

WARWICK AND WARWICKSHIRE ADVERTISER
1823 to 1845

1 14 June 1823

PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPE On Monday last, a child about 18 months old, daughter of **Joseph Mander**, boatman of the Saltisford in this borough, during the temporary absence of its mother, accidentally fell from the uppermost window of a house three stories high. In its descent, it pitched upon the roof of a low outbuilding and broke two or three of the tiles, but notwithstanding the great height (about 28 feet) from which it fell, we are happy to add it sustained only a few bruises, and is now so far recovered as to resume its infantile sports in the public streets.

2 15 November 1823

BOXING On Tuesday last a match took place at Moseley Wake Green between Hall of Birmingham and **Benjamin Whaley**, a boatman, for £5 a side. Arthur and Drabble seconded Hall, and Johnson and Heeley waited upon the boatman. In the first round the boatman made play, Hall acting entirely on the defensive. The boatman hit him a violent blow on the stomach, which brought Hall to the ground. The second round was warmly contested, and lasted about seven minutes, and concluded rather in Hall's favour. (A person here interfered, and the combatants were obliged to move to Acres Green, about four miles on the Warwick Road). The third and last round was entirely in favour of the boatman ; indeed Hall had no chance with him, being beat in every part of the ring, until he fell insensible to time. Matthewson, his second, used every means to rouse him, but without success, and Whaley was consequently declared victor.

3 6 March 1824

INQUEST ON THE PERSONS BURNT AT MESSRS PICKFORDS An inquest was held on Monday before Mr Unwin, Coroner, at the Cumberland Head Tavern, City Road, on the remains of the bodies of John Veale, aged 30 years, and Thomas Evans, aged 15 years, who were victims to the conflagration at Messrs Pickford's on Thursday last. The jury viewed the remains of the deceased persons, which lay at St Luke's Workhouse in shells ; they were mere cinders.

William Andrews, sworn : I am a clerk to Messrs Pickford and Co, at their wharf in the City Road. I was in one of the warehouses on Thursday evening last, near the waterside, between six and seven o'clock, and saw one of the offices enveloped in flames ; I gave an alarm instantly ; the flames burst forth in a moment ; I was much alarmed and with difficulty escaped. The office that was on fire communicated with the whole range of buildings. The fire was got under by eleven o'clock ; it originated by a carboy (a large bottle containing strong acid, aqua fortis or spirits) bursting. I was shipping goods at the time in a boat for Birmingham, Wolverhampton &c when the carboy broke ; a boatman lighted a piece of paper for the purpose of seeing where the contents had run, and the lighted paper set the spirits in a blaze. I saw the circumstance myself, and am positive the conflagration was accidental. One of the porters had removed the carboy when it burst, and a boatman brought the lighted paper to the spot ; the porter snatched it from the boatman, knowing that if it communicated fire to the contents of the carboy it might prove very dangerous, but notwithstanding, the steam arising from the spirit caught fire directly. The deceased persons were clerks on the establishment ; one named John Veale was a collector, and Thomas Evans, who was a youth, was employed on the premises, in his office. They were in one of the range of offices close to the spot where the fire commenced. Another clerk named Delcour, who is so very much burnt as not to be able to attend the Jury, told me this morning that he ran to Veale, and told him to leave the place instantly. Veale came to the office door, but was so terrified by the fire that he could not move further, and retreated into the office again. Delcour ran out of danger as fast as he could. The boy Evans was near to the stair case at the time of the fire. The remains of the bodies of Veale and Evans were dug out of the ruins on Friday morning. Juror : Could not Veale have escaped through a window? Witness : No, he could not.

Robert Lambert, confidential clerk, corroborated the above witness.

Coroner : The bodies are burnt to mere cinders, but there can be no doubt that they are the remains of human bodies.

Mr Harry Cox, surgeon, sworn : I reside at No 2 Broadway, Blackfriars, and have inspected the remains of the deceased persons. All I can say is that they are human bodies ; I never saw human bodies so mutilated in my life before ; their sexes are not distinguishable.

The Coroner said that, from the evidence, the lamentable catastrophe was purely accidental.

Verdict : "Accidentally burnt to death".

4 26 March 1825

The following insolvents were discharged :- **George Stokes**, late of Birmingham, boatman, formerly a coal dealer.

5 13 August 1825

LEICESTER ASSIZES Susannah Read, aged 36, was indicted at the Leicester Assizes for the wilful murder of her husband, James Read. Thomas Read deposed that the deceased was a pensioner of Chelsea Hospital. The prisoner and he never lived well together, and they parted about two years back. In the interval of their separation she had been living in adultery with a young man of the name of John Waterfield, and had a child, who she did not blush to own to her husband was her paramour's. On the 21st of April she desired the deceased to accompany her to Foxton, and they set out together towards that town. This was the last time I saw him alive. About six o'clock the prisoner sent for me, and said, "Good God! Master Jem has run away mad". I asked, "What do you mean?", to which she said, "When we got to below Grimby he started up and ran with all his might into Debdale Wharf". Under the bridge at Foxton I pulled up a dead body, which turned out to be my brother's. This was in a contrary direction to the close in which the prisoner said she had been with him. Mary Gamble heard the prisoner say, "That d-----d old fool, my husband, has made me go live with him, but I'll do for him". E Whitmore heard the prisoner more than once threaten to "settle her husband" to his face. Anne Elliott saw the prisoner the day before the body was found. She only said, "Nobody saw me push him in, therefore nobody can swear against me". **Robert Johnson**, a boatman, on the preceding evening saw a man and a woman coming towards the bridge on the side of the canal opposite me. The body found in the water resembled the man. The man wore a smock frock, the woman a red coloured gown. W Read again called : The prisoner wore a red gown on the night of the murder. J B Collins saw the prisoner and deceased together on the evening in question on the navigation bridge. He wore a smock frock, she a red gown. The Jury consulted for about a quarter of an hour, and then found the prisoner Guilty. The verdict had an electrical effect on the wretched woman. Her agitation during the trial was excessive. The Learned Judge's placing the black cap on his head aroused her from a momentary stupor, but when he addressed her by her name she responded by a frantic shriek of mingled fear and horror. She continually interrupted him by such appeals as, "Save me! Oh, save me! For God's sake, do not hang me! Oh save me for the sake of my six children, and my baby of six months old!"

The following is an account of the execution of this wretched woman at Leicester, which took place on Friday :- The law designating the murder of a husband by his wife petty treason, the prisoner, as usual in such cases, was conveyed to the County Bridewell, the place of execution, upon a sledge, instead of being taken in the gaol waggon. Although the time of her removal was so early as between five and six o'clock, there were numbers of persons collected about the county gaol and along the streets through which she passed, anxious to get a sight of her before the fatal hour. A bed or mattress was placed upon the sledge, which was drawn by a horse, and upon which the prisoner was secured by a rope. On reaching the Bridewell, she was carried into the gaoler's house, where she was shortly after attended by the Chaplain, and joined in devotion. About eleven o'clock she was again placed upon the sledge, and was drawn along the gaol yard to the foot of the steps leading to the scaffold. Soon after she appeared on the platform, followed by the High Sheriff and the usual attendants. Fully sensible that her career in this world was soon to close upon her for ever, she seemed earnest in supplicating mercy for her sins, and in invoking the Divine favour upon her

unfortunate children and relatives. At length the drop fell, and after a few convulsive struggles, she was no more. After hanging the usual time the body was cut down, and being placed in a coffin was immediately taken to the Infirmary, to undergo the remaining part of the sentence. We are glad to find that, before the unhappy creature quitted this world, she made some atonement for her crime, by making an ample confession of her guilt. She said that, having prevailed upon her unfortunate husband to give her what money he had in his possession, she asked him to take his hat off while she rubbed some white spots from it – that having done so, he put his right hand in his pocket for some purpose, and that she then gave him a push, and he fell headlong into the water – that he afterwards came up towards the surface two or three times, but that she went off and left him to his fate. While in gaol, great pains were required to be taken with her, before she could be brought at all to prepare in a proper manner for the awful change which awaited her.

6 20 August 1825

WARWICKSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

CHARGE OF STEALING FROM THE PERSON John Lawrence and Thomas Taylor, both aged 19 years, were charged with having, on the 26th of July last at Birmingham, feloniously stolen from the person of **Daniel Powell** a purse and two £1 notes, his property.

Daniel Powell examined : I am a boatman employed by Messrs Pickford at their Wharf at Birmingham. I arrived there with my boat on the night of the 26th of July last. I went to seek for a lodging. As I was going by the Gullet, a young woman looked out of a house and asked me to walk in, which I did ; there were five young men in the house. I went for some beer and we drank it. I then went to bed. The woman of the house said, “You have no call to be alarmed ; I shall come to you presently”. I had not been in bed above a quarter of an hour, when up came the two prisoners. Taylor, the short one, “as fierce as a lion”, rushed his hand under the pillow and took my breeches. He put his hand into my right hand pocket, took out a handkerchief and purse, and threw them downstairs. During this time, Lawrence was standing at the foot of the bed. Taylor then gave me my small clothes and told me to get up, or he would throw me downstairs. I had two £1 notes and five or six shillings in silver in my purse. There was a watch ribbon, a key and a seal also in it. It was two o'clock in the morning when this happened, there was no light in the room but what was reflected from the fire below stairs, but I can swear to the prisoners very confidently. I dressed myself, the prisoners remaining in the room during the time. When dressed, we all went downstairs. Lawrence then picked up a handkerchief, and asked if it was mine. I told him it was. It was the same that Taylor had thrown downstairs. I said nothing about my purse, but was about to put on my handkerchief when they collared me and dragged me out of the house. The woman of the house came out also, and she and the two prisoners went up the Gullet. I then ran towards Thomas's Street, where I saw the night constable, and told him that I had been robbed. I have never got my purse since.

Paul Lee, one of the night constables of Birmingham, examined : The last witness called on me early in the morning in question, and gave information that he had been robbed by two men. I went with him, and found the two prisoners in another disorderly house, about 200 yards from the one in which the robbery was committed, and apprehended them. They were in company with five women. Powell said, “These are the two men who robbed me ; but Lawrence gave me my handkerchief again”. I asked Lawrence if he did so, and he said he did. I then took them to the Prison. I searched them, but found nothing upon them.

