

RUNCORN GUARDIAN
1876 to 1890

1 11 March 1876

AN INFANT DROWNED AT RUNCORN

THE CORONER'S JURY LOCKED UP FOR SEVERAL HOURS At Runcorn on Friday and Saturday last, a rather unusual occurrence took place, viz, a coroner's jury not being able to return a verdict, and being in consequence "locked up" for several hours. On Friday morning at eleven o'clock, Mr Ridgway, the coroner, held an inquest at the house of Mr William Dearden, the Mariners' Hotel, touching the death of **Sarah Jane Tyrer**, an infant two years of age, who died the previous afternoon shortly after being got out of the Runcorn and Weston Canal belonging to the Bridgewater Navigation Company Limited. The jury consisted of well to do tradesmen and retired tradesmen in the town, who had been carefully selected and summoned by Inspector (?....) on account of their social position and supposed education, and general intelligence, and the evidence laid before them was perfectly clear and intelligible. It was that the deceased was the illegitimate child of **John Taylor**, a boatman, and **Sarah Tyrer**, a boatwoman, both of whom, in company with a woman named Elizabeth Ruen, were seen on Thursday afternoon going along the canal bank from Weston Point to Runcorn very much intoxicated. The man Taylor was on horseback, with the deceased in front of him, and the two women were on foot, held on to each other by one arm, and were dragged along by holding on with the other to the traces and tail of the horse. In that way they proceeded for some distance along the canal bank in the direction of Runcorn, when a man, who was at work on the opposite side of the canal, seeing the condition in which Taylor was, swaying from one side to the other and being scarcely unable to keep his seat on the horse, called out to the women to take the deceased from him, for he would fall and hurt it. The woman Ruen took the child from Taylor, but had no sooner done so and got it into her arms, than she staggered backward and fell with it into the canal. An alarm was raised, and assistance being at hand both the woman and child were quickly rescued. The woman seemed to be very little the worse for her "ducking", but the child died a few minutes afterwards. Had it not been for several workmen being near, the woman Ruen would certainly have been drowned as well as the child ; as she was so intoxicated that she could not have got out, and Taylor and Tyrer were too drunk to be able to render her any help. The jury, after hearing the evidence, proceeded to consider their verdict, and after a short discussion ten of them agreed that the deceased came to her death by drowning through the culpable negligence of Taylor, Tyrer and Ruen ; but the other two gentlemen of the jury, one a boat owner and the other a boat (?.....) and Chandler, refused to take the same view of the matter, and declared that in their opinion the death of the deceased was purely accidental. In this state of affairs, the Coroner was asked for his advice, and he clearly stated what was the law bearing on the evidence. The jury again tried to agree, but only continued to disagree ; and after being locked up for two hours, were, in consequence of the Coroner having an important legal appointment elsewhere, bound over to appear at the Petty Sessions Room at three o'clock the following afternoon, and were allowed to go at large. Punctually at three o'clock on Saturday afternoon they assembled in the Petty Sessions Room, and after a slight conversation together found that they were exactly in the same position as on the previous day, viz ten for a verdict of culpable negligence and two for one of pure accident. The Coroner was again appealed to, and again he clearly expounded the law, but his (?....) and eloquence were unable to get the jury together. They were then locked up in the magistrates' retiring room with a policeman placed at the door, sworn to keep them "in durance vile" without meat, drink, fire or light, until they should be released by the Coroner.

(Article is on the edge of the page and very hard to read here, so a section omitted. Broadly, from what I can read, the jury continued to be unable to agree, and they spent their time telling stories and singing hymns.)

It had got close upon eight o'clock, the Coroner entered the room and asked if they had agreed or were likely to agree to a verdict, and received the short but emphatic answer of "No". He asked them if they required any more evidence and was told that they did not ; and in reply to a further

question as to whether he could expect them ever to come to an agreement "except to differ", they said he could not, and was thanked for the (?....) courtesy and consideration he had showed them under the circumstances. The Coroner then said he felt it was his duty to address a few words to them on their inability to agree to a verdict. The evidence which was laid before them on the previous day was so plain and straightforward that he should have thought that 12 gentlemen of their intelligence and public standing should in a very short time have agreed to a verdict. They had, however, not done so, and he would now read to them from the latest edition of Jervis's Coroner's Court practice what the law empowers coroners to do when juries did not agree to a verdict. The law provided that when a jury consisting of more than 12 persons and they were not unanimous, that the Coroner could then take as the verdict of the jury that upon which 12 of them were agreed. In this case, however, there were only 12 of them, and as they were not agreed he could not take their verdict. The law provided that in such case the Coroner had the power to have the jury locked up for a reasonable length of time without food, drink, fire or light ; and that if they could not then agree he had power to discharge them. Now, as they were locked up two hours on the previous day and had been in the same position for four hours and a half that day, he thought it was quite long enough. The law further empowered him to impose a fine upon them for disagreement, but as that appeared contrary to the spirit of the constitution, for no man could be forced to give his verdict against his judgement and conviction, it was not wise to act upon it, and he did not intend to do so. He had further power, if he thought proper, to remit them to the next assizes, so that they might have the benefit of the advice and judgement of the presiding Judge. That, as they were doubtless aware, was the course pursued with respect to the inquiry into the loss of the Mistletoe, but as Baron Bramwell, who presided at the assizes to which the case was referred, held that the Coroner should have discharged the jury, he (Mr Ridgway) considering that to be sound law, and it was certainly in accordance with his own convictions, he should adopt the course recommended by Baron Bramwell and discharge them. He however only did so, instead of having them again locked up, because the man Taylor and the women Tyrer and Ruen had been brought up in the magistrates' court and committed to take their trial in a court where he felt that justice would be done. If they could have seen their way to a verdict he should have been glad, and he deeply regretted that twelve gentlemen like the jury before him had not been able to do so. He therefore discharged them, though it pained him very much to have to do so.

The jury then separated and returned to their respective homes and avocations.

At the Chester Assizes on Tuesday, the Grand Jury ignored the bill against Sarah Tyrer and Elizabeth Ruen.

2 1 April 1876

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

ASSAULTING A COUNTY COURT OFFICER **William Gibbons**, a boatman, was charged with assaulting John Lewin. Complainant, bailiff of the Northwich County Court, had to execute a warrant on defendant for a debt of £1 15s 6d owing to J Preston, publican. He took possession of defendant's horse, and the latter said he would neither pay the money nor allow his horse to be taken. He knocked complainant's hat off and tore his coat. Mr Garside made a strong appeal for the defendant, who was a very poor man, and was labouring under excitement at the idea of his horse, worth £20, being taken for a trifling sum, which had already been paid to Preston. Fined 5s and costs. The same defendant pleaded guilty to being drunk the same day, and was fined 1s and costs.

3 20 May 1876

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS

A DISORDERLY CUSTOMER **Walter Williams**, a boatman, was charged with being disorderly in the Derby Arms Inn on the 12th May, and refusing to leave when requested. He pleaded guilty. William (?Tinsley) said he was manager of the Derby Arms at the Top Locks, Runcorn, of which Mr Webb was the landlord, and on the previous Friday night the defendant created a disturbance there with another man. He requested him to leave, but instead of doing so he set upon him and

threw him down, and but for assistance being at hand would have seriously injured him. The police were sent for, and PC Davies and another officer came, and the defendant then went away. The Bench imposed a fine of 10s and 9s 6d costs, with the alternative of 14 days' imprisonment. The money was paid.

ASSAULT CASE **Mary Williams**, the wife of the defendant in the preceding case, was charged with assaulting Mary Jane Pownall Webb on the 12th May. She pleaded not guilty. Complainant said she was the daughter of Mr Webb, the landlord of the Derby Arms Inn ; and on the previous Friday night, while serving in the bar, she was told that a woman was killing her brother-in-law. She went to his assistance, and when she entered the room the defendant struck her several times. By the defendant : Did not see her until she struck her. Sarah (????) said she was a boatwoman, and saw the defendant strike the complainant on the side of the face. Defendant said she did not strike the complainant, and called a boatwoman named Sarah (????), who said she did not see the defendant strike the complainant. The Bench ordered the defendant to pay a fine of 20s and 12s 6d costs, and in default to be imprisoned for a month. She paid the money.

USING OBSCENE LANGUAGE **Isaac (?Newsam)**, a boatman, was charged with using obscene language calculated to provoke a breach of the peace to **Jane Poole**, a boatwoman, on the 5th May. It appeared from the evidence that the boats of the complainant and the defendant "collided" on the canal, and the parties subsequently used language to each other more expressive than polite. The Bench dismissed the case.

4 17 June 1876

INQUEST AT RUNCORN On Tuesday last, Mr Ridgway, Coroner, held an inquest at the house of Mr John Blundell, the Barley Mow Inn, Runcorn, touching the death of **David Bailey**, aged 69 years, a boatman of Marsland Green, near Astley. The deceased had come from the collieries along the Bridgewater Canal with a cargo of coals for Liverpool ; and as his flat was leaving the tidal dock at Runcorn to enter the river for the purpose of being towed to Liverpool, he was seen sitting on the fore hatches, and was called to to haul in a line. He was immediately afterwards seen in the river, being carried up by the tide, which was flowing very strong in the direction of the Old Quay. Two sailors promptly manned a boat and rowed after him, and succeeded in picking him up in a very exhausted condition. They landed him at the ferry slip, where the assistant of Mr Robinson, one of the medical practitioners of the town, was promptly in attendance ; and proper remedies having been applied, he was removed to the Waterman's Arms beerhouse, and afterwards to the house of a friend in Cooper Street. He was attended by Mr Robinson and his assistant until Sunday evening, and died at five minutes to seven o'clock on Monday, of congestion of the lungs. The jury returned a verdict of "Death from congestion of the lungs brought on by cold, through being accidentally knocked from his flat into the River Mersey at Runcorn".

5 17 June 1876

A BOAT BOY DROWNED AT RUNCORN On Thursday afternoon, Mr Ridgway, Coroner, held an inquest at the house of Mr Richard Watson, the Vine Hotel, Runcorn, on the body of a boat boy named **Albert Ledward**, who was drowned in the Bridgewater Canal the previous night. **William Ledward** said he was a boatman, and resided at Leigh in Lancashire. The deceased was his son, and was eleven years of age, and was the eldest of six children. On Wednesday afternoon they left Anderton with a pair of narrow boats laden with salt to be discharged at Runcorn, and when near to Bate's Bridge at Halton, the deceased, who had had his supper, got ashore from the second boat to drive the horse, while his brother, nine years old, who had been driving, got on board to have his supper. It was then half past eleven o'clock, and dark, and as the deceased passed the first boat which he (witness) was steering, he spoke to him, and he afterwards heard him speak to the horse. When they got to the Delf Bridge the deceased came and spoke to him, and he told him to go on and get to the horse's head, and he did. He heard him speak to the horse, and when it got near to the gas

works it “shied” at a light, but again went all right until it got opposite the Soapery, when it turned back, and he (witness) called to it to stop, and it did so. He then called out to the deceased, and receiving no answer got ashore to look for him. Not seeing him, he began to feel about in the canal with a boat hook, and there being no person near but his wife, she ran for assistance, and soon brought some men and grapples, and in about half an hour the body of the deceased was found in the canal opposite to the Soapery, and near to the spot where the horse turned. He could not tell how the deceased got into the canal, for he neither heard any splash nor a scream. The jury returned a verdict of “Accidentally drowned”.

6 1 July 1876

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

DRUNK ON LICENSED PREMISES **Edward Greenway**, a boatman, was charged with being drunk on the licensed premises of William Hayward, Waterloo Hotel, Runcorn, on the 22nd June. He pleaded not guilty. PC Turner said he went into the Waterloo Hotel about twenty minutes to eleven o'clock the previous Thursday night, and saw the defendant there drunk. PC Kelly said about ten minutes to eleven o'clock he saw the defendant outside the Waterloo Hotel, and he was drunk. Defendant said he was not drunk, and had not had any drink served to him in the house. He then called **William Williams**, who said he was in the Waterloo Hotel with the defendant, and did not consider him to be drunk, and he had not any drink supplied to him. The Bench imposed a fine of 6s and 12s 6d costs, and in default 14 days' hard labour.

CHARGE OF PERMITTING DRUNKENNESS William Hayward was charged with that he being the keeper of certain licensed premises known as the Waterloo Hotel, did on the 22nd June, permit drunkenness thereon. He pleaded not guilty and was defended by Mr Linaker. At the request of Superintendent Steen the witnesses on both sides were ordered out of court. PC Turner said on the night in question he visited the defendant's house at 20 minutes to eleven o'clock, and there saw a man named **Edward Greenway** sitting down with a glass of spirits in his hand which he drank up. A man named **Williams** was there, and he appeared to help Greenway up, who then put the glass he had in his hand with a crusher in it on the bar counter. He (witness) drew the attention of the defendant's two young daughters, who were serving in the bar, to the condition of Greenway, and the defendant then came in and said that he had been outside and could not be at every end at once. He also said that Greenway had not had any drink there, and he asked him how he accounted for his having had in his hand the glass with the crusher in it, which was on the counter, and he replied that he felt sure that he had not had any drink. He (witness) told him that he should report the case to the Superintendent, and then went out. The man Greenway followed him, and PC Kelly saw him outside the door, and said he was drunk. He did not see Greenway go into the house during the ten minutes he had been standing at the door before going in. By Mr Linaker : The man was not helplessly drunk, he could walk well, and was quiet. There were five men and two or three women standing in the bar before Greenway and Williams. Two young girls were serving in the bar, and he had been in the house a minute or two when the defendant came in. PC Kelly said he saw Greenway come out of defendant's house at ten minutes to eleven o'clock, and he was drunk. By Mr Linaker : He was quiet and could walk well. Mr Linaker, for the defence, said the case was one in which according to the evidence which had been given their Worships could not convict. The man might have been drunk but those who were serving could not see that he was, as there was some six other persons standing between him and them, and he had not any drink served to him. The man was also according to the evidence of the police quiet and able to walk ; and he asked their Worships if they thought it was a case as made out by the prosecution in which to convict a man who had been eight years in business in the town as a licensed victualler, and had never been brought up before. Mr Campbell said the Bench would like to hear the evidence for the defence. Mr Linaker then called William Hayward, the defendant, who said he was landlord of the Waterloo Hotel, which place he had kept for three years, and prior to that he kept the Grapes Inn five years ; and during that time had not been convicted of any offence. On the night of the 22nd June he went

out of the house about twenty minutes to eleven o'clock to look round the stable yard, as was his custom, and left several persons in the bar, all of whom were quiet. He had not then seen Greenway in the house at all. A man named Williams was in the house, sitting on a form, when he went out, and there were six or seven persons standing at the counter. He had not been in the yard more than six or seven minutes when he returned and was told by one of his daughters that a policeman was in the bar. He went there, and the officer asked him what he was doing with the man Greenway there, for he was drunk, to which he replied that he did not appear to be drunk ; and the man then got up and walked out of the house quite straight. Louisa Hayward said she was the daughter of the defendant, and on the night of the 22nd June was serving in the bar when the officer came in. She was not aware that Greenway was in the house until the officer pointed him out to her, and he had not been served with any drink. In her opinion he was not drunk. Elizabeth Hayward said she was the daughter of the defendant, and was serving in the bar when the officer came in. She had not previously seen Greenway in the bar, and had not served him with either beer or spirits. William Williams said he was a boatman and belonged to Runcorn, and had never been brought up before the magistrates on any charge. He was in the Waterloo Hotel on the night in question, and was served by the defendant with half a glass of whisky, after which the defendant went out with a lamp in his hand. The man Greenway was not there then, but came in in about a minute or so and sat down by his side under the window, and some other persons were standing at the counter. He was not served with anything to drink, and as the officer came in, he was in the act of placing his (witness's) empty glass on the counter, as he sat nearer to the counter than he did. Edward Greenway said he was not served with any drink, and was not drunk, though he had that morning been convicted on the charge of being then drunk, for he had only three glasses of ale during the whole day. The Bench dismissed the case.

7 15 July 1876

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

ANOTHER QUARREL **George Shaw**, boatman, was charged with assaulting **Mary Price** on the 6th of June. Mr Garside appeared for the defence. Complainant stated that on Whit Sunday when passing through some locks, she stopped defendant's son from pulling up the pedals and wasting the water out of the locks, whereupon the defendant ran from the bottom to the top lock and seized her by the throat and tried to throttle her. For the defence, **William Shaw** and **William Williams** were called, who gave a total denial to the assault, and said that complainant assaulted the boy, and that the summons was taken out in consequence of ill-feeling engendered by a somewhat similar case heard at last Petty Sessions. The case was dismissed, and complainant was ordered to pay 3s, the costs, which she refused to do.

8 29 July 1876

WIDNES PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

DAMAGING A RAILWAY **William Griffiths**, a boatman, was charged with displacing a rail on the Warrington and Garston Line, belonging to the London and North Western Railway, on the 28th June. Mr Ferrand (from the office of Mr Preston, Lime Street Station, Liverpool) prosecuted, and Mr Husband appeared for the defendant. Mr Ferrand, in opening the case, said the offence with which the prisoner was charged was one for which he was liable to be committed for trial at the assizes ; but, as he had expressed his sorrow for what he did, he (Mr Ferrand) would take the case as one of wilful damage, the amount of which he would lay at 20s. He then proceeded to state the case, and from his statement and the evidence of three witnesses, it appeared that the defendant entered the canal at Widnes with his flat about ten minutes to one o'clock in the morning, and fastened the rope holding the flat to one of the rails on the line, which was thereby displaced half an inch. He was very saucy when spoken to about the matter, but he removed the rope. Mr Husband addressed the Bench in mitigation of the amount claimed for the damage, which he said was excessive, and the injury was repaired in an hour by three men, whose wages for a whole day only amounted to 13s 4d. The Bench ordered the defendant to pay a fine of 2s 6d, also 7s 6d for

damages done and 8s 6d costs, which he paid.

9 12 August 1876

RUNCORN POLICE COURT

FELONY CASE John Eccles, a boatman, was charged with having on the 2nd August 1875, stolen a woollen shawl and 4s in money, the property of **Walter Williams**, boatman of Runcorn. It appeared that the prisoner was a hand on board the boat of which the prosecutor is captain, and on the day in question went to his house in Surrey Street. While there, the prosecutor went to bed, and his wife left the house for a time on business, leaving the prisoner there. She returned and found that the prisoner had gone. She soon afterwards missed her shawl and also 4s in money out of a box in a drawer in the front place. The shawl was pledged the same day in the name of John Ellis at the pawn shop of Mr Imison, for 5s. Inquiries were from time to time made about the prisoner, but nothing was heard of him until Monday, when the prosecutor, who was in Manchester with his boats, saw him there and had some conversation with him, in the course of which the prisoner said if he had taken anything he would, if he would find him employment, work it out. The prosecutor gave him in custody to the police at Manchester, who handed him over to PC Turner of Runcorn, who charged him with the robbery and he made no reply. He was committed for trial.

10 12 August 1876

THE RUNCORN BRANCH OF THE MERSEY MISSIONS TO SEAMEN In the month of July of last year, a branch of the Mersey Missions to Seamen, which in Liverpool has been the means of doing a great deal of good amongst seafaring men, was formed at Runcorn. Prior to its formation the promoters of it had some difficulty in finding a suitable person to labour at Runcorn as Scripture reader and missionary at Runcorn, inasmuch as those amongst whom he would have to labour were not only "those who go down to the sea in ships and do their business in great waters", but those who live and toil in boats and barges on the canals, and whose ignorance of religious and social matters is great, and their morals to say the least of a very low type. At last a fit and proper person was found in the person of **Mr William Shaw** who, having been both boatman and seaman, had a practical knowledge of the tastes and habits of both. He at once set vigorously to work, and being earnestly assisted and supported by **Mr Beddows**, the local resident agent of the Bridgewater Navigation Company, has effected much good. A Sunday School for boat children was opened in St Peter's Mission Room in August of last year, and is open every Sunday for children, both morning and evening, with an average attendance of 120, who are instructed by six teachers ; and in the same room a service for boatpeople is held every Sunday evening, at which there is an average attendance of 100, but on Sunday evening last there were 178 children and adults present. There is also each Sunday afternoon an open air service held in connection with the Mission at the Duke's Docks, and very frequently it takes place on the deck of a vessel. As we have previously stated, Mr Shaw, the Mission agent and Scripture reader, works very energetically, and some account of the work done in connection with the Mission may be gathered from the following facts :- During the past twelve months, 2014 visits have been paid to vessels, 2180 to flats, boats and barges and 2733 to houses. Addresses have been delivered in vessels to 2718 persons, in flats to 5261 persons, and in houses to 3444 persons. At the Sunday School the attendances of children have been 5254, and at 35 open air meetings there have been 1909 children and adults present. There have been 118 services held in St Peter's Mission Room and at the Mariners' Church in Irwell Lane, at which adults and children have been present to the number of 5965. On Saturday last the children attending the Sunday School of the Mission held their first anniversary. They met at the Mission Room at one o'clock in the afternoon, and marched thence, with flags and banners, through the streets of the town. They afterwards went to Duke's Field, where they engaged in a variety of games and pastimes, and were then dismissed to their houses.

11 23 September 1876

A LITTLE BOY DROWNED AT RUNCORN On Thursday afternoon an inquest was held before

Mr Ridgway, coroner, at the house of Mr John Coxhill, the Masonic Hotel, Runcorn, on view of the body of **Robert Waterworth**, aged eleven years and nine months. It appeared that the deceased was the son of **Robert Waterworth**, captain of the flat *John and Mary*, lying at Runcorn, and on Tuesday afternoon went on board the flat (on which a person was) accompanied by a boy named Frederick Darbyshire, aged ten years. The flat was lying close to a vessel in the dock, and the deceased tried to ease her off by placing his back against the vessel and pushing with his feet on the flat. In so doing he overbalanced himself, fell into the water and, missing to catch hold of a rope which was thrown to him, was drowned. Grapples were at once obtained and used, and in about a quarter of an hour the body was recovered, but life was extinct. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

12 7 October 1876

WOMAN DROWNED AT NORTHWICH On Wednesday last, an inquest was held at the Navigation Inn, Lock Street, Northwich, before Mr Dunstan, on the body of **Sarah Ogden**, who was stated to be 36 years of age, and who was drowned in the river Weaver on the night before, just opposite the house where the inquest was held.

Sarah Tyrer said she came from Bedford Leigh, and her husband **Alexander Tyrer** was a canal boatman. She knew the deceased Sarah Ogden. She was the wife of **John Ogden** of Runcorn, a canal boatman. Deceased had lived with **James Bevin** for some time. The boat on which deceased was came to Northwich going down the river on Tuesday night. It was tied up alongside the boat in which witness was. Deceased had been to the theatre. She had got a ticket to come out before the close. She came into that house and asked for a glass of beer, but the young woman serving refused to let her have one. She was in liquor, and witness persuaded her to go to the boat and go to bed. She took her into the cabin, got her a light, and then left her. She wanted to sell witness a sheet for a shilling, but witness refused and left her. About twenty minutes after, Mrs Jackson and she were standing at the rails overlooking the river. They saw deceased on the deck of her boat. She went sideways as if staggering, and fell against the chimney of the boat, which gave way and fell, with deceased, over the side of the boat and between the two boats. Deceased sank and never rose. Witness screamed out, and persons came with boat hooks. The body of deceased was got out with a pole. Two surgeons were sent for and tried to restore life, but all efforts failed. The body was placed in the stable. Bevin was at the play, and witness went to tell him.

PC Wright proved the time of finding the body to be ten minutes past nine o'clock.

Verdict :- "Accidentally drowned".

13 21 October 1876

RUNCORN POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

Before Mr John Brundrit

STEALING A WATCH AND OTHER ARTICLES Fred Homes was brought up in custody charged with having on the 11th of August 1874 stolen a watch, a purse and £3, the goods and monies of **Edwin Tuckey**, from his person. Edwin Tuckey said he was a boatman, and on the 11th August 1874 was with his boat at Runcorn, and the horse was at the Vine Hotel stables there. He went into the stable about ten o'clock in the morning, and lay down on a truss of hay. At that time he had £3 in a leather purse in his trousers pocket, and a silver watch in his fob. He had seen the prisoner that morning in the Vine Hotel, and he was there when he went to lie down. He (prosecutor) went to sleep, and was awoke by someone dragging his watch out of his pocket, and when he awoke he saw the prisoner with his watch in his hand ; he took it from him, saying, "I can mind it myself". The prisoner then went out of the stable, and he (prosecutor) again went to sleep, and when he awoke between twelve and one o'clock found that his watch, purse and money were gone, and gave information to the police. By the prisoner : Did not give the watch and money into his hand. Sergeant Handford said he apprehended the prisoner on the 19th inst at Runcorn, and when he charged him with the robbery he admitted it, and said he had pledged the watch near Farnworth, and lost the ticket about 18 months since. Prisoner said he had promised to pay prosecutor, and because

he could not do so at once, he had given him into custody. He was sent for trial.

STEALING A WATCH GUARD Frederick Homes, the prisoner in the preceding case, was charged with having on the 10th of August 1874 stolen a silver watch guard, the property of **Thomas Wynne**. Prosecutor said he was a boatman and resided at Leigh in Lancashire. On the night of the 10th August 1874, the prisoner, and a man named Edwin Tuckey, and several others went with him to the boat *Nelson*, belonging to William Adams, lying in the canal opposite the crate warehouse at the Bottom Locks in Runcorn. He had at the time a watch and a silver guard, the latter being round his neck, and the watch in his fob. They all slept, and when he awoke the guard was gone and the prisoner also, but the rest of the men were there. He told them of his loss, and they offered to be searched. The chain was worth 19s. By the prisoner : They did not all start off together and go to empty the boat the next morning. Edwin Tuckey gave corroborative evidence, and said he did not see the prisoner again until about three or four weeks ago, when he told him that he must mind, as there was Thomas Wynne's guard gone. The prisoner then said, "I don't know whose guard it is ; but I've had one, and if you will make it right with Thomas Wynne when you see him, I will buy him another guard". Sergeant Handford said he apprehended the prisoner on the 19th October, and charged him with stealing a silver guard, the property of Thomas Wynne, on the night of the 10th August 1874. He said, "Yes, but I know nothing about that". Prisoner now said, "I am innocent of taking the guard of Thomas Wynne". He was committed for trial on this charge also.

14 6 January 1877

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS

STEALING A HAT John Mc Mahon was charged with having on the 30th December stolen a hat, of the value of a shilling, the property of **James Leach**. Prosecutor said he was a waterman and lived in Pennington's Row, Runcorn. The hat produced was his property, and on Saturday last between eleven and twelve o'clock at noon was hanging in the cabin of his canal boat, the *Annie*. He missed it between one and two o'clock the same day, and saw the prisoner soon afterwards walking along the canal bank with the hat on his head. He went to him and asked him where he got the hat from, and he said he gave threepence for it. He (witness) then said to him, "You take it back to where you got it from, and there will be no more bother about it", and the prisoner again said that he gave a man threepence for it, but he did not know who he was. He (witness) again told him to take the hat back, and he went to the boat and threw it into the forecastle. He (witness) afterwards gave information to the police. Sergeant Billington said he apprehended the prisoner and charged him with stealing the hat, and he said, "I took it intending to get something to eat for it". He was committed for a month with hard labour.

