoner. Adjourned until Saturday the 6th for the attendance of witnesses.

61 11 May 1861

DAVENTRY

THEFT **David Huggins**, boatman, Edgbaston, was charged with stealing a whip valued at 2s 6d, the property of Miss Judkins, a lady residing at Stowe-nine-Churches. Caroline Judkins said : On the 2nd of May I left my carriage near a house at Weedon Beck ; in it was the whip now produced, and other articles. The carriage was standing on the lawn in front of the house, no one being in charge of it. As I was looking out of the window of the house, I saw the prisoner come from the canal bank, over the hedge. He went to the carriage, took something out of it, and went away. I then went to the carriage and found the whip had been taken from it. I directed some of the workmen to follow the prisoner. The whip is the one taken from the carriage, but the handle has been broken off. Stephen Kilsby said : I am a bricklayer, and work for prosecutrix, who came to me on Thursday last as I was coming down a ladder, and said someone had been to the carriage. I saw the prisoner come through the hedge with something in his hand ; he then ran till he came up to the boat, pitched it into the cabin, and went towards the horse on the towing-path. I followed him to the

boat, and asked for the whip, when he said he new nothing about it. William Payn, a lad 14 years of age, said he was in service of the prosecutrix ; that he saw part of a whip lying about eight yards from the carriage, which the butler picked up. Police-sergeant Lewis Poole said : I apprehended the prisoner on Thursday, and found him concealed under some iron rails at the bottom of the boat. It was a very difficult place to get in, as the rails were long and heavy, being some castings for a railway bridge. I asked the prisoner why he concealed himself, but he did not make any answer to the question. I then asked the captain of the boat for the whip, and he said you need not look there for it. Prisoner tried to throw the handle of the whip into the boat, when it struck the cabin and fell into the canal. Richard Stimpson, police-constable, said prisoner was brought to the station on Thursday, where he has been since. On Saturday last he began to swear and make a noise. I remonstrated with him, and said there was nothing worse than swearing, unless it was lying, when he said he did not tell lies. I asked him if he did not tell a lie when he told the policeman that he did not take the whip. He replied, "I had that, but you need not tell him I told you so". Prisoner, on being asked whether he had anything to say in his defence, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

62 11 May 1861

DAVENTRY COUNTY COURT, APRIL 29

Thomas Dunkley, broker v **Thomas Stew**, boatman, Coton, Nuneaton. Claim 18s 6d for goods sold and money lent. To be paid in two instalments.

63 15 June 1861

TOWCESTER

INQUEST On Monday afternoon, an inquest was held at the Town Hall before John Becke Esq, the coroner, on the body of a man named **William Hoare**, a boatman living in Horseshoe Street, who died suddenly according to the following evidence which was adduced. W Flewitt Esq, surgeon, deposed that he was sent for about half past four o'clock on Saturday morning to attend the deceased, but before he could reach the house he had ceased to live. He had been dead a few minutes – probably a quarter of an hour. The inquiries he made respecting him not being satisfactory, he thought it necessary that an inquest should be held ; he could not ascertain the cause of death at that time. In consequence of an order from the coroner, he had made a *post mortem* examination. He found the superficial vessels of the brain very much congested, and traces of former disease, though the brain itself was quite healthy. On opening the chest, he found the lungs, the liver, and the spleen and kidneys very much congested. The stomach was large, its inner coat slightly congested, and contained about 3 oz of a gruel like fluid. The heart was slightly enlarged and softened, and the right cavities were partially filled with dark coloured blood. The intestines were quite healthy. He attributed death to syncope, produced by disease of the heart. Deceased had not had any medical attendance since he had been in the town. **Sarah Hoare**, the widow of the deceased, said her husband was 69 years old. He was a good husband ; she had never had a blow from him in her life. He was a boatman, and had been stopping at home for a fortnight while his boat was being repaired. He thought of starting again that day (Monday). On Friday night he thought he was a little poorly, and went to bed early. She returned home about nine o'clock, when he said he had been poorly during the day, and had been obliged to sit down near the brickyard and have a pint of ale. He brought home a part of his victuals, and did not appear to be very ill. He woke her about three o'clock in the morning. He raised himself in the bed, and supported himself on his left elbow. His breathing was very hard, and she said to him, "Bill, what's the matter with you?" He said, "I shall be better in a minute or two". He did get better, and then said, "I can't go to work today ; what must be done?" She said, "You must stop at home". He said, "Yes, but the men can't go on without me". She said he could not help that. His time for going to work was six o'clock. He then said, "You must send Emma up to tell them". He went to sleep again, but awoke soon afterwards, and said he felt very faint. Their daughter wanted to make him some tea, but he would not have it. He never spoke again. He became insensible, and did not answer her. He had

been regularly at work up to that day. He was the father of fourteen children, and had never spoken an unkind word to her. The Coroner having briefly summed up, the jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony.

64 29 June 1861

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

RESULTS OF THE FAIR **Charles Keyes**, a boatman from Gloucester, was charged with having been drunk and disturbed the peace of Weston Street on the 25th instant. He admitted the offence, and was fined the usual amount.

Caroline Keyes, wife of the last prisoner, was next charged with a similar offence, and with assaulting the police. It appeared that when Police-constable Whitworth took the man into custody, the wife rushed up to him and dealt him several severe blows on the face, causing his nose to bleed. She also tore his cape off, and in the scuffle it was lost. Prisoner told a plausible story to the effect that she was really the injured party. She was fined 7s and costs.

65 14 September 1861

FRIGHTFUL ACCIDENT IN A TUNNEL ON THE GRAND JUNCTION CANAL

TWO MEN KILLED AND THREE INJURED On Friday evening last an accident of a most frightful nature took place in the tunnel on the Grand Junction Canal between Blisworth and Stoke Bruerne in this county, on board a steam propelled barge, in which a carpenter, who had been working in the tunnel, and a boatman, who was steering, lost their lives. At the same time two engineers and another boatman were nearly suffocated and severely burned.

Before entering upon the details of the awful catastrophe, it will be necessarily briefly to explain the position and circumstances of that portion of the canal which runs between the villages of Blisworth and Stoke Bruerne. For some months past, several of the boats on the Grand Junction Canal have been propelled by steam instead of being drawn by horses, and with proper adaptations of the tunnels etc, there is no doubt that the difficulties hitherto experienced in navigating canals with steamboats are in a fair way of being overcome. There are several tunnels on the canal, one of them being under Primrose Hill, near London, and another, the one in which the melancholy occurrence which we are about to detail took place. The tunnel at Blisworth is elliptical in form, the water filling one half of the ellipsis. There is no towing-path through the tunnel, and consequently horse power is not available. Previous to the introduction of steam, the boats were propelled by a process called "legging". The process is this : a board is placed out on either side of the boat, and on each boat lies a man who places his feet against the wall of the tunnel, and thus pushes the boat along. This system still prevails on boats to which the steam engine has not yet been applied, and as the labour of thus "legging" the boat along is both arduous and disagreeable, the steam engine is welcomed as a very agreeable substitute. The engine, however, is not without its disadvantages, for, as the tunnels are long and no larger than sewers, the boatmen are half stifled by the volumes of carbon that are emitted from the low funnel ; coal being burnt instead of coke. The only means of ventilation in the tunnel is a shaft, which is placed at three quarters of a mile distant from the Blisworth end of the tunnel. The tunnel is 3,000 yards, or nearly 1 3/4 miles in length. The shaft is covered at the top with a wooden erection very similar to a hut, and is close to the road leading from Blisworth to Stoke Bruerne. It may be easily imagined, that with the shaft closed up, a tunnel of so great a length, and through which boats were compelled to travel at so slow a rate, would require a long time to clear itself of the large quantity of smoke which the boats emitted, particularly when, as on the evening of the accident, five boats, two of them being steam boats, were passing through the tunnel at one time. Until very recently, all the boats on the canal were towed by horses. On arriving at the mouth of the tunnel, the horses are detached, and sent on above ground to the other end of the tunnel, where they are again attached to the barges. The Grand Junction Canal Company have, however, within the past few months, made an important alteration in the mode of working their barges, so as to dispense with the services of these "leggers". Last November they started one barge, called the *Pioneer*, fitted with a small screw propeller. Since that time they have fitted other

boats with a similar apparatus, which is said to answer very well, and to be extremely economical. The machinery is very compact, and occupies the space of only a few feet in the stern of the vessel. It just clears away the little cabin, which is always to be found in those boats which are drawn by horses. The rudder is smaller than usual, and beneath it is placed the screw.

On Friday evening last, one of the Grand Junction Canal Company's barges, called the *Bee*, which was fitted with one of these screws, was on a return journey from Birmingham to London, having on board two engineers, **Gower** and **Jones**, and two boatmen named **Broadbent** and **Chambers**, who were engaged in steering. In each department the men took alternate turns, each turn lasting several hours. The *Bee* had another boat, not fitted with a screw propeller, and in technical language termed a "haul boat", which it was towing. It is not, however, stated who were on board this second boat which providentially became loosed from the steam boat, or there can be no doubt that the loss of life would have been much greater. The *Bee* was passing through the tunnel at about the rate of three miles per hour, and stopped at a place called a "stanks", which is a number of piles driven in to afford a standing place for some workmen who are engaged in repairing the tunnel. Here they took in a carpenter named Edward Webb, who lived at Stoke Bruerne. He had been working in the tunnel since Tuesday morning, and left, we understand, rather earlier for the purpose of returning home to sharpen his tools, for which carpenters generally have a small allowance of time. He got on board the *Bee*, and directed the engineer how to proceed, in order that neither of the boats might damage the "stanks" in going by. They proceeded on their way, and soon afterwards met in the tunnel with two other boats, which were being worked by "leggers". They became entangled, but in about ten minutes were set free. The boat which the steamer was towing was, however, unloosed from it, and was left behind. There can be no doubt that at this time the men on board the steamer were becoming insensible, for one of the "leggers" states that although he called out several times as loudly as he could, he received no answer. The man who was at work on board the boat belonging to Mr Fellowes described the smoke as being so thick that he could see neither boat, the men on board them, nor the lights which they usually carry both in front and in the engine room ; he was only aware that there were two boats in the tunnel by coming into contact with the rope by which they were connected, and it was as much as he could do to save his own life. Had he been aware of the state of the men on board the steamboat, it would have been impossible for him or the men on board his boat to have rendered them any assistance. Following the two boats which were worked by "leggers" was another steamboat, so that at this time there were five boats, two of them being steamers, in the tunnel. The consequence was a great accumulation of coal smoke. Its effect on the men on board the *Bee* was fatal to two of them, and caused the others to receive frightful injuries. Webb, the carpenter who had been taken on at the "stanks", had not been on board more than a few minutes before he fell senseless against a boatman named **John Chambers**, who was sleeping in his berth. This awoke Chambers, who found Webb moaning and plunging about, but unable to speak, and there is every reason to believe that in a few minutes before the unfortunate man had ceased to breathe. Broadbent was steering ; he, too, must have become insensible, and in his dying moments tumbled into the water, from which he was not rescued until some hours afterwards, when two gangs of men were dragging the tunnel for his corpse. Chambers, on being awakened by Webb's falling, found out that one of the engineers was lying in the stoke hole, and apparently unable to move ; he called to the other engineer who was on board, and who, in attempting to rescue his companion, also fell down insensible. These two men must have been lying for a considerable time, being burnt by the fire and the boiler before they were rescued. The only wonder can be how any of them escaped with life. Chambers became so overpowered that on arriving at the mouth of the tunnel, he, too, fell overboard ; the water, however, restored him to partial consciousness, and he managed to climb on board the boat again, and instinctively shut off the steam. The boat could only proceed a short distance, and on arriving at the lock the awful catastrophe was at once revealed. The young carpenter was lying dead in the hold, one of the boatmen were missing, and the two engine men were lying near the furnace, awfully burned. They were at once removed to the Boat Inn, adjoining the lock, and medical men were immediately sent for.

Mr Knott, jun, of Blisworth, and Mr Watkins of Towcester were soon in attendance. They attended to the sufferers, who were now progressing favourably, though it will be a long time before they are again fit for work.

The following is a list of the killed and injured :-

DEAD William Webb, carpenter of Stoke Bruerne. **Edward Broadbent**, boatman of Braunston, residing at Birmingham.