Mr Goulburn submitted that the prisoners could not be convicted of stealing from the person, inasmuch as a pillow intervened between the person of the prosecutor and his apparel at the time it was taken away.

His Lordship then summed up the evidence, observing that as the breeches were separated from the person when the money was stolen, he was of opinion with the Counsel for the prisoners, that in strictness of law they could not be found guilty of stealing from the person. The question, however, was whether the prisoners, or either of them, were guilty of simply stealing the property ; if so, they were still liable to be convicted.

The Jury found both the prisoners guilty of stealing, but not from the person.

Transportation for 7 years : John Lawrence and Thomas Taylor, for having at Birmingham, in the dwelling house of Ann Brookes, stolen from Daniel Powell, two £1 notes and other articles, his property.

7 2 May 1829

BURSTING OF THE DUKE OF BRIDGEWATER'S CANAL We are sorry to state that about nine o'clock on Thursday morning, the embankments of this canal, at Bolling Bank near Lymm in Cheshire, gave way on both sides for a distance of from 20 to 30 yards. In consequence the district around has been drenched with water and, of course, great damage sustained by the owners and occupiers of the land. The embankment, at the part which is burst, was about ten or twelve yards above the level of the adjacent country, and we understand had been for some time in a dangerous state. The heavy rains, therefore, on Thursday, in all probability hastened the misfortune which occurred on Thursday. The effect of this rupture on the Navigation of the Canal is sufficiently evident from the consideration, that for the whole way from Manchester to Runcorn – we believe a line of 30 miles in length – not a single lock occurs. There are however several “stops”, but before those could be rendered available, a number of boats were left what the boatmen call “neap dry”. It will probably be eight or ten days before the breach is repaired.

8 12 December 1829

CORONER'S INQUESTS An inquest was held at Easenhall on Wednesday on the body of a boatman by the name of **Mills**, a resident of Willoughby, who cut his throat in the boat in so dreadful a manner that he died almost instantly. The deceased had for some time been in a low and desponding way, and the Jury found that he destroyed himself whilst labouring under temporary derangement.

9 27 March 1830

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT On Monday morning the body of an elderly female of the name of **Moore** was taken out of the canal, near the Basin in the Saltisford in this borough. The deceased, on the preceding night had been to see her son, who is boatman to Mr (?Battin?), with whom and his wife she stopped supper. About nine o'clock, when she was leaving the boat to go home, the son's wife ordered the boy to light her, which he did. When he left the deceased, however, she unfortunately turned the wrong way and walked into the canal. Her daughter and her husband left the door open when they went to bed, that she might come into the house, and they were greatly alarmed in the morning when they heard that she had left the boat at nine on the preceding night. An inquest was held on the body before G C Greenway Esq, coroner, and the Jury returned a verdict of “Accidentally drowned”.

10 3 April 1830

WARWICKSHIRE LENT ASSIZES

DAVIES v ASHFORD Mr Homfray, who opened the pleadings, and Mr Hill, who stated the case, described this to be an action for an assault. Mr Sergeant Goulbourn was for the defendant.

This was a case of considerable intricacy, and of but very little interest.

The plaintiff is a boatman, and the defendant a timber merchant of Birmingham. The plaintiff stated, by his witnesses, that he had bought a boat of the defendant for £60 which he was to pay for in four quarterly instalments at £15 each. The defendant, who denied that he had sold the boat, ordered the boat to be locked up at Booth's wharf at the top of the 13 locks. The plaintiff, hearing of this, took some others with him, broke the chain and brought away the boat. The defendant took some men with him, and took the boat from Davis and his party, and in doing so, the assault complained of was stated to have been committed. Verdict for plaintiff : damages 1s and defendant to return £1 5s which plaintiff had paid him towards the boat.

11 4 December 1830

On Saturday afternoon, between four and five o'clock, **Thomas Cotterill**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Sanders and Son, timber merchants of this borough, accidentally fell into the sixteenth lock on the Birmingham and Warwick Canal near this place, and was unfortunately drowned. **William White**, his assistant, who had left Cotterill to get the next lock ready for passing the boat, returned, on not perceiving the deceased coming forward, and could not find him ; but on going into the boat and seeing a part of his coat hanging by the side of the cabin, he suspected that he had fallen into the canal ; and another boat coming up at the time, the drag was employed, and the deceased was immediately drawn out. Dr London of Leamington, who was then at Budbrook, on being informed of the accident, went directly to the deceased, and Mr Wilmshurst, surgeon of this place, was there in a very short time, but all their skill was exerted in vain. The deceased was 33 years old, and has left a wife and four children, all under nine years of age.

12 9 July 1831

WARWICKSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

POACHING Edward Gold, a sawyer of Bentley Heath near Knowle, and **Henry Gold**, his nephew, a boatman, were indicted for having in the night of the 28th of May cut the dam of a pit belonging to Mr John Scott Marshall of Knowle, let out the water and stolen the fish, consisting of carp, perch and a few tench, which the prosecutor had put into the pit about two years ago. On the morning of the 29th, Mr Marshall missed the fish and found, in the course of the day, from some scales which lay upon the grass and other circumstances, that some fish had been put into a pit belonging to Mr Bott, a farmer, at no great distance from his own pit, and he traced the muddy footprints of some persons who had passed from his own pit to that of Mr Bott, his neighbour. Mr Bott, on being informed of the circumstance, permitted Mr Marshall to draw the pit, who caught about forty brace of carp, some perch and two tench which, he had no doubt, were his property. Many circumstances, strongly marked, were adduced to fix this offence upon the prisoners, although no one actually caught them in the fact. Amongst others, John White, a blacksmith, saw Henry Gold at four o'clock in the morning of the 29th come into Knowle along the road leading from Bott's pit, with his legs and feet covered with muddy water, who asked him if he had been poaching or robbing anyone's pit of the fish, to which the prisoner said, "What is that to you?" And in ten minutes afterwards he saw Edward Gold coming towards Knowle along the same road. They were also seen at the same time by another witness by the name of Thomas Osbourne. The elder prisoner had asked Mr Bott two months before to let him put some fish into his pit, to which he assented ; and he told Mr Bott, on the 29th, that he had put some fish into it on the preceding Wednesday ; but by the testimony of Mr Marshall, it was clear that the fish had been put there more recently, as one of them was floating on the top of the water, alive, and those that were dead smelt quite fresh, although the weather was very hot. The Jury, after some consideration, acquitted the prisoners.

13 22 October 1831

WARWICKSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS James Atkins was tried for stealing from the boat of **John Green**, lying at Atherstone, a silver watch, his property. The prosecutor, who is a boatman, said his boat on the 25th of February was at Atherstone ; he left it to go to a public house, where he saw the prisoner. He returned about twelve o'clock, and he then had his watch but missed it next morning. Mr Reynolds, who defended the prisoner, cross-examined the witness, who said he was drinking in the public house two or three hours, and there was another person of the name of **Brown** there, who had used to go boating with him, and he knew where the prosecutor's watch and money were kept, and he was a man of bad character. Maria Bostin stated she lived at Birmingham, knew the prisoner, and saw him there on the 2nd May, where amongst other questions, he asked her where he could pledge a watch, which he said he bought at Atherstone. Witness pledged it for 4s, which she gave to the prisoner. A person of the name of Merriven, sister to the pawnbroker, recollected a watch being pledged, which was delivered to Biddle, a constable of Atherstone. In her cross-examination she said many watches had been pledged there that day, and the one in question had

been left in the name of Maria Simpkins. Mr Biddle apprehended the prisoner in July and searched his house, where he found a duplicate, with which he redeemed the watch. Bostin spoke to the watch being the same she received from the prisoner, and it was identified by the prosecutor. The duplicate was found in a box belonging to the prisoner's sister. The Jury found the prisoner guilty, and the Court sentenced him to be imprisoned in the House of Correction and kept to hard labour for six months. This prisoner had been twice before in custody, but not convicted.

Charles alias Morgan Houghton, was charged with having stolen at Stratford-upon-Avon five cross bed pieces and a table drawer, the property of Edmund Paine. **James Gouldby**, a boatman in the employ of Mr Paine, took a boat of coals on the 12th of September, and tied it to a tree at Bidford. Went again on the 16th and found the boat had been robbed of five boards and a table drawer, which were found in a boat under the care of the prisoner, who offered the witness half a gallon of ale to say nothing about them. Once whipped and discharged.

14 10 March 1832

WARWICKSHIRE GENERAL SESSIONS **Samuel Adams** was arraigned for having stolen at Knowle on the 12th of February a quantity of coal, from the wharf of Jonathan Kimbell. The first and only witness, a brother of the prosecutor's, saw the prisoner, who is a boatman, take the coal from the prosecutor's premises as he was passing gently by with his boat. This was a very clear case ; the Jury found him guilty, and the Court sentenced him to be imprisoned in the House of Correction for six months, to hard labour.

15 31 March 1832

CROWN COURT William Read, for stealing at Hampton-in-Arden on the 22nd March, 3 couple of fowls belonging to Mary Ann Sowley. It appeared in evidence that the prosecutrix's son managed her farm and missed the fowls, in consequence of which he went along the canal side, and apprehended the prisoner with a bag on his back which contained a quantity of feathers. He took him back and delivered him to a constable, and then went after a boat in which he found two hens, and which the boatman in his testimony said he had of the prisoner. The prisoner was found guilty of the charge, and ordered to be imprisoned in the House of Correction and kept to hard labour for one year.

16 13 April 1833

WARWICKSHIRE LENT ASSIZES Peter Hopwood was indicted for assaulting and stealing from the person of William Smith at Warwick on the night of the 5th of September, 4s in silver.

William Smith, the prosecutor, was at the Globe public house on the night of the 5th of September last, having some beer. He had been there an hour or two. He was quite sober. He left the house about half past ten. As he was passing over the Iron Bridge on his return home, he saw about a dozen men standing together. Two or three of them laid hold of him and got him down, and then took 4s out of his pocket. He did not know any of the men. A man of the name of Bradnock came up while witness was on the ground, and witness told him what had happened.