15 6 January 1877

NORTHWICH FLATMEN'S FRIENDLY SOCIETY The anniversary of the above flourishing society was held on Tuesday last. The members assembled in strong force at the Club House (Britannia Inn, Market Street, Northwich) at ten o'clock, and soon afterwards formed a procession and went their usual rounds, headed by the Wineham IOGT Brass Band, which was under the able guidance of Mr C Lambert. Having visited the residences of Mrs Hostage, Mr Blake, Mr Neumann and Mr C Williams, they attended Divine Service at Trinity Church, Castle Northwich, an appropriate sermon being preached on the occasion by the Rev R Marsh. On leaving the church, the procession was reformed, and after calling at Mr Sandeman's house in the Highfield, the watermen proceeded to the Brockhurst (Mr Verdin's) and to Riverdale (Mr John Thompson's). They then returned to Market Street, and shortly before three o'clock sat down to dinner in the Market Hall, the loads of good things placed upon the tables by Mr Wood of the Britannia being consumed in a thoroughly characteristic manner. Mr Blake, the Rev R Marsh and Mr C Williams attended, and the first named gentleman delivered a brief address to those assembled.

At the close of the dinner the usual business meeting was held.

Mr Cowley, the secretary, presented his annual report and statement of receipts and expenditure

from the 3rd January 1876 to the 1st January 1877. From this it appeared that the receipts had amounted to £890 8s 11d and the expenditure to £826 6s 5d, the latter sum including £111 18s 6d allowance to superannuated members, £177 12s paid to sick members, £99 paid to widows of deceased members, £28 to members on death of wives, £30 on death of children, £115 19s 0d cash paid into savings bank, and £39 10s 11d savings bank interest added to stock. The following figures show the position of the society :- Total fund on the 2nd January 1877 ; amount in savings bank £2061 4s ; amount in officers' hands £62 2s 6d ; total £2123 6s 6d ; total fund on January 3rd 1876 was £2064 1s 7d, increase £61 4s 11d.

During the year there had died seven members, four wives of members and fifteen children of members. There had been one member excluded and 13 new members enrolled. Last year the strength of the society was 463, and this year it is 468.

The following appointments were made :- Stewards : Messrs William Molyneux and William Hough. Deputy stewards : Messrs Samuel Rowbottom and Thomas Riley. Committee : Messrs George Hickson, James Foxley, James Penny, Henry Starkey, Samuel Corker, William Forster, James Hough, Samuel Cornes, Samuel Palin, Thomas Denton, Enoch Leather and John Moore.

The usual dance took place in the evening.

16 6 January 1877

“OUR CANAL POPULATION” AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION The Commissioners appointed to inquire into the operation of the Factory and Workshops Act have reported that “nothing short of a prohibition of the residence of children in canal boats will be sufficient to secure schooling for the offspring of parents who at present reside permanently, or a great part of the year, in barges”, and recommend that the residence in canal boats of young girls, and of children above the age of three years, should be forbidden. The Council of the Social Sciences Association say, “these recommendations, it is believed, are owing entirely to the efforts of Mr George Smith of Coalville, and his friends therefore feel that such work deserved special aid, and propose to raise a fund to be placed at his disposal, for the purpose of enabling him to press forward the task he has undertaken”.

17 20 January 1877

RUNCORN POLICE COURT

ROBBERY FROM A BOAT **James Dickenson**, a boatman, was charged with having, on the 28th of December, stolen one jacket, one waistcoat, one pair of trousers, one shirt, one muffler, one pair of boots and one hat, the property of a boatman named **William Newman**. Prosecutor said he was the hand of two canal boats called the *Tom* and *Jem*, now lying at Runcorn. The waistcoat, trousers and hat produced were his property, and were safe with other things in a drawer in the cabin of the boat *Jem* on Tuesday the 26th December, about nine o'clock at night. He also left a pair of boots on the cabin floor, and the other things in the drawer were a jacket, a shirt and a muffler. He last saw the boots on Thursday the 28th December, about eight o'clock at night. The prisoner joined the boats as hand on Wednesday morning, and remained on board until Thursday night, when they went to the captain's for tea. They returned to the boat *Jem* about half past six that night, and the prisoner went into the cabin and said he should go to bed. He (prosecutor) said he would go and see how the other boat was, and did so, and did not return until half past nine. He went into the cabin and found that the prisoner had gone, and on opening the drawer found the things he had mentioned gone. The boots were also missing, and he gave information to the police. On Wednesday night, the 17th of January, he met the prisoner by the Derby Arms at the Top Locks, and caught him by the collar, and asked him where the things were that he took out of the cabin. The prisoner said if he would loose him he would pay him for the things, and when he refused to do so he said he would cut his fingers off, and put his hand in his pocket ; but he caught his hand and pulled it out. A policeman came up, and he gave the prisoner in charge. He was wearing the trousers, waistcoat and hat produced when he collared him ; and the clothes he now had on were those he was wearing on the evening of the 28th December. PC Ardern said he received the prisoner into custody on the previous evening from

the prosecutor, who said that he had stolen some of his clothes. He took him to the police station, and on searching him found that he was wearing the hat, waistcoat and trousers which the prosecutor identified as his property. He had also 2s 1d in his pocket. He charged him with stealing from a boat at Runcorn, on the 28th December last, a hat, a jacket, a waistcoat, a pair of trousers, a shirt, a muffler and a pair of shoes, the property of William Newman. He said, "Yes ; and I will steal another pair". The prisoner made no defence, and was committed for trial. It is believed that the clothes which he was wearing when apprehended, and which were taken from him at the Runcorn Police Station, have been stolen. They consist of a sleeved coat with a strong blue cloth front and moleskin back and sleeves, a plaid printed cotton shirt, nearly new, and a pair of boatman's boots with round toes, and may be seen on application at the Runcorn Police Station.

18 17 February 1877

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS

DRUNK ON LICENSED PREMISES **Emma Hodson**, a boatwoman, was charged with being drunk on the licensed premises of John Webb, the Derby Arms Inn, Runcorn, on the 6th February. She pleaded guilty, and was fined 5s and 16s 6d costs.

CHARGED WITH PERMITTING DRUNKENNESS – A HEAVY PENALTY John Webb was charged with that he, being the occupier of certain licensed premises known as the Derby Arms Inn, High Street, Runcorn, did, on the 6th February permit drunkenness on such premises so licensed. He pleaded "Not guilty" and was defended by Mr Segar, barrister, instructed by Mr Lupton of Liverpool. Inspector Buckley said he, in company with Sergeant Handford, went into the defendant's house, and found Emma Hodson, who had just been convicted of being drunk, and another boatwoman named **Ellen Beddowes**, who was also drunk, sitting on a small form in the vaults, and two other women standing by the side of them. There was a pint pot on the counter close to where the woman Hodson was sitting, which was better than half full of what appeared to be beer. When he entered the house, Mrs Webb, the defendant's wife, was behind the counter, and as soon as she saw him and Sergeant Handford, she moved round to where the drunken women were sitting. He told her that she had no business with the women in the house in that state, and she said she was going to put them out. He said to her that she had been serving them with drink, and pointed out the pint pot on the counter, and she said the drink that was in it belonged to a boatman who had just gone with his boat, and had not got beyond "the Green turn". He asked her if he was coming back to drink it, and she said he was not ; and he then asked her if it was customary for boatmen to pay for beer and leave more than half of it behind. Two of the women got hold of Hodson to take her out of the house, and she was so drunk that they had almost to carry her. The woman Beddowes went along High Street, and turned down Brook Street, and seemed as if she did not know where she was going. When she got to the bottom of Brook Street she seemed quite bewildered, and turned back again, and he went and spoke to her and took her home. She gave him her basket to carry, and when she got into her own house she was so drunk that she did not know she had a basket. Sergeant Handford gave corroborative evidence.

Mary Price, a summoned witness, said she was in the defendant's house, and both she and Ellen Beddowes drank out of the pint pot on the counter, being asked to do so by Emma Hodson, who was drunk. Mr Segar, for the defence, said that no drink was supplied to the women, and that which was in the pint pot belonged to a man named **Alnor**, who had gone to his boat, and was paid for by a boatman named **Thomas Jones**. He then called William Tinsley, who said he was son-in-law to the defendant, and managed his bar. On Tuesday afternoon the 6th inst, three boatmen came in, and one of them, named Thomas Jones, called and paid for a glass of cider for himself, a pint of beer for one of the men named Hodson, and a pint of beer and porter for the other man, who was named Alnor. The latter had a cock fowl under his arm, and when he had drunk part of the beer and porter he went out to join his boat. He (witness) was called down to his tea, and hearing someone come into the bar, his mother-in-law went to see who it was. He heard her ask someone to go out, and as soon as she had done so the police came in. Mary Webb, the wife of the defendant, made a similar

statement, and said she did not supply the women with any drink, but was in the act of getting them out of the house when the police came in. Thomas Jones said he was captain of a flat, and paid for the drink which was in a pint pot on the counter for a boatman named Thomas Alner who, in order to catch his boat, had gone away with a cock fowl under his arm and left it. John Hodson and Thomas Alner, two boatmen, gave corroborative evidence. Mr Segar urged that there was no case against the defendant, and said it was not likely that Mrs Webb had supplied the women with any drink, as she was in the act of putting them out when the police entered. The Bench considered the case proved ; and as on the 11th December last the defendant was fined for selling drink to a drunken person, they now fined him £5 and £1 1s costs, and ordered his licence to be endorsed.

19 24 February 1877

CHESHIRE ADJOURNED SESSIONS

CHARGE OF STEALING HAY **William Jervis**, boatman, indicted for stealing five trusses of hay, the property of the Bridgewater Navigation Company, at Preston o' th' Hill on the 13th February, was acquitted.

THE EXTENSIVE THEFT OF IRON NEAR TARPORLEY Absalom Marsh, 33, hawker ; Joseph Westwood, 39, hawker ; Richard Bradshaw, 27, hawker ; **John Owen**, boatman ; **Edward Owen**, 30, boatman ; **Robert Jones**, 36, boatman ; and **Joseph Maddocks**, 72, boatman ; were indicted for stealing three tons weight of pig iron, the property of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, at Wardle near Tarporley on the 8th January last. Mr Wood and Mr Higgins appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Swetenham defended five of the prisoners, Edward Owen and Robert Jones being undefended.

Mr Wood, in opening the case, said it was one of considerable importance, and would require some attention at the hands of the jury, which he felt sure it would receive, in order that they might be enabled to form a fair and just conclusion from the evidence. The learned counsel then entered into details, which were afterwards recapitulated in evidence.

John Hyde said he was an iron merchant at Wrexham. In December last he bought 150 to 200 tons of grey pig iron from the Canal Company, which was to be sent by his order to Wolverhampton. It was loaded at Pontysyllta by the Canal Company's servants, and on the 6th January, he was advised of its having been sent in the boat *Charlie*. The iron had the brand of "Coatham" on it. On the 15th January, he saw between three and four tons of the same kind of iron at the Nantwich police station. The value would be from £7 to £8. It was his property.

By Mr Swetenham : He gave 50s a ton for the iron.

William Roberts, clerk in the employ of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company at Pontysyllta, said on the 6th January last, he saw 14 tons of iron loaded in the *Charlie* for Mr Hyde. A few days before he had sent the *Owl* and *Cato* loaded with the same kind of iron for Mr Hyde at Wolverhampton.

William Pickering, porter in the employ of the Canal Company at Pontysyllta, proved the loading of the iron on the boats *Charlie*, *Owl* and *Cato*.

Evan Morris, captain of the boat *Charlie*, gave evidence of the loading of his boat with iron. On the 7th of January he arrived at Barbridge, and commenced to unload the iron for the purpose of being transhipped.

Thomas Humphrey, captain of the *Sea King*, said that on the Sunday the 7th January, his boat was at Barbridge, and he assisted in unloading the *Charlie*, and put the iron on the wharf near the warehouse. He knew John Owen and Maddocks, and saw their boats, *Cato* and *Cygnets*, at the wharf at Barbridge, near to Ackland's public house, on the Sunday and also on the Monday. Witness left Barbridge on the Monday, and returned on the following Wednesday, when he missed some of the iron that he had helped to unload.

Edmund Shelley, night clerk at Barbridge Canal Wharf, said that there were 14 tons of iron on the *Charlie* when it arrived. He saw Humphreys unload the iron. The *Cygnets* and *Gull* were tied up close to. Edward Owen was a hand on board the *Gull*. On the night of the 8th, he went to Ackland's

public house at Barbridge, which is on the canal bank. He saw two carts coming from the direction of the canal. He saw Edwin (sic) Owen, Jones, Bradshaw and Marsh there. He could not tell who was driving. Heard Marsh say to the two boatmen, "Now, how much for the lot?" Owen replied, "£3". Bradshaw said, "50s is enough". Jones then said, "Well, how is that? You gave us £3 for the last, and you have now twice as much as you had then". Marsh answered, "Well, let us go into the public house and have some beer to settle it. Witness then got a horse and rode to Nantwich, four miles off, for the purpose of giving information to the police. Superintendent Saxton and other officers returned with him to Barbridge where they saw Marsh standing with one of the carts, the horse being taken out. There was pig iron in the cart. They went on to the other cart, containing pig iron, Westwood and Bradshaw being with it. He next took the police to the King's Arms and pointed out Edwin Owen and Jones. On the following morning he examined the iron on the wharf, and found that from two to three tons had been removed. The iron in the carts was the same kind as that which came out of the *Charlie*.

By Mr Swetenham : Marsh is a dealer in old iron and other things, and has a cart ; and Bradshaw is his assistant. Westwood has a cart. The others are boatmen.

Frederick Clay, porter to the Canal Company, said that about seven o'clock on the night of the 8th January he saw two carts at Barbridge near the King's Arms, and all the prisoners except John Owen were loading them with iron from the *Gull*. He did not see anybody else standing there ; the place where they were unloading was not the proper place for that purpose. He went and told Shelley, and when he came back he saw the carts coming out of the King's Arms yard, all the prisoners except John Owen being with them. The carts contained gray pig iron branded "Coatham".

Superintendent Saxton of Nantwich said that on the 8th January Mr Shelley gave him information which led him to go to Barbridge with three other officers. They got to Bittersweet Hill about nine o'clock, where they saw a cart loaded with pig iron, and Marsh in charge of it. The horse was taken out. Asked Marsh what he had in his cart, and he replied, "Only some old iron ; I got it from Barbridge Works, where there has been a sale". Witness said, "You bought it from some boatmen", and he answered, "No, I've not". When witness told him that he should arrest him on a charge of stealing the iron, he said, "How could I steal it, when I bought it and paid for it?" Left him in charge of an officer, and on proceeding a little further, found a cart in charge of Bradshaw, who was apprehended by Sergeant Atherton. Next went to the King's Arms, where he saw the two Owens, Maddocks and Jones, whom he told that he should have to take into custody on a charge of stealing some pig iron. Robert Jones struggled hard to get away, and a regular row ensued. Jones passed some money to one of his friends. Marsh afterwards said that he bought the iron from Maddocks and gave him 30s for it. The boatmen were all very drunk. Returned to Bittersweet Hill, and found the officer, with Westwood and Bradshaw in custody. On the way to Nantwich, Bradshaw said, "I don't know what you are taking me for. The iron belongs to Marsh and Westwood". To this Westwood replied, "Yes, we bought it from Barbridge Works". The carts belonged to Marsh and Westwood.

By Mr Swetenham : Knew that there had been a sale of iron at Barbridge Works on the 4th January, and saw Marsh and Westwood carting scrap iron from there.

Sergeant John Atherton proved the arrest of Bradshaw, who said that the iron belonged to Marsh. Witness then confirmed the superintendent's evidence as to what took place at the King's Arms. On the following day Maddocks made this statement in the presence of Owens and Jones, "These men (Owens and Jones) helped to get the iron out ; Bob and Ned helped me to pull the boat from the wharf to behind Ackland's public house, and John Owen helped us to throw the iron out". In answer to that, John Owen said, "I was drunk and did not know what I was doing".

PC Ashford said he went with the other officers to Barbridge, and afterwards weighed the iron in the two carts, and found it to weigh 3 tons, 1 cwt and 3 qrs.

Inspector Capel, in the employ of the Canal Company, apprehended John Owen on a charge of stealing the iron. He (Owen) said he helped to load the boat, but he got so drunk that he did not know whether he emptied it or not.

Sergeant Porter of Tarporley gave evidence as to statements that were made by Westwood while he

was in the lock-up at Tarporley, and also produced a statement written by Westwood, and bearing at the foot the names of Westwood, Marsh and Bradshaw, which went to implicate the four boatmen, John Owen being mentioned as being present during the whole transaction.

Frederick Partridge, occupier of the Barbridge iron works, said he was not aware that any of the prisoners bought an appreciable quantity of iron at the sale.

This concluded the case for the prosecution.

Mr Swetenham submitted that there was no legal evidence against John Owen.

Mr Wood, in reply, argued that there was a case to go to the jury.

Mr Swetenham then addressed the jury at considerable length on behalf of the four prisoners whom he represented. With regard to John Owen, he contended that there was not a scrap of evidence upon which they could find him guilty. As regarded Maddocks, he did not think that the evidence was so strong as would justify his conviction. The case of Marsh, Westwood and Bradshaw was on an entirely different footing, and he submitted that there had been no evidence whatever adduced to show that they knew they were dealing with iron that had not been honestly come by.

Inspector Capel, in reply to Mr Swetenham, said he had known John Owens for two years, and his character during that time had been very good. The Company had kept him in their employ since that charge had been made.

The Chairman having carefully summed up.

The jury, after a few minutes' consultation, found John Owen not guilty, and all the other prisoners guilty.

The Chairman said the Court perfectly concurred in the verdict, and they considered that the prisoners had been guilty of a very bad offence. Marsh, Westwood and Bradshaw aggravated the case, because if they had not found receptacles for the stolen goods there would not have been the same inducement to the other men to commit the felony, and Court of Justice always looked upon their offence as the worst. The sentence upon them (Marsh, Westwood and Bradshaw) was that they be kept to hard labour for nine months. The other three – Edwin Owen, Maddocks and Jones – would be sentenced to six months' hard labour.

20 17 March 1877

RUNCORN POLICE COURT, THURSDAY

STEALING ROPES **Walter Bunn**, a boatman, was charged with having, on the 13th of March at Runcorn, stolen and carried away 69 lbs weight of rope, the property of **John Benson**. **Richard Hurst** said he was master of a pair of narrow boats, the *John* and *Moses*, which were lying on the 13th of March in the canal at Runcorn, near to the Old Soapery. The hauling line produced was the property of his master, John Benson, who was the owner of the boats. He saw it safe in the cabin of the boat *John* about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 13th instant, but not in the same state as it now was, as the two loops produced had been cut from each end of it. The manilla rope produced he also saw safe in the forecastle of the boat *John* about six o'clock on the night of the same day, and he knew it by the splicing, which he did himself. He left the boats that night for a short time, and between nine and ten o'clock the following morning missed the ropes, and gave information to the police. The prisoner was master of two other boats which were lying in the canal at Runcorn, near to his (witness's) boats, and he never authorised him to take the ropes produced from the boats. **George Coomes** said he was the hand on board the boats named by the previous witness, and knew the hauling produced to belong to their boat, as he had spliced it himself, and the two loops produced had been cut from it. **Charles Walter Tyler**, aged 14 years, said he went to work on the prisoner's boat on Tuesday last, the 13th March, and about half past seven o'clock in the evening saw the prisoner leave his boat and go on the deck of the boat *John*, which was lying near, and get the rope produced out of the forecastle. He then took it on board his own boat, put it in the forecastle, which he shut and locked up, and said, "That will be a good rope". He also said he had bought it. About half past nine the next morning the prisoner started with his boats and went to the "Green Turn", where he tied up, and after a little while left to go to the colliery. When he started from the Soapery he used a new hauling line of his own, and continued to do so until he got to Astmoor

Bridge, and he there took the hauling line produced from the cabin, and cut the two nooses produced from it, and then commenced to haul the boat with it. PC Turner said he received information of the robbery from the first witness, and went with him to Moore, where he saw the prisoner with his boats, and told him he was suspected of having stolen some ropes at Runcorn, and he had come to search his boats. He said, "You'll find no ropes here that I am aware of, only what was aboard when I went to them". He (witness) and Hurst looked through the cabin, but could not find his ropes, and he then went to the other end of the boat, and found he was using the hauling line produced. He (witness) then asked the prisoner where the keys of the forecastle were, and he gave him the keys produced ; he examined the locks and found that they were not the keys to them, and asked the prisoner where the others were, and he replied, "Those are all that were given to me". He (witness) then broke into the forecastle and there found the manilla rope produced ; he shortly afterwards searched the prisoner and found in his possession the keys produced which were the keys of the forecastle. He then took the prisoner to Runcorn, and at the police station charged him with stealing 69 lbs of rope from the boats *John* and *Moses*, at Runcorn on the 13th March. The prisoner replied, "I never handled that line", pointing to the hauling line, "until I went and unhooked it ; and when I was away at Hayward's public house, they must have come on board". PC Jones said he searched the cabin of the prisoner's boats and there found the two nooses produced in a locker. The prisoner made no defence, and was committed for trial.

21 7 April 1877

STEALING ROPE AT RUNCORN At the Knutsford Quarter Sessions on Wednesday, **Walter Bunn**, a boatman, was charged with stealing 69 lbs weight of rope, the property of **John Benson**, at Runcorn on the 13th March. He was found guilty and sentenced to four months' hard labour.

22 14 April 1877

INQUEST AT HALTON On Monday last an inquest was held at the Ship Inn, Halton, before Mr Ridgway, Coroner, touching the death of an infant, five weeks old, which occurred on the 8th inst. From the evidence of the mother, **Charlotte Hoskinson**, whose husband is captain of the narrow boat *Janet*, belonging to **Mr S Taylor** of Runcorn, it appeared that the child was born on the boat on the 3rd of March. It had for some time been suffering from cold in the head, tightness of the chest, and frog in the mouth. The boat was tied up at the Green Turn, Runcorn, and on Saturday the child seemed in its usual state of health. She went to bed with the child about ten o'clock on Saturday night, and gave it the breast once during the night. She awoke about three o'clock in the morning, and found the child lying on her arm quite dead. **Harriet Hodgkins**, wife of another boatman, whose boat was moored alongside the *Janet*, said she was called in by the previous witness to see the child. It was quite dead when she saw it. Dr F McDougall of Runcorn said he had externally examined the body, but had not made a *post mortem*. There were no marks of violence, and in his opinion the child must either have died from convulsions or have been overlain. The jury returned a verdict of "Found dead in bed".

23 21 April 1877

MYSTERIOUS DEATH NEAR CHESTER

APPREHENSION OF A PRISONER Some excitement was caused in the city of Chester on Tuesday last, by a report that a murder had been committed on the canal bank about five miles from that city. On inquiry, we found that a man named **Charles Mostyn**, about 21 years of age, said to belong to Wolverhampton, and who was in the employ of the Shropshire Union Canal Company, had been found by another boatman in a dying state on the towing-path of the canal. Beyond this much it was difficult to get information of an authentic character, the police themselves requiring considerable time to collect the evidence. However, as just stated, the man was found at the point of death on the canal bank, and under circumstances that leave little doubt that his decease was due to violence, but by whom inflicted must of course be left for future consideration.

Mr Churton, County Coroner, opened an inquest on the remains on Wednesday afternoon, at the

Black Dog, Waverton, when the following evidence was given :-

John Morris said : I am a boatman in the employ of the Shropshire Union Canal Company, on the boat named the *Star*. I knew the deceased. He was also a boatman, and in the employ of the same Company. I last saw him alive at six o'clock on Sunday night at Bate's Mill. There is a public house there called Bebbington's. He had not been there to my knowledge. I saw him jump from the canal bank on to the boat house. The boat was moving at the time. It was named the *Usk*. **John Probert** was the master of the boat, and he was on the towing-path at the time. Probert's wife was in the boat, and there was no one else except the deceased, and Probert and his wife. The woman was steering. Deceased was employed on the *Usk*. My boat was tied up at the lock, and how I came to see deceased on Sunday evening was that I went down the canal intending to get a little watercress. I do not know whether he was a single man or not, but I believe he came from somewhere near Wolverhampton. I have known him to speak to for some months. His boat was going to Ellesmere Port. When I saw him he seemed quite sober. He walked all right and straight. He jumped to get on board his boat. He did so all right. The next (Monday) morning at about seven o'clock, I found the body of the deceased lying on the canal bank. I was there with my boat passing through Waverton, and going in the direction of Ellesmere Port. Deceased was lying on his back. He had all his clothes on except his hat, which was under him. I took hold of him and shook him, and shouted, "Charley". He gave just one groan, and opened his eyes, which were closed. I am not mistaken about his opening his eyes. Three of us got him upon the boat – not my boat, but Parry's boat, and one of us went to a farm house and got a little brandy, with which we moistened his lips. After I found him, he may have lived for 10 to 15 minutes. I noticed marks of injury on his face, but not any deep wounds. There was a little blood flowing from the wounds. There had been no rain that morning while I had been at work, but I believe there was a little in the night. Deceased's clothes were wet up to the middle. The upper part of his clothes was dry. He was all over "slutch". He looked as if he had been rolling in it ; but I saw no marks on the ground as if there had been a struggle. I took no particular notice of the ground. If there had been anything remarkable I should have noticed it. It was daylight when I found him – about seven o'clock in the morning. I have since seen deceased's boat at Ellesmere Port, and I told Probert that I had found the deceased. He had been connected with the boat about nine days, and was accustomed to boating. He was a regular boatman. So far as I know he was a steady man. I have never seen him touch a drop of drink. We brought him down the canal to near Waverton Church, and there sent for a policeman. That would be a mile and a half from where we found deceased. The body was subsequently removed to the place where it is now lying. Cross-examined by Dr Watson : He drew breath about once after I got him on the boat. I heard a sort of groan, a gurgling in his throat. There was a little froth about the mouth. I could not say I heard a distinct breathing.

The Coroner : The witness said he opened his eyes ; it is a most extraordinary thing if it is as I understand. I could understand a gurgling or a groan.

Witness : He did open his eyes. I am sure.

The Coroner : It would be utterly impossible if his neck was broken.

Dr Watson : I could easily understand a sound being produced, but not the opening of his eyes.

In answer to the Coroner, Dr Watson here stated (not on oath) that he had seen the body, and there was no external wound to cause death. There was an unusual movement of the head, and he was of opinion that the vertebral column was fractured or dislocated. It would be impossible to give a definite opinion as to the cause of death without a *post mortem* examination.

The Coroner : I suppose the other evidence is corroborative.

Mr Superintendent Wilson : That's all.

The Coroner remarked that there were circumstances connected with the case of a somewhat suspicious character, and it would be well not to hurry through the inquiry. He therefore should adjourn it until Friday, and in the meantime a *post mortem* examination would be made.

Mr Superintendent Wilson intimated that he should feel it his duty to apprehend the man Probert, who was master of the boat in which deceased was last seen.

The Coroner : I think you are right to do so. In fact, I have it in my power to order the apprehension

of any man against whom there is reasonable suspicion.

Probert, who was just outside the room talking with his friends, was then apprehended and conveyed to the lock up.