INJURED **Joseph Jones**, engine driver, severely burned. **William Gower**, engine driver, severely burned. **John Chambers**, boatman of Warwick, injured by immersion and partial suffocation.

Webb was only married this summer. The other man, Broadbent, has left a widow and eight children, the youngest having only been born on the 1st inst.

On Monday afternoon, P E Hicks Esq, the county coroner, held an inquest on the bodies of William Webb and Edward Broadbent. The latter was lying at the Boat Inn, adjoining the locks, but Webb had been removed to his own house, about a couple of hundred yards further along the canal. The jury were sworn in the parlour of a cottage adjoining the inn ; they thence proceeded to view the bodies, and the inquest was then adjourned to the school room of the village, the number of persons attending the inquest requiring more accommodation than the inn could afford.

Mr Anderson, the chairman of the Grand Junction Canal Company, attended the inquest, accompanied by Mr Rogers, the secretary, Mr Fulton, the traffic manager, and Mr Lake, the engineer of the company. Mr Cherry, the manager of the company at Blisworth, was also present. Mr A B Markham attended to watch the case on behalf of the company ; Mr R Howes attended on behalf of the relatives of the deceased men.

Joseph Wickens examined : I am a "legger" in the tunnel at Blisworth, and live at Stoke Bruerne. I knew the deceased, William Webb. He was a carpenter, and in the employ of the company. I do not know his age. I also knew Broadbent. He also was in the company's service. On Friday evening last when I was "legging" in the tunnel, I met the boat on board of which were the deceased men. I was on board a boat belonging to Mr Fellowes. This was in the afternoon between five and six o'clock. The boat I was in was proceeding from Stoke Bruerne to Blisworth. I met the steamer, but the smoke was so strong I could not see anybody in it. This was between No 12 and No 13 – the distances marked in the tunnel. The steamer was coming towards Stoke Bruerne. The steamer was proceeding along one side of the tunnel, and a boat which it was hauling was coming along the other side of the tunnel. The rope extending between the boats got entangled with my boat. The rope pulled our "wings" down, and made me and the other men aboard the boat get to the back of the mast or "bulk". I saw nobody on board the boats during the whole time. I halloed as loud as I could, but nobody answered me. Mr Savage (foreman of the jury) : How did you get disentangled? Witness : Nobody ever spoke, but someone had strength enough to loose the rope. Mr Savage : Which boat was he in – the steamboat or the haul-boat? Witness : The haul-boat. Coroner : Did you know who it was? Witness : No ; I heard nobody speak, but somebody unloosed the rope, or it would have taken us back to Stoke Bruerne if it had kept fast. Mr Savage : Did you find any effect on yourself from the smoke? Witness : Yes, we could not get on with our work until we were getting towards Blisworth, when the smoke cleared off. We sat down on the deck until the wind had blown the smoke by. Mr Savage : Does the wind have any effect upon the smoke in the tunnel? Witness : It is according to which way the wind is. Mr Savage : You said after the boat had passed you the smoke from it had such an effect upon you that you were obliged to lie down on the deck until such time as the wind had blown the smoke away? Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : Was the wind in such a position that it would be likely to effect the steamboat coming towards this end? Witness : Yes, it blew from Blisworth to Stoke Bruerne. Mr Savage : The same way that the steamboat was coming? Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : Have you on any previous occasions met steamboats running through the tunnel when there has been a lot of boats in the tunnel, or has it been a murky, heavy day? Witness : It is in this way. When the wind blows it will clear in time, but if there is a side wind the smoke will remain there. Mr Savage : Yes, but have you ever felt the effect of the smoke in the tunnel previously when steamboats have been running through? Witness : Yes, a good many times, but I never felt anything so bad as that. The Coroner : Are there any shafts or ventilators?

Witness : There is one shaft between 18 and 19, rather above half way through. No 15 is about the middle. Mr Savage : It is about three fifths of the whole distance from one end. Mr Markham : How many numbers are there? Mr Savage : Thirty, and they are each at one hundred yards distance. A witness who was in attendance here said the shaft was 1760 yards, or just a mile, from the Stoke Bruerne end of the tunnel. Mr Savage (to the witness) : Were you aware that another steamboat was following you into the tunnel? Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : Whereabouts did that boat overtake you – previously to your meeting with the steamboat that was coming from Blisworth, or after you had passed it? Witness : That boat caught up to us after we had passed the one that was coming from Blisworth. Coroner : Where did that overtake you? Witness : The one which was following us caught us about the middle of the tunnel, but I could not tell justly for the smoke. Mr Savage : Would the additional smoke caused by the steamboat affect the men who were working the boat that was coming this way? Witness : I don't know. It would not do them any good, because the wind kept blowing it towards them all the while. Mr Savage : Then there would be an additional quantity of smoke in the tunnel, which these men would have to work through. Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : Would the wind keep that smoke upon them? Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : When there has been but one steamboat in the tunnel at a time, have you ever felt any effect from the smoke? Witness : Well, it is very bad until it gets blown away. Mr Savage : But is it worse than before the steamboats commenced running? Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : You expect that the steamboat which followed you was about 200 yards behind you when you met this steamboat? Witness : Yes, I dare say it was somewhat about that. Mr Howes : You said you were entangled in the tunnel ; how long were you delayed through that? Witness : It might be about ten minutes we were in the scuffle. By Mr A B Markham : I am a “legger”. I get my living entirely by that. Coroner : Which boats? The company's boats or other boats? Witness : By the boats that do not belong to the company. By Mr Markham : If all the boats were propelled by steam, they would not require my services. My business as a “legger” would cease as a matter of course. I cannot tell whether there was any light attached to either of the boats I met ; I never saw a light. The smoke was that strong we could not see the light on our own deck, and we had one there. There was much smoke or sulphur. I could see the first boat, but not the last. I do not know whether the first boat was more free from smoke than the last. I never did see the last boat at all. Mr Markham : Did the wind go faster than the steamboat in the tunnel, or not so fast? Witness : I expect it went about as fast as they did, or near enough, because afterwards we got a little better as the wind blew by us. When these boats met us, the men on board my boat said, “What must be done?” I said, “Shout as loud as you can, and tell the other to keep inside”. We had no time to look after lights ; we had to look after our own lives ; we were close to the water on the gunwale of the boat. Somebody in the boat that was being towed halloed out that the first boat had let them go, as the rope was parted, but they got no answer. I called out to them to loose the rope. There were two or three there, and one had strength enough to loose the rope. Coroner : But you did not see them? Witness : No, but they said so when they got to this end. After I got over again, one said, “It was me that loosed the rope”. I said I was very glad he did. By Mr Markham : I don't know whether the steamer would have broke the rope ; if it had not, and the rope had not been loosed, it would have pulled us back. I cannot tell you whether the smoke blew most round the steamer or the boat that followed it. I was as close to the water as I could get. After the steamer had been gone by a little while, the tunnel began to get clear, and we recovered a little. The steamboat was proceeding at the regular pace, so far as we could guess. So far as I know, when I met them, there was nothing amiss, only that nobody ever spoke in the steamer. The two steamboats must have met between Nos 17 and 11, and Nos 11 and 13. Mr Markham : How far is that from the shaft? Mr Savage : About 740 yards. Coroner : Do you know whether the shaft was open or closed? Witness : It was just as it has ever been. Coroner : How is that? Witness : You can just see daylight through if you look up in the daytime ; you can just see light, that is all. Coroner : But you do not know whether it is open or not? Witness : I don't. Mr Markham : Supposing one steamboat went through the tunnel, how long would it be before the tunnel was clear? Witness : It is according to the wind ; if it was a side wind, it might take all day. Mr Markham : But that day? Witness : Very likely one hour or a couple ;

sometimes there is more wind than at others. Coroner : It would depend upon the atmosphere as well. (To the witness) Have you ever been at the top of the shaft? Witness : Yes, there are some boards nailed over at the top like a little hut. Coroner : Then it is not quite open at the top? Witness: No, sir.

This being the end of the evidence of this witness, the coroner and jury, accompanied by the solicitors and the officers of the company, proceeded to the little parlour of the Boat Inn, where the two injured men, Gower and Jones, the engineers, were lying on beds which were made up on the floor. They were unable to rise from their recumbent position, and one of them, Gower, was unable to raise the Bible to his lips when he was sworn, owing to the extensive burns on his hands, which he received when lying insensible in the stoke hole on board the steamboat. They were both stalwart, powerful, middle aged men.

William Gower examined : I was a second driver in a steamboat belonging to the Grand Junction Canal Company. I was at work on board on Friday afternoon. I was driving, and at that time I had the care of the boat. Coroner : Where were you driving from? Mr Anderson : Where did your "turn" begin? Witness : At Long Buckby. Coroner : Where would your turn have ended? Witness : Here, sir. Coroner : Now did your engine work properly till you got to the tunnel? Witness : No, sir. Mr Anderson : When you got on at Buckby, how was it? Witness : She was at work right enough till we got to Blisworth station. Mr Anderson : And then she got short of steam.

This question from the Chairman of the Company called forth a remark from the Coroner as to his asking questions of the witnesses, but Mr Anderson said he was not there to impede the inquiry, but to give them every facility.

Coroner : When you got to Blisworth station, how then? Witness : I cleared the fire out when I found "her" (the engine) getting bad. Coroner : What state was she in when you had cleared it out? Was she foul at all? Witness : The flues were foul. Coroner : But more than if she had been properly cleaned at Birmingham, or wherever she came from? Witness : She was not cleaned at Birmingham. Coroner : But did you know yourself where she was cleaned? Witness : At London.

The Chairman of the Company here said that the widow and children of the deceased Broadbent would be taken care of by the company, who wished to inquire into this accident and, if possible, to prevent it in the future. They might depend upon it that the survivors would not suffer, action or no action ; they were not there to get out of that, depend upon it. Mr Savage : I am very glad to hear it.

Coroner (to witness) : Then you cleaned her out and got the fire up? Witness : I pulled the clinkers out, and got a nice fire up again. Coroner : Then you left Blisworth shortly afterwards? Witness : We did not stop at Blisworth ; we went gently on all the time, lowering the steam. We had 30 lbs on. Coroner : Did you get plenty of steam up? Witness : No, we were obliged to stop for steam before we got to the tunnel. Coroner : Why were you obliged to do that? Witness : Because we had not got sufficient steam to take us through without firing up in the tunnel. Coroner : What do you mean by "firing up in the tunnel"? Witness : Putting fresh coal on. Coroner : Have you any particular instructions about firing up in the tunnel? Witness : I never saw any ; I never had any. Coroner : What made you put it out then? Witness : We did not put it out ; we had a nice clear fire.

Mr Markham : But what made you stop to accumulate the steam? Witness : My mate (Jones) came out and stopped the engine. Coroner : Then did Jones take charge of the boat? Witness : Yes, he took charge of the driving then. Coroner : Now did you perceive any larger quantity of smoke going through the tunnel on Friday than at other times? Witness : After we had got by the "stanks". Mr Anderson : That is where they are doing some repairs in the tunnel. Coroner : What then? Witness : When I got up to the "stanks" I saw a man on the side of the boat. I was in the forepart of the boat, telling the steerer which way to go. He said, "Bill, come back and attend to the engine. I feel rather sick". Jones said that. I went back, and did not go down the fire hole, but went in the bottom of the boat. I saw a man standing on the side. I went to shoot a little coal down behind the boiler, and while shooting it down I came over so queer, and I fell down. I never recollect anything afterwards.

Mr Anderson explained that the witness, in speaking of what he was doing, alluded to the coal bunker. The coals were round the boiler, and in order to get them to the stoke hole, the men had to

push them down to the mouth of the furnace.