William Bradnock, a watch maker, observed about 15 or 16 persons assembled together, 30 or 40 yards from the Iron Bridge, about half past ten o'clock. A man of the name of Robbins cried out, "Smith (the prosecutor), is that you?" The mob then immediately dispersed. Robbins called me to Smith's assistance. When the prosecutor got up, witness perceived that his waistcoat and breeches pockets were turned inside out. The prisoner was knocking his arms about close to the prosecutor, and making a great noise. He did not see him do anything more. The prisoner was taken into custody the next day, and he knew him again. Witness saw the prisoner's features near Mr Adey's, and also near the Iron Bridge, where the robbery was committed. He knew the prisoner again, as he had but one eye.

Joseph Robbins saw an old gentleman coming out of the Globe yard. He missed him in a moment. Witness then went towards the Iron Bridge. There were 15 or 16 men about the prosecutor,

knocking their arms about as though they were fighting. The prosecutor was on the ground ; and when witness called him by name, they all ran away in different directions. They were all hooting. Witness picked the prosecutor up. The prisoner was one who was knocking his arms about. This was about twenty minutes past ten. Witness saw the prisoner's face when he was knocking his arms about, and afterwards when he was under the lamp near Mr Adey's. Witness did not know the prisoner before. All the other persons were strangers. It was at the races. Witness and Bradnock said to the prisoner, "We shall know you again", and then he went away directly. The prisoner wore white trousers and dark clothes.

Bellerby, the police officer, apprehended the prisoner on the racecourse on the following day, when he denied being at the robbery. The prisoner was at one of the thimble tables.

The prisoner denied the charge, and said he could bring witnesses to prove he was not at the place when the robbery was committed.

Robert Bromwich, a lodging house keeper in the Saltisford. Witness is a shoe maker. He saw the prisoner in his house about half past six. He was with him at different public houses. They came home together a little before half past nine. Witness saw no more of the prisoner that night. Witness lived 300 or 400 yards from the Market Place. He did not see the prisoner in his house at half past ten. Witness came home at 12 and went to bed.

Elizabeth Bromwich, wife of the last witness, said the prisoner and his wife were in bed at her house on the night referred to, a little before ten o'clock. The prisoner slept in a house belonging to them, two doors below.

Charlotte Nullender said her husband was a boatman living in the Saltisford next door to the lodging house. She saw the prisoner come home on the night referred to, about half past nine o'clock, arm in arm with Bromwich – his wife walked behind. They all went into the lodging house. Witness saw Mrs Bromwich take the prisoner to the lodging house, and lock them up, at half past 10.

Death recorded.

17 1 June 1833

WARWICK ELECTION PETITIONS

(PETITION AGAINST THE RETURN OF SIR C GREVILLE)

William Gibbons was then called in, and having been sworn, was examined by Mr Sergeant Heath, as follows :-

What are you? A Pink and Blue! (Laughter, on one side).

How came you to vote for the Orange? Because I was bribed. (Laughter ceased).

What is your business – are you a boatman? Yes.

You did vote for Sir Charles Greville? Yes.

A plumper? Yes.

Who persuaded you to do that? Joseph Trepess and Mr Davis.

Who is Davis? I do not know what his other name is.

Does he keep the Black Horse? Yes.

Did you ever see William Trepess there? No, I did not.

Did you ever see William Trepess at all about this business? Yes, I saw him at Mr Mander's.

What is he? He keeps the Navigation Inn.

Had you promised to vote for King and Tomes? No, I had not.

Did you intend to vote for them? Yes, I did.

Where were you brought from to vote? From Birmingham.

Who brought you? Thomas Webb.

Did you come in a coach? Yes.

Who paid the expenses? Thomas Webb.

Where did you go with Webb? To the Navigation Inn first.

That is Mander's. Yes.

Did you see William Trepess there? Yes, I saw William and Joseph both there.

Can you tell me what day it was – was it the polling day? It was on Wednesday.
Was it one of the polling days? Yes, the second day of the polling.
Did you get anything to eat and drink at Mander's? Yes.
Did you pay for it? No, I did not.
Were you ever asked to pay for it? No.
Where did you go from Mander's? To the Black Horse.
Did you get anything to eat and drink there? Yes.
A good deal? No, not a good deal.
Were you sober when you left the Black Horse? No, I was not sober.
Were you pretty far gone or very drunk? Not very far gone.
Who was with you there? Joseph Trepess and Davis was with me and Thomas Webb.
Did you go up to the poll that day? Yes.
Did you say anything to Joseph Trepess and Davis about your vote or about your rent? Yes.
Mr Rogers objected to evidence of what had passed between the witness and Joseph Trepess, on the ground that no agency had been established as it regarded him.
Mr Sergeant Heath was heard in support of the question.
The Chairman stated the Committee were of opinion the question should be put.
Mr Sergeant Heath : What did you say about your rent? I told them I owed £5 rent.
Who did you tell that to? To Joseph Trepess and Davis.
What did they say to that? They said I should have it as soon as I came back from the polling, if I would go and poll for Sir Charles.
Did you go and poll for Sir Charles? I did.
Did you give him a plumper? Yes.
Did you go to the Black Horse? Yes.
Had you any more drink? Yes.
Did you apply afterwards for this £5? Yes.
Who to? To Joseph Trepess and Davis.
What did Joseph Trepess say? He said he could not a while to give it me then.
Did he say why? No.
Did you go again? Not till six weeks afterwards.
What took place then? He gave me two sovereigns.
Where was it? At Mr Davis's.
The Black Horse? Yes.
What did he say to you? He told me not to say anything.
Did you say anything about your £5 at that time? Yes, I told him I should wish to have it all.
What did he say? He said he could not give it me, not then.
Did he give any reason? No.
Did he appoint any place for you to meet at? I was to meet him at his brother William's that day week.
Did you go to William Trepess's? Yes.
On the night that was fixed? Yes.
Who did you see there? William Trepess.
Anyone else? No.
What did you say to him? That I had come about my money that I was promised.
What did he do? He gave me 10s.
What did he say? He told me not to say anything.
Did you go again? I told him I should wish to have it all, and not come after it so many times.
What did he say then? He said he could not give it me, not then.
Did he say anything else? No.
Did he tell you to come again? Yes.
Did you go again? Yes, but I never got any.
Did you never get any more? No ; my mistress did.

How do you know she did? Because she tells me.
Is she up in Town? No.
You were not present when your wife got any from Joseph Trepess? No.
You only know she brought you some from somebody? Yes, she said she got it there.
How much? 5s first.
How much afterwards? I do not know ; she did not tell me.
How much altogether? £3 15s.
Committee : Had your wife £3 15s? No – altogether.
The witness withdrew.
Adjourned to Saturday morning (11 o'clock).

18 8 June 1833

WARWICK ELECTION PETITIONS

(PETITION AGAINST THE RETURN OF SIR C GREVILLE)

William Gibbons was again called in, and having been sworn, was cross-examined by Mr Rogers, as follows :-

You had no conversation about this with Mr William Trepess – it was with Mr Joseph Trepess? Yes.

It was with Mr Joseph Trepess? Yes.

Just tell me where it was you saw Mr Joseph Trepess? In the Navigation Inn.

Was that the time that you received the money? No, it was not.

Where was it you received the money? At the Black Horse.

When was it? I cannot tell just the day when it was exactly.

When about was it? Six weeks after the election.

That was when you received the money? Yes.

It was at the Black Horse? Yes.

When was the first time you saw Mr Joseph Trepess? The second day of the polling.

Where was it? Where was it – it was at the Navigation Inn.

Did you ever see him apart from those two occasions – the Navigation Inn and the Black Horse?

At the Black Horse and the Navigation Inn.

You never saw him but those two times? No – no.

Who was present at the Navigation Inn when you saw him? Thomas Webb.

Anyone else? No.

What room was it in? In the parlour.

Who was present when you saw him at the Black Horse? Mr Davis.

Anybody else? No.

These are the only two occasions you ever saw him? Yes.

Re-examined by Mr Sergeant Heath.

Did you ever see Joseph Trepess but upon these two occasions in your life? No, I saw him often.

After the election, did you see him about your money? Yes – often.

The first time you saw him upon the business of the election was at the Navigation Inn, the second day of the polling? Yes.

When you met him at the Navigation Inn, where did you go to? To the Black Horse.

From the Navigation Inn? Yes.

Who went with you to the Black Horse? Joseph Trepess and Thomas Webb.

There you had some drink again? Yes.

Did you go to the poll that day? Yes.

How soon after did you see Joseph Trepess about your money after the polling? In about half an hour.

How soon did you apply to him for your money? As soon as I came back from polling.

Where? At the Black Horse.

Did you apply to him afterwards for it? I did not see him for six weeks afterwards.

Did you see him? Yes.
Where was he then? I went up to his house.
What did you go for? I went for my money.
Did you see him and speak to him about it? Yes.
What did he tell you to do? To meet him at the Black Horse in a quarter of an hour.
Did you do so? Yes.
Where was it you saw Mr William Trepess? At his own house.
How came you to go there? His brother recommended me to go there.
Where was Joseph when he recommended you to go to his brother? In the street.
Have you seen Joseph Trepess since the election several times about your money? Yes – Joseph Trepess and William too.
You saw Joseph Trepess at the Navigation Inn before the day of the election, and at the Black Horse? Yes.
After that you saw him frequently? Yes.
You are a boatman? Yes.
Were you away with your boat during the six weeks? Yes.
Where were you? At Staffordshire, and then down at Northampton.
Committee : Who did you see at the Navigation Inn the second polling day? Joseph Trepess.
Who else? Thomas Webb.
Who else? No one else – not along with me.
You stated you did yesterday.
Mr Sergeant Heath : Is the Navigation Inn the same as Mander's Inn? Yes.
Committee : Was it on one of the polling days? Yes – on Wednesday.
Mr Sergeant Heath : Did you see William Trepess when you went to the Navigation Inn, when Webb took you there? No, I did not at the Navigation Inn.
You stated yesterday, when you got to the Navigation Inn you saw William Trepess there, as well as Joseph – do you know you stated that yesterday? Not to the best of my knowledge.
Do you remember stating that? Recollect whether you did see William Trepess at the Navigation Inn – did you see William Trepess there or not? I believe I did see William Trepess, to the best of my knowledge.
What makes you think that – were there many people there? No.
The witness withdrew.