24 25 April 1877

THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH ON THE CANAL BANK

THE ADJOURNED INQUEST The inquiry touching the death of **Charles Mostyn**, a boatman, who was found on the canal bank, Waverton, in a dying state, on Monday the 16th instant, under mysterious circumstances reported in last Saturday's *Guardian*, was resumed before Mr Churton, Coroner, on Friday last, at the Black Dog, Waverton. Mr Cartwright attended to watch the case on behalf of the man Probert, who is in custody on suspicion. The first witness called was :-

Edward Parry, who deposed : I am a boatman in the employ of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company. I knew the deceased well ; I last saw him alive on Saturday at Newport, Shropshire. He was there with his boat, the *Usk*. I saw Probert there at the same time (.....) to Ellesmere Port. I was going the other way, but I came back towards Ellesmere Port, and on Sunday evening at about eight o'clock I was at Beeston. I next saw the deceased about seven o'clock on Monday morning, near the Golden Hook Bridge, some 400 or 500 yards on the Beeston side. John Morris was there, and my father and myself. Deceased was lying helpless on the towing-path. He was on his back, and alive, but he did not speak, only groaned. We carried him to our cabin, I mean the cabin of my father's boat. They left me in the cabin with him, and my father went to get some brandy. Deceased lived about five minutes after my father brought the brandy. We put some to his lips, but he did not swallow any. We got a table spoon and put some into his mouth.

The Coroner : He did not appear able to swallow, I suppose?

Witness : No. I know Bate's Mill ; that would be four miles from where we found the deceased. As boats ordinarily travel, it would take about an hour to go from Bate's Mill to where we found deceased. There are no locks on the way. I did not notice the state of the ground where we found deceased. I was only five minutes with him at Newport.

By the Jury : There is a public house after you leave Bate's Mill.

By the Coroner : Deceased's clothes were in a nasty dirty state. They were wet up to the middle. He had a sleeve waistcoat on. The towing-path was level where we found him. The ground was very damp and slushy.

Dr W C Watson deposed : I am a surgeon practising at Chester. I first saw the deceased on Wednesday last. I examined him and found slight external bruises on the skull and face and nose. There were no other marks of violence on the body at all. On the same day, I made a *post mortem* examination of the body. I examined the neck first, in order to find out the cause of an unusual movement of the head. I expected to find either a dislocation or a fracture. I found that the fifth and sixth cervical vertebrae were completely dislocated. There was no corresponding external wound. The neck was perfectly free from bruises. I examined the brain, chest, lungs, heart and all organs, and they were all healthy. He seemed a strong man. The cause of death was the pressure of the spinal cord consequent on the dislocation. The immediate result of that would be complete paralysis of all the muscles of the body below the injury. The heart might beat for a time.

The Coroner : Supposing the injury had been a little higher up?

Witness : In that case it would have been like hanging. Death would have been instantaneous.

The Coroner : That is the reason I asked the question. Having received the injury he would be perfectly helpless?

Witness : Absolutely so.

The Coroner : If he had received the injury on board the boat, it would have been impossible for him to have jumped ashore?

Witness : Utterly impossible. He could not have moved at all.

The Coroner : Supposing he had fallen into the canal?

Witness : He could not have got out again. He would have been drowned, unless someone had

dragged him out. With such an injury he would be perfectly helpless.

In answer to further questions, Dr Watson said : There must have been great violence to cause the dislocation of the vertebra. The ligaments connecting them are extremely strong.

A juror : Are any external signs of injury required?

The Coroner : You mean to say is it possible that such an injury should take place without external injury?

Witness : Yes, if his head were forcibly pressed down, it might be done.

The Coroner : If he had received an ordinary fall it would be impossible.

Witness : Quite impossible I think. The injuries this man received would require the head to be pressed forward by some means.

The Coroner : If he had fallen from the cabin of his boat and his hat had doubled under him, would he have been able to move?

Witness : He would have remained just as he fell perfectly helpless – more helpless than an infant.

By Mr Cartwright : I examined his stomach. There was no smell of drink or anything of the kind. I am quite clear there was no smell of anything of the kind. When I saw him it was two days after death. Alcohol would have gone off in that time. If he had been drinking sherry I should have expected to find some trace of it.

Mr Cartwright : Had you received any intimation of his habit?

Witness : Nothing more than I heard he was a sober man.

Mr Cartwright : Did you receive any information about the sherry?

Witness : No ; but if he had drunk any amount of sherry there must have been a trace of it. I attach no importance whatsoever to the abrasions on the face. If deceased had had a line round his neck, and the boat had pulled him down, it would not have caused severe injuries unless the shock had been very sudden. It would simply drag him along. There must have been direct violence and a forcible bending down of the head.

Mr Cartwright : Would you not expect more external evidence of it?

Witness : Not as I have given my evidence. If his head was violently pushed forward, or if he had violently fallen in a soft place, there might have been no external injury.

At this stage, it was announced that several important witnesses, who had been telegraphed for, had not arrived, and the Coroner said that under the circumstances it would be necessary to adjourn again. After the medical evidence they had just heard, it was of great importance not to hurry the case, but to give Superintendent Wilson every opportunity of getting every possible witness for this inquiry.

The Coroner then adjourned the inquiry until Friday next.

25 **25 April 1877**

OUR CANAL POPULATION The following letter has appeared in the *Standard* :- I should think there is scarcely a man, woman or child in this country but will rejoice to hear the statement issued by the Home Secretary to the effect that he had prepared a Bill which would be shortly introduced to Parliament, the object being to lessen some of the misery and wretchedness the poor women and children living and working on canal boats are undergoing. Facts seen by my own eyes within the past few weeks will give a faint glimpse of canal life. In a cabin at Paddington a month ago, a poor boatman died very suddenly during the night, and it was stated by the jury in their verdict that it was partly due to suffocation caused by the need of sufficient fresh air. There were three men and one woman sleeping in the cabin at the time he lay crouched in death. I saw the unfortunate man a few hours after the sad event and, owing to there not being room to “lay him out”, part of the cabin had to be taken down. Another case was that of a poor woman who had four children very ill of scarlatina and a drunken husband ; she had not a crumb in the cabin or sixpence in her pocket. I was told that the drunken brute had, during the preceding week, reeled to his cabin swearing, foaming and raging, turning the poor woman, with her sickly children out of the cabin on to the towing-path, to dabble in the mud on a bitterly cold wet night, compelling her to fetch the horse up at twelve o'clock and begin their journey – and a journey it was – with three poorly children

trudging after her heels, while her man lay snoring and boozing in the cabin, the other child steering the boat as well as its feeble strength and emaciated body would let it. Not one on either of these boats could read or write. But it is not all as black as this, for since I ventured on the crusade in 1873, and the publication of my little work, more of the better class of boatmen have houses on land. The manager of a large canal company who have 335 boats writes me to say that they have only six women and ten children on board their boats, and employ no youths unless they are apprenticed as sailors and can read and write, which nearly the whole of the men can do, and 105 boatmen out of 665 in their employ are total abstainers, and 646 have homes on land. This plainly shows that an Act can be put in force to prevent overcrowding in cabins without much inconvenience to either boatmen or boat owners.

I am your obedient servant, GEORGE SMITH, Coalville, Leicester, April 21.

26 2 May 1877

THE LATE SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN AT WAVERTON

THE ADJOURNED INQUEST The adjourned inquest touching the death of **Charles Mostyn**, aged 21, a boatman in the employ of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, who was found lying on the canal bank near Waverton in a dying state early on the morning of Monday the 16th April, under suspicious circumstances already reported, was resumed on Friday morning before Mr Henry Churton, county coroner, at the Black Dog Inn, Waverton. The deceased was connected with the canal boat *Usk*, the master of which, whose name is **Probert**, is in custody on suspicion of causing his death.

Margaret Jones, a sharp and intelligent girl, daughter of **Thomas Jones**, boatman, was the first witness. She stated in answer to the Coroner that she was 13 years of age, that she had never been to school, could neither read nor write, and had never heard of the Bible.

The Coroner : An awful state of things! This is an example of boat life. The Coroner then administered the oath, telling the girl that she must speak the truth.

She said : My father is master of a canal boat called the *Stag*. Last Monday week we started from a place called the Brockhole. I was steering my father's boat. It was about five o'clock in the morning when we left the Brockhole. Our boat was empty. We intended going to Ellesmere Port. I remember passing along the canal between the Golden Hook and Crow's Nest Bridge. I saw a man lying on the towing-path there, but did not know whether he was dead or drunk. It is not an uncommon thing to see a drunken man on the towing-path. His head and shoulders were resting on the Cop, and the rest of his body was on the towing-path. I saw his face, and I knew him. I had known him for about six months. He belonged to the *Usk*. I saw him on it on the Sunday evening previous about five o'clock at (.....) beyond Beeston. His boat was travelling and he was driving the horse. I saw **Jane Probert** with the boat. She was steering, but I did not see her husband. My father stopped the boat, when we saw this man, for me to get off and tell another boatman to get him in his boat. I got off, and went back and told **Joseph Boden**. This was at about a quarter past six o'clock. I did not speak to him at all. Boden spoke to him, and deceased groaned in reply. His clothes were all over slutch. He did not appear sensible. Boden took hold of his hands and raised his head and said, "Charley, come my man, and get on the boat. What are you doing lying here?", but he got no answer. Boden said, "Let the donkey go on, Maggie", and I did so, and both us and Boden went on and left him where we found him. We saw no boat in front of us, but we met the Brummagem Flyer. We saw nothing of the *Usk*. Did not see anything of the Proberts at Ellesmere Port. I thought the man was drunk. I noticed nothing particular. Deceased was a quiet steady man. I never saw him quarrel with anyone. I told the Brummagem Flyer what we had seen. We stopped with deceased about 20 minutes. I did not notice that he breathed with difficulty. There was a good bit of blood about the face. I saw no hat. The proper name of the Brummagem Flyer is the *Severn*. The name of the master of that boat is **Benjamin Foster**. My father took no part in this matter at all. It was me and my mother.

The Coroner (to witness) : Are you the eldest?

Witness : No, sir, the youngest.

The Coroner : Well, you are a very intelligent girl, and it is a pity you could not have the advantage of education. You have given your evidence very well.

William Williams was then called, and said that on the day in question he was on board the boat *Ceres*, and at about a quarter to six he came up to where the deceased lay. I got out of the boat and saw Boden, who said, "Never mind, start the donkeys and go on". Boden took hold of his arm, and put his hand to the back of his head, before he said this. I did not touch the deceased myself. I did not go very near him. Deceased did not speak, but he made a groaning noise. I was not there more than a minute or so. My boat was empty. We went on, and did not stop till we got to Chester. I saw the *Usk* on Sunday night and we met it on Monday below Chester, coming back from Ellesmere Port. It would be about half past eleven on Monday morning when we met him. Deceased was a very steady man.

By Mr Cartwright : I did not tell Probert what I had seen when I met him on Monday morning.

Charles Bowden, master of the boat *Ceres*, gave corroborative evidence, and in answer to the Coroner said his impression was that when he saw deceased he had been in a skirmish. He seemed in a sort of sleep. He was not accustomed to take drink. Witness saw no blood, but there were two slight scratches on his face. I did not touch the deceased. I noticed that he breathed. I did not raise the body up. I remained there about two and a half minutes.

The Coroner : Noticing the man lay there, would it not have been humane, and part of your duty in fact, to assist him?

Witness : Perhaps it would ; but I have wakened many drunken men.

The Coroner : You are trying to get out of the difficulty, but you can't. You said just now you thought that he had been in a skirmish, and we know what that means.

Witness : There were the scars.

The Coroner : If he had been a dog you could not have treated him with greater indifference. You are sure you did not raise him up?

Witness : Yes.

The Coroner : Or speak to him?

Witness : No.

The Coroner : Or offer to take him to your boat?

Witness : No.

The Coroner : Not even touched him?

Witness : No.

The Coroner : Did you overtake the *Usk*?

Witness : No. I saw her at Ellesmere Port.

Witness continuing : I went to Ellesmere Port and stayed there about an hour.

Police Sergeant John Palin, Waverton, deposed : On Monday morning the 16th of this month, **Edward Parry** came to my house. From what he said to me, I went to the Bone Works Bridge on the canal. I there found a man dead in his boat. Parry told me his name was Mostyn. I got a cart and conveyed him to the Black Dog, Waverton. I noticed bruises and blood all over his face. I searched the deceased at the inn, in the presence of several persons, and found on him a purse containing 4s 9d in silver and 1s 8 1/4d in coppers. There was also a tobacco box and pipe. I afterwards stripped and washed him. His clothes were covered with dirt and slutch. (Clothes produced). He was wet up to the middle ; the upper part of his clothes were dry, except that they were covered with dirt. His trousers were saturated with wet. I noticed deceased's cap. It was wet. I did not go to the spot until Thursday. I did not think it necessary at first. I then found marks of his trousers, where a person appeared to have been. I saw marks to correspond with the corduroy trousers. The marks were quite distinct. I also saw three fingerprints and thumb mark on the left hand in the mud. I saw similar impressions near the same spot. I also saw the impressions of a man's foot on the cop, where there was no grass. It seemed to be the footmark of a boatman ; their shoes are made different to ours – rather narrow at the toe. About three yards from this spot I saw a lot of cinders and ashes, as if they had been thrown out of a boat, and about six yards further on the towing-path there were some crushed oats and beans, as if a horse had been feeding there and they

had dropped out of the nose bag. The cop is two and half or three yards from the canal. The depth of the canal near the side is about three feet six inches. I saw Probert, the man now in custody, at Chester on Monday night, and warned him to attend the inquest on the following Wednesday. He did so attend at the commencement of the inquiry.

At this stage the Court adjourned for luncheon ; and on resuming,

Edward Parry senior deposed : I am master of the *Woodcock* boat, belonging to the Shropshire Union Company. I knew the deceased, having become acquainted with him about three months ago. I was with my son, Edward Parry (a previous witness) when our boat came up to the place where we found deceased ; it was between six and seven in the morning. I was steering, and I got on to the towing-path and went to the deceased. When I got to him, I said, "Poor fellow!", being under the impression that he had been kicked by a horse, and that he had been lying there all night. I also said, "He's starved to death ; let us take him into our cabin". He seemed as if he had no use in his arms or legs, but he was not stiff. The minute we got him on the boat, I ran to a farmhouse close by to beg a drop of brandy. I got some brandy and mixed it with hot water, lifted him up, and tried to make him take some in a teaspoon, but I could not perceive that he swallowed any. I asked a boatman named **Morris** to listen if he heard any breathing, and he said he heard a gurgling sound, but deceased expired a moment or two after. This would be about a quarter of an hour after we first saw him.

John Owen said : I am a boatman and master of the boat *Dart*. I knew deceased, and last saw him on Sunday night, the 15th inst, at Bate's Mill. He jumped on the *Usk* as she was on the move from that point. John Probert was driving the *Usk* and his wife was steering. Deceased appeared to be sober and steady. I don't work on Sundays, and our boat remained there till between six and seven o'clock on Monday, when we proceeded towards Ellesmere Port. The next I saw of deceased was when John Morris was standing beside him on the towing-path between Golden Nook and Nixon's Bridge. I got out of my boat and went to the deceased, in company with Edward Parry, the last witness. Deceased was lying on his back with his head in the cop. His face was covered with bruises, blood and dirt, and he seemed unable to speak or move. I assisted in getting him to Parry's boat, and we did our best to see if we could bring him round. I was driving fast to get a policeman or a doctor. I saw the *Usk* at Ellesmere Port. It was leaving when we arrived on Monday.

Thomas James said : I am master of the *Snipe*, a fly boat belonging to the Shropshire Union. I knew the deceased. The *Snipe* and the *Usk* went together on Sunday for some distance, and from what I saw, deceased and Probert seemed on comfortable terms. My boat was in front. After passing the second bridge, I went into the cabin to sleep. When we got to Darlington's Bank on the Christleton side of Egg Bridge at about eight o'clock, Probert's wife came up and said to our steerer that their chap had stopped behind and had got into the canal. I got out and said, "Why didn't you stop and bring him with you?", and ordered our boat to stop, and asked Probert to go back with me. By that time Probert's boat had come up with us, and I put my shoes on. I said to Probert, "Where has he got in the canal?", and he said, "Egg Bridge". Upon that I and Probert and one of my men named **Rowlands** went back to about 100 yards of Egg Bridge, when Probert said, "We'll go no further. It isn't at Egg Bridge where he got in, but the Halfway Bridge".

Superintendent Wilson : That is the Goldenbrook Bridge.

Witness (continuing) : I said to Probert, "Was he on the bank all right?" Probert replied, "Yes, he'll be after us just now. Let us go back to our boats and go on".

The Coroner here remarked that as this evidence affected Probert and his wife, they had better be brought into the room, and the two were accordingly brought into the room.

Cross-examined by Mr Cartwright : About six miles had been travelled before he was called by Probert's wife.

Mr Cartwright : During the time the *Usk* and your boat were together, was there anything to drink?

Witness : No.

Mr Cartwright : Didn't Mostyn have some washings of sherry?

Witness : Nothing of the sort.

Mr Cartwright (severely) : Are you speaking the truth?

Witness : Yes, I am.

Mr Cartwright : Are you quite confident?

Witness : Yes, quite confident.

Mr Cartwright : On your oath, you know.

Witness : Yes, there was nothing of the kind.

Humphrey Rowland said : I am one of the hands of the *Snipe*, and I remember on the Sunday evening in question passing along the canal towards Christleton. I was steering. Mrs Probert came up and said, "Our chap has stopped behind". I, Thomas James and Probert went back to find him. Mrs Probert said the deceased had got into the canal. We did not go as far as Egg Bridge, and as John Probert said deceased was at the Halfway Bridge, and he was not going that far and leave his horses starving on the bank. They then went back to their respective boats.

By Mr Cartwright : Did not remember anyone saying that deceased was big enough to take care of himself. The boats ought not to stop anywhere. Probert's boat is a fly boat.

John Jones, a lad, who gave his evidence in a very intelligent and straightforward manner, said : I am employed on board the *Snipe*. On the night in question I was sleeping whilst journeying from Beeston to Christleton, and from that point I drove the horse to Chester. I met both the Proberts at the stable at Chester, when I was putting up our horse. Probert gave me a bottle of gin to drink from. I took some and handed it back to him. Then Mrs Probert and myself walked away together. I said to her, "Where is Charley?" She replied, "He has stopped behind, and he got into the canal. I can't rest in my bed till the chap comes. I am sure somebody will find him dead on the bank in the morning". I had seen him (...) at Beeston the same evening, and he seemed (.....).

By Mr Cartwright : There was no one besides the two of us present. I told Thomas Jones of the conversation. The Proberts and deceased appeared on friendly terms at Beeston.

This concluded the evidence.

The Coroner, in summing up, dwelt at some length on the evidence, showing the deceased as a sober and steady man, and the indifferent and cruel manner in which the men who first saw the deceased on the bank treated him contrasted strongly with the humane manner of the two Parrys and Morris. All this would be for the jury to sift and so to analyse as to enable them to return a satisfactory verdict, not only to themselves but to the public. The two main questions they had to determine were whether the deceased's death resulted from an accident, or whether there was any reason to believe that the injuries which caused his death were inflicted by either one or more persons. In considering these questions it would be necessary for them to take into their consideration the theories and probabilities of the case. In considering whether death was the result of accident, they must take into consideration the evidence (.....) the position in which the man was found, and the fact that the doctor had told them that it was utterly impossible that any fall the deceased had had on the towing-path could have caused the injury found when the *post mortem* examination was made. The cervical vertebrae were dislocated, and the ligaments torn in such a manner as could only be caused by an immense amount of violence. It was impossible the deceased could have received the injuries on the towing-path. It might be said that he had fallen in the canal accidentally, or fallen against something with great violence, but this was very improbable, because if he had done so, it would have been entirely impossible for him to have extricated himself from the canal. Besides that, he would have been totally submerged, whereas it was shown that deceased's clothes were only saturated to his middle, the other part of his body being perfectly dry. Again, if he had on falling from the boat received the injury which caused his death, he must have been drowned, as he would have been utterly paralysed or, as Dr Watson expressed it, more helpless than an infant. The jury must take all these matters into consideration, and also the probability that these injuries were inflicted by some person or persons. Who were the persons there at that time? This was an important question. The only evidence on the point showed there were three – the deceased, Probert and his wife. He (the Coroner) confessed he was astonished to find such injuries as stated by Dr Watson. There must have been an enormous amount of violence. Then again there seemed to be no apparent motive for the crime. What might have taken place was a mere matter of speculation ; but assuming that he was murdered, and that he had received these injuries from the

hands of Probert, there must have been undoubtedly something happen previously ; supposing these injuries were inflicted in this manner, it was quite clear they must get rid of him from off the boat ; and if he was removed from the boat, was it possible for one person to do it, remove a helpless paralysed man? The jury might assume there was more than one way of removing him from the boat. He might have been thrown by one person on the boat to another on the towing-path, and his legs and lower part of his body slipped into the canal, and that might account for the saturated condition in which they found his trousers. The evidence of the witness James was of the highest importance. (The Coroner here read James's evidence). When James heard of the deceased being left, he acted like any human man would under the circumstances. He not only went back himself, but took one of his men with him, and these two with Probert went back along the towing-path. Before they had gone more than two or three hundred yards, Probert, with the most (.....) indifference, refused to go any further (.....) not going to allow his horse to stand (.....) and that it was not at Egg Bridge but at Halfway Bridge that deceased was lost. So in the first place Probert came with a lie in his mouth. The jury must take into consideration the conduct of Probert in forsaking the man he ought to have protected ; for in a certain sense he stood towards him as an employer to a servant ; but instead of looking after him, he refused to go further, as much as to say, "Let him take care of himself, and come back when he chooses". The Coroner then referred to the evidence given by the lad John Jones, and said it was very clear that Mrs Probert felt very uncomfortable on the Sunday night with respect to the absence of deceased. He (the Coroner) must say that in the whole course of his experience he never met with a more heartless and cruel case than this, because supposing deceased had met with an accident, everyone would expect Probert to lend him assistance. Probert must have known what his condition was. It was a physical impossibility for the deceased to have placed himself where he was found, and he (the Coroner) could not help thinking that deceased received his injuries on the boat and was subsequently removed from it ; and judging from the conduct of Probert and his wife, he had very little doubt but that they were the parties to be held responsible. He considered this a case of so much importance that the jury would not be performing their duty if they failed to fix the responsibility on one or other of the prisoners.

The room was then cleared of all except the jury, who remained to deliberate their verdict.

The prisoner John Probert subsequently intimated his wish to make a statement, upon which the Coroner cautioned him in the usual way. He said he still wished to do so, and stated : My name is **John Probert**. On Sunday week afternoon I was called on the boat *Snipe*. I got off mine and went on the *Snipe*, and there was a tea basin about three parts full of sherry. Humphrey asked me to drink, and I drank it. Below Bate's Mill lock, he asked my man to come on, and he went and remained until arriving at the third bridge. The deceased then came on our boat, and told the missus he had had some rum. He did not tell me he had had anything. We got our tea, and I then said, "Charles, one of us must go to the horse. If we get far behind that boat we shall be locked out". I meant the *Snipe*, and off he went with the whip in his hand. How he got off I cannot say. My missus said, "Charles is in the cut". Upon that I came out, and then saw he was on the bank out of the cut. I said, "Charles, come on the boat", and he seemed stupid. I asked him three times to come on the boat, but he gave me no answer. I let the mare go on herself quietly, thinking he would follow us. We went on till we got to the next bridge, and I said to the missus, "It's no use waiting, he don't intend to catch us". I said we had better go on and catch this boat, and so we did. When we came through Farm House Bridge, deceased was coming on through the bridge on behind. The missus asked of the people on the *Snipe* where was Tom, and they said he was lying down. The missus said, "Our man has stopped behind", and asked them to stop the boats and look for him. They did so, and when within a hundred yards of Egg Bridge they asked me where did we leave him. I said in the "straight" beyond Farm House Bridge. He said, "I understood your missus that it was Egg Bridge he was at. If he's there, I'm not going back". I said, "If you cannot come, I cannot, for I've only the missus with me". I never had a wrong word with him during the time he was with me – 10 days.

Jane Probert, wife of James Probert, made the following statement : Before we came to Bate's Mill

lock, Tom Jones called my master on his boat. When we came to the lock there was a pair of boats in the lock. The wind blew our boat and the *Snipe* to the other side. I went on to James's boat to see what they were doing. They had got a brown can containing something I thought was ale. There was a basin full as well. Tom James asked me to drink, and I said, "No thank you ; I do not drink any ale". He said, "It's not ale ; this will do you no harm", and I then drank. I asked my master to come out, and he came on board his own boat. Charles then jumped on to the *Snipe*, and continued on to the third bridge, when three men jumped off the *Snipe* together, and my man came on board and had his tea. He had a basin of tea and a plate of mutton. He then jumped off with a whip in his hand, and he slipped and fell on the coping, and he fell into the canal. His whole body was not in. He got himself out, and it was but very little time before he was out. My master came out and said, "Charles, come on the boat", three times. He followed us a long way, and then he did not seem to keep up with us. When my master saw that he was hanging behind, he said, "Jane, you had better keep on and catch these people", (meaning the *Snipe*), and I did so. We soon caught the boat, and Rowlands was steering. I asked Rowlands where was Tom, and he said he was lying down. I asked him to tell him to get up, and he did so. I said to him, "Tom, I'm very sorry you have given him drink. He don't seem as usual since he came off the boat". I then asked him to go with my husband and fetch him. Three of them started to go back, my husband and two others, but they did not go very far. When they came back, I said, "You rascals, you never went, you only want a little more of that stuff". Tom said, "He's not that bad but that he can come on. He's old enough and big enough". I said, "He's tumbled down". My husband said, "If you go on, Tom, I shall come on, and batter you down the locks. We shall tie up at Chester and wait for him", and we did so. We never saw him again.

The jury were then again left to consider their verdict, and shortly afterwards returned a verdict of "Wilful murder" against John Probert and his wife. The woman was then taken into custody ; and the Coroner committed them for trial on the capital charge at the next Cheshire Summer Assizes.

27 5 May 1877

THE SUSPECTED MURDER AT WAVERTON

EXAMINATION OF THE PRISONERS BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES On Thursday, at a Special Petty Session held at the Egerton Arms, Broxton, Mr R O Orton being the only magistrate present, **John Probert**, boatman, and **Jane Probert**, his wife, were charged with feloniously killing and slaying **Charles Mostyn**, a boatman, on the night of the 15th or early in the morning of the 16th of April last.

Mr Superintendent Wilson, in opening the case, said that the prisoners were employed on board the canal boat the *Usk*, and deceased was employed under them. On the evening of the 15th ult, they were seen together on the boat, but early next morning the deceased was found by some other boatmen in a dying condition on the canal bank, and a subsequent examination proved that his neck was dislocated. An inquiry had been held before the Coroner, which had resulted in a verdict of wilful murder against both the prisoners.

Mr Cartwright again appeared for the defence.

The first witness called was,

Dr W C Watson, surgeon, Chester, who recapitulated his evidence as given before the Coroner, and already published *in extenso* in the columns of the *Guardian*. In answer to the Clerk, witness said that violence must have been used to cause the injuries. The effect of such injuries would be immediate paralysis of all muscles below the injured part, and deceased would be perfectly incapable of moving. It would not cause immediate death. There was no trace of drink of any kind. If sherry had been taken into the stomach, I should have expected to find some trace of it.

By Mr Orton : The scratches on deceased's face were as if he had rubbed them on the soil.