Mr Fulton : Were you there for the purpose of putting any coal on? Witness : I was going to put a little bit on, but I could not do so. Mr Savage : Did you put any on in the tunnel? Witness : No, sir. Mr Markham : What number is the “stanks”? Mr Savage : 1,900 yards from this end. But he is under a wrong impression. They did not fall in this way until they got half way between the “stanks” and this end, which will be proved afterwards. Mr Markham : How many times have you been through the tunnel? Witness : I think ten times – up and down. Mr Markham : Have you ever experienced similar sensations before? Witness : Yes, in a railway tunnel I have. Mr Markham : But in this tunnel? Witness : Yes, once before. Mr Markham : When was that? Witness : About three weeks ago. Coroner : Did you become insensible that time? Witness : No, not so bad as this time. Mr Markham : You felt sick. Witness : Yes. Mr Howes : Have you met a boat in a similar way before? Mr Markham : What sort of coal do you use on board the steamboats? Is it coal, or coke, or slack? Witness : I don't know the name ; it's coal, not coke. Mr Anderson : It's “broach” coal, from the south of Staffordshire. Mr Markham : It is similar coal to that used on the railways? Witness : No. Mr Markham : But you have experienced similar sensations in railway tunnels? Witness : Yes. Mr Markham : Can you give any explanation of what you attribute your sickness to? Witness : No, I cannot, because I was gone in an instant. I fell down directly. Mr Anderson : You did not feel anything coming? No giddiness? Witness : No, I fell right down. Mr Savage : Did you know that repairs were going on inside the tunnel? Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : Are you aware that Webb got upon the boat while you were passing there? Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : Had you any conversation with him after he got on the boat? Witness : No. Mr Savage : How far did you come after he got upon the boat up to the last time that you saw him in the boat? Witness : Two or three yards. Coroner : You had not fallen down insensible? Witness : No, sir. Mr Savage : Do you recollect meeting the company's steamboat, the *Wasp*? Witness : No, I do not. Mr Savage : Jones perfectly recollects that. Mr Howes : When you felt these sensations before, did you meet a steamboat in the same way, or was yours the only steamboat? Witness : Mine was the only one that I was aware of. Mr Howes : Did you put any coals on the fire just before you went into the tunnel? Witness : I did not put any on. Mr Howes : Did you know of any coals being put on? Witness : I never saw any. Mr Howes : Do you know the regulations about cleaning the engines? What is the usual course? Mr Anderson : He came from Long Buckby. Mr Howes : Was the engine cleaned at Birmingham? Witness : The flues were not clean. Mr Howes : Is it the usual course for the company's boats to have the flues cleaned at Birmingham? Witness : No, at London. Jones : They are always properly cleaned in London. Mr Howes : About Webb ; how was it that Webb got on to the boat? Was he working in the tunnel at the time as a carpenter? Witness : I believe so. Mr Howes : Was the company's agent there at the time? Witness : Not that I know of. Mr Howes : You did not hear anything said to Webb? Witness : No. Mr Howes : And you know nothing further? Witness : No. Mr Savage : You stated that you were not aware of what was the cause of your becoming in a state of insensibility ; could you attribute it to anything? Witness : To sulphur. Mr Savage : What caused the sulphur? Witness : The coal, no doubt. Mr Anderson : There must have been a particular vein of sulphur in the coal.

Joseph Jones examined : I am an engine driver in the employ of the Grand Junction Canal Company. On Friday afternoon last I had care of the boat, which I stopped before we got to the tunnel to see if the fire was in proper order and the steam ready to go into the tunnel. I had been in charge of the boat from Itchington (near Rugby). Mr Anderson : He is the chief engineer ; but he must rest, and therefore has another engineer under his command. Examination continued : The boat was coming back from Birmingham. I had been with her from Birmingham to London, and was bringing her back again. I brought the boat away from London a week last Saturday night (August 31st). I arrived at Birmingham on Wednesday evening. We were delayed on the road. Mr Anderson : What caused the delay? Witness : The helm was out of order. Mr Anderson : I recollect; you were delayed at Knowle, or else you were due at Birmingham on Tuesday evening. Coroner : Did you examine the engine before starting from London? Witness : I did ; I had the men at work at her, and she was all right before we started out. Mr Anderson : There is a fireman and a

man in charge of the boat who can give you evidence to that effect. In London we have a shop of men to assist these men in their duties. If there is anything wrong, they are assisted by the men up there. There happens to be one man here who can give you evidence that she was in a proper state when she left. Coroner : Then you examined her at Birmingham? Witness : Both at Birmingham and London. Coroner : Tell me the state she was in till you got up to the tunnel? Witness : She worked as well as any engine in the world until my mate got in. Then she rather got short of steam. I suppose she was dirty. The fire at the back had got rather clinkered. I did not suppose she had got steam enough. When we got to Blisworth, I again took charge of her at the request of Jones (*sic*). That was at the Blisworth end of the tunnel. We had plenty of steam to go through the tunnel. They stopped us in the tunnel at the "stanks", so as to go by steady. Mr Markham : Who stopped you at the "stanks"? Witness : Some man there ; I don't know who he was. Mr Anderson : It was an agent of the company. Mr Markham : Were you completely stopped at the "stanks"? Witness : The steam was shut off. Webb got in there. Mr Markham : What did he tell you? Witness : He gave me instructions how to go on till the boats got by, and then told me to start again. Mr Markham : What did he say? Witness : He told me to shut off the steam ; and then when he wanted me to go on again, he told me to put the steam on gently. Mr Savage : That was because you should not flush over the "stanks" I suppose? Witness : Just so. Coroner : Did you shut it off, and then put it on again? Witness : Yes. I shut it off and put it on again. Coroner : Did you become insensible? Witness : After then I did. Coroner : Tell the jury. Witness : When Webb gave me instructions how to go on after passing the "stanks", we went on as usual. After then we met two boats, neither of which was a steamboat. I felt very giddy before we met the steamboat called the *Wasp*. Coroner : Did you know it was the *Wasp*? Witness : Yes. Coroner : Did she pass you? Witness : Oh yes, she passed me a long time before I fell down. Coroner : Was there more smoke than usual in the tunnel? Witness : Well, I have seen as much smoke in the tunnel as there was then, quite as much or more. Coroner : Where was Broadbent ; was he in the boat? Witness : Yes, he was steering our boat. Coroner : Was he steering when you became insensible, or did he become insensible before you? Witness : I don't know anything about him. Coroner : What was the name of your boat? Witness : The *Bee*. Coroner : I suppose you know no more about it till you were taken out of the boat? Witness : Oh yes, I do. I felt rather giddy, and I called to my mate to come back, and he did so. He fell down in the fire place, where the coal was. Coroner : Whereabouts did you fall down? Witness : I had lain down in the boat. Mr Anderson : Were you in the engine room until you called to your mate? Witness : Yes. Mr Anderson : And then you went into the place where you sleep? Witness : Yes. Mr Anderson : Towards the fore part of the boat? Witness : Yes. Mr Anderson : May I ask you another question? Did you smell anything from the coals? Witness : Not that I am aware of. Mr Anderson : Not at all ; no particular blast like sulphur out of the coals? Witness : Well it was rather black stuff, and hung around our lips a good deal. Mr Anderson : Did you feel any inconvenience at any other times when there was more smoke than the other day? Witness : I don't know that I did, only it took more effect upon us. Mr Anderson : This time? But you don't know any reason why? Witness : No. Coroner : But is not the engine room shut up? Mr Anderson : No, it is open, except just over the engine, to protect it from the weather. Witness : The wind that day all set to the other end. Other boats were in the tunnel, and their smoke all took our end. It would not clear itself or go away. Mr Anderson : In fact it all kept hovering about you. Witness : Yes. Mr Anderson : But would that not affect the other boat? Mr Savage : No, because that boat had stopped behind. Mr Markham : How long have you been in the company's service? Witness : Eight weeks. Mr Savage : This is a new concern ; he has been on the railway. Mr Markham : How long have you been accustomed to the management of engines? Witness : Nine years. Mr Markham : What portion of that time have you been upon railways? Witness : I have never been on any railway except the London and North Western. Mr Markham : How long have you been upon that? Witness : Nine years and nine months. Mr Markham : Engine driving and stoking? Witness : Yes. Mr Markham : Did you ever experience those sensations in Kilsby tunnel, or any other of the long tunnels? Witness : Well, they are very bad on railroads, but you go through them more swiftly, and you are not in them so long. Mr Markham : But you have experienced the same descriptions of

sensations? Witness : Yes. Mr Markham : When? When you were burning coal or coke? Witness : It is immaterial which, but I think coke the worst. Mr Markham : But you have felt the same sensation when burning coke? Witness : Yes. Mr Markham : How many times have you been through this tunnel? Witness : About sixteen. Mr Markham : And you never felt it so bad before? Witness : No. Mr Markham : Have you felt anything approaching it? Witness : Not the least whatever. Mr Markham : In all those number of times, you have never experienced anything like it? Witness : No. Mr Markham : Were you conscious? Witness : I must have been ; I had hold of the regulation handle. Mr Markham : Then the boat still proceeded? Witness : Yes. Webb fell down in the boat, and he said, "There is a man in the fire hole". I got out of bed as well as I could, and tried to pick him up. I could not. I was in dread and fear about my boiler being burned. So I got out of bed and put the "feed" on. As I was coming out of the fire hole, I had my foot on the step. I don't remember anything more. Mr Markham : Was the *Wasp* burning the same description of coals? Witness : I don't know. Mr Markham : It could not have been worse. Mr Anderson : Is it all the same sort of coals? - We have been burning it for the last eight weeks. - Mr Howes : Had you another boat in tow? Witness : Yes ; we had another boat towing. Mr Howes : Would that retard the speed of your boat in going through the tunnel? Witness : Well, I don't know. I have been through with a tow boat in 35 minutes. We should go rather faster with an empty boat. Mr Howes : Can you give me any idea of what difference it would make? Witness : Very little. I could go through with both in 40 minutes. Mr Savage : Can you run 40 minutes without firing? Witness : I can, but when I get one length from the tunnel I put one shovelful on. Mr Savage : What is about your average rate of travelling per hour? Witness : About three miles per hour. Mr Savage : And what is your consumption of coal per hour? Witness : I don't know. Mr Anderson : About five or seven tons during the voyage. Mr Savage : That would be about one hundredweight per hour. Witness : You can put one hundredweight on. Mr Markham : Don't you think you had put on more coal? Witness : Decidedly ; a man knows he is coming to a tunnel, and he ought to have his fire up. Mr Markham : It was not so in this case ; you stopped to accumulate heat. Witness : It was as near as possible when she got to the tunnel. I only put one shovelful on afterwards. Mr Markham : Don't you think you must have got too much coal unconsumed before you got to the tunnel? Witness : No, sir, there was plenty of fire to take her through, only the clinkers wanted fetching off the bars. Mr Markham : Are there any particular orders? Witness : We have orders not to put any coal on so as not to make any smoke. Mr Markham : How was it in this case – there was a great deal of smoke? Witness : There were other boats. Mr Markham : But they were not the boats which made the smoke? Witness : Well they might ; the smoke would be just about the same in a cabin boat. Mr Markham : If you were going through again, should you adopt the same practice with regard to putting the coal upon the fire, or should you not put a little less? Witness : Well I should have the fire box full. Mr Markham : But should you not wait until it had burnt, so as to do away with the smoke? Witness : Of course I should have all the smoke done away with. We had no dead coal in the box. Mr Anderson : How far from the mouth did you fire up? Witness : Against the wharf I put on three or four shovels full. Mr Savage : Against Worster's Wharf? Witness : Yes. Mr Savage : But you stopped after that? Witness : Yes, purposely, to let it burn clear. Mr Anderson : They always have as little smoke as possible. Mr Markham : But from what he says, Mr Anderson, there must have been a great deal. Mr Howes : Did you put in more than one shovelful when Webb got in the boat? Witness : No. Mr Markham : Had you a light upon your boat? Witness : Yes ; we had two lights upon our boats. Mr Markham : Was there so much smoke that you could not see the lights? Witness : You can always see the lights. I could see the engine lights in the other boat. Coroner : What lights were they? Witness : Signal lights. Mr Anderson : A large oil lantern is placed in the front of the boat. Mr Savage : Were you aware that you had left the haul boat behind? Witness : No. Mr Markham : Could you see the two boats as you passed them? Witness : Yes. Mr Anderson : Then you saw the men plainly enough? Witness : Yes, I saw the "leggers". Mr Markham : It was not so thick then but what you could see the boat? Witness : You could see the boat anywhere. Mr Howes : Did you see Mr Eden, the company's agent, there? Witness : No ; I did not see anyone but the men at work. I did not take notice of anyone. I saw

Webb get on, and he gave me instructions how to pass.