19 13 July 1833

WARWICKSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS Mary Hassall was indicted for stealing at Birmingham five sovereigns, two half sovereigns, seven half crowns and seven shillings, the property of **James Grimes**. The prosecutor is a boatman from Ledbury. One night in the beginning of May, about 11 o'clock, the prosecutor was accosted by the prisoner in New Street. She jostled against him for some time, and then ran away. He immediately missed his purse and money, and he ran after her, crying, "Stop, thief". She was stopped by a watchman, who saw her throw away the purse. None of the money was missing. Transported for seven years.

20 26 October 1833

NISI PRIUS COURT, THURSDAY John Chapman was convicted of having stolen ten trusses of hay, the property of **Joseph Knight**, boatman of Hatton. The prosecutor's boat was lying on the Worcester Canal near Birmingham, laden with hay and straw. In the absence of the prosecutor, the prisoner, who had been suffered to lie on the straw, took away the hay. Three months in gaol to hard labour.

21 4 January 1834

NISI PRIUS COURT **Charles Boden** was tried for embezzling £3, the monies of **Thomas Bowater**, his master. The prosecutor, who is a boatman residing at Caseley in Staffordshire, hired

the prisoner last summer, to help to work his boat. In November last, he sent the prisoner with a load of pig iron to Manchester, with orders to bring loading back. The prisoner, after he had discharged the boat, took a load of slates at Runcorn, consigned to Mr Jas McTurk, slater of Birmingham. The prisoner received £3 for haulage from Mr McTurk on the 6th of November, which he had not paid over to his master. Instead of doing that, he left the boat at Birmingham, where he was afterwards found by the prosecutor in a public house. The prisoner said he had laid out nearly two pounds in buying hay and corn for the horse. Adam Capewell had known the prisoner from a child ; he had worked for him for two years and had always borne an honest character. The prisoner said when he lost the money he was ashamed to go back. The Jury found the prisoner guilty, and the Court sentenced him to be imprisoned in the House of Correction to hard labour for 4 months.

22 4 January 1834

NISI PRIUS COURT **William Black**, a boatman, was indicted for stealing about three quarters of a hundredweight of coal at Long Itchington, the property of George and Charles Witherington. By the evidence of one of the prosecutor's servants, the prisoner, on the night of the 7th of December, took a piece of coal from the prosecutor's stack and put it into his boat. The witness desired him to put the coal back, which he did ; he was then taken into custody and afterwards committed. The coal was valued at 9d. One week in gaol. The Court refused to allow the prosecutors their expenses.

23 15 March 1834

WARWICKSHIRE GENERAL SESSIONS Edward Robinson, for stealing at Birmingham on the 21st January last, a watch, a shirt and other articles, the property of **Martin Giles**. The prosecutor, a boatman, was at Snow Hill, Birmingham, on the above day, and met the prisoner with a bundle coming in a direction from his boat, which was lying in the canal near the place. A servant of the prosecutor, who was sleeping in the boat, saw the prisoner leave his master's boat with a bundle under his arm. He was apprehended by Hall the following day. (A former conviction in the county of Northampton was proved). Guilty. Seven years' transportation. The prisoner thanked the Court, but said he had never committed the robbery.

24 26 April 1834

BIRMINGHAM

MURDER OF MRS WEBB – COMMITTAL OF FITTER, THE SUPPOSED MURDERER

ADJOURNED INQUEST – MONDAY APRIL 21st. This morning, pursuant to an adjournment from the previous Monday, the Jury impanelled upon this inquest again assembled at the Globe Tavern in Vauxhall Row. During the week the civil authorities, but more especially Mr Blakemore, the headborough of Duddeston and Nechells, Mr Walford, the headborough of Birmingham, Mr Davenport, the coroner's messenger, and Palmer, the officer, had been unremitting in their exertions to obtain some satisfactory clue to the perpetrators of the murder. From the evidence we have detailed below, it will be seen that their efforts have not proved altogether unsuccessful.

The proceedings of the adjourned inquest commenced soon after eleven o'clock ; at which hour the street in which the Jury assembled was completely choked with persons from all parts of the town, anxious to hear the result and obtain a sight of the prisoner. In the course of the afternoon the crowd increased, and ultimately became so noisy and turbulent as to interrupt the proceedings of the Coroner and Jury. Nothing could exceed the intense interest which appeared to prevail throughout the neighbourhood. From eleven o'clock in the morning until after nine at night, the hour at which the investigation closed, the jury room was crowded to suffocation by strangers, many of whom came from distant parts of the town and neighbourhood. Fitter, on being introduced into the room, looked much paler and more dejected than on the last occasion. He appeared sensibly impressed with the accumulated evidence which was about to be brought against him. Mr Prichard Smith attended as his legal adviser. The first witness called was :

Mary Ann Hilton Patterson. [The prisoner eyed the witness closely from head to foot.]

The Coroner : Now, witness, let me caution you to speak the truth. Tell me nothing but what you know of your own knowledge ; and do not be under any fear as to the consequence. I will take care that you are properly protected.

Witness, who gave her evidence with remarkable clearness, proceeded : I shall be twenty three years of age the 29th of next June. Mr husband's name is John Hilton Patterson. I live at No 4 house in a court in Handley Street, beyond the Hospital. My husband is in the 82nd regiment of foot ; but whether dead or living I cannot tell. I was married to him at Rochdale in Lancashire on Easter Monday four years ago. I know John Fitter, the man who stands behind me. I know his home in Lawley Street. I have been there several times to have shoes mended by him. I was there last Wednesday was a week, as near as I can guess, about half past three o'clock. I left James Derusey's at the top of Handley Street at two o'clock. On my way along the cut side, I stopped to speak to a man of the name of **Stokes**, a boatman, about half an hour. I met another man, whose name I do not know, but who comes from Harbourne, and I talked to him a few minutes. When I came to the lock on this side Coleshill Street, I stood looking at a boat passing through the lock opposite Belmont Row wharf, near Fitter's house. I then went to Fitter's house. I there saw first Mrs Fitter and the baby. She had got some binding on her lap ; but whether she was sewing or not I did not notice. There was nobody else in the kitchen ; she was sitting by the fire. When I went in, I inquired whether the master was within. She replied, "No, he is not". I had a pair of boots in my hand, which I wanted him to mend. I stood at the door with the door in my hand for a short time, and I was going to turn out of the house when Mr Fitter came in. He had on a pair of slipper shoes and a red jacket. As he came in he hardly stopped, but walked as swiftly as he could through the place. He went to the cellar door and opened it with his left hand ; as he swung the door open, I saw blood upon his left hand. He went into the cellar and pulled the door after him with his right hand. Whilst he was in the cellar, a tallish man with dark clothing on came in and walked upstairs. I did not perceive his features. I only saw his back as he went up. In the meantime Fitter came upstairs into the kitchen ; he had neither shoes nor jacket on ; he came up stripped. I asked him, when he came up, if he would please to mend me a pair of boots ; to put a piece in to mend the lace holes, the same as they had been mended before. I pointed out to him they needed mending in several places besides. He answered me, "No, my girl, I can't awhile". Mrs Fitter then got up and walked towards the cellar head. I can't say whether she went down the cellar, as I turned off and went away. When Mr Fitter came up from the cellar, I perceived blood upon his left hand, as if someone had wiped it across. It appeared smeared. I went from thence through the entry joining Fitter's house into the yard, from that yard into another, in which Mrs Rufford lives at the back of Windsor Street. [The entry to which witness alludes is the next lower down in the street to that in which Mrs Webb lived]. I went to Mrs Rufford to ask her to do me some washing. She told me she would, and that she was going to wash next day, and asked me if I had got any caps. She thought I had caps in the handkerchief I had in my hand. I said they were boots which I had taken into Lawley Street to be mended ; but I could not get them done. I don't think I mentioned Fitter's name, but only that I had been into Lawley Street. I wished her to do my washing on Friday, and it was agreed that I should take her my clothes that morning. I then left Mrs Rufford's and went into the next yard, to Mrs May's house, but she was not at home. When I went into the kitchen, there was no one else in but Fitter's wife and the baby. In answer to questions from Jurors : When I went to Fitter's house, the door was a little ajar. Fitter had a leathern apron on. I am not certain as to his trousers, but I think they were dark ones. When Fitter went into the cellar, his hand seemed very wet with blood ; when he came out it appeared smeared, as if it had been wiped. I saw nothing in either of his hands. I think he had some top sleeves over his jacket sleeves when he came in ; but I will not be certain. The man who walked upstairs walked with his hands up to his breast, as if holding something. When Fitter came out of the cellar, he had not his apron on, nor his shoes. By the Coroner : When I spoke to Fitter he was in a confused state ; he could hardly answer me at all.

The Coroner : Now, witness, I am about to read over to you the evidence you have just given. Remember that you are here to speak the truth. I caution you that your evidence goes far to affect the life of the prisoner. Attend, therefore, and correct me if I have written anything down which is

not true ; and, at the same time, do not let any kind of fear prevent you from speaking the whole truth.

The whole of her evidence having been read over, witness swore to its correctness.

Elizabeth Rufford : [The witness is a loquacious old woman ; and on this occasion appeared to affect as much ignorance as possible upon all points upon which she was examined. She was evidently an extremely reluctant witness ; and, we imagined, gave her evidence under a feeling of intimidation]. I am a widow, and live at the back of No 4 house, Windsor Street. I have known the witness Patterson, whom I now see before me, about a fortnight or three weeks. I saw her last Wednesday week ; on the day of Mrs Webb's murder. I saw her in our yard, as I was coming out of the brewhouse. She asked me if I would wash for her. I think it was about four o'clock, for I have generally done about four. I told her I had done ; and it was agreed that she was to bring her linen on Thursday night or Friday morning. She said nothing to me about boots. I did not ask her whether she had any caps or not ; but she had something tied up in a white handkerchief, but I never asked her what it was. She did not say that she had been to have some boots mended, and that she could not get them done. She said nothing about having boots mended. I will swear that she did not. I did not see her again that afternoon. I am certain the last witness did not come to my house again that night. I am sure I did not see her after four o'clock. I know nothing of Fitter.