By the Clerk : An ordinary fall on a flat surface could not have caused such injuries. If a rope had become entangled round his neck, it is more likely that the first and second vertebrae would have given way, causing instant death as in hanging. If he had fallen against the canal cop or bank, it would not have done it.

Cross-examined by Mr Cartwright : I observed a small scar under the chin. It was merely a small abrasion of the skin, of the same nature as the other scars described. I think the injury to the neck might have been done by pressing the head violently forward. They could not have been done by pressing the neck backward, apart from the appearance of any external injury ; in my opinion direct sustained pressure on the neck would not have caused such injuries. If a rope had been twisted round his neck, my opinion is that the injuries could not have been sustained. I should have expected to find some marks. In cases of strangulation we generally find marks. I do not think it was caused by the kick of a horse. There would in that case have been an external bruise and crushing of the vertebrae, and no rupture of the ligaments. The parts would have been crushed instead of being torn in the manner in which they were found. I would not say that the injuries would require more force than a horse could kick. A kick from a horse would not produce such an injury as I found. I did not see the deceased's clothing. I understood he had on a sleeve waistcoat (articles produced). Notwithstanding his wearing these articles, I should still have expected to have found external injuries if the deceased had sustained a kick from a horse. I should think it possible that a man might live with such injuries for a day or two. There was an immediate compression of the spinal marrow, and from that he died. There was no fracture of the skull, and the brain was perfect.

John Morris, boatman employed on the *Start*, proved finding the deceased on the canal bank, early on the morning of the 16th ult. Had seen him alive and well at Bate's Mill on the previous evening. He was then quite sober.

Edward Parry junior recapitulated his previous evidence as to his taking deceased on board his boat, and sending for some brandy, and ultimately handing the body to the police officer. He added that subsequently on arriving at Chester he met Probert and the other boatmen at a public house kept by a man named Pritchard, but said that nothing relative to the case transpired there.

By Mr Cartwright : There were only two or three men at Pritchard's. The matter was not talked about while I was there. This was on the Monday night. I saw Mrs Probert on the *Usk*, but did not speak to her. I went into Pritchard's with my father, and when I got there I saw Probert.

By the Bench : Morris was in Pritchard's. Ellesmere Port is 9 miles from Chester, and it would take about three hours to travel that distance. Witness added the following additional evidence. I went on to Ellesmere Port and saw Probert there. He jumped off the boat, and asked witness if he had seen Charley anywhere, and witness told him he had found him dead. This was about four o'clock in the afternoon. Mrs Probert was present, and no one else.

Cross-examined by Mr Cartwright : When Probert had finished speaking, a man named Thomas King came and called him to go on his boat, and he went. He said to Probert, "Come, John, I want you quick". Probert went on board immediately. It would take a fly boat such as the *Usk* about an hour to come from Bate's Mill to where the deceased was found. Deceased was covered with slutch, as if he had been rolled in the mud. He had never known deceased to drink anything, and had known him about 12 months. He was a quiet inoffensive man. Witness had once seen a man lying on the canal side asleep. Some boatmen were unsteady, and occasionally the boats went on without them.

Edward Parry senior, father to last witness, gave corroborative evidence, and said that he had known deceased only three months. When he saw deceased lying on the bank, he at first thought he had been kicked by a horse. He went and fetched some brandy and gave some to deceased, but he could not swallow any. He knew Pritchard's public house at Chester, but did not remember going there on the Monday.

John Owen also repeated his former evidence, adding that he spoke to Probert at Ellesmere Port on the Monday afternoon, and told him they had found the deceased on the canal bank. Probert said, "Well, whose fault is it?", and witness replied, "I don't know". A man then came and hurried Probert off to his horse. That was the only conversation he had with Probert. By Mr Cartwright : Witness saw boats pass half an hour after the time on Sunday night when Probert's boat went on, but did not meet any boats on Monday till they met the "Brummagem" flyer, almost opposite where they found the deceased. The boats he saw on Sunday night were the *Ceres* and the *Stag*. They

were not fly boats, and would go much slower than the *Usk*. It would take these boats an hour and a half to go from Bate's Mill to where deceased was found. Witness had no hands on board to help him but his wife and five children.

Margaret Jones and **William Williams** repeated their evidence ; without, however, adding anything new thereto.

Joseph Boden, master of the boat *Ceres* belonging to the Shropshire Union Canal Company, deposed to seeing deceased lying on the canal bank, but did not offer to help him. In answer to questions from the Bench, he said he did not know whether he would be doing right to help him. He had never been mixed up in a case like this before.

Mr Orton remarked that the witness's conduct in leaving the deceased on the towing-path was most unfeeling.

Henry Clegg, master of the *Delhi* canal boat belonging to the Bridgewater Trustees, said : On the night of the 15th ult, I was at Beeston with my boat, and left there about 11 o'clock at night. When about three miles from there, the horse, which was going by itself, stopped for about half a minute. I smacked the whip and shouted, "Gee", and the horse went on. Witness saw nothing to make the horse stop. This occurred about three quarters of a mile from the Halfway Bridge. It was before we got to the Halfway Bridge, going from Beeston to Chester. There is no bridge between where the horse stopped and the Halfway Bridge. By the Bench : It is not an unusual thing for the horse to stop where there is a bank. It was very dark and rough, I could not see the horse. I saw Probert and his wife at Ellesmere Port next morning ; but at that time I knew nothing about the affair. By Mr Cartwright : We met no other boat on the Sunday night. My horse was accustomed to the work. I know the canal thoroughly. I have travelled up and down it now for 15 or 16 years. I know the boat had been stopped, as I felt the snatch of the rope when she started again. The mare is about 15 hands high, is 15 or 16 years of age, strong built and a quick walker. She wears blinkers and has good eyesight.

Benjamin Foster was then examined, and said : I am master of the boat *Severn*, otherwise the "Brummagen Flyer". On the 16th April I was going from Ellesmere Port to Birmingham. When halfway between Goldenbrook bridge and Nixon's bridge, I met a boat, of which John Morris was captain, and on the bank witness saw the deceased. Immediately after, he met another boat, and the witness Parry, and he asked him to put deceased on his boat, and he did so. Witness saw Probert's boat at Chester, but did not have any conversation with him there.

Police-sergeant John Palin said that in consequence of information he received, on the 16th ult he went to the Bone works bridge, Waverton, and there found a man in Parry's cabin, dead. Parry said his name was Charles Mostyn, and I got a cart and conveyed him to the Black Dog, Waverton. I then searched deceased, in the presence of several persons, and found upon him the sum of 4s 9d in silver and 8 1/4d in copper ; also a knife and tobacco pipe and box. There were bruises on his face. I afterwards examined the place where he was found, and saw prints as if from his trousers, and also marks apparently made with his hands. There was a footprint on the side of the bank.

After examining several other witnesses, whose evidence for the most part was simply a recapitulation of that given before the Coroner, and published last week, Mr Cartwright handed in a newspaper report of the statements made by the prisoners at the inquest, and asked that they might be entered on the depositions. This was accordingly done, and the prisoners were then committed to take their trial for "Wilful Murder" at the next Cheshire Summer Assizes.

28 12 May 1877

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS

CHARGE OF CRUELTY TO HORSES – HEAVY PENALTIES **Reginald Bell**, boat horse driver of Northwich, was charged with cruelly ill-treating a horse at Sutton on the 2nd May, by working it when it was in an unfit state to work. He pleaded not guilty, and was defended by Mr Dixon of Northwich. PC Martin said that on Wednesday the 2nd May, he was on duty on the river Weaver bank at Sutton, in company with PC Randall, and there saw the defendant driving a dark brown horse which was hauling a loaded flat. He examined the horse, and found on its left shoulder a

wound a little larger than a shilling, and on the top of the neck, under the collar, there was another wound about the size of a crown piece. The defendant said he was employed by **Mr Hough** of Northwich to drive the horse. He was not a weekly man, but was engaged as an odd man at 3s a journey. The masters paid all the fines of the weekly men, but not those of men engaged like him. By Mr Dixon : the flat was a large one, having, he should think, a tonnage of from 80 to 100 tons. PC Randall gave corroborative evidence. Mr Dixon, for the defence, said it would have been more satisfactory if a duly qualified veterinary surgeon had been called to prove the case instead of policemen, who did not know anything about a horse, and could scarcely tell one when they saw it. (Laughter). Mr Hough, the owner of the horse in question, had 13 horses hauling on the river Weaver, and he was very careful not to have any of them turned out if unfit to work. He constantly employed a stable man to look after the horses, and a person named Minshull, who had been amongst horses for 40 years, came daily to inspect them, and was paid a yearly salary for so doing. He (Mr Dixon) had no hesitation in saying that the wounds alleged to be on the horse were not old ones, or the owner of the horse would have been summoned. He then called George Hough, who said he resided at Northwich, and was owner of the horse in question. He had 13 hauling horses at Northwich. He regularly employed a stable man to look after them, and also did so himself, and no horse was ever allowed to go out if not in a fit state to work. He also paid a yearly salary to a person named Minshull, who inspected the horses every day. The horse in question left his stables between four and five o'clock in the morning, and when it returned in the afternoon there was not any wound on the shoulder nor on its chine, though on the latter a little hair was off, and it had been working ever since. By Superintendent Steen : He had been summoned once. Mr Dixon objected to the question. Mr Campbell then asked witness if he had ever been fined for allowing any of his horses to work in an unfit state. Mr Dixon objected to the question, and told his client not to answer it, lest he might criminate himself, which the law did not require him to do. Mr Day (clerk to the magistrates) then handed to the Bench a document showing that the witness had been fined for allowing a horse to work in an unfit state. Mr Dixon protested against the document being shown to the magistrates, who sat there not only as judges but as a jury, and it was never the custom to inform a jury of a previous conviction until after they had found an accused person guilty. Mr Day said when the witness stated that none of his horses were ever allowed to go out in an unfit state to work, and his solicitor objected to his answering a question put to him on the subject both by the police and the Bench, it was but right that the magistrates should know the real facts of the case. Mr Dixon then called William Minshull, who said he was a blacksmith and farrier, and had been working amongst horses for 40 years. He saw the horse in question on the 2nd May, after the police had stopped it from working, and there was nothing the matter with it. There was a little hair off the chine, but the shoulder was perfectly sound. John Hooley said he was stable man in the employ of Mr Hough, and saw the horse on its return to the stable, and it had no wound upon it. The Bench said they would not give their decision in this case until they had heard the two others on the list. **John Wilkinson**, boat horse driver of Northwich, was charged with cruelly ill-treating a horse at Middleton on the 2nd May, by working it when it was in an unfit state to work, and **George Hough**, boat horse owner of Northwich, was charged with cruelly ill-treating the same horse by causing it to work. PC Martin and PC Randall stated the case, and in the course of their evidence said that prior to being police officers they had several years' experience amongst horses, the former at a farm and the latter at a horsebreaker's establishment. On the day in question, they were examining a horse at the Weaver bank at Middleton, and while so doing saw a man unhook a horse from a flat which it was hauling, and turn back with it. He tried to make it gallop, but it was in such poor condition that it fell down, and the man then left it and jumped on board the flat which the horse had been hauling. The horse had a large wound on its chine, also two wounds on its off shoulder, and on the left shoulder there was also a large wound. They took the horse to a stable near, where it remained until the following Friday, when it was fetched away by the defendant Wilkinson. Reginald Bell said the man who ran away from the horse was **William Gorst**, the boatman, but the defendant Wilkinson took the horse out of the stable in the morning. Mr Dixon, for the defence, said he should prove by evidence that the police had very much exaggerated the case. He then called William Minshull,

who said that he saw the horse, and all that ailed it was a small wound on one shoulder, about the size of a fourpenny bit, caused by a boat lamp. John Hooley, the stable man of the defendant Hough, gave similar evidence. Mr Campbell said the Bench believed the evidence of the two police officers, for it was plain and straightforward, but that for the defence was not. The defendant Bell must therefore pay a fine of 40s and 21s 6d costs, and in default be imprisoned for six weeks ; Wilkinson must pay a fine of 40s and 18s 6d costs, or go to prison for two months ; and Hough must pay a fine of £5 and 18s 6d costs, with the alternative of three months' imprisonment, and if he came again on a similar charge, he would be committed to prison without the option of a fine. The whole of the money, £12 18s 6d, was paid.

29 16 May 1877

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS

GAME TRESPASS CASE **Peter Perrin, William Nettle** and **Henry Hankinson**, three boatmen, were charged with trespassing in pursuit of game on the 9th of May on land at Norton in the occupation of Thomas Acton. They pleaded not guilty. George Hargreaves, assistant keeper to Sir Richard Brooke, said about nine o'clock in the evening of the 9th May he saw the three defendants rooting up rabbit burrows with sticks and pieces of rails. The defendant Nettle was in the field, and the other two defendants were in the ditch by the side of the road. He asked them what they were doing, and they said they were not doing anything wrong. He searched them, and found in Perrin's pockets the half dozen snares produced. Thomas Jones, a labourer, gave corroborative evidence. In defence, Perrin said he was not searching for game. It was true that he had the snares on him, but he was not going to use them. Nettle said he was not in the field searching for game, but looking for some watercress, and when asked for his name he gave it, and also a piece of paper on which to write it ; and Hankinson said he was never out of the road. The Bench ordered each of the defendants to pay a fine of 10s, and 13s 6d costs, and in default to be imprisoned for 14 days. They paid the money.

30 26 May 1877

A FLAT IN COLLISION On Monday night about half past eleven o'clock, as the flat *Jenny*, from Northwich, laden with salt, was proceeding down the Mersey, she came into collision with an emigrant ship which was at anchor between Egremont and New Brighton. The flat was towed clear by the Wallasey Ferryboat *Waterlily*, and sank near Egremont ferry. The crew left the flat in their boat.

31 27 June 1877

WHITCHURCH

A VIOLENT FELLOW At the Magistrates' Court on Friday, before the Hon E Kenyon, **Francis Trow**, boatman, was brought up in custody, on remand, charged with being drunk. It was intended to make the charge one of assault on the police, but in order that there might not be a further remand, it was reduced to one of simple drunkenness. PC Lewis stated that he was on duty in Mill Street at eleven o'clock on the previous Tuesday night. He found prisoner lying asleep by the Canal Wharf. When he awoke him, he (prisoner) struck him a violent blow in the eye, which nearly knocked him down. He then took hold of him. Prisoner struck him again ; they had a "tussle" and both went down together. While on the ground prisoner struck him several times. Witness laid hold of him, got him on his back, and after some time succeeded in putting the handcuffs on him and taking him to the lock ups. Prisoner admitted being drunk, but he was not questioned as to the assault. Superintendent Haines said when the officer came in to the Penny Bank he was nearly covered with blood. Prisoner was fined 10s and 8s 6d costs. In default of finding the money, he was committed for seven days' hard labour.

32 8 August 1877

THE CANAL BILL AND NANTWICH Mr J A Davenport's connection with Mr George Smith in

the promotion of the Canal Bill which has lately passed through committee in the House of Commons, has brought him a variety of correspondence from those who are wishful to do good to the canal population. Mr George Smith FSA wrote him on Friday as follows :- "My Dear Sir, - Thank God the Canal Bill has passed through committee, and years of toil brought to a close". Mr Davenport has also lately received 50 copies of "Hand and Heart", an illustrated journal, for distribution among the boatmen. **Mr Harriss**, the canal manager at Audlem, writes that the men receive them gladly. Copies have also been sent to the Basin at Nantwich, where they have been distributed by **Mr Clay**, the canal manager at Nantwich. At the latter place Mr Davenport has been endeavouring to make arrangements for Sunday service for the boatpeople, and in reply to a letter he addressed to the Rev R S Redfern, Vicar of Acton, in whose district the canal basin lies, he has received a letter promising hearty co-operation. The Rev R V Barker of Nantwich has promised to take the opening services, and it is probable that several other clergymen will lend their aid. The services will be held in one of the rooms at the wharf. Altogether, we may look forward to some amelioration of the condition of what is at present a degraded and ignorant class of people.

33 22 August 1877

RUNCORN POLICE COURT

ROBBING HIS EMPLOYER **Enoch Rollinson** was charged with having, on the 4th March 1876 in the township, stolen £3 5s in money, also one jacket, one vest, one muffler, one hat and two pairs of stockings, the goods and money of **Edwin Tuckey**, his master. Edwin Tuckey said that on the 4th of March last year he was master of two narrowboats called the *Mary* and *Letitia*, belonging to Messrs Joseph Verdin and Sons of Winsford, and was at Marston with his boats. The prisoner was at that time in his employ as hand, and had been for about three months, and was in the habit of sleeping with him on board the *Letitia*. On the night of the 4th March they had been ashore, and returned to the boats together about ten o'clock, and he (witness) went to bed at once, leaving the prisoner up getting his supper. He awoke about three o'clock the following morning, and found that the prisoner had gone. He also missed £3 in gold and 5s in silver, which he had safe in a purse in his inside waistcoat pocket before going to bed. He also missed a vest, a jacket, a muffler, a hat and two pairs of stockings, which he had seen safe in the cabin the night before. He gave information to the police, and since then from time to time looked out for the prisoner, but had not seen him until the day before, when he caused him to be apprehended at Moore. He was there when he was apprehended, and heard him say to PC Quinn that he knew him (witness) and had gone with him as hand in Verdin's boat. He also heard the police officer ask him, "What made you leave him?", and the prisoner replied "I stole some money off him, and some clothes, and got drunk at Macclesfield ; and somebody robbed me of the clothes". PC Quinn said he went with the previous witness to Moore on the previous day, and there found the prisoner on board a canal boat. He took him ashore to where the last witness was, and said to him, "Do you know this man?" He said, "Yes, I went with him as hand on Verdin's boat, and I stole some money off him, and some clothes, and got drunk at Macclesfield, and someone robbed me of the clothes". He then took him into custody and charged him with stealing on the 4th March 1876 the sum of £3 5s in money, also a jacket, a vest, a muffler, a hat and two pairs of stockings, the property of his employer, Edward Tuckey, from on board the boat *Letitia* of Marston, and he made no reply. The prisoner, who made no defence, was committed for trial.

34 29 September 1877

NANTWICH PETTY SESSIONS

CANAL MEN BROACHING CARGO **William Grimes** and **Thomas Bromley**, boatmen, were brought up on a charge of stealing a quantity of currants, the property of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company. Another charge of broaching cargo was also preferred against **Edward Parry** and **John Parry** (father and son) and **John Ellis**, and the prisoners were remanded until Saturday.

35 29 December 1877

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY AND "OUR CANAL POPULATION" Mr George Smith of Coalville has received a letter from the secretary of the above society, in which he says the committee are interested to hear of his good work among the canal boats, and to show their interest in the matter, have made him a free grant of one hundred Testaments of good type for distribution among the boatmen and their families.

36 30 January 1878

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

BREACH OF THE RIVER WEAVER NAVIGATION BYE LAWS **John Poole** was charged with, that he being the master of a certain boat or vessel called the *James* navigating the river Weaver, did on the 14th January at Weston so moor the same vessel as to be an obstruction to the passage of the traffic, and that he did also refuse to remove the same when requested. He pleaded not guilty. Captain Clark, harbour master at Weston Point, appeared to prosecute on behalf of the River Weaver Trustees, and produced the bye laws for the regulation of the traffic of the river Weaver and canal. **John Musgrave** said he was lock tender at Weston Point, and was on duty there on the 14th January. The basin was not level, and Poole moored his vessel on the hauling side of it, which was contrary to the bye laws, and when the basin became level he placed his vessel in a berth in which she should not have been, and when he told him to move her, he said he would not. He went to him again a second time, and told him to move the vessel as she was obstructing traffic, and he said he would not do so either for him or his master. John Penny said he was deputy harbour master at Weston Point, and on Monday after the 14th January, prior to the basin being level with the canal, the defendant asked to be allowed to put his vessel at the lower end of the basin, and he told him he could not do so. On the following morning, Tuesday, he (witness) was informed that he had put his vessel in an improper berth where there were six vessels abreast, and he went to him. After some difficulty he saw the defendant in the cabin of his vessel, and asked him how he came to be out of his turn and had taken up a wrong berth, and he said he had not done so. He (witness) told him to move his vessel astern, but he did not and made no attempt to do so until after the basin was off and some five or six flats were aground, three of which, belonging to Mr Deakin, could not get out to Liverpool that tide to load vessels which were on demurrage. By the defendant : There was plenty of room for him to have gone astern. Defendant said that a packet and barge came through the lock, and he asked the captain of the packet if he was going into the new basin, for had he done so, it would have been his duty to go into the old basin. It took them an hour and a half to decide where to go, and the barge then came and obstructed the way. Captain Clark said the defendant had no right to take any notice of what the captain of the barge said to him. When he first came to Weston, each boatman thought he had a right to do as he thought proper, and the consequence was there was great confusion and irregularity ; but subsequently bye laws had been adopted and printed, and they were bound to obey them. Mr Darglish : That is quite correct, and but for them the boatmen would only be regular in their irregularity. The Bench ordered the defendant to pay a fine of 40s and 11s 6d costs, and in default to be imprisoned for 28 days with hard labour.

37 27 April 1878

CANAL BOATS Every canal boat which is used as a dwelling must after the 30th of June next be registered after inspection by a competent person, and the following are among the conditions which must be complied with before such registration will be granted :- The boat shall contain a clean and weatherproof cabin, which shall be, if an after cabin, of a capacity of not less than 180, and if a fore cabin not less than 80 cubic feet, and shall possess means of ventilation other than by the door. One cabin at least shall possess a stove and a chimney. If the boat is meant for the conveyance of offensive cargo, then between the cargo and the cabin there shall be placed two bulkheads separated by a space of not less than 4 in, which space should be open to the air, and shall be furnished with a pump to ensure its ready and effectual cleansing. The number of persons who may dwell in a boat is so regulated that every person over twelve shall have at least 60, and

every person under twelve at least 40, cubic feet of space. A cabin occupied as a sleeping place by a husband and wife shall not be occupied by any other female person above the age of twelve, or by any other male person above the age of fourteen. A cabin occupied as a sleeping place by a person of the male sex above the age of 14 years shall not at any time be occupied as a sleeping place by a person of the female sex above the age of 12 years, unless she be the wife of the male occupant. Every canal boat is to be properly pumped out every 24 hours, and painted every three years. In case of serious illness occurring on board a boat, the master of the boat is required to notify the same to the sanitary authority of the district through which the boat happens to be at the time passing, and "in every case where a sanitary authority may have detained a canal boat for the cleansing and inspection thereof, the authority, before allowing the boat to proceed on its journey, shall obtain from the medical officer of health, or from some other legally qualified practitioner, a certificate to the effect that the boat has been duly cleansed and disinfected, and shall cause such certificate to be delivered to the master of the boat".

38 8 May 1878

WORK AMONG CANAL BOATMEN AT CHESTER

THE CHESTER BOATMAN'S BETHEL The following article, written by the Rev P W Darnton of the Queen Street Congregational Chapel, Chester, appears in this week's "*Christian*" and will no doubt be read with great interest by our readers.

The condition of the canal population has long been a stigma on our boasted Christian civilisation and enterprise. No class of people is perhaps more difficult to reach and needs more peculiar methods of approach than the inhabitants of our canal boats. They are to a large extent cut off from the ordinary life of our towns and villages ; no Education Act reaches them ; no sanitary regulations touch their dwellings. They seem to have been overlooked by the Christian churches generally, and it is owing to the indomitable energy and self denial of Mr George Smith of Coalville that at length the attention of the Legislature has been directed to these people, and an Act which promises to be a beneficent means of rescuing many thousands of our countrymen from a semi barbarous life has been passed, and will soon come into force.

The condition of this most neglected portion of our population may be gathered from an article written by the Rev T Robjohns of Hull, in the December number of the "Christian World Magazine". From that article I borrow a few statistics, premising, however, that these figures are only approximate, there being no means of obtaining exact returns.

It is calculated that there are probably some 240,000 canal boats plying upon our 4.800 miles of canals. That there are about 220,000 persons employed in connection with this traffic, a very large number of whom live entirely on board the boats. The cabins in which these people live would, I am afraid, bear but poor comparison with an African kraal. About eight or nine feet square, they form the only living and sleeping accommodation for the boatman and his family – often five or six persons. We are not surprised to find the mental and moral condition of the canal population deplorably low. About 25 per cent of the whole are unable to read or write, and nearly 60 per cent of the couples are unmarried.

About twelve months since, the wretchedly ignorant and debased condition of these people came clearly before the public in connection with a trial for murder in the neighbourhood of Chester. The revelations made during the trial startled many who had been ignorant almost of the existence of such a class of people – certainly of their demoralised and utterly neglected state. The heart of one Christian lady in the city of Chester was deeply moved by this story of crime and ignorance, as she lay upon a sick bed, and she determined that if God should spare her life, she would do something to help and teach these poor and half forgotten people. It was not difficult to interest many benevolent people in the project, though some, of whom better things might have been expected, looked askance or coldly at the scheme. The Canal Company was communicated with, and the manager, being a man of earnest piety, gave himself heartily to the subject. A large "flat" was given by the Company, called the "*Oak*", repaired, caulked, painted and handed over to us as the foundation of our Bethel. Upon the flat (about forty five feet in length and fifteen feet wide) we

erected a wooden building, loft, light and cheerfully – even elegantly – painted. The building was divided into two portions – a small room for the children, and a larger one for the adults. The latter will seat, when filled with chairs and forms, about eighty or one hundred persons. The interior of both rooms has been made as bright and cheery as possible, with illuminated texts and pictures, and the whole is well warmed by gas stoves. The boat is moored to rings in the canal bank, especially placed by the Company.

It happened that among our various organisations for Christian work we had an institution called “The Compassionate Society”, composed of a number of pious earnest working men, who spent their leisure hours on Sunday in visiting the sick poor. In that Society, we saw the instrument for our purpose. As though Providence had foreseen the nature and needs of this new work, the superintendent and leader of this band of Christian men had himself begun life as a boatman. He was a man eminently fitted, both by natural ability and divine grace, for work among this class of persons, and ever since the Bethel has been opened, he and his companions have borne the chief burden and done a great part of the work.

The Bethel was completed by the end of 1877, and early in the present year was opened by the Mayor of the city, ministers of various denominations taking part in the opening meeting. This first Sunday afternoon, a free tea was provided for all the boatpeople who could be found. They were a little shy at first, but a goodly number came, and an interesting service was held. We felt quite uncertain whether the numbers which were attracted by the “tea” could be maintained without such an attraction ; but to our intense gratitude we find that these numbers have been considerably increased. The attendance fluctuates according to the number of boats at the station, and while it has risen to seventy, it has fallen as low as twenty four. The average for the three months just ended has been, of children in the afternoons, nineteen, and of all classes at the evening service, forty eight. About ninety four children have passed under the teachers' notice during the three months, for it seldom happens that the same persons are present on two consecutive Sundays. It is one of the chief difficulties of the work, that with the exception of a few who have houses on shore, the congregation does not repeat itself for some five or six weeks.