The inquest then left the room and inspected the boat, which was moored outside, on board of which the catastrophe took place. When they returned to the school room, the inquiry was resumed. John Chambers examined : I am a boatman in the employ of the Grand Junction Canal Company, and live at Warwick. I was with the steamer last Friday. I had been steering her. Broadbent was steering through the tunnel. I did not see Broadbent in the tunnel. The last time I saw Broadbent alive was at Long Buckby. I was asleep in the hold at the bottom of the boat till Webb tumbled in upon me, and awakened me. He said, "There is one of the engine drivers down, and cannot get up". Jones ran out to pick him up. Webb, the carpenter, began to cry and kick about. I asked him what was the matter with him, but he would not speak. Then I came out of the hold, and came abreast of the engine against the boiler, and stood there for three or four minutes, when it took me, and I fell into the water in the tunnel. The water brought me to myself, and I swam and caught hold behind. I hung there a while. I shouted for Broadbent to come and pull me out. I thought he was inside the boat. I got inside the boat again just as it was coming out of the tunnel. I turned the steam off, and then came away from the boiler and went to the cabin, where I fell off to sleep. Some people came and dragged me out. I cannot recollect that anyone gave me my cap, or told me to stop the engine. Mr Phipps (a juryman) : He had not been in the water in the tunnel. Mr Watkins (surgeon) : Can you recollect the paddle knocking against your legs? Witness : Yes. Examination resumed : I was tired from exertion, and went to sleep in the cabin. I don't know who fetched me out. I did not see either Webb or Broadbent alive on board the boat. I only saw Jones. I saw Webb lying beside me before I fell over. The tunnel was full of smoke, but I have seen as much smoke in the tunnel on previous occasions.

John Sturges examined : I am an agricultural labourer and live at Shutlanger. On Friday evening last I was driving some cows, the property of my master, Mr Phipps, along the towing-path of the canal near to the tunnel. I saw the steamboat come out of the tunnel. I saw the front of the boat going straight in amongst the mud and flags, and I called out, "Hold on", but the boat was so full of smoke that I could not see anybody. I ran down to the tunnel end and I saw the driver hanging over the side of the boat. That was Jones. I called out to him, but he did not move. I called out to him again as loud as I could. Then another young man who was along with the boat came out from underneath the cloth. I said to him, "Look here, this man is asleep or something". He said, "He is not asleep ; he is very nearly killed with the smoke". He was looking round to look at those men on the boiler. He said, "Here's one lays down here in the hole very nearly dead ; he's a stranger to me, but I believe he's a company's man". I asked him if I should run and fetch somebody. He said, "I think you'd better". I asked him whether I should go to the lock-keeper's or Mr Phipps. He said, "Go to which is the nighest". I then ran for Mr Phipps, and followed my master down. Before I went to my master's, this young man fell into the cut. He "scrabbled" about and got out again. When I came back, I gave this young man his cap. I never did see Webb or Broadbent. I saw the other three men lifted out.

Samuel Harris examined : I live at Stoke Bruerne, and am a "legger" on the canal. On Friday night I went into the tunnel as one of a second lot, to drag for the body of Broadbent. We dragged for him. We found him between Nos 9 and 10. I was legging in the second boat that met them that afternoon. I could not see for the smoke. I knew Broadbent was at the helm. I knew him well, and knew his voice. That was between Nos 12 and 13. I knew Webb. I don't know how long he had been at work in the tunnel.

Samuel Haydon : We went to work in the tunnel at a quarter to four o'clock on Tuesday morning.

Harris's examination resumed : The witness Wickens was in one boat, and I was in the other. I could not see whether there was a light on board the steamer. I hung over the side to keep out of the way of the rope. I have been a "legger" before these steamboats were in use. They have passed me several times while "legging". I have never had anything happen when I was there before. I have been at work there since twelve months last Easter. I have never met with anything to cause me to fall down. The smoke has taken an effect on me, and felt disagreeable. Boats that are not worked by machinery have smoke. They are not so bad as those which have machinery. When there is a

great smoke, it is very unpleasant. I should think the steamer would have more smoke than four or five boats without machinery. It has happened before that boats have fouled while in the tunnel, but not while I have been there. The boat that was attached to the steamer was very far behind it, but I could not see how the foul happened.

William Tew examined : I live at Stoke Bruerne, and am a shoemaker. On Friday evening I was near the canal, and went to the boat. I found Webb over the engine. I saw him got out directly. He appeared to me to be dead. I had known him previously. I do not know his age. Mr Savage : He is about 40.

Mr William Parsons Knott examined : I am an assistant to my father, who is a surgeon at Blisworth. Last Friday evening a boy met me with a horse, and I came over here directly. I went first to the men who were injured, and saw to them. I next went to Webb's house. I got there at half past seven o'clock, about three quarters of an hour after the accident happened. In my opinion death was caused by suffocation. There was great venous congestion, which is usual in such cases. On the following morning I saw the body of Broadbent. It had been in the water for some time. I believe he was first suffocated, and fell into the water afterwards.

Mr Robert Webb Watkins examined : I am a surgeon, and reside at Towcester. I saw the body of Webb on Friday evening last, in the company of the last witness. I carefully examined the exterior of the body, and found the face, particularly the eyes and lips, very much congested. The whole of the surface of the body was congested with venous blood. There was no mark of violence on any part of the body. Having heard the previous evidence, I am decidedly of opinion that he died from asphyxia, and that it was produced by the coal smoke in the tunnel. Coroner : You mean that they were suffocated. Mr Watkins : No, a man may be suffocated owing to violence. In this case death took place from asphyxia, owing to the exclusion of pure air, or rather of air sufficiently oxygenated to support life. Mr Anderson : What, in your opinion, prevented the other boats being served the same way? Witness : There was not the same quantity of smoke. Mr Anderson : But they had a "butty" boat behind them. If the smoke was so thick in the steambot, why not in the boat behind them? It is in evidence that the smoke was so thick they could not see, but there appears to be a little variance as to that statement. Would not the people on board the slow boat be affected by the want of oxygen? Witness : The smoke issuing from the furnace would take a considerable time to diffuse itself. Of course, where the boat was, there must have been a considerably larger quantity of smoke than in any other part. That would gradually diffuse itself in the course of the passage through the tunnel. In five or ten minutes, I think they would have recovered, just as the boy who fell overboard did. From an inquiry which I made, it appears that the light at the head of this particular boat was burning when the boat came out of the tunnel. The probability is that if the air had been foul it would have gone out. That proves there must have been much purer atmosphere at the head of the boat. I asked that question of one of the men before I came into the room. Mr Anderson : But they have engine lamps. A coal we first tried contained so much sulphur that the men in the Regent's Canal tunnel were affected by it. I want to know whether there was not a sufficient amount of sulphur in the coal which they had in the furnace at the time to account for this. Witness : It is impossible, without a more definite knowledge than I have of the kind of smoke there to say whether it acted as an actual poison, but my opinion is that they died from the absence of air that would support life, and not from inhaling any poisonous matter. Mr Anderson : But this sulphur would come out of the smoke hole, and affect the men in the rear of the boat. Witness : But it appears that those in the hold were affected as much. These particular men would have been in a denser atmosphere of smoke all the way. Those who met them would pass through that dense atmosphere, and escape into an atmosphere that was somewhat purer in five or ten minutes. Mr Markham : If a light would burn at the head of the boat, and life would not live where the engine room was in consequence of the absence of pure air, how was it that persons lived unaffected in the same boat that was coming on behind? Witness : There was not the same dense atmosphere. Mr Markham : But they were in it all the time. Witness : No ; the boat was cast off, and did not come out of the tunnel until some time afterwards. Mr Markham : I suppose life would live where a light would burn? Witness : That is the general opinion. Mr Anderson : We are anxious to get at the

facts of this case. So many boats have passed through the tunnel that it is extraordinary to my mind that the smoke on this occasion should have produced such very unfortunate results. Witness : I may say that the deceased men were the two stoutest and fattest men in the company. The young fellow suffered comparatively little, and was rallied by the water. The two men who are injured are thinner, not nearly so stout as the deceased. There would be a larger proportion of blood in the body, and they would therefore require a larger quantity of oxygen.

This was the whole of the evidence.

Mr Markham wanted to call Mr Anderson, the chairman of the Grand Junction Canal Company, to explain the rules with respect to the fires in tunnels and the improbability of death taking place in the tunnel owing to the large number of men who had passed through.

The Coroner intimated that he thought this proceeding unnecessary, and proceeded to sum up to the jury. He said they had now to analyse the evidence in this case, and then to deliver their verdict upon the facts. Those facts were very few and simple. The medical evidence was very strong as to the real cause of death ; there could be no doubt that it arose from asphyxia, or suffocation as it was more commonly termed, and which they all understood. If they believed that death arose from suffocation, there was an end of the question. So far as the company were concerned they would, no doubt, take eminent engineering opinion as to whether the smoke could be condensed or got rid of in any way, but with that the jury had nothing to do. Of course, had there been any blame attached to the company, had the engine not been properly cleaned, that would have been a question as to their liability, but not in this court. The captain of the boat, however, had distinctly told them that he had examined the engines at London and Birmingham, and that they were clean and in good working order. All they had to do in this inquiry was to ascertain whether, as to the origin of the accident, there was any blame attached to any person. It did not appear that there was, but this would seem to be one of those unfortunate occurrences which took place without their being able to account for them. Many other men had passed through the tunnel without meeting with such an unfortunate result. There might have been something in the coal, as the chairman of the company had told them that a description of coal had been complained of in the Regent's Canal tunnel, and consequently they immediately ceased using it. They had, no doubt, noticed the questions that were put to the last witness with a view to ascertaining whether there was any sulphur in the coal, so that they might not use the same sort again. If it had been proved that sulphur did arise from the coals, that would not have materially affected this inquiry, as all they had to decide upon was the cause of death, in which they must be guided by medical testimony. All the other questions, though not relating to the issue, had been very properly put in this investigation. If the jury could suggest a means of getting rid of the means whereby the deceased died, of course this company would take it into their consideration ; but, after all, it was partly an engineering question and partly a chemical one. If they were satisfied with the facts, they would return a verdict accordingly.

The jury, after a few minutes deliberation, found that the deceased Edward Broadbent and William Webb met with an accidental death, and that it was caused by suffocation in the Blisworth tunnel. They strongly recommended to the consideration of the canal company the giving of more ventilation to the tunnel by sinking additional shafts in the shallowest places. The expense would not be very great, and the jury were of opinion that anything that would act by itself would be much more efficient than any system which would require attention.

The Chairman (Mr Anderson) said that instructions had been given to the engineer before the accident happened to provide several additional shafts in the tunnel.

The inquiry then terminated. The injured men were removed to the Infirmary at Nuneaton the same night.

66 23 November 1861

BANKRUPTS TO SURRENDER IN THE COUNTRY Joseph Holloway, West Bromwich, boatman, November 25 at the Oldbury County Court.

67 22 February 1862

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

FOWL STEALING **John Johnson** (54), a boatman living in a court in Bridge Street, and George Hardwicke (20), a shoemaker living in the same court, and Andrew Forester (20), a carpenter living in Cow Lane, were charged with having stolen from an outhouse adjoining the New Walk, four fowls, value 7s, the property of George Sykes, a shoemaker of 105 Bridge Street, on the 15th inst. The prosecutor deposed that he kept his fowls at the walk near Mr Anderton's garden, and on Sunday morning last between six and seven o'clock, he missed four of them. Inspector Beattie produced three of the fowls, which were identified by the prosecutor as being those he missed. Two of these had been found on Sunday morning in Johnson's house under the table. The other was found in Forester's lodging. Forester and Hardwicke pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment. They both declared the innocence of Johnson, who pleaded not guilty, and was accordingly committed for trial at the Assizes.

68 22 February 1862

DAVENTRY PETTY SESSIONS, FEBRUARY 19

BRAUNSTON **George Wakeling**, boatman, and **Eliza**, his wife, were charged with assaulting Samuel Mason, innkeeper, Braunston. The case was one of small moment, and the Bench allowed the parties to withdraw and arrange the matter, on payment of the expenses, 10s 8d.

69 14 June 1862

TOWCESTER COUNTY COURT

William Hickson, Blisworth, grocer v **Thomas Johnson**, boatman, Blisworth. For £1 4s 1d. At 4s.

70 9 August 1862

DAVENTRY PETTY SESSIONS, AUGUST 6TH

LONG BUCKBY **Charles Cox**, boatman, Crick, was charged with sleeping in a barn at Long Buckby. Police-constable Stimpson said : In consequence of some complaints, Police-constable Kitchen and I were sent to watch some premises. We found the prisoner in the barn. The prisoner, who said he was 61 years of age, seemed to be exceedingly feeble and ill. The magistrate ordered Mr Judkins, the relieving officer, to take care of the old man, whose condition excited commiseration.