Coroner : Now, gentlemen, I shall certainly think it necessary that we should have the last witness up in the room, in order that we may confront the two women together. Let the girl be called up.

Mary Ann Patterson recalled. (Looking steadily at last witness). That is the Mrs Rufford whom I meant in the evidence which I have given. I went straight from Fitter's to Mrs Rufford's. She was coming from the wash house. I said to her, "What, you're just going in". We began the conversation in the house.

Mrs Rufford : She never was in the house.

An altercation here took place between the two witnesses ; in the course of which it was stated by some of the jurymen that Fitter more than once touched the shoulders of the old woman. He was ordered to be removed to a greater distance from her. Both witnesses having been examined at some length, they were directed to leave the room.

The Coroner said he had thought it right to confront the two last witnesses, to see if their different testimony could be reconciled. The Jury might form some opinion by the manner of the two witnesses, and certainly the evidence of Patterson had not been contradicted on any material point, while in some it had been confirmed. Her memory was moreover much more likely to be correct than that of the old woman.

The next was the most important witness examined during the inquest.

Mary Hodgson : (Witness appeared extremely timid, but gave her evidence in a clear and straightforward manner). My husband's name is Thomas. We live on Barr Street. My husband is a tin and iron plate worker. I never saw Fitter before last Wednesday week. On that afternoon, as nigh four o'clock as I can guess, I was going up Lawley Street to the coal wharf – the Irishman's as it is called – to fetch some coals. I went into the coal yard. There was no one there to serve me, and no barrow to wheel my coal home. I then turned back to the end of Duddeston Row, for the purpose of looking for the coalman, but could not see him. I turned from the end of Duddeston Row to go up Lawley Street. I then saw Fitter come out of his house, and go up the entry in which Mrs Webb lived. When I got to the end of the entry, I saw no one. I wanted to go to the privy ; I went up the entry into the yard for that purpose, but I saw no convenience. I was going to Mrs Webb's house to ask her about a privy, and when I got to the window, I saw this person (looking at the prisoner Fitter) bent with his back to the window, with a woman on his right arm. Her head was towards the wall as you come up the yard. I heard no noise ; there was no noise at all. I thought she was in a fit, or had fainted away. I saw the man, and did not go in, but turned down the yard. He had got on a leather apron, a paper cap, and a red jacket or waistcoat ; I cannot tell which. I then went into Lawley Street and turned to my left hand, up the next entry lower in the street. I saw a privy there, and I went into it. I was not there a minute. I came down the entry again, and crossed over to the coal yard. I saw the coalman there. I said to the man, "Where have you been? I have

been here before". I bought three pennyworth of coal of him. I did not see anything in the hands of the man in the house, for his back was towards me. When I was wheeling home the coals, just as I was passing the end of Duddeston Row, a lump dropped off my barrow ; I stopped to pick it up, and I then saw Fitter come out of the entry and go into the same house he came out of in Lawley Street. He walked pretty fast, and had got one corner of his apron lifted up a little in his left hand. I did not see any blood upon his hand. There was the whole breadth of the road between me and Fitter. My barrow was on the foot road. I did not stay longer than to pick the coal up and go on. I felt glad I had not been in the yard. I did not see anybody go into the house after him. I think Fitter's door was shut ; if it was not it was very close. I did not observe anything more, but went straight home. I never saw Fitter that I know of before that day. I saw him again the next day. I went to the end of Duddeston Road for tea, sugar and soap, and I then saw Fitter standing with his back up against the end of his door case, reading a paper about a murder. There was a crowd around him. I crossed over, and I heard Fitter reading a paper about the murder of a woman, but I can't say what murder. I noticed him because he had the same clothes on which he had the afternoon before. I did not stay above a minute, but went home. I never saw him afterwards until this day. (Witness was directed to look at the prisoner). That's the man ; I know him by his long face. When I came into the room and saw him, I felt quite bad. I did not think at the time the man was doing the woman any harm ; I thought it was her husband. I did not see whether he had anything over the sleeves of his jacket. When he went into his house he appeared to be dressed the same as when in Webb's house. I can't say when I first heard that Fitter was in custody ; but I told my sister, last Thursday, they had got the right man. I never saw Mrs Webb after she was murdered. There was a white curtain to the window, and I think it was plaided. It was not so high but I could look over it. The curtain was a short one, and went across the window. (The description of the curtain was perfectly correct).

Fitter, on the recommendation of Mr Smith, declined asking the witness any question.

After a solemn caution from the Coroner, the witness swore to the truth of her depositions.

The girl Patterson recalled : When Fitter came into the house he had on a paper cap. He had not it on when he came out of the cellar. I had the door in my hand ; the door was not latched.

John Reynolds (who was brought up in custody) : I am by trade a pocket book maker. I know Fitter; he is an acquaintance of mine. There is an entry, three entries below my house, which goes across from the street in which I live into Lawley Street. I saw Fitter about five o'clock in the afternoon that Mrs Webb was killed. I went to his house. He was up against the fireplace in the kitchen. I believe he had his red jacket on. I did not notice whether he had a cap and apron on. I went in consequence of the reports of the murder. I went into the house and I saw Fitter, and asked him if she was dead. Fitter replied, "Yes, is she ; she has got her throat cut five inches and a half in length, according to the doctor's measure". I was never out of the house during the whole day until five o'clock. I have a wife and three children. They were at home during the day. I am quite positive I was never out during the day until five o'clock, and I am certain Fitter was never at my house.

Harriet Russell (A very respectable looking young woman) : I live at Mr Dobbs's in Newton Street ; they are distant relations of mine. I know Fitter perfectly well. I know John Reynolds. I have known Reynolds ever since I can remember. I saw Fitter and him together turn up an entry, which leads to a yard, between ten minutes and a quarter past four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon week. This entry leads into Lawley Street. Fitter having on a soldier's jacket, made me remark it. He had nothing on his head, nor did I observe any apron.

Palmer, the officer, and Mr Blakemore and Mr Walford, produced the hammer, hatchet, bed key, old stocking and rag, knives&c, together with other articles found, some of them stained with blood, on the prisoner's premises. But the most important article subjected to the investigation of the jury was the old jacket. It will be recollected that both the women, Hodgson and Patterson, deposed to the prisoner being habited in this jacket ; and the latter stated that, after he had stripped it off in the cellar, she observed that the blood on his hand appeared smeared. It was natural to suppose, therefore, that the lining of the jacket sleeve would be stained in the act of taking off. In order that this fact might be ascertained, the coroner ordered the jacket to be examined, when it was

discovered that the linings of both sleeves had been recently torn out. The thread and the (.....) of the lining still remained, and the red cloth was quite fresh, as if its covering had just been removed. This discovery produced a great effect on the minds of the jury.

The Coroner : Now, Fitter, you have heard all the evidence brought forward this day, on Saturday week and on Monday last, and on one occasion I put questions to you and took your answers in writing – have you anything to say in answer to the charge brought against you?

Fitter : I say for myself that I am as innocent as the child unborn, and what has been said against me is all false.

The Coroner then proceeded to sum up the case to the jury in a neat and perspicuous analysis of the evidence.

The room having been cleared, the jury, after a short consultation, returned a verdict of Wilful Murder against John Fitter.

25 20 August 1834

CROWN COURT, WEDNESDAY

ROBBERY AT BINLEY Thomas Buckley, aged 35, was charged with feloniously stealing at Binley, from the person of **William Taylor**, 20s and other goods, his property. It appeared that the prosecutor is a boatman, and on the 5th July met the prisoner at the Black Dog public house, Coventry. He agreed with the prosecutor for a voyage in his boat up to Brandon near London. The prosecutor lay down to rest himself and went to sleep, and when he awoke he was asked by the prisoner if he had lost anything. On searching he found he had, and in consequence of information he received from a little boy, he apprehended the prisoner, and found the money in his pocket. Guilty. Twelve calendar months in the House of Correction to hard labour.

26 16 January 1836

WARWICK BOROUGH SESSIONS

STEALING MONEY **Thomas Freeman** was indicted for stealing two sovereigns, a half sovereign, eight half crowns and other monies, the property of **John Cooke**, from his person. The prosecutor, a boatman in the Saltisford, said the prisoner had been in his employ about a fortnight ; on the 21st of November, he and the prisoner left Leamington in his boat, about ten o'clock at night ; at Emscote he felt the money in his pocket, and then went into the cabin and fell asleep at Baly's Lock, they then went on to Warwick, and on going to bed he missed his money. He went to the prisoner and accused him of the robbery, which he denied. He searched the boat but did not find any money. He saw no one from the time he left Leamington but the prisoner, except a young man who came to him in the boat when he was quite wide awake. Bellerby apprehended the prisoner the same night at his lodgings, but found nothing on him but sixpence and some halfpence. The next day, when Mrs Tallis (with whom he lodged) came to bring the prisoner's dinner, he saw the prisoner give her something, and on asking for it, she produced two sovereigns and a half, quite warm and wet. He asked the prisoner where he got them from, and he said out of his mouth. On searching an old coffee pot in Tallis's back kitchen, he found eight half crowns, which prisoner said was all Cooke's money, and he hoped he would forgive him and say no more about it. In his defence the prisoner said the money was his own, which he had hardly earned during the winter. Twelve calendar months with hard labour.

27 26 March 1836

WARWICKSHIRE LENT ASSIZES

STEALING FROM THE PERSON James Jakes was charged with stealing from the person of **Joseph Hemmings**, a purse, two half crown pieces, one shilling and sixpence, his property. On the 8th of the present month, the prosecutor, who is a boatman, stopped at the George at Newbold, and there fell asleep, the prisoner being in the kitchen at the time. He was awoke by the landlord, and missed his property ; the prisoner was instantly searched, and the purse and money found hanging out of the top of his boot.

28 21 May 1836

CHILD DROWNED On Sunday last, a child 8 years old named **John Cotton** (son of a boatman in the Orchard) was drowned in the canal basin in the Saltisford. An inquest was held on Monday before G C Greenway Esq, and from the evidence, it appeared the child was last seen alive about three o'clock on Sunday. A sister of the deceased (only 4 years old) went on the canal bank with him, and saw him stoop towards the water several times endeavouring to catch the small fish, and the child warned him of the danger. She however went home alone and left him behind her. About half past nine in the evening, the corpse of deceased was found in the canal and taken to the Navigation Inn in the Saltisford. The Jury found a verdict of "Accidental death".