That the boatpeople appreciate the effort made for their welfare is quite evident from the fact that when they come back to Chester they almost invariably come to the Bethel of their own accord. On the Sunday previous to the day on which I am writing, fifty seven people came to the evening service, not one of whom had been solicited to attend. Other indications from time to time appear of the interest felt by many of the people themselves in the services. Conversations have been overheard, which give the key to the character and condition of the speakers, and indicate how they look upon the work we are doing. “How should we know anything”, said a man the other day to a companion after the evening service, “when we never go to any place to hear it – no chapel, nor anywheres else? We know nothing but eating and drinking, and cursing and swearing, and steering and driving”. “Good bye, and God bless you for the words I have heard tonight”, said another, on taking leave of the leader of the meeting. “Well, do you like it?”, said a boatman to his wife, as they were going back to their boat. “I haven't spent such a happy hour in all my life, as I can remember”, was her reply. “Well”, said the man, “I've worked harder on Sunday than any day of the week for a many years, but this has been a happy day, and I tell thee what – if thou'lt stick to it, I will”.

Notwithstanding that so few of the men can read, the little lending library we provided has proved too small for the demand. No less than fifty two persons have borrowed books – some several times ; and if they cannot read themselves, there is generally someone at hand who can manage to make sense out of a book, and the art of acquiring knowledge is almost as new and delightful to many of these people as to the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands.

It will be seen, I think, that there is an extremely important and most interesting sphere of labour open to those who dwell near any of the stopping stations upon our canals. When we consider the isolation of the boatpeople from our ordinary shore life, and the utter absence among them of “Sunday clothes”, or indeed of any clothes except the roughest and rudest garments, we cannot expect them to enter our churches and mingle with well dressed congregations. The Gospel must be

taken to them ; and there are no people known to me who are so accessible and ready to receive instruction, and withal so grateful, as those known as the canal population.

In conclusion, I should like to point out one or two features of our work to which, I think, we owe – under the blessing of God – the encouraging success which has hitherto attended it.

In the first place, the Bethel is a floating structure. No one who has had anything to do with sailors or persons accustomed to the water will fail to see the value of this. Then, secondly, the Bethel is exclusively for the canal people. With the exception of those who conduct the meetings, no one but persons engaged on the canal is permitted to enter. Again and again, refusals have to be made to persons belonging to other classes who wish to attend the meetings. Even the wives and friends of those who are engaged in the work are dissuaded from attending. The boatpeople have been told that the Bethel belongs to them. Whenever it is open they are welcome to enter, either to attend a school or service, or to sit and read, or look at the books and pictures. So long as they find no one there but persons of their own class, many of whom they know well, there is not fear of their deserting the Bethel.

And once more the services are conducted by the right class of men, in the freest and least formal manner – addresses, short, simple, even “rough and ready”, delivered by men who can talk the language and refer to the life of those they address.

The workers in connection with the Bethel meet every Sunday morning “on board” for special prayer ; and as their prayers are always “special”, they obtain answers to their petitions, and the blessing of God is manifestly resting upon their labours. The good seed is being sown in new and unusual places, in soil which seems unpropitious, but already we see that we dare not judge by appearance, and there are signs of a blessed harvest.

A footnote is added by the editor which we heartily re-echo, and cannot do better than give it in full. “We insert the foregoing with deep satisfaction, and are sorry to learn that the original cost of the Bethel has not been completely defrayed. Books, illustrated papers, &c, for the library are also needed”. We are also desired to call attention to the fact that Mr Webster, photographer, Chester, has taken a photograph of the Bethel, and copies of the same will be on sale in a few days. Thus a good opportunity for doing good will present itself, and we hope that it will be fully taken advantage of.

39 5 June 1878

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

CHARGE OF ASSAULT **Joseph Bell**, a boatman, was charged with having on the 27th April at Runcorn assaulted, beaten and kicked **William Ellis**. He pleaded guilty to the charge of having struck the complainant but denied having kicked him. Complainant said he was a boatman, and about half past ten o'clock at night on the 27th April was lying down, being very drunk, on board one of Mr Taylor's boats, when the defendant came to him, struck him, kicked him and broke his jaw, and he lost a great deal of blood. He had not been able to get any of his witnesses to appear, and he wished the case to be adjourned so that he could subpoena them. The Bench adjourned the case for five weeks, for the production of witnesses, and also to enable the defendant, who trades by canal between Runcorn and London, to be present without unnecessary inconvenience.

BREACH OF THE PEACE **John Larkin**, a boatman, was charged with committing a breach of the peace on the 26th May, with a man who had decamped. **Peter Pendlebury** said he was a constable on the Bridgewater Canal, and on Sunday the 26th May, when on duty at the Locks at Runcorn, saw a crowd of persons on the canal bank, and on going there found the defendant and another man stripped and fighting together. He ordered them away, and they then went into the Duke's Field to have the fight out, but he followed them there, and ordered them away, and they went. In defence, the defendant now said that the other man struck him three times because he had a few nights before refused to allow him to sleep in the cabin of his boat. The Bench ordered the defendant to be bound over in his recognisance in the sum of £10 to keep the peace for six months, and to pay 11s 6d costs.

CHARGE OF USING THREATS **William Ellis**, a boatman, was charged with having on the 31st May, at Runcorn, used threats to **Mary Bell**. He pleaded not guilty. Complainant said she was the wife of **Joseph Bell**, a boatman (who had that morning appeared in that court to a summons charging him with having assaulted the defendant), and on the 31st May, as she was sitting on her boat about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the defendant called her foul names, but she took no notice of him and went into the cabin. In the afternoon and in the evening, when she was sitting on a chair sewing in Mr Tucker's house at the bottom of the Vine Yard, the defendant again cursed her, called her foul names, and said if Joe Bell had broken his jaw, he could break 14 jaws. Defendant said he had not any questions to ask the woman respecting what she had said, as he did not know her, and had never seen her before. **Joseph Booth** said he was a canal constable, and on Friday night last was at the Top Locks and heard the defendant, who was in his boat on the opposite side of the canal, cursing Joseph Bell and his wife. He (witness) called to him to make less noise or he would come to him ; and as he continued to swear as before, he got one of the county police constables to accompany him to the defendant's boat, and he there told him that if he did not desist he would lock him up. Defendant said the witness had been squared by the complainant. PC Speed said he went with the previous witness to the defendant's boat. He could not tell all that the defendant said, but he heard him swear and make use of bad language, and the name of Joseph Bell. The defendant was drunk in the cabin of his boat. The magistrates recalled the witness Booth, and he said he did not hear the defendant use any threats, but only foul language. The Bench ordered the defendant to be bound over to keep the peace for six months, himself in £10 and two sureties in £5 each, and in default to be imprisoned for a month with hard labour.

40 3 August 1878

DEATH OF MR THOMAS BEDDOWS OF RUNCORN It is this week our melancholy duty to record the death of **Mr Thomas Beddows**, the local resident agent at Runcorn of the Bridgewater Navigation Company Limited, which was briefly announced in Wednesday's Guardian, and which took place at his residence, Mersey View, Runcorn, after a few days' illness, on Tuesday last. The deceased was in the fifty first year of his age, having been born on the 24th of March 1827 at Horwich in Lancashire. He was the son of Mr William Beddows, yeoman, and about the year of (?1860?) came to Runcorn, and was employed as a clerk in the offices of the Bridgewater Trustees. He was shortly afterwards removed to Stockton Quay, and took up his residence in Latchford near Warrington. Subsequently he was appointed resident agent of the Bridgewater Trustees at Macclesfield, where he remained several years, and won the esteem and respect of all who knew him. He took a deep interest in Sunday School work, and all that concerned the welfare and improvement of the young ; and on leaving Macclesfield to assume the duties of agent for the Bridgewater Trustees of Manchester, was presented with an illuminated address by the members of the Macclesfield Young Men's Christian Association, which stated that the presentation was made "on his retirement as honorary secretary, an office which he held since the formation of the society (seven years) with most assured diligence and ability to make the influence of the society lasting and extensive". The address was accompanied by (?Kirts's?) Family Bible, in four volumes, handsomely bound.. He was also at the same time presented by the employees of the Bridgewater Trustees at Macclesfield with a large and beautiful chest of homeopathic medicine, for his uniform kindness to them ; and his connection with St Paul's Church Sunday School was marked by the presentation of a beautiful timepiece, bearing the following inscription :- "Presented to Mr and Mrs Beddows, by the teachers and elder scholars of St Paul's Church Sunday School, Macclesfield, as a small token of their affection and regard, and high appreciation of their long and faithful service in connection with that institution". In Manchester he pursued the same line of conduct as he had done in the places where he had previously resided, and with the like good result, and on leaving there for Stoke-on-Trent in the summer of the year 1868, was presented by the employees of the Bridgewater Trustees with a handsome tea and coffee service, bearing the following inscription :- "Presented to Mr Thomas Beddows, as a mark of esteem on the occasion of his removal to Stoke-on-Trent – Manchester, June 1868". He was also presented with an illuminated address and Bible

by the (.....) class of St Paul's Church, Hulme, Manchester, which stated that the presentation was made "for his kindness and zealous care for the welfare of the members of the class ; and as a mark of affection and gratitude for warm, earnest and self denying teaching with which we have been privileged. July 1868". After being at Stoke-on-Trent some five years and a half, he was appointed by the Bridgewater Navigation Company Limited, who had come into possession of the navigation property of the Bridgewater Trustees, to be their resident agent at Runcorn, in succession to Mr **Frederic Farrall**, and on leaving Stoke, was presented with a very elegant silver inkstand, on which was the following inscription :- "Presented by the Vicar and Sunday school teachers to their superintendent, Thomas Beddows Esq, in grateful remembrance of his devoted labours amongst them. January 1874". The deceased, in February 1874, on taking up his residence in Runcorn for the second time, at once commenced with his wonted earnestness to discharge the duties of the important office to which he had been appointed, and which he filled until his death to the satisfaction of his employer and the clerks and workmen employed under him. To the former he was a faithful and devoted servant, living and acting daily for the promotion of their interests ; and to the latter he was a kind and indulgent master, prompt in acknowledging and rewarding merit, and where obliged to censure or to punish, doing it with kindness, consideration and evident pain, and was ever ready to condone an offence on the offender showing signs of penitence and contrition. In the year 1878, on the formation of the Upper Mersey Navigation Commission, he was appointed secretary, which office he continued to hold until his decease. On entering upon his duties as agent in Runcorn of the Bridgewater Navigation Company Limited, the directors of that Company, by virtue of the powers conferred upon them by the Runcorn Improvement Act, appointed him as one of their representatives at the Board of Improvement Commissioners, the duties of which office he discharged until his death, with as much devotion and zeal as his other duties would permit. Being a Churchman, and having been formerly connected with Trinity Church, he, on again coming to reside in Runcorn, became a member of that congregation, and took an active part in everything connected therewith, and rendered efficient assistance to the clergy by reading the lessons at the Sunday services when there was only one clergyman present. At the Easter vestry meeting, he was appointed inner sidesman, and at each succeeding vestry meeting was reappointed. He was also a manager of Trinity Church schools, and one of the vice presidents of Trinity Church Young Men's Christian Association, the meeting of which he frequently attended, and deeply interested himself in its proceedings. He, however, did not limit himself to that society, but took an active part in the formation of the Runcorn Young Men's Christian Association, became one of the vice presidents and its treasurer, and until the time of his fatal sickness, took an active part in promoting its welfare. He also took a warm interest in all that tended to promote the welfare of the canal population, the boatpeople, and the sailors trading to the port at Runcorn, and was the means of establishing there a branch of the Mersey Missions to flatmen, and the appointment of a missionary to labour amongst them, whose labours he seconded to the extent of his power. Being fully persuaded that one of the greatest evils amongst the boatpeople and the lowest classes of society was drunkenness, he took a great interest in the temperance movement, and as a means to further it, advocated the opening of coffee and cocoa rooms, and was one of the principal promoters of the Runcorn Coffee and Cocoa House Company Limited, the first establishment of which was opened in Runcorn in June last, and has, so far, been attended with results far beyond the expectations of its most sanguine promoters. Only a fortnight ago on the 19th July, the deceased attended the funeral of Captain Day, apparently in his usual health ; but on the following day he complained of being unwell, and on returning home from business he took his bed, from which, although attended by Mr Moutitz, surgeon and two assistant surgeons, he never rose again, being attacked with typhoid fever and congestion of the lungs, of which he died at one o'clock on Tuesday morning last. The news of his death cast a gloom over all classes in the town, for all who knew him esteemed him and respected him ; and many did not know he was ill until they heard that he was dead. The deceased was twice married, his first marriage being in the year 1851 to Eleanor, third daughter of the late Mr W (?Carlin?) of Blackburn, who died in June 1860, leaving him with five daughters and a son, who survive him. He was again married in 1863, to Ann, youngest daughter of Mr John Adshead of Macclesfield, whose

health has been very precarious for several years, especially since she came to reside in Runcorn, and who now lies in a very reduced and critical state, her death being hourly looked for. The mortal remains of the deceased will be interred at the Runcorn Cemetery this (Friday) afternoon, and the funeral will, no doubt, be numerously attended. Since the death of the deceased, the blinds at the public offices and at the residences of several of the inhabitants have been drawn, and the flags on the vessels in the port, on the steamers at the quay, and on the tower of Trinity Church, are hoisted half mast, as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased. We also understand that with late promptings, it has been decided to postpone the annual excursion of the teachers and scholars of Trinity Church Sunday School from Thursday until the following Thursday.

41 14 August 1878

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BOATMAN AT GRAPPENHALL Mr Garside, county coroner, held an inquest at the Barry Arms Inn, Grappenhall, on Friday afternoon last, on the body of **William Burrows**, 49 years of age, a boatman in the employ of the Bridgewater Navigation Company. **Ann Burrows** said the deceased, who was her husband, left Manchester in a boat at seven o'clock on Tuesday night, the persons on board being herself, the deceased and a hand named **George Chinney**. When they had got about two miles from Lymm, the deceased, who was steering the boat, said to her, "Take hold of the tiller", which she did. The deceased then knelt down, rested his head on the hatches, and in a short time afterwards witness called out to **John Clegg**, who was on a boat behind, to assist her to manage the boat whilst her husband, who had been at work from Monday morning to Tuesday night, went to sleep. In about an hour afterwards, when the boat was between Lymm and Grappenhall, she went to the deceased to ask him to take charge of the tiller again, but she found that he was dead. She had seen nothing unusual the matter with him on the way from Manchester. The deceased had bread and butter for tea. He was not addicted to drinking and had very rarely been ill. The last time he required medical assistance, he went to Dr Wilson of Hulme, Manchester, who gave him some medicine for a cold. By the jury : Chinney was asleep in his cabin during the absence of deceased from the deck. She did not disturb the deceased for some time as she wanted him to have a good rest. She had had no disagreement with her husband, who was insured in the Company's Club in Manchester. The sum she would receive was £10. John Clegg gave corroborative evidence, and said the deceased and his wife lived on the most friendly terms.

PC Wynne of Grappenhall said he saw the body of the deceased early on Wednesday morning, and removed it to the Barry Arms Inn where he examined it. There were no marks of violence on it, excepting an old wound on the right leg. The hands were not drawn up, and the body was quite limber.

The Coroner said there was no evidence to show the cause of death. It had been clearly proved that there were no marks of violence on the body, and he thought the death was by the visitation of God. The jury were of a similar opinion, and returned a verdict as suggested by the Coroner.

42 18 January 1879

CHESTER BOATMEN'S BETHEL The first annual meeting of this excellent institution was held on Thursday at noon in the Bethel. The ex Mayor (Mr W Parish) presided, and was supported by the Revs P W Darnton, F Anderson, All Saints', Hoole ; W Durban, Baptist, Pepper Street ; Mr Sargent, Mrs Darnton, Mrs Hudson and Miss Hudson.

The proceedings were commenced by prayer by the Rev F Anderson.

The Rev P W Darnton stated that he had received a very kind note from his Grace the Duke of Westminster, regretting that another engagement prevented him from being present. They all knew the Duke had taken a great interest in the Bethel from the beginning, and gave them a very handsome donation to start with. He had also received letters from the Rev H W Lloyd of Boughton, Mr Williams of the City Road Chapel, Mr Jones, Manager of the Shropshire Union Canal, and the Rev J Donaldson, all regretting their inability to be present. The rev gentleman then read the first annual report of the Bethel.

It is with great and almost unexpected satisfaction and gratitude that we present our first annual report to the Christian public. When, twelve months ago, our present Chairman, who then filled as worthily the office of the chief magistrate of the city, kindly presided at the opening of the Bethel, though we were content to persevere in our efforts for the welfare of a neglected class of our population, we certainly did not anticipate so complete a success. But we have received so much encouragement, so many tokens of the Divine blessing, that we are filled with gratitude as we look back upon the past. While churches and congregations all around us are complaining of coldness and religious indifference, on board the Bethel there has been enthusiasm, and joy, and prosperity. As will be seen by the treasurer's report, the whole of the cost has been defrayed and the year closed with a clear balance sheet. We think we ought to say, with reference to this matter of funds, that not only have we had no difficulty in raising the money required, but it has come without any personal ministrations on our part. Donations have flowed in from all quarters, and it has been again proved that true Christian work done from pure motives, and in reliance upon God's help, is never allowed to languish for want of funds. We have received great help from a lady well known in the circles of Christian society in Chester – Miss Churton – who has voluntarily collected a considerable amount on behalf of the Bethel, and whose name will, we hope, be a guarantee of the simple and thoroughly unsectarian nature of our work. And we should also mention with expressions of much appreciation and gratitude the name of Miss Price who, though a member of the congregation of Christ Church, has rendered most valuable help as the teacher of our Sunday afternoon children's class. With respect to the attendance at the services, we have even greater reason for thankfulness. It has happened, we believe, that every boat family in Chester has been on board the Bethel on a Sunday evening, and a visitor might have gone from boat to boat lying in the canal and found them absolutely deserted. The average attendance on the Sunday evening service for the first three months was 48, but during the last three months it has risen to 72. The first meeting, held on the first Sunday in January 1878 was attended by 45 people ; the attendance on the last Sunday in December was 180. The number of children at the Sunday afternoon class has increased from 17 to about 40. A part of the large increase which has taken place within the last 5 or 6 weeks is doubtless owing to the fact that numbers of boats have been detained in Chester by the severity of weather and the depression of trade. But apart from this, the attendance has shown a steady increase, and a growing love of the Bethel and appreciation of the services is shown by the canal population. It would be right to remind you that only boatpeople are admitted on board on Sunday evenings at the services. The door is kept by one of our friends, who is thoroughly acquainted with the canal and those working on it, and he steadily refuses admission to any others. I have no doubt that our success is very largely due to this fact – the people know that when they come here they will find only people of their own class, and that the Bethel is their own. The interest taken by those for whom we labour in the work is most cheering and encouraging. There is little of that listlessness upon religious subjects generally found among the working people of our towns and cities. A few examples of the way in which they regard the instructions received may be interesting to you. A man was overheard saying to his companion as they came out of the Bethel, “How should we know anything when we never go to any place to hear it, no chapel or anywhere else? We know nothing but eating and drinking, and cursing and swearing, and steering and driving”. “Well, and how do you like it?”, said a boatman to his wife, as they were going back to their boat. “Well”, said the woman, “I've worked harder on Sunday than any day of the week for many years, but this has been a happy day, and I tell thee what – if thou'll stick to it, I will”. “What a blessing this Bethel is”, said a boatwoman, “it has done so much for the children – your hear the little ones singing the hymns as they go along the canal – and not only them, but all the boatpeople, they are not like the same ; it's a pity it wasn't opened years ago, but it is not too late now, praise the Lord for his goodness”. An old boatman said to one of our friends who helps in the services one evening, “I could have sat there all night. I am an old man, but while he (meaning the preacher) was speaking, the words came to my heart and the tears rolled from my eyes, for they brought things back to my mind when I was a lad. I did feel a happiness to be there, and whenever I am here on Sunday, I won't stop away”. Such are some of the testimonies we have of the spirit in which our efforts are

received, and we ask you to join your prayers with ours that many of these neglected people, whom for so many years no one seemed to have thought about or cared for, may be brought to a knowledge of that Saviour who gave Himself for the sins of the world. It may be interesting also for you to know that we have a library on board the Bethel, consisting of volumes. These books are lent to such of the boatpeople who can read or procure the assistance of others to read to them, and a very active demand has sprung up for these books, which are passed then from hand to hand and highly appreciated. We have also been able, by the generosity of Mr George Smith of Coalville, to distribute 68 copies of the New Testament to as many boats during the year. I am glad, too, to be able to report that we have done something in convincing the people of the importance of legal marriage, and through the kindness of Mr Rogers, the registrar, we have been able to marry four couples without charge. Fifteen children have also been baptised on the Bethel during the year. Twice we have given a Sunday tea to the boatpeople ; on the first occasion to 45, and on the second to 86 persons. A singing class has also been provided by Mr Hill, one of the members of the Compassionate Society, who has skill in music, and acts as our organist on Sunday ; and the children, aided by a few other friends, gave a service of song on board the Bethel on the 28th December to an audience of 68 boatpeople, which was followed by an address. It would hardly be right to conclude our report without alluding to the Canal Boats Act. This Act, which has been prepared and passed chiefly by the persistent and benevolent energy of George Smith of Coalville, Leicester, provides for the inspection of all boats used as dwelling places, and for the proper accommodation of those who live on board, ventilation, cleanliness, separation of the sexes, and similar points. This Act, which will probably involve the transfer of a good many families from the boats to the shore, will thus bring them under the ordinary influences of religious and social life and, it is to be hoped, affect a great and beneficial change in the lives of many. It does not appear, however, as though such changes would be as common or so rapid as to render such work as we are doing among the canal population unnecessary, and under the (.....) of God, and supported by the sympathy and aid of the Christian public of the city, we hope still to continue our unpretending but we trust useful work.

Mr Sergent then read the treasurer's statement from which it appeared that the (income?) during the last year had been £123 12s 8d, and the expenditure a little less, leaving a balance in the hands of the treasurer of £2 8s 6d.

The Chairman moved the adoption of the report and the treasurer's statement. He felt very much pleased to hear of the success which had attended the labours of those in connection with the Bethel during the first years of its existence. He very well remembered the ceremonies of its opening. On that day he had been engaged with the Recorder and the Sheriff in the court at the city sessions, and it was rather a pleasant exchange to come from that court, where there was nothing to see but what was grievous in his heart and to those of the other gentlemen who were there prosecuting the poor people who had fallen into woe and sin, and who, if they probably had had a good training early in life, would not have fallen into such a state. He felt that their sanguine expectations at the opening of the Bethel had been more than bettered. Their work had been signally blessed to be of great use to a large number of people who had been sadly neglected in times past. The treasurer's statement showed something marvellous about the amount of work done. For something less than £180 the whole thing was put into operation. He was sure it was gratifying to all of them to see the benefit that had accrued from the effort. He had always found in his experience that where there was a good work to be done, the Christian and benevolent heart of England was always ready to find the money, and the latter on the best part of it. He was most pleased to find the Bethel so useful ; and hoped that the success of the past year was only a prelude to the greater success in the future. He had great pleasure in moving the adoption of the report and the treasurer's statement.

The Rev W Durban seconded the matter, which, on being put, was carried unanimously.

The Rev F Anderson moved a vote of thanks to the ex Mayor for presiding.

Mr Maddock, who was described as captain of the Bethel, seconded this motion. In doing so, he said that he had had a great deal of experience in connection with the Queen Street Compassionate Society in the (....) and (.....) of Chester, but he never met a class of people so willing to learn as

the canal boat people. They would sit and listen like children ; and he hoped that some of the seed sown should take root, and that their report next year would be even better than the one they had just heard.

The Rev P W Darnton supported the motion ; and to the financial part, said he hoped (.....) a year would now suffice to carry on the work. They had a grand tea there on the Sunday after New Year's Day, and they hoped during the coming year to have much work in the winter months.

The meeting was closed amid applause.

Mr Parish replied ; and after the Doxology had been sung, the meeting dispersed.

43 19 March 1879

PECULIAR CASE AT LYMM Mr Ridgway, Coroner for the Honor and Fee of Halton, held an inquest at the Sessions House, Lymm, on Friday afternoon, on the body of a child named **John William Clare**, four years and six months old. The first witness called was

Margaret Clare, aunt of the deceased, who said she was the wife of Joseph Clare of the Lymm stables, Lymm, ostler. The body the jury had seen was that of John William Clare, son of **William Clare**, a boatman, now dead. The deceased had been living with them for nearly six months, and up to last Saturday appeared to be in good health. On Wednesday he became unwell, and she intended to send for a doctor the next morning. She did not see him alive after Wednesday. He was a very dirty child, but she had properly attended to him as far as food and washing were concerned. The ulcers on his toes were caused by his burning them by putting them too near the fire when he was up early in the morning. The wound on the chest was caused by the deceased picking it after the removal of a mustard plaister, the bruises on the legs and arms being caused by witness whipping him with a strap. She did so because the deceased was a very dirty child, and told lies. The blisters on the loins were caused by the deceased standing too near the fire. She did not know where the deceased's mother was.

Joseph Clare, husband of the last witness, said he found the deceased dead in bed about six o'clock on the morning of the 13th inst.

Dr Cartwright of Lymm said that about ten days since he attended Joseph Clare's children, and he was requested to look at the deceased's feet. He did so, and found four ulcers on one foot and three on the other. He was of opinion that the ulcers were the result of some skin disease. He prescribed some ointment for the feet, and ordered better food, as the child seemed pale. He did not see him alive again. When he saw him he was very dirty. On Thursday morning he was called in to see deceased, but when he got to the house, about seven o'clock, he found that he was dead. He had that day made a *post mortem* examination of the body of deceased, and found that externally it was very pale, and there were several bruises on the arms, legs and thighs. There was a raw wound with commencing suppuration on the front of the neck and upper part of the chest. Mrs Clare told him that this wound was caused by a mustard plaister, and he thought that might be so. There were also two old marks of blisters, one over the right loin and the other on the outside of the right thigh. Then there were also the marks of the above mentioned ulcers on the feet. Mrs Clare told him that the bruises on the arms, legs and thighs were caused by her "strapping" the child, and he saw no reason for doubting her statement. The legs of the deceased were very slightly swollen from dropsy. The wound on the chest, he thought, would have been there for three or four days. The cause of death in his opinion was bronchitis and dropsy. He should think that the bronchitis had lasted nearly a week, and the child's breathing for the last 24 hours must have been bad. The deceased was fairly nourished. Mrs Clare's own children had the appearance of being better taken care of than the deceased. There was nothing in the bruises or wounds to cause death.

The jury returned a verdict of death from natural causes, namely bronchitis and dropsy.

44 31 May 1879

SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN BY DROWNING AT RUNCORN

ADJOURNED ENQUIRY The adjourned enquiry into the cause of death of **William Gore**, a boatman, who was found drowned in the Bridgewater Canal near Top Locks on Thursday last, was

resumed before Mr T J Ridgway, Coroner, in the Petty Sessions Room, Town Hall, Runcorn, on Tuesday afternoon. The jury having answered to their names,

The Coroner said they were again assembled to make further enquiry as to how the deceased, William Gore, whose body they had viewed, came to his death. Having read the evidence of the witnesses which was given when the enquiry was given on Friday last, he then proceeded to take the following evidence :-

Robert Moores said he was at present in the custody of the Runcorn police. On Tuesday the 13th inst, he was in company with Joseph Rowland, one of the previous witnesses, who had that day come out of prison. He came out of the Derby Arms that night with Rowlands, between ten and eleven. He saw Gore, the deceased, standing close to the Derby Arms with Mrs Ogden. He knew them both very well. He did not speak to them. He heard Mrs Ogden pass an insulting remark to Joseph Rowlands. Neither of them replied, but went on. He did not see anything more of them that night, neither had he seen William Gore alive since. He (witness) had only had three gills of ale, and was quite sober. On the following Thursday or Friday night, he saw Mrs Ogden. He had then heard that Gore was missing, and he said to her, "What have you done with Gore?" She said, "I know", and came out with an oath. She was not sober at the time. He had not since seen her to speak to. By a Juror : He had no ill-feeling against Mrs Ogden. She had never done him any harm. When he saw Gore on the 13th inst, he (Gore) was nearly drunk. Rowlands was not quite sober. On Thursday or Friday night when he saw Mrs Ogden, she said, "I know", (referring to Gore) in a nasty sort of way.