71 1 November 1862

DAVENTRY PETTY SESSIONS OCTOBER 29

FOUND UNDER SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES **Linsom Newbold**, boatman, Leicester, was charged with being found in enclosed premises, supposed for an unlawful purpose. James Payne, farmer, Watford Gap, said he found the prisoner under a stack in his stackyard, about nine o'clock on the night of the 28th instant. Witness was induced to search the yard by the barking of a dog and a whistling. Prisoner said he had been with a boat load of coals to Buckby Wharf, where they were unloaded. He had some words with the captain of the boat, and left him, intending to make his way to Leicester, but got benighted and lost his way. Not knowing which way to go, he lay down under the stack, thinking to find his way when daylight came. Discharged.

72 3 January 1863

NORTHAMPTON DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS

STEALING FROM THE PERSON Charlotte Grooves, one of the "fair and free", was charged with stealing from the person of **John Maling** 6s, on the 26th inst in the parish of Hardingstone. The prosecutor, who is a boatman, said he resided in Nuneaton. His boat was lying in the river in the parish of Hardingstone. On the night in question he went to Northampton, and met the prisoner in Gold Street ; she agreed to go with him to his boat. He went to sleep in the bed place in the boat, and was awoke by Inspector Jackson, at about three o'clock in the morning, who asked him if he

had lost anything. He then discovered that his pockets had been turned out, and his purse, containing two half crowns and two sixpences, taken out. He had not given the prisoner any money, but he had treated her in Northampton. Inspector Jackson said from information given to him that a girl was seen going towards a boat with an old man who was drunk, and whom it was supposed she was going to rob, he went to the boat that morning. On entering the boat, he found the prisoner with a soldier and another man, sitting in the cabin. The prosecutor was lying on the bed, asleep, with his trousers pockets turned inside out. He awoke him and asked him if he had lost anything. He replied that he had lost his purse. Witness then accused the girl of having robbed the prosecutor. She denied the charge, but he said he should take her to the station and have her searched. He observed that she then put her hand into her bosom and take out something, which she threw upon the ground. Police-constable Copping was present with him, and he asked him to pick up what she had thrown down. On finding that it was the prosecutor's purse, he took her into custody. Robert Tuckley said he saw the prosecutor and the prisoner going down Bridge Street about one o'clock in the morning. From a conversation which witness heard between the prisoner and some men who were following her, he suspected that she intended to rob the prosecutor. He immediately gave information at the police station, and went with Inspector Jackson and Police-constable Copping to the boat. He heard Inspector Jackson charge the prisoner with stealing the prosecutor's purse. She denied the charge, and he afterwards saw her put her hand into her bosom and throw something on the ground. Police-constable Copping deposed to picking up the purse, which was thrown on the ground by the prisoner. It contained two half crowns and two sixpences. The prisoner, who said she was not guilty, was then committed for trial. The Chairman said that it was very much to the witness Tuckley's credit that he had taken the course he had, and thus aided the ends of justice.

73 3 January 1863

FATAL ACCIDENT BY "LEGGING" On Thursday last, an inquest was held at the Anchor Inn, Braunston, before the Coroner, W Terry Esq, on the body of **Thomas Russell**, aged 15 years, whose death took place on Tuesday last under the following circumstances :- The deceased was employed as a "legger" by a boatman named **William Gill** of Tring. On Tuesday, his boat went through Braunston Tunnel, the deceased "legging" it. He had never legged a boat before, but refused to tie a rope round his waist, saying he should not need it. When the boat was about half way through the tunnel, the deceased's master heard a splash in the water, and he took a lantern to endeavour to pick up the deceased at the side of the boat. He, however, could not see him, but he heard him splashing about in the water some yards from the boat. The body was not discovered till about an hour and a half after the deceased fell into the water. There was a slight turn where the deceased was heard to fall into the water, and it is supposed that he missed the side of the tunnel with his feet. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the above facts.

74 7 March 1863

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LENT ASSIZES

BURTON LATTIMER **John Christopher** (20), boatman, John Turtle (20), bookbinder, Joseph Carroll (16), shoemaker, and John Lamb (20), labourer, were all charged with wilfully setting fire to a stack of hay, the property of Hannah Downing, at Burton Lattimer on the 26th July 1862. Mr Markham appeared for the prosecution ; the prisoners were undefended. Edward Patrick, labourer, said he worked for Mr Eady, and on the evening of the 26th of July he was going from Burton to Finedon, and on going into the field leading to Mr Eady's lodge he saw Carroll and Turtle near the gate, lying on the grass, each with a stick in his hand. Directly afterwards he saw the other prisoners coming out of the lodge field. Went home and went to bed, and was soon afterwards called up by Mr Eady's man to go and help save the rick that was on fire. The sticks the prisoners had in their hands were similar to those produced. Mr Joseph Downing, carpenter, son of the prosecutrix, said shortly after nine o'clock on the evening of the 26th of July he heard that his mother's hay stack was on fire, and on going down the road to the stack, he saw three men there, and asked them if they saw the fire. Thought one of the prisoners was one of the persons he saw in

the road. One of the three persons had a blue jacket on, similar to the one worn by Carroll. Cannot identify the prisoners. Asked them to assist him at the fire, but they did not do so. George Dicks, labourer living at Burton Lattimer, said he went to the fire a few minutes after nine on the night of the 26th of July, and saw four persons near the fire. The prisoners he believed were the same persons. Is quite sure the prisoners were the persons he saw ; could identify them because of the peculiar jacket one of them wore. On arriving at the stack he found two (songs?) and two sticks (produced) near the stack. The stack was in a grass field. Went through the gate into the field. The prisoners were about 180 yards from the gate, near to Burton Lattimer. Could see the stack on fire when he left Burton. Did not meet anyone else on the road besides the prisoners. There was no path across the field. Thomas Clark, labourer living at Finedon, said on the 26th of July he was at Finedon, at his master's house, at work. On going along the road towards Burton, about a mile and a half from Burton, he saw four persons going from Finedon to Burton. They were about one mile and a half from the stack. The four prisoners were the people he saw. One of them had two sticks in his hands, and they were similar to those now produced. Mr George Downing, who managed his mother's business, said the stack had been put together about three weeks. The fire was not caused by spontaneous combustion. Should think it would take two months to cause it to fire from heat. The stack was worth £30. It was got in good condition. The prisoners did not live in that neighbourhood. Inspector James Osborn : On Saturday night, the 26th of July, I received the prisoners into custody. They were not living near, but were quite strangers. On taking them before the magistrates, I did not say anything to the prisoners. They were remanded, and on returning I asked Carroll why he did not assist at the fire, and he said the other three would not go. Asked him if he thought it was an accident, and he said, "I struck a match to light my pipe, and threw the match down, and it set fire to the hay rick ; we tried to put it out, and could not, and we then ran away. The light stick belonged to me. I do not know who had the other. We went out of the field at the corner, the same way we went in". At the lock up, Christopher and Turtle were put in separate cells, and Christopher put his head out of the cell, and said, "Joe has split upon us ; when I get the young ---- before the magistrates, I will give it him". Turtle said, "I shall stick to it I knew nothing about it". Christopher said, "Oh that be d----d, you are as bad as the rest of us". Lamb said, "Joe has told the Inspector all about us". They commenced talking the next day, and witness cautioned them. After they were brought before the magistrates, Christopher said, "You done me rather sharp, governor, but it does not matter, as we shall plead guilty, that we may all come out the same time". By Sergeant O'Brien : The same evidence was given before the magistrates that had been given again. In defence, Christopher said they were going towards Burton and they met a man, and he asked them to go and help at the fire ; they declined to go, as they thought they might be detained for the fire. Carroll said the Inspector had nearly starved them in the lock up ; but on the last day they were given in custody, he told them he would give him some coffee if he would split. The other two prisoners said they were innocent. The jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

75 **18 July 1863**

NORTHAMPTON DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS

HARDINGSTONE **John Harris** was charged with evading toll at Cotton End Gate. Defendant, who is a boatman, said he did not evade the toll. He refused to pay the sum demanded of him, not considering it legal. On the 9th of May he went through the gate with a horse and cart and paid the toll. He afterwards returned with the same cart, but drawn by another horse, the horse that drew it originally being at its side. He offered to pay the three half pence for the additional horse, which was all that he considered he was fairly liable to. He had never before been asked to pay sixpence. Mr Warner, the gatekeeper, said the Act required the toll of sixpence for every horse drawing any cart. The toll was on the horse, not on the cart. If defendant had had the additional horse by the side, and the cart had been drawn by the original horse, the sum paid by defendant would have been correct. Defendant said he had often done the same thing in the parish of Gayton, where he lived, and had never been asked for more than three half pence. The magistrates said there was no doubt about the law ; the words of the Act were express, and they must fine defendant 6d and 13s

expenses.

76 7 November 1863

DAVENTRY PETTY SESSIONS, NOVEMBER 4TH

BRAUNSTON **Thomas Hollowell**, boatman, Braunston, was charged with being drunk and disorderly on the 22nd ult. Police-constable Kitchen proved the charge. He had not offended before. Fined 1s, costs 10s, or in default seven days.

77 9 January 1864

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

WEEDON **Thomas Partridge** was charged with stealing £2, the property of Fanny Carvel of Weedon. Mr Sills was for the prosecution.

Jemima Bond, wife of Henry Bond, lives with her mother, Fanny Carvel, who keeps the Black Horse Inn, Weedon. On the morning of the 5th of January, witness put ten sovereigns and two half sovereigns in a bureau in the kitchen, the property of her mother. This was about eleven in the morning. Prisoner and two other boatmen were there. They came at ten in the morning and stayed until two. Prisoner sat close to the bureau when she put the money in it. She went several times to the bureau in the course of the morning for the purpose of changing money. Prisoner left at two, and came back about four. When he came back her mother accused him of having taken two sovereigns from the bureau. He said he wished his eyes might drop out of his head if he had done anything of the kind. At half past five the police were sent for. In the morning, the prisoner and another boatman named **Thomas Davis** talked about going to Birmingham, and Davis offered to bet prisoner 1s that he could not show a sovereign. He said he had no gold about him. About half past one, the prisoner and another boatman, who was asleep, were alone in the room where the bureau was. The bureau was kept locked.

Thomas Davis, captain of a boat, said he was at the Black Horse with the prisoner. He was half fresh ; and there were some soldiers there who were fresher than he, and had no money to pay. After he and the prisoner left the Black Horse, prisoner showed him two sovereigns and some silver. He said, "You thought I had no money, but look here. My father sent me a post office order from the city". This was on the way to the Rose and Crown.

Police-sergeant Poole was sent for to the Black Horse on the 5th, about half past five. He called prisoner into the parlour and told him he was suspected of stealing two sovereigns. He told him to turn his pockets out ; he pulled out his purse and said he had got £2 odd to pay his men with. Witness counted the money ; there was a sovereign and £1 13s in silver. He said in reply to witness that he had no keys about him. On searching him, he found in his right waistcoat pocket a key and two sixpenny pieces. He said the key was the key of the cupboard door in the boat, where he generally left it. The key unlocked and locked the bureau. When he was in the omnibus, he said he had been just in such a hobble before, but he had got out of it.

Prisoner's statement was read to the effect that there were other men in the house, and four soldiers. This was the case. The Chairman said there was really very little to go to the jury. There was only the statement of Mrs Bond that her mother said that she had lost two sovereigns from the amount. There was no proof of the loss of money from the bureau. The mother should have been called to prove it.

The jury acquitted the prisoner.