29 2 July 1836

NISI PRIUS COURT

FELONY **Thomas Kendall** was indicted for stealing from the person of **William White**, one half crown, fourteen shillings and sixpence and a purse, his property. The prosecutor said he was a boatman of Warwick. On the night of the 5th of June, he slept in his boat which was then lying at Birmingham. About two o'clock the next morning, he was awoke by the barking of his dog, and he then missed his money. The prisoner worked for him, and he was missing from the boat ; the dog barked from another boat passing him – but he had not heard him bark before he went to sleep ; he would not bark at the prisoner, because he knew him well. The prisoner, on being taken into custody, confessed the robbery, and said he was sorry for what he had done, as White was a good master. Six calendar months in gaol, and hard labour.

30 3 December 1836

CORONER'S INQUEST On Wednesday last an inquest was held at St Mary's Workhouse (by adjournment from the previous day, when the proceedings were opened by Mr Moore, the Deputy Coroner legally appointed) before S W Haynes Esq, the Coroner for this Borough, and a respectable Jury, on the body of **Mary Butler**, the wife of **James Butler**, a boatman, who had unfortunately died in childbed on the previous Monday. It being an extraordinary case, and various rumours having been circulated with respect to the cause of death, the Parish Authorities very properly considered it necessary that the circumstances should be investigated for the satisfaction of the public mind. The poor woman had been attended by Mrs Miles as midwife, who had attended her on five similar occasions. After a most careful and diligent investigation, during which Mrs Miles, the chief witness, distinctly and clearly stated in evidence the circumstances of the case, and Mr Wilcox, the surgeon, gave testimony which satisfied the Jury that the death of the deceased had not been caused by any improper treatment, the Coroner recapitulated the evidence and briefly addressed the Jury who, after a few minutes consultation, returned a verdict of "Died by the visitation of God". It appears that Mrs Miles (who has had many years experience) is employed as midwife by the Ladies' Lying in Charity, to attend such poor women as require the assistance of that excellent institution ; and it was suggested by the jury, on this present occasion, that it would be very desirable for the Institution to secure the services of a medical midwife, who would promptly attend, on being called upon, in any case of difficulty and danger. The Coroner most readily undertook to communicate this suggestion in the proper quarter.

31 7 January 1837

NISI PRIUS COURT

STEALING COALS **John Hinchmore** pleaded guilty to stealing on the Stratford Canal near Lapworth a quarter of a hundredweight of coal, the property of John Tomlinson. The prisoner was a boatman, and had robbed the prosecutor of the quantity of coals above stated, for the use of his own boat. Two calendar months House of Correction, hard labour.

32 14 January 1837

BIRMINGHAM

FRAUD AND WILFUL DAMAGE A man named **Perkins**, a boatman in the employment of Mr Henry Southan, was brought before Messrs Lloyd and Blakeway in the private room, charged with wilfully damaging a boatload of barley consigned to Messrs J and G Sturge, which he had conveyed from Gloucester to Birmingham. The first witness examined was Philip Henry, a watchman, who stated that he was on duty near the Crescent Canal on Thursday night, a little before twelve o'clock, when his attention was attracted to the canal ; and on looking towards the boats, he observed the prisoner in one of them, who having untied some strings, lifted up a sail cloth or covering, and commenced lading water with a can or bucket from the canal into the fore part of the boat. After pouring nineteen cans of water into the boat, the prisoner tied down the cloth and went towards the cabin end where, after removing the covering as before, he commenced lading the water in, in a similar manner ; witness counted forty three buckets full. Suspecting that all was not right, witness procured the assistance of Smith, a watchman, and went round to the place where the boat lay, and telling the prisoner that a gentleman wished to speak with him, he took him into custody and brought him to the watch house. On the following morning, he went to Mr Sturge's warehouse, where the boat had been brought round, and apprised his foreman of the circumstance. On taking the tarpaulin off the cargo, the barley was found to be all in a float at both ends. The witness was cross-examined by Mr Edmunds, who appeared for Perkins, but his testimony continued clear, as to the identity of the prisoner and as to having seen the water laded from the canal into the boat. Mr C Sturge estimated the damage done to the barley at £15. Had he not been apprised of the injury, the damage would have been £50. A boy engaged in the boat was called for the defence, and stated that the boat leaked very much, and that the prisoner had thrown a couple of cans of water into the pump to make it work. Mr Sturge's foreman said that if the boat had leaked, the water would not have ascended to the top of the cargo in the manner they had discovered it. Mr Rollason, who attended for Mr Sturge, said that he had no vindictive feeling in the matter. Mr Sturge's sole object being to protect his property and that of his neighbours from depredations of this nature, which were frequently resorted to by boatmen in order to cloak over thefts on property committed to their charge. Mr Lloyd said that he was perfectly satisfied that this was one of the frauds practised by boatmen. It was time that a practice so detrimental to individuals as well as to the mercantile interests of the town should be put a stop to, and he should therefore fine him in the penalty of £5 and costs, or be imprisoned for one month. The prisoner said he would pay the fine. It appears that the barley was delivered *by weight* on board, and a portion of it having been made away with on the voyage, this trick (which we understand is a very common one and is carried on to a most ruinous extent) was had recourse to by Perkins to make up for the deficiency in the freight, which would have been discovered at Mr Sturge's warehouse when the barley came to be weighed.

33 5 May 1838

DREADFUL MURDER A frightful murder of a female was committed at Braunston in Northamptonshire in the night of the 17th ult. An inquest was held before George Abbey Esq, Coroner, and the Jury continued the investigation for three days. The following particulars were given in evidence :-

The name of the deceased was Ann Chown ; she was a single woman about 46 years of age, and lived on the Green at Braunston. The person who first discovered the murder was a woman named Elizabeth Bennett, who lived within forty yards. She went about eight o'clock on Wednesday morning the 18th ult for some soft water, which the deceased was in the habit of selling. On opening the front door, which was not latched, she saw the deceased lying dead on the floor, which was covered with blood. The surgeon, Mr Stubbs, who examined the body, stated that he found a wound on the forehead over the left eye, two inches in length, and extending into the brain. Taking away part of the skull, he found a piece of bone from the orbit of the left eye had been driven into the brain. There were also two flesh wounds near to this, each of them an inch and a half in length, and two similar wounds behind the left ear, two inches and a half in length, a wound on the left cheek an

inch and a half in length, with a fracture of the upper part of the cheek bone ; three wounds on the left jaw, one on the upper lip an inch long ; two teeth knocked out ; a wound on the left arm an inch and a half in length and an inch wide. The immediate cause of death was, of course, the severe injury inflicted on the brain. It appeared to have been occasioned by a blunt but heavy instrument ; and a sharp instrument seemed also to have been used. A bill hook or a coal pick might have inflicted both descriptions of wounds. At least eight or ten blows must have been inflicted. There was blood on the floor, on the wall, on the clock case and on the mantelpiece, but no impression of fingers. Mr Simons, the constable, examined the house. There were two rooms on the upper floor, the one which the deceased used as a bedroom, and the one in which she kept her trunks and various goods. In this latter room, which had a window in it looking towards the street, Mr Simons found a chest of drawers containing five drawers, four of which were open, and one closed but not latched. The open drawers had linen in them which had been turned over. In the lock of one of the trunks in the room, there was a key with a bunch of other keys attached to it. The key in the lock was not the right one, and was removed with difficulty. The proper key was, however, in the bunch, and upon opening the trunk it was found to contain a red pocket book in which were £23 10s in gold ; a purse containing nine sovereigns, and some rags also containing gold, amounting in the whole to £73 11s. In another trunk in the same room was a tea caddy, which contained £22 6s 6d in silver and a savings bank book. The key of this trunk was found in a cupboard below stairs. There is no reason to suppose that anything had been taken away. In the bedroom, which looks backwards, the bed bore the impression of someone having lain upon it, but it did not appear that it had been slept in. The gingerbread baker to whom we alluded last week, as having been under examination, is named Feavers. Suspicion had been attached to him merely because it was understood that he had kept company with the unfortunate woman. The constable found him at his own residence in Staverton. It appeared, however, that he was in Daventry from nine in the morning of the Tuesday on which the murder was committed, till four the next morning, at the house of Elizabeth Baker who keeps a grocer's shop there, and the jury were perfectly satisfied of his innocence. A porter in the employ of Messrs Pickford named **William Green**, a distant relation of the unfortunate woman, also underwent an examination, but nothing whatever was elicited which could justify his detention. A boatman named **Joseph Hemmings** heard the deceased in conversation with a man at five minutes past eight on the evening of the murder, as he was passing by the house. He paid no attention to what was said, as the voices were not unusually loud. Between half past eight and nine, a person named Mary Foster saw a light through the window of the upper room next the street – that wherein the trunks were kept. It seems pretty clear therefore that the murder was committed between five minutes past eight and half past eight o'clock. Green, however, was shown to have been at the wharf from seven until a few minutes before eight, and at the Ship public house from five or ten minutes after eight till half past eight. His whereabouts was afterwards distinctly traced till eleven o'clock. When Mary Foster observed the light in the upper room, she observed also that the curtains were drawn quite close. She thought it strange, because she had never seen them drawn since the mother of the deceased died, which was about two years ago, and she had only once even seen a light in the room. At this very time, in all probability, the murderer was ransacking the drawers. A labourer named William Boyes, who lives in the yard into which the back door of the house of Mrs Chown opens, locked the gate which is the common entrance to the yard, at precisely half past eight. It is not unlikely that the murderer was disturbed by the noise ; the key left in the trunk in which the money was contained affording ample proof that he had made a precipitate retreat. At present, notwithstanding the very minute inquiries at the inquest, which lasted three days, the case is involved in mystery, not the slightest clue having as yet been obtained to the murderer. A verdict of wilful murder was returned against some person or persons unknown. The deceased was a person of an incommunicative disposition, and none of her neighbours or relations seem to have been aware that she had any property in the house. She always indeed represented herself as being very poor, and used frequently to borrow a shilling or sixpence for a day or two of her neighbours. The house in which she lived was her own, and it is said that she paid the purchase money – about £70 – entirely in silver. This purchase was supposed to have (used?) the whole of her savings. It was

stated by one of the witnesses on the inquest that deceased had told her that on the previous Sunday night, after her door was fastened, some person had tried the latch. She did not, however, appear alarmed at the circumstance, but it has not been ascertained who was her visitor. The murderer had, no doubt, gained better information as to the extent of her property, and the place in which it was deposited, than her neighbours. A short time back she waited upon a solicitor at Daventry for the purpose of making her will, but upon learning the expense, went away, saying she could not afford it. She died, therefore, intestate, and the whole of her property falls to a niece, to whom she had often declared her intention of leaving it. A reward of £100 is offered by government for the detection of the murderer.