Mr Finlay McDougall said he was a duly qualified medical practitioner practising at Runcorn. He had made a *post mortem* examination of the body of the deceased. He had examined the body carefully externally. On the face, beginning at the junction of the nose with the forehead and extending up the forehead, the skin was discoloured and was very dark. He cut the discoloured part open, and found that the discolouration extended to the bone. The discolouration might have been caused by a blunt instrument or by a fall, and must have been caused during life. Under the right eye the skin was discoloured, and the soft part underneath bruised. That discolouration was probably caused during life, and might have been caused by a blow or a fall. The one on the forehead was the most extensive, but neither injured the bone. The one on the forehead would be sufficient to stun deceased, and in his opinion was caused shortly before death. Over the left eyebrow the skin was longitudinally cut about 2 1/2 or 3 inches long, and extending to the bone. Above that the skin was cut about an inch and a half long. There was a cut across the nose from the inner angle of the right eye, over the nose, cutting the right nostril right open. Those three cuts were produced after death, and were such as might have been caused by the fan of a steamtug. Those were all the marks on the face. On the back of the head the skin was soft and the tissues underneath pulpy and discoloured, showing that it had been bruised during life. The skull was perfectly whole and uninjured, and the bruises might have been caused by a blow or a fall. Over the right ear there was another cut of about 3/4 inch long, caused after death in the same way as before. The eyes were closed and the pupils slightly dilated. The mouth was closed, tongue swollen and slightly protruding between the teeth. On examining the inside of the mouth he found a piece of tobacco in the left cheek, which seemed as if it had only been in a short time. The hands were slightly clenched. The skin was thickened, soddened and white. There was nothing in the grasp of either hand. Over the shin-bone of the right leg, about six inches below the knee, there was a cut, caused after death, such as might be produced by a boat hook. Over the left knee there were the remains of an old sore, nearly healed up. There were no other external marks. He could not say whether the bruise on the forehead and the one on the back of the head were caused by one and the same blow. He opened the body, and was of opinion that the cause of death was drowning. He could not account for death in any other way. The injuries would not account for death, and the man must have died in the water. He did not observe any trace of poison. He opened the skull and found the brain congested. In his opinion the deceased must have been either insensible or incapable when he got into the water.

Samuel Tomlinson, landlord at the Blue Ball Inn, said he could not say whether Mrs Ogden or the

deceased were in his house on the night of the 13th inst. He remembered seeing Mrs Hillier. By a Juror : Mrs Ogden might have been in the house without his knowledge.

Hannah Leathwood, after being duly cautioned, was sworn, and said she was a single woman, and lived in Nelson Street, Runcorn, with Mrs Ogden until last Saturday. She had been with her about four or five weeks. She remembered Tuesday night the 13th inst. She was in Mrs Ogden's house all night, and also all the day. Some time before dinner on the day in question, she heard Gore shout out, "Are you in, Eliza?" She lifted up the blind to see who it was. She saw it was Gore, and saw Mrs Ogden go to him on the canal bank. Mrs Ogden then went with Gore, and came back in the afternoon alone. On her return she (witness) said, "Where have you been?" She said, "Did you hear Bill Gore sing out this morning?" She said, "Yes" ; and she replied, "He asked me to get on the flat. He was not a bit ashamed of me, and I steered her up to the bridge". She also said that she had been in a public house with him, and that he had given her some money, but she did not say how much. She also said, "I have to meet him again tonight". They both had some tea together. They were alone in the house both when she was speaking and when they had tea. After tea, between six and seven o'clock, Mrs Ogden went out. She (witness) also went out soon after seven, and returned after shutting up time alone. Mrs Ogden returned soon after she (witness) got in. It would be about half past eleven or a quarter to twelve o'clock. She came in alone, and she (witness) asked her where she had been. She said, "I have just left Gore ; he is following me". She asked her if he was drunk, and she replied, "Yes, very near". She (witness) said, "Let us wait up to see if Gore will come". They did so, but he did not come. On Friday after Gore was missing, she (witness) went into the Albion beer shop at the top of Nelson Street, and saw a man named James Limb sitting there with Mrs Ogden. Both were sober as was she also. She sat down next Mrs Ogden and said to Limb, "Do you remember meeting me up the new cutting?" At the time she referred to she was travelling with Gore, and that was the week before Gore was missing. Limb replied, "Yes, I saw you up there". Mrs Ogden said, "I had a row that time with Gore and his friends, and had to take the train and come home". Mrs Ogden said, "He is drowned now, poor lad!", (referring to Gore). "I know where he is drowned, but I am not going to tell, and no one will make me tell". She (witness) then got up and went out. Since Gore was missing she had often heard Mrs Ogden say, "I know he is drowned ; I wish he was living". She had been warned to give evidence on Saturday the 24th inst. Since that day she had not spoken to Mrs Ogden. On Tuesday night the 13th inst, she (witness) heard a disturbance in Nelson Street shortly after she came in and before Mrs Ogden came in. She did not say anything about any disturbance.

Hannah Tomkinson, wife of John Tomkinson, living in Nelson Street, said she knew Mrs Ogden and Gore also. She remembered the Tuesday night in question, and about half past eleven she heard a row in Nelson Street. She opened her door, looked out, and heard Mrs Ogden's voice. The row lasted a few minutes, and her door being open, she saw Mrs Ogden pass in the direction of her own house and towards the canal bank. She said something to her which she did not properly hear. She (witness) went to bed in a few minutes, and after dozing some short time she heard someone talking loudly on the canal bank. She opened the window, and saw Mrs Ogden come off the canal bank alone down the steps, and call out to the last witness to open the door. She went into the house. It was Mrs Ogden's voice that she heard on the canal bank. She heard another voice (a man's) besides Mrs Ogden's, but could not say whose it was. She did not hear any other voices. The next day (Wednesday) about half past two in the afternoon, she saw a man go to Mrs Ogden's house, and afterwards heard her say to Mrs Nicholls, "My poor Bill ; I know he is drowned ; I could have told you he was". Since Gore was missing, she had several times heard Mrs Ogden say, when speaking about Gore, "I know where he is, but I am not going to tell". By the Foreman : There was no ill-feeling between her and Mrs Ogden.

James Dellar said he was a boatman, and was captain of the narrow boat *Faith and Hope*, owned by Messrs Abbott and Walton of Runcorn. He had known Gore, the deceased, for some months, and had had a good deal to do with him. The last time he saw him alive was on Tuesday night, the 13th inst, in Welsh Row, about half past ten. He told him he was going up to Eliza Ogden's, as she had done him. Gore was then "fresh".

Frederick Wright said he lived at Tipton in South Staffordshire, and was hand of the *Earnest* under Gore, the deceased. He remembered Tuesday the 13th inst. The boat was then at Weston Point. He and the deceased were with her. He knew Ogden. She had travelled one voyage with Gore in the boat. He had not known her previous to that. He remembered coming to Runcorn on the 13th inst. Ogden got on the boat near the Soapery and rode to Doctor's Bridge, where she got off. The boat lay at the Top Locks about an hour, and Gore was away during that time. When he returned he brought a loaf of bread and some cheese with him. From Top Locks they went to Weston with the boat. At half past nine, Gore, the deceased, left the boat, and told him he was going up to Runcorn. He did not see him alive again. When he went away, he told him he should return in about two or three hours' time. On the next morning, as Gore did not return, he came to Runcorn to look for him, and saw Dollar, who told him to call at the different public houses. He also told him where Ogden lived. After searching the public houses he went to Ogden's and saw Mrs Ogden there. He spoke to her, and said, "Have you seen anything of William Gore?" She said, "I have not seen anything of him since I got off the boat at Top Locks". He again asked her if she had seen him, and she said, "No, I have not". He told her he had not seen him since half past nine on the previous night. She said, "Well, I am sure my lad's drowned". She then went with him and enquired at several public houses about Gore. He afterwards left her and returned to Weston. On the following day (Thursday) between six and seven o'clock, Ogden and another woman came to Weston to the boat. They went into the cabin. Ogden had her baby with her. He followed them into the cabin to hear what they had to say. Ogden kept on saying, "My lad's drowned ; William's drowned ; I am sure he is". She was referring to Gore. Rowland and Sturgess came on board whilst they were there. Ogden took the child off the bed and said, "I would soon put it right", (referring to the baby), "if it were not for my neck". He went to a public house in Weston with Ogden and the other woman, where she again said she was sure her lad was drowned. He did not know who the other woman was, and had not seen her since. When Gore left the boat on the Tuesday night, he said he had promised to meet a person at Runcorn. He did not say who it was.

James Limb said he lived at 64 Nelson Street, Runcorn, and was a boatman. He knew Gore, the deceased. On Saturday the 10th May, as he was going into Manchester, he met Gore with his boat coming from Manchester. Ogden was on the boat, with Gore beside her. Mrs Ogden spoke to him, saying, "Hello, Jim, is that thee? Where are you going to?" He said to Manchester. There was a man steering, to whom Gore was speaking. Gore seemed to be the worse for drink, and nothing more was said. He had not since seen Gore alive. He (witness) saw Ogden again on Friday night the 16th inst. He went into the Albion beershop in Nelson Street, and saw her sitting there. He sat down, and she came and sat down by his side. Leathwood was also there. Mrs Ogden said to him, "Do you remember meeting us on the new cutting". He said, "Ay". She said, "We have had a row since then ; he is drowned. I know where he is, but I won't tell, and no one will make me tell". He understood she was talking about Gore. There were a good many people in the house, and he did not take particular notice of what was said. They had to leave the house then, as it was shutting up time.

Elizabeth Owen of Chester said she had lived at Mrs Ogden's since Wednesday the 14th inst. She had never seen Gore.

PC Bossons said at a quarter to four on Thursday morning the 22nd inst, he was on duty near the Derby Arms, and saw a number of men standing near the canal. Some of the men called to him and told him there was a man in the canal. He went and saw a body there, which he recovered, and took it to the stable attached to the Waterloo Hotel. The body was properly dressed, with the exception of a hat. The right trouser leg was torn, and the right trouser pocket turned inside out. He noticed that the face was cut and discoloured. He searched the pockets, and found in the left hand coat pocket four horse nails and a child's mouth organ. There was some thick twist tobacco in both waistcoat pockets. There was no money. The body was in the canal near the crane, opposite the Derby Arms.

Frederick Wright, recalled, said that when Gore left the boat on the Tuesday night, he told him he had only a shilling.

Mary Ann Hillier, recalled, said that when she saw Gore in the Blue Ball she noticed a mark in the centre of the forehead. It seemed to be healed up.

Jane Hicks said she was the wife of Thomas Hicks and lived in Cooper Street, Runcorn. She knew Mrs Ogden. On Thursday the 15th inst, she went with Mrs Ogden to Weston Point. She went with her because Mrs Ogden came to her house and said, "Will Gore is missing from his flat, will you come with me to Weston Point?" On arriving at Weston Point, Ogden got on board Gore's boat, and she (witness) followed her. Ogden had her baby with her. They went into the cabin. She (witness) said to Wright, "Hasn't Will turned up?" He said, "No ; I wish he would". She saw Rowland and another man come on board. (Here the witness, though much pressed by the Coroner, denied that Mrs Ogden said anything about Gore being drowned, and about the baby, as stated by the witness Rowland).

Joseph Sturgess said he lived at Bedford Leigh in Lancashire. He knew the deceased. On Thursday the 15th inst, he was with his flat at Weston Point, and Rowland was helping him. They were then about 50 or 60 yards from Gore's flat. In consequence of what Rowland said to him, he went with him to Gore's boat. They both went into the cabin. He saw there Wright, Ogden and Mrs Hicks. Rowland said when he got into the cabin, "Where's Bill?" He meant Gore, the captain of the boat. Mrs Ogden said, "He is drowned". She took the child out of the bed, wished that it was dead, and said if it were not for her own neck she would drown it. He was disgusted and left the boat, Rowland following.

The Coroner, addressing the jury, said they had now to consider what they thought had been the cause of death of the man Gore. The evidence, as they were aware, was certainly contradictory, and he thought it had indeed been made more so by some of the witnesses, who had evidently not told the whole truth. The evidence of Ogden of course they would take with caution, as she appeared to be an interested party. After being cautioned, she said she was only with Gore in the earlier part of the day ; but that he thought had been thoroughly contradicted by her own statements to other people afterwards, especially to the girl Leathwood, whose statement he did not see any reason to doubt. From the evidence, it appeared that on the day in question the deceased was drinking with Ogden, according to her own statement, in the early part of the day. He then went to Weston, and Wright states that he again left Weston at 9.30 in the evening and came to Runcorn, where he had been seen by several people, Rowland, Hillier and Moores, and each time in the company of Ogden. There seemed to be nothing improper during the whole time ; simply a question of drinking, and if they took the most favourable view of it, the deceased was certainly "fresh". After that time it was all supposition. The next thing was Ogden's getting home and stating to Leathwood that Gore was coming in. He did not come in ; and it seemed the woman Tomkinson saw Ogden in the street that night, and just afterwards heard voices, one of which she recognised as Ogden's, and a man's voice. If the matter had ended there he thought they would have very little difficulty about it, but would simply have returned an open verdict. The most awkward part of the case seemed to be in Ogden's own statement to different people that she knew where the deceased was, and that she knew "he was drowned". It would be for them to consider in what form they should put their verdict. Referring to the witness Hicks, he thought her evidence could not fairly be received, as it was flatly contradicted, and he would ask them to dismiss from their minds altogether her evidence. The evidence of Leathwood and Limb was very important, as when in the Albion Hotel, after Gore was missing, Ogden, as had been stated by the two witnesses, said she knew where the deceased was, and that he was drowned. To put it in the mildest form, the case looked awkward, and it was for them to consider what their verdict should be. There was one person in particular to whom suspicion pointed, and he would ask them to consider the case carefully.

The jury then retired for a few minutes, and on returning into the room, the foreman announced that they had agreed to the following verdict :- "That on the 22nd May, the deceased, William Gore, was found drowned in the Bridgewater Canal between Doctor's and Waterloo Bridge, but how he came there there was no evidence to show, but that from the evidence given, considerable suspicion attaches itself to the conduct of Eliza Ogden, a widow residing in Nelson Street".

The Coroner said he was very much displeased with the manner in which the witnesses Ogden and

Hicks had given their evidence, and to mark his displeasure he should not allow them anything for attending.

45 4 June 1879

SANITARY WORK IN CHESTER One other branch of sanitary work is the inspection and registration of canal boats. It is necessary that the owner of a canal boat should have it registered ; and when it is so registered, the Sanitary Authority takes care that there is sufficient space for the persons sleeping on board the boats. This is about all that can be done, and how further to deal with canal boatmen and their families is a problem yet waiting solution. Chester, before the era of railways, was a centre for canal traffic ; and even with the opposition of the iron roads, the canal trade is so large that the Shropshire Union Company have registered more than two hundred boats at Chester.

46 14 June 1879

PUBLIC NOTICES

CANAL BOATS ACT 1877

TO OWNERS AND MASTERS OF CANAL BOATS

The Runcorn Improvement Commissioners hereby give notice that **Mr JOHN PARRY**, the duly authorised inspector for the district of Runcorn, is empowered to, and will proceed against, all persons acting in contravention of the said Act, after this date.

By order,

W BROOKES

Secretary, Public Offices, Runcorn.

June 12th 1879

47 12 July 1879

THE NON REGISTRATION OF CANAL BOATS AS DWELLINGS At the Manchester City Police Court on Wednesday, a number of owners and masters of canal boats were summoned before Messrs C H Rickards and W Joynson for having respectively allowed to be used, and used, those canal boats as dwellings, in contravention of the Canal Boats Act 1877. Mr Talbot (Deputy Town Clerk) prosecuted, and stated that under the first section, the Act provided that the owner of each canal boat could register the boat, with a registration authority appointed under the Act, as a dwelling for such a number of persons of a specified age or sex as might be laid down by the provisions of the Act, and the boat should be used as a dwelling only for that number of persons. For this use of the boats as a dwelling place without registration, both master and owner were liable to be fined in a sum not exceeding 20s. The Act only came into operation on the 1st January last, and was designed to prevent overcrowding, the Local Government Board having issued a number of regulations similar to those governing lodging houses. Boats could be registered in Manchester, the Corporation having been appointed a registration authority under the Act, and also at Chester and other depots. These were the first cases in which the Act had been brought before the Court, and he did not appear to press for any severe penalties against the parties for this their first offence. Among the defendants were **John Barratt**, 104 Canal Street, Congleton, owner, and **Thomas Barratt**, 62 Canal Street, Congleton, master of the boat *John* ; **Jabez Thompson**, Wade Brook near Northwich, owner of two narrowboats named the *Rob Roy* and the *Dolphin*, and **George Dawson**, Marston, master of the same boats ; F R Harrison and Co, Northwich Basin, Duke's Dock, Liverpool, owners, and **Richard Draper**, Canal Bank, Runcorn, master of the boat *Speedwell*. Inspector Ryder proved the cases, having in each instance found persons sleeping in the boats without their having been registered. Each of the owners was fined 1s and costs (9s 6d in all) with the exception of Thompson, who was fined 5s and costs ; and the Deputy Town Clerk not pressing for penalties as against the masters, the summonses affecting them were withdrawn.

48 19 July 1879

AN UNGRATEFUL FELLOW At the Runcorn Police Court on Wednesday, **John Done**, a boatman, was brought up before Mr Henry Reynolds charged with having, on the 15th inst at Runcorn, stolen a waistcoat, a guernsey, a muffler and a shilling, the property of **Thomas Bowyer**, a boatman. It appeared that the prosecutor on Monday night took the prisoner on board his boat and gave him a night's lodgings, and when he got up the next morning, the prisoner was gone and the articles named in the indictment were also missing. On the application of Superintendent Williamson, the prisoner was remanded to the Petty Sessions on Monday next.

49 26 July 1879

RUNCORN POLICE COURT, TUESDAY

SAVAGE ASSAULT ON A WIFE **Frank Rothwell**, a boatman, was brought up under warrant, charged with having on the 22nd inst assaulted his wife **Alice**. Superintendent Williamson said the prisoner was alleged to have thrown his wife on the floor, put her ankle out, and then grossly assaulted her with a chair. She was very badly hurt about the head and face. Emily Moss, stepdaughter to the prisoner, was called, and said on the 22nd inst she saw a crowd at the door, went in and saw the prisoner hit his wife and knock her down. He struck her on the face. She did not however see the beginning of the row. Mr D C Williams, assistant to Dr Robinson, was called, and said the woman had evidently been very badly used, the top of her head was like a jelly, and she was suffering from dislocation of the ankle, and was unable to attend the Court. The case was adjourned until Monday next.

50 25 October 1879

CHILD KILLED AT LYMM Mr Ridgway, Coroner, held an inquest at the Jolly Thresher Inn, Lymm, on Saturday morning, on the body of **Clarissie Guest**, two years and six months old, daughter of **John Holt Guest**, a boatman living at Lymm. Elizabeth Harrison said she lived at Broom Edge and was a needlewoman. On Saturday afternoon the 11th inst, she was walking up Higher Lane in the direction of Mr and Mrs King's, with whom the child had been living, when she heard a scream, and turning round saw the wheel of a spring cart belonging to Colonel Leigh going over the deceased's body. She saw Mr Brazendale pick up the girl and carry it into an adjoining house. Death took place on the 15th inst. John Dutton, second coachman to Colonel Leigh of High Leigh Hall, said he was the driver of the spring cart, but he did not see the deceased. He was sorry the accident occurred. Dr Cartwright deposed that the child died from concussion of the brain and internal injuries. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

51 13 December 1879

OPENING OF THE BOATMAN'S MISSION ROOM, NANTWICH The new Mission Room built by the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company at the Acton Wharf, for the use of the boat people employed on the canal, was opened on Tuesday afternoon. The Mission was first started in August 1877 by the Rev R V Barker, the then senior curate of the Nantwich Parish Church and new vicar of St Paul's, Preston. When the Canal Boats Act reached its final stage in the House of Commons, Mr J A Davenport, Surveyor and Inspector for the Nantwich Union and Rural Sanitary Authority, was led to enquire into the social and moral condition of the boat people. The result was that he put himself in communication with Mr George Smith of Coalville, Leicester, who took a deep interest in the welfare of this hitherto much neglected portion of the community. A supply of periodicals was forwarded by that gentleman and distributed by Mr Clay, the manager of the Acton Wharf, and at his suggestion Mr Davenport appealed to the Rev R V Barker, whose labours among the fishermen of Yarmouth where he previously held a curacy, eminently fitted him for the work. Mr Barker entered warmly into the scheme, and with the permission of the Rev R S Redfern, vicar of Acton, agreed to hold a boatman's service every Sunday afternoon. The first service was held on Sunday August 19th 1877 in the warehouse at Basin End. A little mission room was boarded off from the large cheese warehouse, and provided with desk, forms, stove and chair. The

accommodation was necessarily limited, and the solitary pane of glass in the roof admitted but a feeble light. Engravings and illustrations of Biblical incidents enlivened the walls, and when lighted up and comfortably filled, the little mission room presented a snug and cosy appearance. The average attendance of boat people was about a score, occasionally reaching to 30, and even more during the severe frost of last winter, when the boats were ice bound. The want of music was met by a small harmonium purchased by the subscriptions of a number of kind friends interested in the mission, including Mr and Miss Tollemarche of Dorfield Hall, Baron Shroeder, Mrs Bellyse, Rev R Redfern, Miss Bennett, Captain Roberts, Mr Griffiths, Mr Hugh Cawley, Rev R V Barker and others. The service consists of prayers chiefly extempore, hymns, the reading of a portion of Scripture, and an extempore address or sermon, and very many encouraging results have attended the labours of the gentlemen in charge of the Mission. A Sunday School has also been established in connection with it, and under the care of Miss Clara Griffiths, occasionally assisted by Mrs Clay, a good work is being done among the boatmen's children. For some time past it had been felt that the requirements of the congregation had outgrown the early provision made for them, and the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, in response to an appeal, undertook to build a room capable of accommodating between 60 and 70 boatpeople, which might be used as a place of religious worship on Sunday, as well as of relaxation during the rest of the week. The result was seen in the neat little mission room adjoining the cheese warehouse on the canal bank. The interior has been furnished by the liberality of various kind friends, the Rev R V Barker having made a present of the lectern. Some eight or nine substantial seats with backs accommodated the congregation, and three side windows afford ample light. A small raised platform at one end is reserved for the use of the officiating clergyman, and this will eventually be kept distinct from the other part of the room by a moveable curtain. In this way the boatpeople will be able to meet together for social occasions, and read and in other ways spend a pleasant evening, different from what they are now able to do in their cribbed confined little boat cabins.

The opening of the new mission room took place at half past four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon by the celebration of Divine Service. The room was closely packed with boatmen and boatwomen, to the number of between 60 and 70.

The Rector of Nantwich and the Rev LaGrange Leney read the prayers and lessons, and a sermon was preached by the Rev R V Barker MA, who made touching reference to his past connection with the mission, and the success which had attended the labours of himself and others on behalf of the boatpeople.

After service, the boatpeople assembled in the warehouse, which had been tastefully decorated with evergreens, and the walls hung with scriptural mottoes and texts. A number of boatpeople whose boats were frozen in at Barbridge walked to Acton, and as a result about 80 sat down to tea, the provisions for which were kindly given by Mrs Worsey, Mr Hugh Cawley and Miss Tollemarche. The Misses Griffith, assisted by Mrs Clay, undertook the management of the tea and presided at the tables. The company was much larger than was anticipated, and necessitated the sending of a messenger to Nantwich for a further supply of provisions. About 20 children afterwards sat down, and there was ample store for everyone, supplemented by cakes and oranges later in the evening by the kindness of Miss Tollemarche. After this,

The Rev R V Barker said he was very glad to have met so many boatpeople that day. He thought as he was coming to Nantwich what bad weather they were experiencing, and when he got to the Basin (?Bed) found the canal frozen over. It illustrated the old saying about good coming out of evil, because had it been otherwise, he did not suppose there would have been half so many present to enjoy the good tea they had partaken of that evening. Something like two and a half years had elapsed since the opening of the Boatman's Mission, and the first service held in the little room adjoining the cheese warehouse. For some time, the want of a more suitable place was felt, and he felt thankful that it had been carried out. They ought not to forget to whom they were indebted. He remembered Mr Davenport speaking to him at the Sunday School at Nantwich, and saying what a good thing it would be to get up a service for the boatpeople ; and his replying that if it were held at a suitable time on a Sunday afternoon, he would do what he could to help it forward. From that

time down to July, when he left Nantwich for Preston, he attended each service when at home, and he was thankful to see that the Mission had prospered so well with the assistance of Mr Davenport and other friends. The Directors of the Railway and Canal Company had given the land and built the mission room, and they had to thank kind friends in Acton and Nantwich for fitting it up, and presenting various other things necessary for carrying on the services and promoting the comfort of those who attended them. And having done so much, he hoped it would not be expected from Mr Leney, who would now take in hand the mission, that he should go round to the boats and tell the people it was service time. They had a bell which would ring ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before the commencement of service, so that they would be without any excuse for not knowing the time. Besides the services which would be held there on Sundays, it was hoped that eventually they would be able to arrange for having a few papers and magazines and social gatherings on week days, which would keep them from the public house. He was glad to have met them in such large numbers, and thought they had to thank Jack Frost for having brought them together. He wished them all "a merry Christmas and a happy new year", when it came. (Applause).

Mr B Clay said he wished on behalf of the boatpeople to thank Mr Barker for coming amongst them on that occasion, as well as for his kind and valued ministrations in the past. No matter whether it was cold or hot, storm or wind, he never failed to come amongst them ; and although he had left Nantwich for another town, they all felt their hearty thanks were due to him for what he had done. It was the intention of one of their superintendents to have been present and tender on behalf of the directors their acknowledgement of Mr Barker's services ; but as he had been prevented coming by another important engagement, he (Mr Clay) would venture to do so, at the same time that he tendered Mr Barker the thanks of the boatpeople, in whose welfare he had taken so deep an interest. (Applause). They were also much indebted to the rector of Nantwich and his curate Mr Leney, upon whom the work of the mission would principally devolve now that Mr Barker had left.

The Rector of Nantwich said as he had had very little to do in connection with that gathering he could join them most heartily in thanking the friends who had so kindly made provision for the gathering, and the ladies who had presided at the tea tables. It was no doubt a subject of great thankfulness to all of them that the new mission room had been opened. At one time it seemed that nobody cared for the boatpeople ; but now there were kind and sympathetic friends who felt that they had both bodies and souls to be cared for, and that their children should be brought up and educated in the fear of the Lord. He was glad to recognise amongst those present many who not only attended the mission services, but who also came occasionally to Nantwich Parish Church, which was as free and open to them as to anyone else. They must bear in mind that Mission Room had been opened for the accommodation of the boatpeople, and he hoped they would appreciate and make good use of it. If any of them happened to find themselves in the neighbourhood with their boats, he would ask them to try and push on a few miles so as to get to the service, while those who were at the Basin End might delay starting on their journey in order to attend. He was quite sure that the loss of an hour in that way would result in real and solid gain to themselves in the end.