78 20 February 1864

DAVENTRY PETTY SESSIONS, FEBRUARY 17TH

A LEAKY BOAT **James Barnwell**, boatman, Hillmorton, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of Henry Higgins, coal merchant, Northampton. William Wills, labourer, Weedon, deposed : On Monday last I was employed to unload a boat containing coal for the barracks. The prisoner employed me to assist him. While at work I saw the prisoner throw several pieces into the deck of the boat. I told him not to do so, for there would be a bother about it. He

said he would burn what he could, and the rest he would take to Hillmorton. The name of the boat was the *Express*, the name of the owner Elizabeth Worthy. I helped to weigh the coal, and heard Jones, Mr Higgins's man, say the coal was short weight. I never said anything about coals being put in the deck. The prisoner said, in reply to Jones, "I can't help that ; it is a leaky boat". I saw Jones go and look into the deck. George Jones : I am employed by Mr Higgins, and was sent to Weedon to test the weight of a boat load of coals sent to Weedon Barracks. I found there a deficiency of 12 cwt weight as compared with the gauge ticket. The boat was gauged at Braunston. When I mentioned the deficiency to the prisoner, he said he could not help it, as the boat leaked. I looked in the cabin, and found there about 1 1/2 cwt that should not have been there. I then went to the deck and found about four hundred more. I then gave the prisoner in charge. The value of the coals was 4s. The next day I went with Sergeant Pool and weighed the coal. Lewis Pool deposed : Yesterday morning I went to the boat ; the prisoner was present. I mentioned the short weight, and asked him how he accounted for it. He afterwards said, I should not have put any away, only Wills put some away first, saying he knew where he could sell it. I took the prisoner into custody. Wills was not there at that time. The prisoner elected the summary jurisdiction of the Bench, and pleaded guilty. Mr Higgins said the prisoner had been in the employ of his father, and he had never heard anything of the kind about him before. The Bench remarked on the seriousness of the offence, but as nothing had been before brought against the prisoner, they would mitigate the penalty to two calendar months, with hard labour.

79 27 February 1864

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

ASSAULT **Frederick Fry**, boatman, was charged with having assaulted **John Clifton**, boatman, at the South Quarter about three months ago. The assault was the result of an intimacy with some young woman, who was a favourite of the prisoner. It was proved that the complainant was as bad as the prisoner, and therefore the case was dismissed.

80 26 March 1864

NORTHAMPTON DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS

NORTHAMPTON – STEALING LINSEED **John Harris**, Gayton, and Thomas Tibbs of Heyford were brought up on remand charged with having stolen, or received knowing it to have been stolen, a quantity of linseed, value £20, the property of the Grand Junction Canal Company. Mr A B Markham appeared for the prosecution ; Mr C C Becke for Tibbs, and Mr R White for Harris. Mr A B Markham said he would propose on that occasion only to offer sufficient evidence to obtain a further remand, as the case was not yet completed. There would be 14 or 15 witnesses, several of whom would have to come from London. The facts of the case were simply these. Mr Blewitt of London, of the firm of Blewitt and Shaw, cake manufacturers, had been in the habit of sending linseed from London to Northampton by the canal. On the 19th of September, he dispatched a boat load of linseed from London to Northampton, and the boat left the basin two days afterwards, and reached Northampton on the 24th of September. When it arrived, however, 15 bags of linseed were found to be missing. The linseed was what was called Calcutta seed, and Mr Blewitt was present to say that, to the best of his belief, the seed which the prisoners would be proved to have sold was this particular sort of seed. Mr Blewitt then proved that, in September last, he purchased 1400 bags of Calcutta linseed for the purpose of sending it to Northampton to be made into oilcake. He dispatched the whole of it by the Grand Junction Canal but, on the boat arriving at Northampton, 15 bags were missing. There was none of the bulk of the seed left, but the bag of Calcutta seed produced corresponded with that which he sent to Northampton. In cross-examination by Mr Becke, Mr Blewitt said the person from whom he purchased the seed sold large quantities of the same description to other parties besides himself. Linseed was scarcely or ever sold out of his establishment. Sometimes a little was sold, but this was very rarely. Re-examined : He thought he might safely say that none of the particular sort of seed produced had ever been sold out of his mill. Inspector Evans proved finding two four bushel sacks and a bushel and a half of linseed, of the

same description as that produced, in Tibbs's mother's house at Nether Heyford. Tibbs managed his mother's business. On his asking him how he could account for the seed, he said he bought it of a boatman one afternoon at three o'clock, as the latter was passing up the canal. He added to witness that he did not know the boatman's name, but he thought he should know him if he saw him again. Witness was present when Inspector Beattie apprehended Harris, and on Beattie asking him how he accounted for the seed which he and Tibbs had sold, he said he bought it of Mr John Bond, corn dealer of Waterloo Road, Lambeth. Witness went to London and saw Bond. Mr White objected to any statement by Bond being received at the present stage of the inquiry. Mr Markham said Bond would himself give evidence when the case was again heard, and he thought sufficient evidence had now been adduced to justify the Bench in granting a further remand. The case would be completed by Thursday next. The prisoners were then remanded till Thursday. Bail was refused.

81 **9 April 1864**

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

THE LINSEED STEALING CASE Thomas Tibbs (33), wharfinger, and **John Harris** (32), boatman, were charged with having stolen 13 bags of linseed, the property of the Grand Junction Canal Company, on the 24th September last. Mr T Markham appeared for the prosecution ; Mr Merewether defended Tibbs, and Mr Palmer defended Harris. The whole of the evidence, it will be remembered, was given in our impression of a fortnight ago. In September last, Mr Blewitt of the firm of Blewitt and Shaw, cake merchants of Northampton, bought 1017 bags of Calcutta linseed, and shipped the whole of them by the Grand Junction Canal boats to Northampton. In one boat, the captain of which was a **Mrs Fisher**, 200 bags of the linseed were placed at the Limehouse wharf on the 19th September. The boat left the wharf on the 21st of the same month, and on its arriving at Blewitt and Shaw's wharf, four days afterwards, it was found that 15 bags were missing. In the following February Harris sold seven sacks of Calcutta seed to John Payne of Kislingbury, at 5s per bushel. In December last he sold a sack of similar seed to William Payne, farmer of Gayton, and in January he sold a sack to William Kirby Linnell, baker of Gayton. The prisoner Tibbs, who lives at Lower Heyford wharf, also sold some Calcutta seed to John Eales, carrier of Lower Heyford, and this together with that sold to Mr Payne of Kislingbury, was afterwards sold to Mr Jesse Harvey, corn dealer of Northampton. Altogether 24 bushels of Calcutta seed were purchased by Mr Harvey, and his suspicions being aroused, he communicated with Messrs Blewitt and Shaw, and afterwards handed the seed over to the police. Inspector Beattie of the borough police then went to Harris at Gayton, and asked how he could account for having the Calcutta linseed which he had sold to Payne, and he answered that he had purchased it from Mr Bond of Waterloo Road, Lambeth, London, and that he could show the bills for the purchase of it. He then went to Harris's house, when he produced some bills, but the only one that could be found relating to linseed was for 1s 4d worth of crushed seed purchased in 1860. Tibbs was asked by Inspector Evans how he could account for the seed he had sold, and he said he had purchased it of a boatman one evening as he was coming up the canal. He did not know who the man was, but he thought he should know him if he saw him again. Samples of the seed were produced in court, and Edward Livingstone, who is foreman to Messrs Blewitt and Shaw, said the samples were similar to the bulk of the seed which arrived at his employers wharf in September last. Calcutta seed was never used for any other purpose than for crushing. None of the bulk was left, so that the samples could not be compared with it, but he was of opinion that they were exactly alike. Mr Harvey, in cross-examination by Mr Merewether, said there was nothing particular in Calcutta seed by which it could be sworn to. Mr Bond, who it was stated had sold the linseed to Harris, was examined, and denied that he had sold any Calcutta seed to him, in fact he had had none in his shop for eight years. The case occupied nearly the whole of the day, there being about 13 witnesses for examination. At the conclusion of the case for the prosecution, Mr Merewether desired to ask the Court whether there was any necessity for him to address the jury, and the learned Chairman said he thought the case should go to the jury. Mr Merewether then addressed the jury for Tibbs, and called Mr Henry Hadland, Mr Thomas Bromwich, Mr William Montgomery and Mr Herbert Floyer, who each gave him a good

character. For Harris, Mr Palmer made an able defence, and called three witnesses to speak to his character. The learned Chairman then summed up, and the jury being unable to agree, requested to retire. After being absent for about an hour, they were desired to re-enter the Court, and the Chairman said 11 of them were agreed as to the prisoners being guilty of receiving the linseed, but that the twelfth could not agree to this verdict, although he was of opinion that the prisoners did not come honestly into possession of the linseed. The learned Chairman then explained several points in the evidence, and the jury were again locked up. After consulting till about half past eight, the jury said they were unable to agree, and accordingly they were discharged. The prisoners were liberated in their own recognisances of £50 each to appear to take their trial at the next Quarter Sessions.

82 11 June 1864

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY COURT

THE GRAND JUNCTION CANAL COMPANY v HENRY HARRISON AND BENJAMIN FLETCHER HARRISON, AND WILLIAM GEORGE BEEBY The company were represented by Mr A B Markham ; Mr Becke appeared for the Messrs Harrison, and Mr Tomalin for Mr Beeby. This was a claim for £13 9s 6d for carriage of goods brought by the Canal Company. In explaining the case, Mr Markham said in May 1863, the Canal Company received orders at their office in London to take certain machinery from Mr Blewitt's of London to Messrs Harrison's Wharf of Northampton. The Company accordingly conveyed the machinery to the Wharf, and obtained an invoice in the name of the two defendants Harrison. On the day, however, before the goods would arrive at Northampton, Mr Beeby went to the Canal Company's office at Northampton, and said the machinery belonged to him. When it arrived he wished to be informed, and he would give a receipt. The goods were accordingly delivered at Harrison's Wharf, and were received by Beeby, who gave a receipt for them. The payment for carriage was made out to the Harrisons, at 17s 6d per ton, but they said they had nothing whatever to do with the matter, they were simply agents, the goods belonging to Mr Beeby, to whom the Company must look for payment. Mr Beeby said the rate was much more than he thought was fair, and independent of that, he had made a special rate with Mr Blewitt for these goods to be charged according to the price which Mr Blewitt paid for the carriage of his goods from London to Northampton. But there was no special rate between Mr Blewitt and the Canal Company in respect to such goods as the ones in question, and accordingly the Company's agent at Northampton, Mr Stubbs, wrote to the head office at London for further instructions. He received authority from the London manager, Mr Fulton, to charge 15s 10d per ton. The payment had not been made by either the Messrs Harrison or by Mr Beeby, and the action was brought by the Company to recover the money from both or either. Mr Becke : I would submit, according to Mr Markham's statement, that there is no contract between my clients and the Canal Company. The company knew who was the consignor, and they must sue him for carriage. Mr Tomalin : With regard to my client, Beeby, I contend that we have nothing whatever to do with the matter. We did not know that the machinery came by the Canal Company until they came and informed us of the fact. We were no party whatever to the contract. Mr Markham : But you took the goods in. Mr Tomalin : Yes, but the fact of my taking in a parcel would not make me responsible for its carriage. Mr Markham : Can you show me any authority for this view? Mr Becke : Yes, a score. His Honour suggested that the facts of the case should be written down, as they were very simple, and no evidence need then be called. Mr Markham, however, called Mr Beeby, who said he did not make any contract with the canal company, but he made an arrangement with Mr Blewitt that the goods should be sent to him (Beeby), and that they should be charged at his special rate of carriage. Mr Fulton, the London manager of the canal company, was next examined. He produced a copy of the invoice of the goods in question, which showed that Turner, Blewitt and Company were the consignors. He said there had never been any special rate of carriage agreed upon between Mr Blewitt and the company for the carriage of such goods as the present. It was a custom in the carrying trade throughout England to charge the consignee with carriage when no special instructions were received from the consignor to the contrary, and this principle had been

upheld in all County Courts and in superior courts as well. This was the case in the counties of Staffordshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Worcestershire and other counties with which he was acquainted. In answer to Mr Tomalin, Mr Fulton said the goods were consigned to the Messrs Harrison, and not to Mr Beeby. Mr Thomas Stubbs, the Northampton manager of the canal company, said he received the invoice, and informed Beeby that the goods were coming. On the arrival of the goods he asked the Messrs Harrison for the carriage at the rate of 17s 6d a ton. The Messrs Harrison refused to pay, saying the goods were for Mr Beeby. Beeby, when asked for the carriage, also refused to pay, saying he had made arrangements with Mr Blewitt. Mr Markham asked Mr Becke to produce the bill, but Mr Becke said he could not do so as he had received no notice. Mr Beeby said he had never been asked for the money or received any bill. Richard Lattimer, invoice clerk to the company at Northampton, said he received an invoice of the goods in question. Beeby came to the office and said some goods were coming to Messrs Harrison which were for him. On the arrival of the goods, he desired the boatman to land them at Harrison's wharf. Mr Markham then produced a receipt, signed by Beeby, showing that he received the goods, but Mr Becke said the receipt was worth nothing, as the amount of the carriage was not entered. It was simply a receipt for the delivery of the goods. His Honour said he thought this receipt went a great deal against the company, as it showed that they did not expect payment from the consignees. Mr Markham explained that the receipt was simply for the satisfaction of the company, as showing that the boatman had properly delivered the goods. Mr Fulton said the amount of the carriage was never entered on the road notes for Northampton, as there was an agent at this town. Boatmen seldom received money for carriage except there was no agent. This was the case for the plaintiffs. Mr C C Becke, for the Messrs Harrison, contended that before the claim could be obtained, a contract must be proved, and no contract had been proved as existing between the Grand Junction Canal Company and his clients. In the case which he had submitted to his Honour, the case of "Coleman v Lambert", it was laid down by the Judge, Baron Parke, that the consignor was liable for the payment of carriage, and that the consignee was not liable, unless it could be proved that a special arrangement had been entered into. As far as his clients were concerned they had not received the goods, or had any interest whatever in them, and it was quite a mistake on Mr Blewitt's part to consign the goods to them. He contended that a letter which was sent by Mr Blewitt to the Company ought to have been produced, as it might contain a promise to pay for the carriage. But the company not having produced the letter, they had not proved the case, and he contended that no contract had been entered into with the company. Mr Tomalin said with regard to his client, Mr Beeby, he would urge that he had nothing whatever to do with the case. Mr Blewitt was the consignor, and the Messrs Harrison the consignees. Beeby, therefore, had nothing whatever to do with the case except to ask for costs. His Honour said he would give his decision at the next Court day.