34 6 July 1839

MURDER ON THE TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL On Monday morning, after the jury had assembled, Collins, the husband of the woman found drowned near Rugeley, was brought into the jury room, and the boxes belonging to the deceased were opened in his presence ; a part of the contents were identified by Collins, and he then proceeded to state that three or four weeks since, being out of employ, he left his wife in Liverpool and went to his friends in London, and having obtained employment, he sent a sovereign down to his wife, to pay her passage to him ; that having heard from her that she had taken a place in Pickford's boats, he was daily expecting her, and had been to Pickford's wharf on Saturday last, where he was informed of the dreadful fate which had overtaken her.

Thomas alias Dobell, one of the prisoners, stated that on this side Colwick Lock, the captain, **Owen**, had abused the woman, calling her most offensive names, and that as he and **Lambert** lay in bed, they heard the deceased and Owen making a great noise, the woman exclaiming, "I'll jump, I'll jump" ; the captain said, "You ----, if you don't, I'll throw you off". On this side the aqueduct I missed the woman, and said to the captain, "Weren't you ashamed to turn the woman out?", and he replied, "You may go if you like". I never saw any blow struck. The captain at Fazeley called me and Lambert, and wanted us to swear that deceased got out of the boat at Colwick Lock.

William Brookes, porter at Stoke wharf, stated that he saw deceased at Stoke Wharf on Sunday week ; she was there whilst the boat was unloading, from twelve to four o'clock. She asked if Owen's boat would pass through Birmingham, or whether there was any boat from Stoke to London, for she did not like the crew of the boat, they were not civil. He replied that she must not mind what they said, but if they meddled with her she must report them. Soon after, Thomas came to her and made use of very indecent language. She cried out, "Leave me alone", and he then left her.

Ann Brookes had seen the woman in the boat ; she appeared in trouble about her husband, but was perfectly sane, and not tipsy.

Owen, the captain, was also brought in. He stated that Lambert had been improperly intimate with the woman. He had got up, when it was his turn to sleep, and found Dobell and Lambert in the hold with one of the woman's boxes open. He asked them what they were about, and they said, "Go to ---- with you, you are frightened ; the woman's right enough. Say the woman got up at Colwick Lock".

At this stage of the proceedings, the inquest was adjourned.

On Wednesday morning, the jury having re-assembled,

John Astley, porter at Rugeley Wharf, was examined, and stated that he saw Barstones, and Barstones said he had had some conversation with Neale about the woman ; but he thought Neale would not have been such a d----d fool as to have said anything about it.

John Barstones of Bedworth Hill near Coventry, examined : I am captain of one of Pickford's boats. I met Owen's boat near Haywood, about twelve o'clock on Sunday night. Lambert was steering and Thomas was changing the horse at the stable whilst I was there. The only persons I saw with the boat were Lambert and Thomas. They never spoke about the woman, nor said they had a passenger. I saw **Thomas Neale** at Stoke Locks on Friday. He asked me if I had heard of this affair. I said I had. I told him where I met Owen's boat, and that Thomas and Dobell were minding

their business. I asked Lambert where they were going. He said to London. The only conversation I had with Thomas was about a hay net. When I returned from Preston Brook I again saw Neale, and told him I had heard the report of them at Preston Brook on Wednesday night, and I said that as the boat was perfectly still when I met them, they might perhaps have tied a handkerchief over her mouth and kept her quiet in that way, or they might not. It is about half a mile from our stables at Haywood to the Mill Lock. I will swear that I never did tell Neale or any other person that one of Owen's crew said to me that they had tied a handkerchief over the woman's mouth to stop her screams, and when they undid it she was gone. Lambert and Thomas appeared to me to be perfectly sober when I was at Haywood. There was no light in Owen's cabin ; I could see no fire.

John Boston of Rhode in Cheshire, having been sworn, said : I am boatman to one of Beache's boats. On Monday week, about two o'clock in the morning, I met Owen and Dobell at the stop place, on this side Brindley's Bank turn. I saw Owen's boat at Rugeley Wharf, but never spoke to any of his crew. I never saw them throw anything into the water. I never saw the boy.

The prisoners having been brought into the jury room, the Coroner proceeded to read over to them the whole of the evidence.

James Owen, having heard the evidence read over, expressed his desire to give further evidence ; and having been sworn, stated that Thomas (alias Dobell) raped the woman at Haywood Lock ; at Bellamour Crane I lifted the woman upon the top of the cabin against the slide ; Thomas was inside the cabin and Lambert in bed. Thomas and I were quarrelling, because he had abused the woman ; the boy was driving. I put her on the top of the cabin out of their way. Whilst I went to look for my silver in the cupboard, Thomas took the helm. I afterwards heard Thomas jump upon the cabin top. When I turned round from my cupboard, Thomas was again in the hatches. I called the boy at the stop place beyond Brindley's Bank to lend me some silver, and the woman was gone. I missed her then for the first time.

During Owen's examination he frequently said, "Dobell was the man who abused the woman and drowned the woman", but, on being questioned closely, he would not state that he saw the act.

The room was then cleared and, after a long deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against all four prisoners. On Thursday morning they were removed to Stafford county prison, to await their trial at the ensuing assizes.

35 **7 September 1839**

LEAMINGTON

CORONER'S INQUESTS An inquisition was held at the White Lion Public house at Radford on the body of Elizabeth Stroud, who was found drowned in the Napton Canal, near that place the day before. The deceased had the care of Colonel Steward's house at Leamington for the last three months. Yesterday week she went out about half past seven in the morning with a black bag and an umbrella, and was not heard of again till she was found drowned. **John Cleaver**, a boatman, was going along the Napton Canal with a boat on Friday, and when near Mr Lythall's he perceived a shawl lying at the top of the water, which he touched with the tiller and found the body of a woman lying in the water. He then saw her umbrella upon the hedge, and a black bag hanging upon it. He gave an alarm at Mr Lythall's, and the body was taken out and carried to the church. Mr Lythall assisted in taking the woman out of the water ; he examined the contents of her pocket and bag, and found 17s 5d money in them, and some keys. Several witnesses were examined, who clearly proved that the deceased had been some time labouring under partial insanity. A verdict was returned that the deceased drowned herself while in a state of insanity.

36 **14 March 1840**

NISI PRIUS COURT

HAY STOLEN BY A BOATMAN **Benjamin Millington** was tried for having stolen, at the parish of Priors Hardwick, a quantity of hay, the property of John Reading. The hay had been stolen from a rick, and some of it being repeatedly missed, a part of it which had been previously marked by the prosecutor's shepherd was found in the prisoner's boat. Guilty. Three calendar months in the House

of Correction, hard labour.

37 22 August 1840

WARWICKSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

TRIAL FOR WILFUL MURDER Josiah Lilly (who had given in his age as only being 17) was indicted for the wilful murder of Harriet Wright at Birmingham on the night of Wednesday the 6th of May last, by putting her into the Fazeley Canal, and did then and there drown and suffocate her.

Mr Clarke and Mr Mellor were counsel for the prosecution ; the prisoner was defended by Mr Daniel.

Mr Clarke recapitulated the leading facts of the case to the Jury, and then called witnesses to substantiate the charge against the prisoner.

Thomas Morris, boatman of Adam Street, Birmingham, said that on Thursday morning the 7th of May last, he and his brother were walking along the towing-path of the Fazeley Canal, between four and five o'clock, he found a man's hat upon the towing-path near to Walmer Lane Bridge ; there was a bonnet about a yard and a half from it, and in consequence he fetched a boat hook, and soon found the body of a young woman, which they pulled out of the water and then took to the Dog and Duck public house in Cleveland Street. There were 14 pledge tickets and two letters in the pocket of the deceased. The bonnet was bent ; but the hat was in the usual form and had not been in the water. They saw no marks of scuffling on the ground at all ; it was a wet night.

Josiah Morris, brother of the last witness, said the hat was under the bridge, and the bonnet was in the water. The arch that goes under the bridge would catch a man's hat if he turned off very short.

William Bruff, sergeant of police, went to the Dog and Duck on the above morning about a quarter before five, where he saw the body of a female. Crockeny, another policeman, said he knew it was the body of Harriet Wright. He went to the prisoner's house about six, and told him he was come to apprehend him for drowning a young woman. He said, "Good God, is her dead?" Witness replied, "Yes". The prisoner then said, "Well if I am hung for her, I shall die innocent". He got the hat from Thomas Morris ; the prisoner, on seeing it, said it belonged to him – it was taken off him last night for a trap. He said he saw the deceased last night about half past nine.

Dennis Crockeny of the police said he had frequently seen the prisoner and the deceased together. He saw them about four on the above afternoon ; they were wrangling about a bonnet and a shawl.

John McCrone, inspector of police, had some conversation with the prisoner about his hat ; he said it was taken off him by a person unknown. He ordered him to be taken to view the body.

Edward Edmunds, an inspector, had known the prisoner three or four years. Witness said to him, "Josiah, how came you to drown the young woman?" He answered, "I did not, but I am as bad as if I had done so, because I knew she intended to do it". He said, "I saw her last about eleven last night near the Brewery ; she asked me to give her my handkerchief, but I refused ; she then took my hat from my head, and ran towards the canal". Witness told him to state that to the Coroner, when he said, "I intend to make a confession of the whole" ; he was crying and seemed much affected.