The Rev R V Barker, in responding to the vote of thanks proposed by Mr Clay, said he could not forget the kindness shown towards him by the boatpeople on the occasion of his leaving Nantwich to enter upon his new charge. When he opened his front door in Preston, one of the first things to attract the notice of himself and anyone else who came to see him was the model of a canal boat which they presented him with, and which he had put into a glass case. It always served to remind him of his past connection with the boatpeople in the service of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, and he hoped they would bear him in kindly remembrance. (Applause).

Mr Davenport proposed a vote of thanks to Miss Griffiths for her services at the harmonium, which was most cordially rendered ; and was followed, at the request of Mr Clay, by several hearty cheers for Mr Barker, the Rector, Mr Davenport and other friends of the mission.

The children of the boatpeople, numbering about two dozen, afterwards partook of tea in the same room, and the remainder of the evening was spent in various amusements, the proceedings being enlivened by the playing of a band of juvenile instrumentalists, Master White Davenport presiding at the harmonium.

SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A BOATMAN AT BUNBURY This case, which is exciting great interest in the neighbourhood, and which was briefly noticed in last week's *Guardian*, is assuming unmistakeable signs of being a bad one. The additional information which we have gathered is to the effect that the boat worked by the three men, **Ruscoe**, who was steering, **John Evans**, who was driving, and the deceased, **Richard Price**, left Nantwich on her way to Ellesmere Port on the afternoon of Wednesday last. When she arrived at Bunbury Locks, a distance of about eight miles, which would be about 11 o'clock at night, the deceased was found in the cabin under such circumstances that led to the detention of the boat. It appears that several men were noticed riding on the boat as it left Nantwich, and as these were seen returning some hours later in a drunken state, the agent, Mr Jay, immediately went after the boat, knowing that among the cargo were some barrels of porter. He overtook it at Wardle, and found his suspicions correct, and that the porter had been tampered with. Upon this he sent back to Barbridge for the assistance of the agent there, Mr Bowcock, who accompanied the boat to Calveley, where the porter was taken out. At Wardle Mr Bowcock's attention was called to the state of Price, who in all appearances lay drunk in the cabin. The cabin, however, was not entered. After staying a short time at Calveley, the boat proceeded, and arrived at the Bunbury Locks, a mile further on, about a quarter past eleven at night, when the man in charge of the locks found Price lying dead in the cabin with the back part of his head almost knocked in. The inquest was opened before Mr Churton, Coroner, on Friday morning, at the Inn, Higher Bunbury; but for convenience sake was removed to the girls' schoolroom near, the schools being closed for the holidays. The jury having been sworn and the body viewed, the canal boat was visited whilst lying at the Bunbury Locks, about a mile distant. The boat is of the ordinary kind, the cabin being about seven feet long by four or five feet high; seats are along each side, and a small stove near the door. A quantity of blood was noticed on the floor at the further end of the cabin, where the deceased's head lay. A small hammer and poker were also spotted with some dark liquid, and these were taken possession of by the police. Previous to the enquiry, Dr Kirkpatrick of Bunbury was ordered by the Coroner to make a *post mortem* examination of the body; and upon the jury reassembling,

John Cadman, who was the first witness, stated that he was on duty attending to the locks on the night of Wednesday. At about a quarter past eleven o'clock the boat *Eyton* came up to the locks; William Ruscoe was steering and John Evans was driving. Ruscoe asked him to come into the cabin with his lamp, for he thought "Dick" was dead. He went to the cabin, and found the man lying on the floor on his right side with his feet towards the door. He was very much bruised about the head. He felt his hands, and they were cold. There appeared to be spots of blood on the stove and a quantity on the floor. The stove was at the feet end of the body and there was no fire in it. He saw nothing in the cabin to lead him to think that there had been a struggle, nor anything that he could have been struck with. He suggested that a doctor and policeman should be sent for at once.

Dr Kirkpatrick of Bunbury said that he was called up early in the morning of Thursday, and went to the Locks by request, and found the dead body of a man lying in the cabin of the boat. He noticed some bruises on his head and a deal of blood on the floor, but the place being too small he could not make an accurate examination. The body was cold and stiff, and death had taken place several hours previous – three or four hours, if not more. That morning he had made a *post mortem* examination of the body. He found the head very much congested. Behind the right ear there were several bruises, one extending down to the bone, and a good deal of swelling on the same side. Over the left eye there was also an injury. Behind and below the left ear there was a great deal of effusion, and a small slit about a quarter of an inch long extending half way through the ear, which was almost bloodless. There was discolouration of the upper part of the chest. He found considerable effusion between the scalp and skull. At the bottom of the skull there was a large fracture, penetrating the outer and inner table. The cause of death was the fracture of the skull, and death must have been almost instantaneous. A single fall or blow might have caused all the injuries on the left side, but it was not probable. The other organs of the body were healthy.

Samuel Bowcock, agent for the canal company at Barbridge, said on Wednesday evening about a

quarter to eight o'clock, the boat in charge of Ruscoe arrived at Barbridge. Some cargo was discharged, and in about a quarter of an hour the boat went on. He did not see the deceased until he was sent for by Mr Jay, and then he only noticed through the door a man lying in the cabin.

PC Latham said that he went to the Bunbury locks on the morning of Thursday, and found the deceased lying dead in the cabin of the boat. He caused him to be removed to Bunbury. That morning he had made a thorough examination of the boat. There was a quantity of blood on the floor of the boat and some splashes of a dark nature on the stove. The hammer and poker produced were also spotted. The greater part of the blood on the floor was under the deceased's head, and he lay with his feet towards the cabin door.

This was all the evidence taken.

The Coroner stated that the case appeared to him to be one of great suspicion ; and to afford an opportunity for the superintendent of police to get other witnesses, he should adjourn the inquest until that day week.

The case excites the greatest interest in the neighbourhood, and judging from appearances little doubt is entertained but that the man has met with foul play.

53 30 March 1881

FATAL ACCIDENT TO A WIDNES BOATMAN The Liverpool Coroner yesterday held an inquest on the body of **Joseph Grice**, aged 48, a hand on board the flat *Trial*. The deceased lived in Wellington Street, Widnes. The flat left Weston Point on Saturday last in tow of the tug *Conqueror*; and early the following morning, the weather being very rough, she commenced to make water. The captain's wife and child were transferred to another flat, and the captain and the deceased got into the punt just as the flat sank. The punt also swamped, and the occupants were left struggling in mid channel, but they were rescued by the tug. The deceased was taken to the Northern Hospital, where he died on Thursday from the effects of the immersion. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

54 24 June 1882

MYSTERIOUS CASE OF DROWNING AT RUNCORN On Wednesday afternoon the body of a man was observed floating in the Bridgewater Canal near Waterloo Bridge, Runcorn, by **Samuel Lewis**, lock tender. It was at once got out of the water, and has not yet been identified. The body was that of a man about 40 years of age, and appeared to have been in the water for about a fortnight. The man was fully dressed in corduroy trousers, dark vest, blue striped cotton shirt and clogs. The inquiry by the Coroner may clear up what at present appears to be a very mysterious case.

55 24 June 1882

FLAT SUNK AT WIDNES On Wednesday morning about three o'clock, while a flat belonging to Mr Thomas Snape was lying in the river at Widnes, a strong gale rising suddenly and blowing through the arches of the bridge with intensified force, she was overturned. One of the piles of caustic bottles with which she was loaded went through the bottom of the flat, and she rapidly filled with water and sank. The captain was not aboard at the time, but a young man, one of the crew, was on her, and he had a narrow escape from drowning, only succeeding in escaping by means of the small boat attached to the flat. The sunken barge was raised on Thursday.

56 2 September 1882

ALTRINCHAM COUNTY COURT

ACTION BY AN ALTRINCHAM BOAT OWNER **Taberner** v the Marple Chemical Co.

In this case, Mr Lowe, barrister, instructed by Messrs Nicholls, Hinde and Co, appeared for the plaintiff ; and Mr Jordan, barrister, instructed by Messrs Brown and Ainsworth, for the defendants. The action was brought to recover £35 16s damages for injuries sustained by the plaintiff's horse on the 3rd May 1882, by reason of the negligence of the defendant's servant, **Charles Spencer**, and, so

far as could be seen, the only defence Mr Lowe pointed out was that Spencer was not at the time a servant of the defendants. He called **William Martin**, boatman, Astley Green, who stated that he entered the service of the company about the year 1881. He was sent to take charge of a boat at Runcorn which Spencer had left. On the 3rd May, he was with the boat *John* at Manchester as captain. He left defendant's employ about a month since. Mr Finch, the manager, told him he would have Spencer locked up for having spent 5s 10d given to him for tonnage dues. This was the amount paid to Spencer on the 2nd May as captain of the *Charlie*. By Mr Jordan : The trip sheets were signed at Runcorn and not at Manchester. He never left Cornbrook with the *Charlie*. Spencer was his brother-in-law, but he did not know he was discharged for drunkenness and misconduct. Mr Finch never told him he had discharged him when he took the *Charlie*. He could not tell from memory the time he brought the boat to Cornbrook. When he left the company's service, he went in the middle of the night, and had not been near since. He would swear he did not put his cross in the book produced in the presence of Mr Goddard on the 2nd and 10th May. He had not taken the *Charlie* from Cornbrook. Charles Spencer, flatman, Garston, formerly in the employ of the Marple Chemical Company, said he took charge of the *Charlie* at Cranbrook, having been engaged by Mr Finch. He recollected the plaintiff's (Taberner's) horse being tripped into the canal at London Bridge, about nine miles from Runcorn. **John Martin** was along with him. His brother-in-law went with him one trip to show him the places. After the accident happened, he tied up at Walton, and had the horse taken to the farrier's at Warrington, where it was treated. He slept on the *Charlie* that night, and the next morning he went to the bottom locks at Runcorn. He left the boat there, as he could not get a living. The accident happened through the line being too short. Plaintiff's horse was on the right hand bank of the canal, and it was the duty of witness to stop and let him pass. When witness stopped, the horse was tipped into the canal by the hauling line of the defendants. If the line had been sufficiently long, the accident would not have happened. He told Mr Goddard on that particular trip that the line was done, and he would want another, and he replied that he must get a fresh one, and give them the old one for cart ropes. He brought the trip sheet back to Manchester sometimes, and sometimes they were sent by post. They mostly went by post. He was stopped on the Saturday. Cross-examined : On the 15th April he took out 600 empty carboys. He did not get on the spree at Widnes. He heard Mr Finch was looking for him. He got back to Cornbrook from that trip on the 29th April. Mr Finch told him he must stop if Martin came. He went out with the *Charlie* on the Tuesday evening at seven o'clock. Mr Goddard asked him to go. He would swear Goddard did not give it to Martin. Witness left at Runcorn, and had not been paid anything. The accident happened about 22 miles from Manchester, and he might have passed 20 horses safely. John Martin, mate of the *Charlie* at the time of the accident, corroborated the evidence of the previous witnesses. **Job Taberner**, son of the plaintiff, who is a boat owner, said he had charge of a boat belonging to his father called the *Four Brothers*. It was on the 4th May that the horse was tipped into the canal. They should have slacked for his horse to get over, but with the line being too short it was thrown into the canal, and when got out was found to be badly cut. The usual length of a hauling was 33 yards. The line belonging to the defendant was about 15 yards, and Spencer said they would not give him a line. The horse was at the veterinary surgeon's two or three days. It was laid up from the 3rd May to 2nd June. The horse was sound then, but now, when it did a hard day's work, it went lame. He valued it at that time £40. It might be worth £10 now. Cross-examined : He did not know what the horse cost. It had worked about a month altogether since the accident happened. **John Taberner**, boat owner, Altrincham, said he went to Warrington and found the horse injured in the hock. It was three days there. He had to pay 8s a day for another horse, and food for the man and the horse. He assessed his loss at 8s per day, and for this he claimed £10 8s. He paid the veterinary surgeon £1 10s, and the difference between that and £3 odd was for fomentations and bandages, and the work of the man attending it. He valued the horse before the accident at £30 to £35. It was now worth £12 to £14, he should think. Cross-examined : I gave £10, and claimed £22 10s. There was an improvement during the time he had it. Thomas Massey, groom, Warrington, in the employ of Mr Ferguson, veterinary surgeon, said that on the 3rd May the horse was brought to their establishment very badly cut and scarred in several places. The

horse had now a thick leg in consequence of the injury. He should say the injury had depreciated the value of the animal about £20. Inspector Harper, RSPCA, said he knew the horse very well indeed, and had known it before plaintiff got it. Witness frequently met it on the canal, and he should say it was worth £35, as it had improved while in plaintiff's possession. He should think it was now half depreciated in value. Cross-examined : The horse was slightly bent in the knees. He did not know why Mr Cowsill sold it. Mr Jordan, without making a speech, proceeded to call witnesses. The first was Mr Herbert Finch, who stated that he discharged Spencer on his return from Runcorn, when he had been away a fortnight instead of five days. He had no recollection of telling him he must wait and see what Martin had to say. He had never engaged him since. The captain of the flat bought his own tow ropes, and brought the bill to the wharfinger to be paid. In reply to Mr Lowe, he emphatically stated that when he discharged Spencer, he did so entirely, and was not aware that he was in charge of the *Charlie*. George Goddard also said that he had instructions not to allow Spencer to go with the boat. Mr Jordan said it appeared to him that his friend was clearly out of court, because when he opened the case, he said that the only case he came to fight about was whether Charles Spencer at the time this accident occurred on the 3rd of May was a servant of the company. He called three men, discharged servants, who could not read or write, who did not know anything about dates, but by some mysterious process of reasoning the first witness Martin could remember the 4th May ; but what did Charles Spencer say? He said he was discharged on the 29th April, but he attempted to put an ingenious condition to it. Mr Finch told them that he went out on the 13th April with a cargo of empty bottles, and instead of returning in five days, he took until the 24th April. He went to Runcorn and Widnes, suspecting that Spencer was drinking as boatmen did, and when Mr Finch saw him again on the 29th, he discharged him. He submitted that Mr Finch had not discharged Spencer without cause, but because he had put them to trouble and expenses, impeding their business. His Honour said the whole point in the case was whether at the time of this accident the boat was in charge of one of the company's servants or not. It might be admitted, as Mr Lowe put it, that there was a new employment, but by whom? There again was a question, and the case depended upon the evidence of Martin, Spencer and Finch, because with regard to Goddard, he was a person who had no authority in the matter either to hire or discharge. William Martin was contradicted by several circumstances as to when he was in charge of the boat *Charlie*. He said he took charge on the 4th May, but he denied having made any entries in the books or signed papers at Manchester ; but in that he was contradicted by Spencer, who said that the usual course was for captains to sign. As far as Martin's evidence went, it was not of a reliable character. In his examination in chief, Spencer said he was stopped on the Saturday before the accident happened, and that Martin made some arrangements. Therefore in point of fact, the employment of Spencer at that time was by Martin. The question then arose, had Martin any authority on behalf of the company to make any such arrangements with Spencer? Coming to the evidence of Finch, Finch was explicit that he gave directions to Goddard that if this man arrived in his absence, he was to discharge him at once without any condition as to re-engagement or anything attached to it. Finch said he discharged him on the following Saturday, and Spencer admitted he had got his wages at that time, and said he had not applied for anything since. Looking at the evidence of Finch, he must come to the conclusion that Spencer was not in the employment of the company at the time this accident happened. He admitted it might be somewhat hard upon the plaintiff, but still he had fair notice of what the defence would be. He therefore gave a verdict for the defendant with costs.

57 **1 March 1884**

THE CANAL BOATS ACT (1877)

AMENDMENT BILL The following further particulars of this Bill will be of interest to a number of our readers. The Bill is the outcome of the persistent agitation of Mr George Smith of Coalville with regard to the neglected condition of our floating population, and is backed by Mr Burt, Colonel Makins, Mr Samuel Morley, Mr John Corbett, Mr Pell and Mr Broadhurst. The first clause provides for the annual registration of canal boats and the renewal of the certificates ; the second

states that every canal boat containing accommodation for sleeping or cooking shall be deemed to be used as a dwelling within the meaning of the principal Act ; and the third (.....) at a grievance affecting the employment of children before they have reached at least the rudiments of education. No child under 13 years of age is to be employed on a canal boat unless he or she shall have obtained a certificate of having attained the third standard ; and no person under 16 years of age is to be employed on a canal boat on Sunday ; offences under these sections being punishable by a maximum fine of 20s. Both the owner and master of the boat may be proceeded against for not complying with regulations, and for each default are liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding 40s. Section 5 imposes on the Local Government Board and the Education Department the duty of inquiring and reporting with respect to the registration of canal boats, the education of the children dwelling on board, and other matters relating to the due observance of the Act. The Education Department is also empowered to make regulation as to the form of certificates or pass books respecting attendance at school, and the payment or remission of school fees in regard to children who, owing to living in canal boats, are unable to attend the same school during the whole of one week. Another section provides that the expression "canal boat" shall include all travelling and temporary dwelling not rated to the relief of the poor. These are the salient points of the Bill, which, if passed, is to be cited as the Canal Boats Act 1884.

58 9 April 1884

CHESHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING A COAT AT GRAPPENHALL **George Webster**, 32, a boatman, was charged with stealing a blue cloth monkey coat, the property of William McHale, at Grappenhall on the 15th March. Prisoner pleaded guilty. Mr Yale prosecuted, and said that the prosecutor laid his coat on the canal bank at Grappenhall, when the prisoner came along with his boat, got on shore, and took the coat. He was subsequently seen by prosecutor, and when he spied McHale he went into his cabin and took the coat off. On being given into custody, prisoner pleaded guilty. There was a previous conviction for larceny in 1880 against the prisoner, and Webster was now sentenced to six months' hard labour, and warned that if he came there again he would be sent to penal servitude.

59 19 July 1884

NORTHWICH PETTY SESSIONS

NON PAYMENT OF RATES **James Williamson**, waterman, Navigation Road, Castle, was summoned by Mr G A Hughes, collector to the Northwich Local Board, for 4s, being the amount levied on him for water rate. Defendant did not appear, and an order to pay forthwith was made.

ALLEGED DAMAGE TO GRASS **Joseph Good**, boatman of Wincham, was charged with committing damage to grass growing in a field at Marston by turning a horse therein. The complainant, Peter Hargreaves, stated that on the 10th of July he found the defendant's horse in his field. Defendant said he turned his horse into Mr Rayner's field, but the fences being bad it must have strayed. There being no witness present who actually saw Good turn the horse into the field, the case was adjourned for a fortnight, on the understanding that the complainant would produce further evidence.

MULES ASTRAY **William Beech**, boatman, Barnton, was summoned by PC Bottoms for allowing two mules to stray on the 8th July. He was fined 5s, including costs.

DRUNKENNESS The following persons were fined for drunkenness :- **William Johnson**, boatman, Marston, 5s including costs.

60 30 January 1886

SUDDEN DEATH OF A WARRINGTON MAN AT RUNCORN On Wednesday afternoon, a boatman named **Edward Holt**, residing at Warrington, died under very sudden circumstances at the

Old Quay Docks, Runcorn. The deceased, who was a man about 40 years of age, was turning the bridge off to allow his boat to pass, when he fell to the ground and expired almost instantly. An inquest will be held.

61 30 January 1886

CAPSIZING OF A CANAL BOAT AT RUNCORN During Saturday night, a narrow boat belonging to **Mr Samuel Taylor**, which had been loaded during the day with vitriol in tanks at the works of Messrs Hazlehurst and Son, capsized and sank. The two men belonging to the boat were fortunately not sleeping on board, or there would have been little chance of their escape from death.

62 6 February 1886

RUNCORN COUNTY COURT The monthly sitting of this court was held on Tuesday when, owing to the unavoidable absence of his Honour Judge Wynne Ffoulkes, F G Carver, barrister at law, Liverpool, was nominated deputy judge and dispatched the business of the court. The only case of interest was one in which **Thomas Robinson**, a boatman living in Mason Street, Runcorn, sued **Mr Philip Speakman**, boat owner, for £1 13s 10d for freight. Mr Burton, solicitor, appeared for the plaintiff, and the defendant was represented by his clerk, Mr William Carroll. The defendant admitted plaintiff's claim, but claimed a set off of £4 10s for demurrage. Mr Carroll said the defendant gave plaintiff permission to take a cargo of rags from Manchester to Liverpool, and he was expressly told that if he was delayed at Liverpool he would be charged demurrage. The plaintiff denied the statement. Mr Carroll, in answer to questions, admitted that the plaintiff was a servant in defendant's employ, and was liable to be dismissed at a trip's notice. His Honour held that the plaintiff was not liable to the defendant for the counter claim, and he must give judgement for the plaintiff's claim. He should say that the consignees of the cargo of rags would be liable to the defendant for the amount of demurrage.

63 5 June 1886

BOY DROWNED AT RUNCORN

SINGULAR CONDUCT OF A BOATMAN

AN INSANE ACTION Mr J T Ridgway, Coroner, held an inquest on Tuesday afternoon at the Vine Hotel, Lowland Road, Runcorn, touching the death of **William Silas Wood**, aged three years, son of **William Wood**, a boatman living in the Vine Yard, off Lowlands Road. It appeared that on Monday evening, the deceased, whose parents live near the canal, went out of the house to play. As he did not return, his grandmother, Elizabeth Lamb, went to look for him, and found the body in the canal close to the side. She called for assistance and the boy was taken out of the water by a man named William Nicholls. Life was not wholly extinct, and efforts were made to restore animation, but without avail. A witness named **James Sumner**, a boatman living at Acton Bridge, said that he saw the child in the water before it was seen by its grandmother. He did not pull it out, as such an attempt would have made him light headed and dizzy. Instead of attempting to pull the body out, or to call for assistance, he went to look for the dock constable, who told him to go to the police station.

The Coroner : Do you mean to tell the jury that you did not attempt to save this child?

Witness : I dare not attempt to touch it at all.

The Coroner : But if you go dizzy, how is it that you were able to go for the dock constable?

Witness : Well it's the truth I told you.

The Coroner : Well, I must say that I can hardly believe the tale you tell.

Witness : It's the truth from my heart.

The Coroner : Have you ever got a body out of the water?

Witness : No.

The Coroner : Well, how do you know it makes you dizzy?

Witness : I have seen them in the water, and when I have gone to them, it has made me so dizzy that I should have fallen in myself.

The Coroner : But there were people within a few yards to whom you could have called for assistance?

Witness : Yes, but I went for the constable.

The Coroner : I hope if you ever see another body in the water you will not walk away as you did yesterday without either making an effort to get it out or call the assistance of some person close to. Recollect that this child has very likely lost its life through your walking away without making the effort which you ought to have done. Of course I don't know anything about you, and am not able to judge whether you are telling me the truth, but as far as I am able to see, I doubt very much whether you are telling me the truth.

Mr Frodsham (a juryman) : I think he deserves censuring.

Mr Moores (another juryman) said that the child was certainly alive when taken out of the water, and it was able to swallow brandy. He believed if it had been taken out of the water a little sooner, the efforts made to restore animation would have proved successful.

Mr Percival (a juror) observed that the witness might have got a boat hook to get the child out.

The Coroner said from the evidence it appeared that the child was alive when taken out of the water, and the slightest effort on the part of Sumner might have saved its life.

In reply to Mr Temperley, the witness said he thought the child had been in the water some time.

The Coroner asked PC Sutton, who was present on behalf of the police, whether he knew anything of the witness.

Police-constable Sutton said the witness was a loafer, but went with boats for the sake of a living.

A juror asked whether the constable thought the witness was of sound intellect.

Police-constable Sutton said he did not think he was as sensible as he might be.

The Coroner said he did not think that any man with the feelings of a man would have acted as Sumner had done.

Mr S Yarwood said his action was that of an insane man.

The Coroner said that looking at the case in a mild light, some people had a dislike to touch dead bodies.

The jury were unanimously of the opinion that Sumner should be censured.

On Sumner being called into the room,

The Coroner said that if he had not given his statement on oath, neither himself nor the jury would have given his statement credit. It certainly seemed an insane action on the part of any man not to make an effort to get the child out of the water, but instead of that to go a long distance for assistance. He quite agreed with the jury that he was deserving of censure. If he had called to the men who were close to, the life of the child might have been saved. He hoped that he would take the case as a lesson in the future, and in order to mark his conduct, he should not allow him the witness's fee. He certainly thought he had shown a great want of feeling.

Mr Yarwood alluded to the distress in which the parents of the deceased were. Both the father and mother were ill in bed, and he suggested that the jury should give their fees to the parents.

The jury, through the coroner, presented the sum of 13s to the parents of the deceased.

A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

64 19 June 1886

RUNCORN POLICE COURT, TUESDAY

KEEPING A DOG WITHOUT A LICENCE **William Dagnall**, a boatman, was convicted, on the evidence of PC Millington, of keeping a dog without a licence, and was fined 2s 6d and 9s 6d costs.

THURSDAY

A VAGRANT **George Dodson**, described as a boatman, was charged with sleeping in an outbuilding belonging to John Ford of the Commercial Hotel, Bridge Street. Police-constable Barratt proved that on the previous night he found the prisoner in a hay loft at the Commercial Hotel. He was entirely without means of subsistence. The magistrate said that there was much danger caused by persons like the prisoner sleeping out and sent him to prison for 14 days with hard

labour.

65 2 October 1886

FATAL BOATING ACCIDENT AT FIDDLER'S FERRY

A WARRINGTON POLICE INSPECTOR DROWNED A sad drowning fatality occurred on the river Mersey near Fiddler's Ferry on Wednesday morning. Captain Mather of Warrington, and Inspector John Berry of the Warrington Borough Police Force, left Atherton's Quay in a boat about half past seven, and went down the river towards Runcorn. They returned with the tide, which was very high, and when near the Ferry Inn crossed from the Cheshire side of the river, when they came into collision with the flats *Titus* and *Active*, which were lying abreast. The boat was upset, and both men were thrown into the water. Inspector Berry got on the keel of the boat, which turned over, and seeing Mather struggling in the water crawled along the bottom until he got near him, when he tried to drag him on the boat. In this, however, he was unsuccessful, the boat overturning, and Inspector Berry was thrown into the water and not seen again alive. Captain Mather seized a small plank on which he had been sitting in the boat, and getting it under his chin, managed to keep himself afloat until a boatman named **White**, of the flat *Titus*, pulled him aboard his flat in an exhausted condition. He was afterwards taken home. A man named **Tinsley**, of the *Active*, threw a rope to the men when in the water, which Mr Berry could easily have reached, but he endeavoured to save Captain Mather, and thus his noble effort caused him to lose his own life. Inspector Berry has been over 20 years in the force, and was much respected both in his private and public capacity. He leaves a wife and five children.

66 22 December 1886

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS. MONDAY

CANAL BOATS ACT **Thomas Fellows**, a boatman, was charged with allowing a narrow boat, of which he was master, belonging to the Anderton Company, to be occupied by two persons of the opposite sex above the age of twelve years. The defendant pleaded guilty. Mr Thomas (?Boote?), inspector of Canal Boats to the Runcorn Improvement Commissioners, said that on the 10th inst he inspected the boat of which the defendant was master, and found that it was occupied by his son and daughter, both of whom were over 12 years of age. The defendant said he had only brought the girl with him on one trip for the sake of her health. A fine of 5s and 9s 6d costs was imposed.