83 2 July 1864

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

THE LINSEED CASE Thomas Tibbs, 43, wharfinger, and **William Harris**, 32, boatman, both on bail, were charged with having stolen thirteen bags of linseed, value £20, on the 24th of September 1863, the property of the Grand Junction Canal Company. The case was heard at the last Sessions, but as the jury could not then agree, the case was ordered to be again heard today. Mr T Markham appeared for the prosecution ; Tibbs was defended by Mr Merewether, and Harris by Mr Palmer. The prisoners were charged under two counts, the first for stealing the linseed, and the second for receiving the same knowing it to have been stolen. Mr T Markham, in his opening statement, explained the case, and desired the jury to dismiss from their minds anything they might have heard or read of the case. He said the prosecutors were the Grand Junction Canal Company, who were entrusted with a quantity of Calcutta linseed by Mr Blewitt of the firm of Blewitt and and Shaw, to convey to Blewitt and Shaw's Oil Crushing Mills at Northampton. In one canal boat 290 bags of seed were placed at the wharf in London, but on the arrival of the boat at Northampton thirteen of the bags were missing. This seed, or some exactly similar, had been traced into the possession of

the prisoners. It would be for the jury to say whether the account they had given of how it came into their possession was at all probable. He impressed upon the jury that Calcutta linseed was not used for feeding pigs, but only for making oil cake, Messrs Blewitt and Shaw being well known oil cake makers, to make which cake the linseed was brought.

Jacob Thompson, a bargeman, said : At the latter end of December last he loaded Mrs Fisher's boat at Limehouse Wharf with linseed. He loaded it in tiers, chalking the number of sacks in each tier. He afterwards chalked the number outside the boat. Cross-examined by Mr Merewether : He could not swear that the figures were correct. He could not read or write, but he could count very well. He did not know the total number of bags in the boat when it was loaded. A man named Davis reckoned up the total number of bags by the chalk marks outside when the boat was loaded.

John Davis, a foreman in the employ of the prosecutors, said he remembered the last witness loading Mrs Fisher's boat. After it was loaded he counted the chalk marks outside, and he found that there were 290 bags in the boat.

Mrs Sarah Fisher, in the employ of the Grand Junction Canal Company, said, in December last, her boat was loaded with linseed on a Saturday night. On the following Monday, the 21st, she left the wharf, and in three days she arrived at Northampton. None of the cargo in her boat was meddled with, as far as she was aware of, till it arrived at Northampton. Before the boat left the Lime House wharf, a road note was given her. Cross-examined : When her boat was unloaded, she did not notice that any of the bags had been taken out. It was loaded from one end to the other, and was also level from one end to the other. If any bags had been taken out during the journey she must, she should think, have noticed it ; indeed if one had been taken, she should have noticed it. When the boat was at Paddington the boat and its cargo were weighed, and the weight was 21 tons 14 cwt and 1 qr. The boat did not go near Heyford Wharf, having no occasion whatever to do so. By the Court : When I took the tarpaulin off the boat on its arrival, I did not notice that any of the bags had been taken out. Re-examined : The boat could have held more sacks than the number that were on the road bill.

Edward Livingstone, foreman to Messrs Blewitt and Shaw, said he had been foreman for five years, and had been in the oil cake trade for 30 years. The arrangements between the company and Messrs Blewitt and Shaw was that the former should convey 14 bags to the ton ; 290 bags would therefore just weigh 20 tons 14 cwt 1 qr. When the boat arrived at Northampton it contained only 275 bags of seed. He had weighed a bushel of the seed that was in the boat ; it weighed 52 lb. He also weighed two bushels of Calcutta linseed that were given to him by Inspector Beattie, and these weighed a little over 52 lbs. He had examined the eight bags produced by Inspector Beattie ; also the three bags produced by Inspector Evans. They all contained linseed of the same quality as that which Mrs Fisher's boat brought to Northampton. By Mr Merewether : He could not swear that the seed produced was exactly the same as that which arrived at his master's wharf. By Mr Palmer : He did not know that Harris was a boat owner, or that one of his boats had lately sunk. There were two bags and a half to the quarter and, according to this calculation, 290 bags ought to weigh 40 tons 14 cwt 1 lb. All the bags produced contained Calcutta seed. Some other seeds were mixed with the Calcutta seed produced. During the last year, most foreign linseeds had come into this country in a foul condition, that was to say, they were mixed with other seeds.

William Payne, a farmer of Gayton, said he knew the prisoner Harris, who lived in a house of his at Gayton. In December he went to ask him for his rent, when he said he had some linseed, and asked him to take it instead of money for the rent. He told him that he did not want any of the seed, but on the following morning he sent him up a sack, for which he deducted a sovereign from the rent. He used some portion of the seed in feeding cattle. By Mr Palmer : He did not know much about Harris, and had had no dealings with him. He had, however "sold him up". He did not know whether a boat of his had lately sunk. He believed he used to take timber to London, but he did not know whether he used to trade back by buying and selling seed.

Edmund Kirby Linnell, a baker at Gayton, said he used to supply Harris with bread. In January last he asked him to buy some linseed, but he told him that he did not understand anything about linseed. He told him he might have a sack for a sovereign, and on the following morning he sent

him a sack, for which he (witness) deducted £1 from his bread bill. By Mr Palmer : The sack contained about four bushels. He did not sell the linseed.

John Payne, a baker at Kislingbury, said on the 2nd of February last the prisoner Harris came to him and offered some linseed for sale, at 5s per bushel. He bought three sacks of him, and on the 8th of February Harris brought four more sacks, each containing about three and a half bushels. He gave him altogether £6 17s 6d for the seed. He afterwards sold the seed to Mr Harvey, corn dealer at Northampton, for 7s a bushel. By Mr Palmer : He had known Harris for about two years, but he had never heard that he had lost two or three boats. He could not tell what sort of seed it was. He knew that Harris was in the habit of working up and down the canal from and to London. He might have brought seed or corn from London for aught he knew. Harris delivered the seed at his house, on the first occasion in the morning, and on the second in the afternoon.

John Eales, a carrier at Lower Heyford, said in February last he saw the prisoner Tibbs in a public house. Tibbs offered him some linseed for sale, and three days afterwards he went to his granary and looked at it. Some days afterwards he bought of him three sacks and a half. He gave £1 each for two of the sacks, 15s for the other, and 12s for the half sack. He afterwards sold the seed to Mr Harvey for 7s a bushel. By Mr Merewether : He had known the prisoner for some years, but he had never known anything against him. A boat coming from London to Northampton would have no occasion to go near Heyford. Tibbs kept a wharf for his mother. He had never before bought any seed of him. The seed was very dusty, and some of it was damaged.

Jesse Harvey, corn dealer of Northampton, said in January last he brought about 23 bushels of linseed from John Payne. In February Eales asked him to buy some linseed, and he purchased about 14 bushels from him. The seed produced was mixed. One portion of it was Calcutta seed, and the other Black Sea seed. He purchased the seed for Calcutta seed, but he afterwards found some of the sacks contained Black Sea seed. The bags produced by Inspector Evans contained Calcutta seed, as did also those produced by Inspector Beattie, but these latter contained some small seeds with it. By Mr Merewether : His opinion was that seed which was dirty would weigh heavier than that which was clean. He did not see any samples of Black Sea seed produced. He handed some Black Sea seed over to the police, but no samples of it were produced. If Inspector Beattie said he had produced samples of all the seeds which he (witness) handed over to him, he said that which was not true.

Inspector Beattie said, in consequence of information he received, he went over to Gayton to see Harris. He told him that he had seen some seed in the possession of Mr Harvey, which he had purchased of Mr Payne of Kislingbury, and Payne had informed him that he had had it of him (Harris). Harris made no reply, and he asked him if he would give any account of the seed. He answered that he had bought the seed of Mr Bond of Waterloo Road, Lambeth, and had bills to show that this was the case. They then went to Linnell's house, and witness asked him if he had bought a sack of linseed from Harris. He said he had, and had given a sovereign for it. Harris added, "That's correct". Linnell afterwards went with the prisoner to Mr Payne of Gayton, and Payne gave him a sack of linseed. He afterwards went to Harris's house, which was constructed of two old boats. Harris then showed him a number of bills, but only one related to linseed. He told him that he could find no bills to account for the linseed, when he said, "Oh, I buy off anyone". By Mr Palmer : I believe Harris is a boatman, but I am not positive of this, nor do I know that he had lost any boats. I apprehended him in Banbury Lane. Re-examined : I received 29 bushels of Calcutta linseed seed from Harvey, and I produce samples of each sack.

Inspector Evans said : On the 11th of March he went to Tibbs's house, in company with last witness. Mr Markham was about to ask witness what Beattie said to Tibbs, but this was objected to by Mr Merewether, and it was ultimately decided that Beattie should be again called, and speak for himself.

Inspector Beattie was then further examined, and said he asked Tibbs whether he could choose to give an account of how he became possessed of the linseed.

Mr Merewether objected that Tibbs's answer should be given.

Mr Markham said the objection was a most frivolous one, and had not been taken since the time of

Lord Coke. The course which he intended pursuing was one that was always pursued in this country.

Mr Merewether said if this were so, it was a great pity, as it had been condemned by two learned Judges.

The Court ruled that the answer might be given.

Examination continued : Tibbs said he bought the linseed of a boatman at nine o'clock at night. By Mr Merewether : I am not aware that he said he should know the boatman if he saw him again.

Inspector Evans, recalled, said he asked Tibbs whether he had any more linseed by him, and he answered that he had not. Witness told him he should search the premises, when he said he had two more sacks, one in the granary and one downstairs. He went to the granary, and there he found one sack containing about four bushels, and another sack containing about a bushel and a half. In the brewhouse he found another sack containing four bushels. He told him he should take him into custody, and Tibbs said he bought the seed of a boatman one afternoon at three o'clock. He asked him which way the boat was coming, and he said it came up the canal. The three bags produced were samples of the linseed found in Tibbs's house. By Mr Palmer : I have known the prisoner for about a year, but I do not know that he has lost any boats.

John George Bond of Waterloo Road, Lambeth, a corn dealer, said he knew Harris. He had sold him some oats, beans and maize, but he had never sold him any linseed. By Mr Palmer : I deal in linseeds, but not in Calcutta linseed. I have seen the prisoner Harris since the last trial, but I am not aware that I told him the samples of the seed had, or would be, changed. He has not been in the habit of bringing up his boat to my Wharf. I might have said that two samples of seed were produced in Court, Calcutta seed and Black Sea seed.

Mr Shaw of the firm of Blewitt and Shaw, said : In September, 1018 bags of linseed were consigned to him at his wharf. In September last Calcutta linseed was worth 8s a bushel. He had seen the seeds in the bags produced, and he believed it was the same seed as was in the boat that arrived at his wharf in September last. By Mr Palmer : Calcutta seed fell a little in price after September.