Ann Mitchell said about half past nine on the above night, she saw the prisoner and the deceased meet together, and go up the middle entry which leads up to the canal side. About 11 she saw a man come running from towards the same entry, without a hat ; he was like the prisoner – but she could not swear it was him. The deceased was rather hasty ; she was not quite 19, and a stout girl, tall and strongly made.

Joshua Frantket, sergeant of police, saw the prisoner and the deceased together between five and six on the 6th ; they were wrangling about a shawl and a bonnet. The prisoner said, "---- you, I'll serve you out – I'll bonnet you for what you have done this morning". Lilly had been in custody for stealing the bonnet and shawl, but she did not appear against him. He did not see anything the matter with the deceased then, she was lively enough.

Sarah Witherage said she heard the prisoner and the deceased quarrelling ; she said she had given him four denials, and she would give him another before witness. He said he would be a regular devil, and would be hanged for her before the week was out. He afterwards told deceased he would give her things if she would go into York Street.

Mr C E Gem, surgeon to the police force, examined the body ; there were no marks of violence upon it; three slight finger marks appeared under the right arm.

Mr Daniel then called his witnesses for the defence.

Sarah Evans said she saw the deceased on Wednesday afternoon ; she appeared to be in great trouble, because she had been summoned to appear against the prisoner for stealing her bonnet and shawl ; she said she would not do it.

Eliza Neale, sister-in-law to the deceased, said her father disapproved of the acquaintance between the deceased and Lilly. Her sister was a very good tempered girl, but hasty ; she once said she would destroy herself if the prisoner turned his back upon her, because she refused to marry him. The prisoner told his mother, in a quarrel, he would not be hung for one, but he would finish three while he was about it. She thought he meant himself, his mother and the deceased. He had frequently said that no one should marry her but him. She did not appear cheerful on the above night.

James Sabine saw the parties together on the above evening ; the deceased did not seem to be in her usual good spirits.

Julia Hewitt, the prisoner's sister, said the deceased told her that her father would murder her if she did not appear and press the charge against the prisoner for robbing her of her shawl and bonnet a day or two before, when deceased asked her father about marrying the prisoner, he said he would turn her out altogether if she said another word about it.

Mr Daniel addressed the Jury in a long and able speech on the part of the prisoner.

The Judge then proceeded, in an explanatory and most impartial manner, to sum up the evidence to the Jury. His Lordship was an hour and a quarter in going through the evidence.

The Jury consulted but for a short time, and then pronounced the prisoner Not Guilty.

38 2 April 1842

INSOLVENT DEBTORS to be heard at the Court House at Warwick in the County of Warwick on Thursday, the 21st day of April 1842 at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

JOHN GETHING, late of No 48 Wharf Street, Birmingham in the County of Warwick, Boatman.

39 28 January 1843

NOTICE If **Emanuel Nixon** of Oldbury, Shropshire, Boatman, does not, on or before the 10th day of February next, pay for the keep, and take away the horse he left at my house on the 12th day of July last, I shall cause the said horse to be sold by public auction to pay for the keep and all expenses. Dated this 23rd of January 1843

FRANCIS HANSON

Navigation Inn, Kingswood, Rowington.

40 16 December 1843

WARWICKSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

ROBBERY AT LAPWORTH Samuel Harris, William Hall, William Harris and Thomas Hall were indicted for having, at the parish of Lapworth, burglariously broken and entered the dwelling house of Richard Abell, and stolen therein two sovereigns and a half, a quantity of halfpence and other articles, the property of Richard Abell.

Mr Mellor conducted the prosecution, and Mr Miller defended the prisoners William and Thomas Hall.

The prosecutor, a very old man, stated that on the 2nd of August last he retired to rest about eight o'clock, and placed a rushlight near his bedroom, so that the light shone in the room of his housekeeper, adjoining his own. About eleven o'clock he awoke, when he saw four men going up the stairs ; the first of them was the prisoner William Harris, who stood just in the doorway of his housekeeper's room, in the act of listening. He then fell back again, and in a moment afterwards two men rushed into the housekeeper's room, and two into the witness's. William Harris, the prisoner, stood on one side the bed, and another man on the opposite side, brandishing weapons in

the air. Witness knew another of the men to be the prisoner William Hall, who demanded his money, and threatened to murder him if he stirred. Witness asked them what they wanted, and William Hall said, "We want victuals, and we want money, and money we must have". Witness said, "For God's sake, use no violence, and I will tell you where my money is ; it is in the writing desk, in my housekeeper's room". Immediately the witness had mentioned where the money was, the man on his right hand left the room, went into the adjoining one, and left William Hall standing as guard over the old man. The burglars then went downstairs, taking the rushlight with them, which they had used the whole of the time, and then left the house. Witness did not get up, as he was quite unable to defend himself, and did not rise till four o'clock, when he went and called his housekeeper (who is very deaf) and who had not been disturbed the whole of the time. He then examined his desk, and missed a quantity of pence, 2 1/2 sovereigns, three silk handkerchiefs and several other articles. The robbers had obtained entrance into the house by forcing the ledge of the shutter off, and opening the window by taking a pane of glass out. The witness found a quantity of ropes in his own room, and a table knife in that of his housekeeper, extremely sharp. The prisoner Harris had been frequently employed about the premises.

Joseph Taylor, farmer residing at Packwood, deposed that he lived about a mile from the house of the prosecutor, and about half past eight o'clock on the evening of the 2nd of August last, he saw the prisoners cross a wheat field in his occupation, in the direction of Abell's house.

Samuel Poyner, boatman, stated : On the morning of the 3rd of August last, he saw four men between Birmingham and Kings Norton, walking along the tolling path ; it was about half past three o'clock. The witness could identify three of the prisoners as being the party, the other man he did not know ; they were at this time about seven miles from Lapworth Boot.

Thomas Robinson, constable at Hales Owen, said : In consequence of information he had received, he went in search of the prisoners on the 11th of August ; witness met Samuel Harris near to his own house, and charged him with having broken into Mr Abell's house ; at first the prisoner denied it, but in a few moments he trembled very much, and said he could tell all about it. Witness asked him, "Who was with him", and he said there was "old Tom Hall, his son young Tom Hall, and William Hall, called Stuteley". Witness then locked him up, and again saw the prisoner in a hour afterwards, when he asked him, "Who got into the house first". He replied he did not know, for he was at the back door, and the other three were at the front of the house, and all went in together. Witness then asked him, "How much money he had received that was stolen", and he said, "Half a sovereign". The prisoner then said "he had seen old Abell in bed, and there was a rushlight burning in the room ; that Will Hall had stolen a spanner, and they had broken into the house with it". The spanner was afterwards found in a pit near the prosecutor's house.

Pishton, a constable at Dudley, apprehended William Harris, when he charged him with having broken into Mr Abell's house, and stolen a watch ; the prisoner said "he did not have it, for William Hall took it, he only received 10s, and that was brought to him by his brother's wife, and that he had been led into it by old Tom Hall and his sons".

Mr Miller addressed the Jury on behalf of William and Thomas Hall.

His Lordship summed up, and the Jury returned a verdict of Guilty against William Hall, William Harris and Samuel Harris, and acquitted Thomas Hall. The learned Judge sentenced the prisoners to be transported for the term of 20 years.

41 19 October 1844

ANOTHER MYSTERIOUS DEATH IN THE AVON An inquest was held on Saturday last at the White Lion in Bidford, before H O Hunt Esq, Coroner, and a respectable jury, on the body of a man unknown, who was found in the river Avon in the parish of Bidford.

The following was the evidence :-

James Goslin : I live in Pershore, Worcestershire, and am a boatman. On the morning of the 12th of October, I was going along the Avon with a boat towards Stratford, and saw something floating in the water which I thought was a bag. I called to **William Ferris**, another boatman, who was towing the boat, to stop. We pushed the boat back, and found it was a man ; we pulled the body out of the

water, laid it on the bank, and called to a man who was working in a field near and sent him up to Bidford to get assistance. Several persons came down to the river, and the body was taken to the White Lion at Bidford. I do not know the man whom we took out of the water.

William Ferris corroborated the evidence of the last witness.

Thomas Hodgkins, constable of Bidford, stated that he went down to the place where the body was found, which was in the parish of Bidford, and ordered the body to be taken to the White Lion. The body, which appeared to be that of a labourer, had on a dark fustian jacket, dark stuff waistcoat, corduroy trousers and a pair of low boots, nearly new. There were no marks on his linen. In his pockets were found a shilling in silver and five pence halfpenny, a tobacco box, and two or three gins or snares ; there was a black leather belt round his waist. A hat was produced, in which was a piece of whipcord ; the hat was found in the river two or three days before the body was found, and near to the same place ; no mark was in the hat, or maker's name. Witness had made many enquiries, but could not find out who the man was, and there had been a great many people to see the body, but could not identify it.

George Haynes Fosbrooke, being sworn, said : I am a surgeon at Bidford. I carefully examined the body externally, but found no marks of violence. I have made a *post mortem* examination, and have no doubt the man was submersed whilst living, and died from drowning. Every part of the body was healthy. I think the body had been in the water two or three days. Deceased was apparently about 25 years of age.

The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

(The body has been identified and claimed since the inquest, and has been removed to Exhall for burial).

42 10 May 1845

INQUEST On Monday last an inquest was held at Budbrooke, near this town, before Mr John Smith, deputy coroner, on the body of **John Pearce**, aged 14 years. It appeared by the evidence that the deceased was in the service of **Henry Berry**, a boatman, who was engaged by Mr Thomas Saffery of Witney, Oxon, to fetch coals from the Staffordshire pits ; that the deceased and Berry and his wife and child left home on Friday last, and was on Saturday proceeding on their journey when, after passing the fourth lock in that part of the Warwick and Birmingham Canal which is situate in the parish of Budbrooke, the deceased ran forward to draw off the fifth lock, and in so doing fell into the canal and was drowned. Verdict : "Accidentally drowned".

43 20 December 1845

DEATH BY DROWNING On Saturday last an inquest was held at Long Itchington before G C Greenway Esq, coroner, on view of the body of **George Milliner**, aged 31 years, a boatman employed by the British Alkali Company who, on Saturday morning last about six o'clock, accidentally fell into the Warwick and Napton Canal in the parish of Long Itchington, and was drowned. The jury returned a verdict accordingly.