James Fulton, the manager of the Grand Junction Canal Company in London, said fourteen bags were calculated for a ton, and according to that, there would be 20 tons 14 cwt and 1 qr in the boat. The actual weight, however, was over 22 tons.

Thomas Stubbs, manager of the Canal Company at Northampton, said, in consequence of what was told him by Messrs Blewitt and Shaw, he paid them £19. This was the whole of the evidence. Mr Merewether asked if there was any case against Tibbs to go before the jury, and the Chairman said he thought the case had better go to the jury.

Mr Merewether then addressed the jury for Tibbs, and said it was likely that the bags of linseed were now lying in some out of the way corner at Limehouse. He contended that the evidence was most conclusive that the bags supposed to be stolen were never placed in Mrs Fisher's boat, for she had positively stated that if any of the bags were taken out of the boat, she must have noticed it when she unpacked the boat on its arrival at Northampton. He alluded to the fact that, although the seed was supposed to have been stolen in September, nothing was seen or heard of the seed till the following February. During the whole of that time the prisoners were not found trading with the seed, and six months was too long a lapse of time to call upon men to account for that which had not been proved to have been stolen. He contended that the prosecution had failed to bring home guilt to either of the prisoners. Tibbs was a most respectable man, and had managed his mother's business for years, and he should bring witnesses to speak as to his character. At the last trial there were several witnesses who spoke to his character, but, in consequence of the expense entailed, the whole could not be called today.

Mr Palmer then addressed the jury for Harris. He said if the jury did not believe that the bags were stolen during their transit to Northampton, the case must fall to the ground, because the prisoners were charged with stealing the linseed in the county. He commented upon the fact that some Black Sea seed was traced to the prisoners. This, he contended, was a point in the prisoner's favour, because the prosecutors had positively stated that they had lost Calcutta seed only. Although none of the witnesses seemed to know Harris, it was a well known fact that he was a boatman, and that

some years ago he lost two of his boats by their having sunk, one in the canal and the other in the river Nene. In these boats were permits of the Canal Company, and these would have shown what were the articles that Harris had traded back from London with. However, as these permits had been lost, they could not be produced in evidence.

Mr William Stanton, Mr Hadland and Mr Thomas Bromwich each gave Tibbs a good character.

The Chairman then carefully summed up, and read through the whole of the evidence, commenting upon some of the most important particulars. He concluded by drawing the attention of the jury to the three following points :- Was the linseed ever sent from London? Did the prisoners steal it, or receive it knowing it to have been stolen? And lastly, was it proved to their satisfaction that the linseed traced into the possession of the prisoners was the same that had been stolen from the boats? The jury requested that they might be allowed to retire, and after an absence of about a quarter of an hour, they returned into Court with a verdict of Not Guilty. The decision was received with marks of approbation by the audience in the Court.

84 30 July 1864

BRAUNSTON – A CHILD DROWNED IN THE CANAL On Wednesday last an inquest was held at the Castle Inn before the coroner, W Terry Esq, on the body of Thomas Reynolds, a child four years of age, who was accidentally drowned in the canal. Deceased was the son of **Thomas Reynolds**, foreman of the towpath on the Oxford Canal. Margaret Warren, wife of John Warren, beer merchant and grazier of Braunston, said : On Monday evening she and the deceased's mother were walking, and as they got close to the deceased's father's house they saw something in the canal, which they at first supposed to be a dog. When they got up to the canal they saw it was the deceased, who was floating with his face under the water. A boat coming up at the time, the boatman took out the child immediately, just as the mother was going to jump in. The boatman said the deceased breathed after he was taken in. In consequence of the father's house being locked, the deceased was compelled to be taken to the Castle. The child's mother had been to witness's house, and she sent him about five minutes before he was found in the water, in order to see whether her daughter had come back with the key. The usual restoratives were applied, but animation could not be restored, and a doctor was sent for immediately. The deceased, it was stated, was a strong child, and was not in the least subject to fits. Mr Charles Bennett, surgeon of Braunston, said he saw the child a short time after he was taken out of the water. Proper steps appeared to have been taken to restore animation, but when he arrived the child was quite dead. There was a bruise on the forehead, which was probably caused by coming in contact with the iron guard on the canal side. The cause of death was drowning. A verdict of “Accidentally drowned” was returned.

85 13 August 1864

NORTHAMPTON PETTY SESSIONS

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Edward Chesterton**, boatman, was charged with having been drunk and creating a breach of the peace in Horseshoe Street on the 11th instant. The prisoner admitted the offence, and was fined 5s and costs.

86 24 September 1864

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

FORGERY **John Phipps**, boatman, no residence, was charged with forgery, and uttering a receipt for the payment of 1s 4d given in payment for certain canal dues, the same having been altered to 7s 6d, with intent to defraud Henry Higgins, merchant, Bridge Street, on the 22nd August last. Mr R Hewitt prosecuted, and Mr C C Becke appeared for the defence. Inspector Cornwell said he apprehended the prisoner on Saturday morning last on a warrant, but did not tell him the charge then. At the station house he read the warrant to him, charging him with forging and altering a receipt from 1s 4d to 7s 6d. The prisoner said, “I did alter it ; it is of no use denying it”. As both prosecutor's and prisoner's solicitors wished for an adjournment, the case was adjourned until Tuesday. Mr Becke applied for bail, and said he was prepared with a complete answer to the

charge. Bail was granted.

87 1 October 1864

NORTHAMPTON DIVISION PETTY SESSIONS

SINGULAR CASE John Phipps, of no residence, was brought up on remand, charged with forging and uttering a receipt for the payment of 1s 4d given in payment for certain Canal dues, the same having been altered to 7s 6d, with intent to defraud Mr Henry Higgins, corn and coal merchant of Bridge Street, on the 22nd inst. Mr Hewitt was for the prosecution, and Mr C C Becke for the prisoner. The case, which occupied the Bench several hours, was of a most complex character, and elicited some curious circumstances. The prisoner is a boatman, and was engaged by Mr Henry Higgins to convey a certain quantity of corn to Birstall Mill, in Leicestershire, on the 15th August. He returned from the voyage on the 30th of August. Birstall Mill is on the Leicestershire Canal, and it was understood between Mr Higgins and the prisoner, neither being acquainted with the dues there, that this would constitute an extra charge. Accordingly, on prisoner's return, Mr Higgins asked him what he had paid on this score, and he said 7s 6d, and he gave Mr Higgins a receipt purporting to be from the canal collector at Mount Sorrel. The 7s 6d was paid, but after he had left, Mr Higgins observed an erasure and an alteration in the figures, and upon inspection it was obvious enough that the receipt had originally been for 1s 4d in payment of canal dues on four tons of wheat. The figure denoting the number of tons had not been effaced, but other figures denoting twenty two and a half tons had been added, and the figures denoting the amount, 1s 4d, had been converted into 7s 6d. Mr Higgins, upon making this discovery, wrote to **Mr Dawes**, the collector at the Leicester Canal Public Wharf, and received from him a corroboration of what was apparent on the receipt – that it had originally been given for 1s 4d for dues on four tons at 4d per ton. Meantime the prisoner was gone on with his boat into Derbyshire. The evidence that followed disclosed a singularly loose way of conducting the affairs of the canal. **Mrs Mary Ann Carr**, wife of the collector at Mount Sorrel, stated that on the 22nd of August prisoner's wife paid to her 1s 4d, the dues on four tons at 4d per ton. She took the representation of the quantity to be charged from the prisoner's wife. She had no means of knowing anything as to the actual quantity, because the load had been delivered before it reached Mount Sorrel, Birstall being between Leicester and Mount Sorrel. The dues should have been paid at Leicester, but the collector resides about a hundred yards away from the wharf, and it rested with the prisoner whether he went that hundred yards out of his way to inform the collector, or passed the wharf on his way without giving any information at all. The prisoner had done the latter, and had delivered his cargo between Leicester and Mount Sorrel, and when, therefore, he arrived at the latter place, the only evidence as to the quantity to be charged was his word. Mrs Carr did not know the amount per ton to be paid, nor her husband either, and they charged fourpence, when the price ought to have been threepence. Mrs Carr did not take the money the first day, but not until four days after, when she had consulted with her husband. She did not see Phipps at all. As far as she knew he had nothing to do with the receipt. Mr Carr stated that he believed this was the customary way of doing business. Before the prisoner returned from Derbyshire, witness had received information that he had delivered at Birstall Mill more corn than he had paid for, and he told him that instead of delivering twenty quarters at Birstall Mill he had delivered 100 quarters, and if he did not pay the difference, a summons would be taken out against him. Prisoner said it was a mistake, and he paid 3s 8d to make up 5s, at 3d per ton on 100 quarters. Witness gave a receipt for the 5s without recalling the receipt for 1s 4d which his wife had given already, so that although prisoner had two receipts, one for 1s 4d and one for 5s, though in point of fact he had only paid 5s. It is the custom of this canal to charge only for even tons, so that the actual quantity was 22 tons 10 cwt, only 20 tons was charged. On the other canal, however, it is the custom to charge the actual weight. The Mayor said it seemed to him that this mode of carrying on the business of the canal was the most slovenly he had ever heard of. There was in the first place nothing to prevent anybody who pleased to go by the wharf without giving any account of his tonnage ; and when a fraud was discovered, instead of punishing the offender, they told him if he paid the difference nothing would be said about it. Then the receipt for 5s bore the same date as

that for 1s 4d. The 3s 8d which the witness Carr had received, and which he had paid over to Mr Dawes, did not appear as yet to have been ever entered in the Company's books. He thought the whole management was calculated to encourage fraud. Inspector Cornwall stated that when he apprehended the prisoner, and told him the charge, he said, I did it, and it is of no use denying it. Mr Becke, addressing the Bench for the prisoners, put the case in the following way :- The prisoner had received a load of corn to deliver at a certain mill. It appeared that at Leicester he would not be able to pay the tonnage without going out of his way. He goes on to the next lock, and there the collector was absent. The wife of the prisoner goes to the wife of the collector, and states that there was a certain quantity of corn delivered. It was stated that she said the quantity was four tons instead of twenty tons, but she left a memorandum from **Mr Raffles**, the collector on the other canal, on which the actual tonnage was entered – the whole 22 tons and a half, which was charged £1 2s 6d. Mrs Carr, however, charges but 1s 4d. Subsequently the prisoner finds that only four tons were charged when he knew there were twenty two tons and a half. He therefore, having to receive the money of Mr Higgins, puts the correct tonnage on the receipt, and alters the amount to 7s 6d, which would be the correct sum at 4d per ton. He obtains the 7s 6d, and goes back the same journey, and passes through the same lock. On his return he sees the collector, who then charges him twenty tons at 3d, that is, 5s. Directly he returns to Northampton he goes to Mr Higgins's office, sees the clerk, shows him the receipt, and offers to return the difference between the 5s and 7s 6d. He contended that there was clearly no intention to defraud Mr Higgins. If there was any intention to defraud at all, it was the Canal Company, and the attempt was made, not by the prisoner, but the prisoner's wife. He did not think that the magistrates upon such evidence would feel it their duty to commit the prisoner. The magistrates, after some consultation, committed the prisoner for trial at the Assizes, accepting bail.

88 15 October 1864

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

INDECENT EXPOSURE **William Busby**, boatman of Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire, was charged with having indecently exposed his person in Grenville Terrace on the 7th instant. The prisoner admitted the offence, saying he was drunk at the time. Two witnesses were called to prove that the prisoner had wilfully exposed his person. The Mayor said they were determined to put a stop to such conduct as that which the prisoner had been guilty of. He would be committed to prison for three calendar months' hard labour, and the next person that was brought before them for a similar offence would be committed to prison for three or six months, and receive some lashes.

89 29 October 1864

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS

ROW GENTLY HERE, MY GONDOLIER **Isaac Thompson**, a burly boatman, was charged with being drunk and using obscene language in Bridge Street on Sunday afternoon. "Yes, sir", he replied, "Quite right, sir". Mr Law told him it was very wrong to conduct himself in that way at any time, and especially wrong on a Sunday, and he would be fined, therefore, 7s 6d and costs.

90 19 November 1864

BANKRUPTS **J Wright**, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, boatman, November 26.

91 10 December 1864

BANKRUPTS **H Bird**, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, boatman, December 16

92 17 December 1864

BANKRUPTS **T Jones**, Bilston, boatman, December 19