67 5 February 1887

BODY OF A FLATMAN FOUND IN THE CANAL AT WIDNES Recently **James Morris**, about 25 years of age, of Sankey Bridge near Warrington, has been missing. On Wednesday morning shortly after nine o'clock, the body of a man was found floating in the Widnes and St Helen's Canal at Widnes, and from his appearance it is supposed to be that of Morris. He had in his pocket 3s 6d in money, a pocket knife, a small tooth comb, and a letter which appeared to have been sent by Stephen Millbank, *SS Seine*, Victoria Dock, London. He is 5 ft 6 in in height, has brown hair, moustache and imperial ; was dressed in old moleskin trousers and vest, tight fitting coat and old fish tail lace up clogs, the irons of which were nearly worn off. The body appeared to have been in the water about a week or ten days. It now lies at the George Hotel, Waterloo Road, Widnes, awaiting an inquest.

The body has since been identified as that of James Morris, who has not been seen alive since Thursday the 16th December.

68 30 June 1888

WIDNES PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY

MALICIOUS ASSAULT **Thomas Heaton**, a flatman who resides at Birkenhead, was summoned by Robert B Wilkinson and brother for assaulting them on Sunday night. He pleaded not guilty. Wilkinson stated that the prisoner was in company with a lot more youths in Moore Lane, and kept following them and jeering. When they got to the new lamp they stopped, and the defendants

passed. When crossing the fields towards the Central Station they were attacked by Heaton and others. They had not given them any provocation. Heaton picked up a stone and struck the plaintiff in the ribs, and another stone hit his brother on the head. Wilkinson in self defence hit one of the company with a stick. Alfred Greenock said he was with Heaton at the time. He did not see him throw the stone, but he heard someone call out, "Oh, my head". Inspector Keighley said he was in the police station when the youths came to lay the charge against the young man, and they appeared to have been badly treated. Heaton was fined 20s and costs, in default to go to gaol for one month.

69 12 September 1888

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

ALLEGED DISOBEDIENCE OF AN ORDER **Alfred Bentley**, flatman, was charged on remand with failing to comply with an attendance order made on the 18th of June, by not causing his son **Ernest** to attend the Weaver Navigation School at Northwich. Defendant's wife appeared in answer to the summons, and said she had not seen her husband, who was at Northwich, for a week. As there was no proof that the defendant was aware of the issue of the summons, the case, on the application of Mr Bowyer, attendance officer, was adjourned for a fortnight.

A SERIOUS CHARGE A flatman named **John Mason** was charged on remand with a criminal offence on two children under the age of sixteen years on board a flat on the river Mersey on the 3rd inst. Mr C T Peters of Widnes defended, and Superintendent Hollingworth informed the magistrates that the prisoner was remanded from Saturday. He asked for a further remand for the appearance of certain witnesses who, he thought, had by some means been kept out of the way. Mr Peters objected to the remand, and said that if it was granted he should ask that the prisoner, who was a working man and had a large family, be admitted to bail. Prisoner was remanded till Wednesday, bail being refused.

70 12 September 1888

DROWNING CASE AT MIDDLEWICH On Saturday afternoon, an inquest was held at Mrs Ann Beckett's beerhouse, Newton, near Middlewich, before Mr C Blunt, deputy coroner, on the body of **William Pilbury**, a boatman of Burland near Nantwich, who was found drowned in the canal at Newton about half past one on Thursday morning. Mr Peter Hancock was foreman of the jury.

John Owen, captain of the Shropshire Union boat *Beatrice*, deposed that the deceased had been in his employ for a fortnight. About one o'clock on Thursday morning they were proceeding up the Trent and Mersey Canal at Newton, when he sent the deceased ahead to get Ramp's lock ready for the boat. When witness got there he found the lock was not ready, and he drew the two bottom paddles. Another boat captain then said to him, "Have you seen that chap of yours about anywhere?" He replying, "No", the other captain said, "He is in the lock then". They grappled for him, and found him in the lock, quite dead. The night was very dark and wet.

George Grainger, the captain Owen had referred to, said he was captain of the boat *Moses*, belonging to the Shropshire Union. His boat was just leaving the lock about one o'clock in the morning in question, when a man went by him. Witness said to him, "It is a very wet night", and he replied, "Yes, it is". He heard him afterwards drop the paddles and shut the top gate, and when he had gone a little way with his boat he heard a sigh. He jumped off the boat and went back with a rake. He dragged in the bottom end of the "pound", thinking deceased had dropped into the water, but could not find him. Captain Owen then came up, and witness asked him if he had seen that chap of his about, and Owen replied, "No", and he then said, "He is in the lock then". They dragged the lock and found him at the bottom.

Ambrose Clarke, deceased's stepfather, of Burland, identified the body. He said he last saw him alive about a fortnight ago. He was really a farm labourer, but of late had thought he would like boating. He had been doing that for a few months.

A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned.

71 20 November 1888

THE ACCIDENT ON A WIDNES FLAT The man **Oakes**, who was severely injured about the head and face through a winch handle striking him, is progressing. He is wholly conscious and converses freely. It is quite a miracle how he survives, and his convalescent state is totally contrary to all the doctors' opinion. The poor man suffers considerably in his head. The skull is staved in to the extent of three or four inches, and in consequence of the jaw bone being broken he is not able to eat any solid food.

72 20 November 1888

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS

“OVERDRIVEN WITH A STRAW” **Alfred Everill**, a boatman, was summoned for cruelly ill-treating a horse by flogging the same with a whip on the 17th of October. Constable Hammersley gave evidence showing that at four o'clock on the afternoon of the 17th ult, he was in Swinton's Lane, off Percival's Lane, when he saw the defendant driving a horse along the canal bank. Every few yards that the horse went, defendant, who was in drink, hit the animal with a whip. Witness went after the defendant, and did not come up with him until he arrived at the next lock. He asked the defendant whether it was his horse, and he replied that it was, and that he should flog it as much as he liked. Witness examined the horse, and found a number of whip marks and wheals on its body from its shoulder to its hind quarters, and the animal was trembling all over. Defendant admitted that he had flogged the horse with the whip, which he, however, stated was only two ounces and a half in weight. The animal did not require much whipping, and could be driven with a straw. The Chairman : You say your horse could be driven with a straw, therefore with a whip like that you could overdrive it. We have no doubt that the horse was over-driven ; but a small penalty of 10s including costs would be imposed.

73 27 February 1889

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **George Wilson**, a boatman of Northwich, was summoned for cruelly ill-treating a horse by causing it to be worked whilst in an unfit condition on the 5th inst. PC Breeze stated that on the afternoon of the day in question he was on duty in the township of Clifton on the river Weaver canal bank, when he saw the defendant's boy with a horse going in the direction of Northwich. He noticed that the animal was suffering, and on examining it, he found a large wound on its shoulder from which blood was oozing. The boy, in answer to the officer, said his father harnessed the horse the night previous. Inspector Nicholls, RSPCA, stationed at Altrincham, deposed that he saw the horse at Northwich on the 11th inst. It was then in the stable, and on examining it, he found an old wound on the shoulder, which was then healing. The collar had blood on it. Defendant said that on the day in question the horse had been working on the riverside towing a barge, and the wound was rubbed over. He was obliged to send the horse as it was the only one he had. A fine of 20s and costs, or one month's imprisonment.

74 26 October 1889

BOILER EXPLOSION ON THE RIVER WEAVER

ONE MAN KILLED AND OTHERS INJURED

THE STEAMER WRECKED On Saturday evening shortly before six o'clock, a boiler explosion took place on the river Weaver, at Saltersford Locks, Barnton, which resulted in the death of one man and injury to two others, as well as the total destruction of the steamer *Development*, the property of the Salt Union Limited. The particulars of the accident are as below :- About two o'clock, the ill fated steamer started from the works of the owners at Winsford for Weston Point, in charge of **Matthew Allman**, captain ; **John Penny**, engineer ; and **George Southerton**, hand. It was towing the barque *Denmark*, with captain **Ernest Verdin** and mate **William Rathbone** on board. All went well until Saltersford Lock was reached. Here, whilst the vessels were being lowered, Penny informed the captain that he would go into the engine house and oil the machinery,

whilst it was stationary. He had no sooner descended the steps than the boiler exploded with a terrific crash, the sound being distinctly heard four miles away. The scene for the next few moments was indescribable, parts of the steamer being flung considerable distance ; and the cargo, heavy lumps of salt, being blown, in some instances, more than forty yards. Allman, who was on the after part of the engine house, was lifted off his feet and carried some two yards ; but he luckily escaped with no further injuries than being slightly scalded about the legs and sustaining a severe shaking. He immediately succeeded in getting safe on the stone work of the lock. **John Lyon**, lock tender, who was assisting to lower the water for the freight to go through, fared far worse. He was struck by pieces of the debris with such force that one of his ribs was broken. In addition to this, he received a most violent shock to the system. The most serious accident, however, befell the engineer, who was not seen until five minutes after the explosion, when the steamer sank and filled with water. Then it was that Penny came to the surface with a piece of the wreckage. Southerton, who was engaged in drawing off the water, got down to the water's edge, seized hold of the man's arms, but the skin peeling off, he secured a rope around the poor fellow's waist, when he was hauled ashore by **George Plant** and **George Hancock**, lock-keepers. A messenger was dispatched for Dr Smith of Weaverham ; and at the same time, Dr Brown of Northwich was telephoned for.

In less than an hour, Dr Smith, Dr Bowers, his assistant, and Dr Hall, assistant to Dr Brown, were in attendance. They did what they could to relieve the intense agony of Penny, but, from the first, they considered his case hopeless, he being fearfully scalded all over the body. Death put an end to his awful sufferings shortly before ten o'clock the same night. The deceased was aged about 25 years, he was unmarried, and when able to be at home resided with his mother in Baker Street, off Churchill Street, Manchester. He was, however, engaged to be married next Christmas. He was in the employ of Mr Falk before the floating of the Salt Union Limited, and since then had occupied his position under the new owners of the *Development*, as engineer.

Several narrow escapes took place in connection with the occurrence. Southerton had only just come from the cabin after having had his tea, and had only been on the lock for a moment for the purpose of drawing off the water, when the explosion happened. He was on the south side of the lock, on which fortunately none of the timbers or boiling water were thrown. The captain and mate of the barge *Denmark* consider their complete immunity from harm miraculous, they being surrounded by flying missiles. **John Hancock**, lock tender, owes his escape also to being on the south side. All the material, strange to say, was forced in a northerly direction ; and large lumps of salt were thrown over the houses occupied by the lock tenters, a distance of 40 yards. The deck planks were carried fully 20 yards ; the bulk head was thrown a long way ; and part of the smoke box, weighing a hundredweight, went a considerable height, and alighted eight yards from the wreck. It is further considered fortunate that the steamer was deep in the lock at the time of the explosion, the force thereby being confined to a relatively small area. If she had been on a level with the shore, serious damage must have been done to the houses close by ; and the men who so narrowly escaped would have been even in greater danger from the debris. As it is, the steamer is a complete wreck, and nothing is to be seen of her with the exception of a number of loose planks, and the mast. No attempt will be made to raise her until after the inquest, there being ample accommodation at the other lock for the traffic.

Lyon, on Monday, was progressing as well as could be expected ; and it is anticipated that with quietness for a few days, he will recover. The medical gentleman attending him is surprised that he was not more seriously injured. He attributes this to the fact that he was wearing a thick pilot coat at the time, for if his garments had been thin, he would in all probability have had more ribs fractured. The scene of the accident was visited on Sunday by several hundreds of the inhabitants of Northwich and district, but the utmost orderliness prevailed.

The cause of the explosion is unknown. It may be stated that 12 or 13 years ago the boiler of the *Development* burst about the same spot, and on that occasion, the same as the present, the engineer was scalded to death.

THE INQUEST On Tuesday afternoon, at the offices of the Weaver Navigation Company, Saltersford Locks, Barnton, an enquiry touching the death of John Penny was held before Mr H C

Yates, coroner. The Rev S L Laidman, vicar of Barnton, was chosen foreman of the jury. Mr J H Cooke, solicitor, Winsford, was in attendance representing the interests of the Salt Union Limited, and Mr Saner, engineer to the River Weaver Trust, was also present.

Mr Cooke at the outset said he was there as the representative of the Salt Union Limited, and on their behalf he wished to express their very great regret that the accident should have occurred. He was instructed to facilitate the enquiry as much as possible.

The mother of deceased was to have been called for the purpose of identification ; but before entering the room she gave way to a flood of tears, and, in order to save her feelings to the utmost extent, it was decided to call

John Robinson of Wade Brook, Northwich, who said : Deceased was my brother-in-law, and he was 25 years of age last month. He chiefly resided with his mother in Baker Street, Manchester. He was an engineer in the employ of the Salt Union Limited, and was in charge of the *Development*. I last saw him alive three weeks ago this evening, when he was quite well. I identified the body as that of John Penny. The Coroner : Did he ever speak to you about this flat? No, sir. Did he express any fear of it? Not to me. The Foreman : How long had he been engineer on the *Development*? So far as I know about two years. Can you tell us how long he had had experience as an engineer? I cannot say. He was a fitter by trade. The Coroner : Do you know whether he was the fitter of a marine boiler, or a railway boiler? I cannot say, but I fancy of a marine boiler. He was accustomed to marine engines? Yes ; but I cannot speak positively on the point. Had he only been an engine driver two years ; had he been promoted? I believe that he had been an engine driver previous to joining the *Development*. So that he was conversant with the working of an engine? Yes, I think so, considering that he was a fitter. A Juror : He used to be a fitter under Mr Verdin? Yes, for some years. And a driver occasionally, I understand? Yes.

Dr Joseph William Smith of Weaverham deposed : I was called to see the deceased on Saturday evening, about a quarter past six. I found him in a state of collapse suffering from excessive scalds. I saw no hope from the first of his recovery. The scalds were chiefly on the face, chest, back, arms and legs. The skin peeled off his hands just the same as you take off a glove. I am not aware that any bones were broken. He complained of suffering pain on the right side ; but his condition was such that an examination could not be made. He died, in my opinion, from shock and severe scalds. I have been informed how he got the scalds, and I was right on the scene of the accident after it happened. The Foreman : Did he make any remarks to you about the boiler or engine? No, he was unable to do so. All he did was to complain of a difficulty of breathing.

The Coroner, accompanied by the foreman of the jury and Dr Smith, then went to the bedroom of John Lyon, who was so severely injured, and on their return Mr Yates read the following evidence given by him :- I am lock-keeper at the Saltersford Locks, Branton. On Saturday about 5.40 o'clock, I was on the lock side watching the approach of the flat *Development*. It had got inside the lock. There was a barge with it. When both got inside the lock, the gates were closed. I saw Penny on the deck and spoke to him. He merely said, "How do you do?" I saw him go below, and in about half a minute a terrible explosion occurred. I was struck with something, but I know not what. I ran wildly up and down the bank, and then bethought me of the men on board. I went to the lock side. I saw Matthew Allman, the captain, standing on the deck. He seemed bewildered, and cried, "Oh, my engine driver". I said, "Matthew, the vessel is sinking ; get off her". He obeyed my orders, and got off the vessel. In about half a minute, the vessel sank. We were all anxious for the safety of the engine driver. Shortly after, he came to the top, and one of the men on the other barge cried out, "Here is the driver". Plant, who had by this time got to the lock, ran for a boat hook, and gave it to him. He took it with both hands, and he was drawn to the side of the gate. He said, "I cannot hold on". I went down the gate and reached my hand to him and got hold of his hand, and we held him there until the ladder was put in the dock. A rope was put round him, he was lifted to the top, and he was taken to the office. He was stripped and wrapped in a blanket, and Dr Smith was sent for. Deceased had been two or three years on the flat. He had never said anything to me about his engines. I cannot say what caused the explosion. The flat came in the lock quietly. By the Foreman : The deck of the engine house was partially blown off before the flat sunk, and this

would allow a chance of escaping. He was a steady man.

Matthew Allman said : I am captain of the flat *Development*, belonging to the Salt Union Limited. The deceased was my engine driver, and George Southerton was my hand. This composed my crew. My flat is 230 tonnage. I had got a load of salt on board, shipped at Winsford, where we left about two o'clock on Saturday afternoon, bound for Liverpool. We had in tow a barge, which was also laden with salt. It was in charge of Henry Verdin and William Rathbone. We arrived at the Saltersford locks about twenty minutes to six, and came quietly inside the lock, when the gates were closed. Both I and the engine driver were on deck. Penny said, "I will go down below now, and give the engine some oil". He then left me. Within half a minute, an explosion occurred. I was still on the deck. I was lifted up and carried about four feet further aft. I received no injury. I was talking to the lock-keeper, who had merely asked me how far we were going, when the explosion happened. I did not see him knocked down. The next thing was that he came to me and said, "Get ashore ; she is sinking". I got up the lock side, and then turned my attention to the deceased, who was eventually rescued from the water. The Coroner : Have you been in charge of this vessel for some time? *About 18 months this time.* Had she been under repair or something? *I only came to her when she had been repaired, and the men formerly in charge had left her. She was repaired about six months before I became captain of her.* Do you know whether the repairs in question attended to the engine? *I do not know.* You have nothing to do with the engine, your duty being simply to navigate the vessel? *That is all.* Was there anything unusual with the engine as you came along? *No, I did not notice anything.* No steaming? *No.* I take it you did not go down into the engine room to see what pressure was on? *No, sir.* Would your driver have any object in view in putting on extra steam? *No, sir, we were only going as far as Acton Bridge that night.* I think the lock previous to that is called Barrows Lock? *Yes.* Did everything go right there? *No ; he went to clean the fire whilst there, and two of the bars fell out.* Were they replaced? *Yes ; he cooled them and put them in again.* Did you see this done? *No ; but he told me of the circumstance when he came on deck.* Did he report anything else as to steam or anything? *No, sir.* You saw no steam escaping at Barrows Lock? *No ; but I should have seen it if there had been any.* Can you form any opinion as to how this unfortunate accident happened? *No, I cannot.* Had he been under your charge for any length of time? *He was with the boat before I came to it.* Had you always found him a careful driver? *Yes.* Any indulging in putting on extra steam, or anything like that? *No, sir.* When you came into the lock, you did so quietly? *Yes.* Is it the practice of the engine driver to oil the engines when in the lock? *Yes, sir.* Can you tell me what weight of salt you had on board? *Yes ; about 220 tons.* Was that a usual cargo? *No.* It would not strain the engine? *No – we could bring 230 tons. I did not know the exact horse power.* The Foreman : Can you tell us when the boiler was last cleaned? *About a fortnight ago.* What is the usual custom in this respect? *To clean it once a month.* The Coroner : Do you know how it was that the boiler was cleaned under the usual time? *It wanted a new hose pipe, and the steam was blown off to allow this to be attached.* Do you know who cleaned it? *A man named Dean.* The Foreman : Have monthly cleanings been exceeded? *No. Whenever they have required cleaning, it has been done. We had only to mention the matter.* The Foreman : Do you know whether the safety valve was in proper working order? *I cannot say.* The Coroner : You had no fear of this engine? *I had not.* Do you know that this engine once had exploded or met with an accident? *Yes, I saw it.* How long is it ago? *Eighteen years.* The same boiler? *No, sir, but in the same boat.* Then it seems to be an ill fated vessel. Mr Cooke : Has the engine driver ever praised this boiler to you? *He said it was a good boiler, but rather small.* Have you ever heard anything about a plug being placed on the safety valve, or respecting his being cautioned about it? *No, sir.* What has ever been required has been done by the Salt Union? *Yes, sir.* The Coroner asked Mr Cooke if his references were with respect to confining the steam, and Mr Cooke replied in the affirmative.

George Southerton of 6 Brook Street, Runcorn, said : I am hand on the ship *Development*. On Saturday we left Winsford with a load of salt, bound for Liverpool but only going to Acton Bridge that night. We left Winsford about two o'clock, and arrived at Saltersford about twenty minutes to six. On reaching the lock, I had just come out of the cabin from having my tea. When we were in

the lock, I got ashore to draw the water off. I drew off one side of the lock, and then went across to draw the other, when the explosion took place. The noise was like a clap of thunder. I ran round the lock, and seeing the captain, shouted, "Oh, where's Jack?" He replied, "He is in the engine house". Immediately he said that, the boat's stern went under, and deceased came to the surface. I lowered myself down the gates, caught hold of his arm, the skin of which peeled off. He said, "Oh, pull me out, George", and I said, "I will pull you out, Jack". I then got a rope round his waist, and we handed him on the lock. All had gone well from Winsford to here. I was not on the vessel at Barrow's Lock, having gone to Northwich for the wages. I joined the vessel at Baron's Quay. She was a long time in coming, and on asking the reason, the engine driver said two fire bars had been out. I had been on the flat about 20 months. I never suspected the slightest danger, or else I should have left her. The Coroner : Did deceased ever talk about the engine? *He praised her, and said, "My little boiler is a good one". He was a steady man, and I considered him a practical engineer.* The Coroner : Did you know that the valve was ever plugged? *No, sir. I believe I put some coal on the fire near Northwich, deceased saying that he felt unwell and I having recommended him to have some tea. I did not notice the steam gauge after I put the coal on. I was getting the lamps ready.* The Coroner : I suppose you cannot help us out of this difficulty as to how this explosion happened? *Not at all. I have not the slightest idea. I have not been brought up in connection with machinery.*

The Coroner said that now it became a question as to an adjournment of the inquest, for they had by no means arrived at the nature, as required by the oath they had taken, as to why and how the deceased John Penny came by his death. So far, they had very little evidence with regard to the engine. He would like to know whether the Salt Union Limited intended to raise the vessel.

Mr Saner, engineer to the Weaver Navigation Co, said they were intending to raise it, and he was preparing for this to be done at the present time. It would however be some days before this would be accomplished. It might be ten days before the lock was empty. He was proceeding as speedily as possible with the emptying of the lock, so that the vessel could be seen in the position in which it had sunk.

The Coroner said the material point was the examination of the boiler, which would perhaps give them the secret of the accident, the mischief of which they wished to get at. It was incumbent upon them to ascertain the state of the boiler, and therefore he took it that the best thing at present was to adjourn the enquiry *sine die*. The police sergeant would inform him when the boiler was in a position to be seen. In the meantime he thought some independent man acquainted with engineering should, on their behalf, examine the boiler. If that was their wish, he would get it done. The jury thought this would be the best plan to adopt.

The Coroner asked if they had any suggestion to make as to the gentleman who should perform the duty.

Mr Saner said that he had received word that he must not touch anything connected with the explosion until the Board of Trade's Inspector had been down.

The Coroner said that under those circumstances, it would be the best plan for him to communicate with the Board of Trade, and if it was the wish of the jury that some scientific man should examine the boiler, he would inform them of the fact. The moment he got the communication from the Board of Trade, the sergeant would doubtless inform him when the enquiry should be resumed. He thought they ought not to hurry over the matter, for the accident was an exceptionally sad one. One poor fellow had lost his life by it, and another, the lock-keeper, had been seriously injured. If they could solve what was at the present time a mystery, viz the cause of the explosion, it would be doubtless a blessing, not only to the men engaged on the barges, but to the public generally.

Mr Cooke said that they had communicated with the Board of Trade, as required by Act of Parliament. In the case of a boiler explosion, they were obliged to report the matter within 24 hours.

The enquiry was then adjourned *sine die*, the resumption to take place at the Bridge Inn, Barnton.

75 13 November 1889

FOUND DROWNED AT RUNCORN The body of a man at present unknown was found on Sunday afternoon about half past two in the Bridgewater Canal at the Top Locks, Runcorn, by a boatman named **Needham**. The body was removed to the mortuary, and an inquest is arranged for.

76 18 December 1889

RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS

CLAIM AGAINST A BOATMAN A boatman named **Charles Spencer** was summoned for having wrongfully left the employment of his employer, Mr Richard Abel, without having given proper notice to do so, and £4 damages was claimed in consequence. Mr J Burton, solicitor, said that the defendant, who pleaded guilty, on the 3rd inst was engaged to take a cargo of timber to Manchester, and received £2 10s from Mr Abel ; but instead of going to Manchester he got drunk, and refused to take the timber by the flat. The timber was delayed for two days in consequence. Prosecutor was willing to reduce the claim to £3. Mr Abel said the defendant had been working for him for about four or five years, and he thought that as he (prosecutor) had been very kind to him, he ought to pay up the amount claimed at once. Defendant, after having been paid £2 10s, refused to take the timber, and told prosecutor that he must take it himself. Defendant was ordered to pay £3 in a month.

77 2 July 1890

ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN At the Runcorn Petty Sessions on Monday, before Messrs James Handley and G L Wigg, a boatman named **Abraham Bates** was charged with assaulting his wife **Martha** on the 12th ult. Complainant said that she lived on board a boat with her husband, and about eleven o'clock on the morning of the 12th ult, defendant thrashed her most severely, and struck her on the nose, afterwards kicking her on the left side. He afterwards tried to drown her in the canal at Manchester. Defendant said he only touched his wife, because she had thrown half a pound of butter into the canal. His line broke, and he told her to hold the boat in ; but instead of that she jumped out of the boat on to the towing-path, and threatened to have him taken away from the boat. He denied that he had attempted to drown his wife, but admitted having thrown some water over her. Complainant said she had not lived with the defendant since, as he had told her that he did not want her. The Chairman : You don't seem to have lived a happy life with her? Defendant : No, sir. Bates was bound over in his own recognisance of £5 to keep the peace for three months, and was ordered to pay the costs, which amounted to 11s.

78 2 August 1890

WESTON POINT

A MAN FOUND DROWNED At noon on Thursday, the body of a man unknown was recovered from the river Weaver by a man named **Charles Bowyer**, a boatman in the employ of the contractors for the Ship Canal Works. The body was removed to the Weaver Hotel, and on an examination by PC Hammersley, no marks of violence were found. In the pockets were 1s 4 3/4d in money, a knife, a pincushion and several small visiting cards. Deceased is about five feet seven in height, with black hair, clean shaven and between 20 and 30 years of age. He wore dark striped trousers and vest, and had on no shoes or stockings.

79 2 August 1890

FRODSHAM

SHOCKING FATAL ACCIDENT AT THE RUNCORN BONE WORKS

THE INQUEST An enquiry was held at the Aston Arms, Frodsham Bridge, on Thursday morning, by Mr R Dobson, deputy coroner, into the circumstances attending the death of **Charles Edwin Houghton**, aged 22, who succumbed on Wednesday to injuries received whilst at work at Mrs Riley's works at Sutton. Mr Acton was the foreman of the jury. Charles Houghton, a labourer living at Seven Houses, Frodsham Bridge, the father of the deceased, identified the body as that of

his son, who died on the previous day at the Runcorn Bone Works at Sutton. Deceased was a labourer at the works, which belonged to Mrs Riley. **William Wild**, living at Rock Savage, also employed at Mrs Riley's works, and who has worked there about three months, said he knew the deceased, who had been longer in the employ, very well, and on Wednesday morning witness and deceased were engaged in emptying a flat laden with bone at the works. He and the deceased were in the flat, whilst **George Hulse** was the crane driver. There were two buckets in use, and the bone was filled into these, and drawn up afterwards by the crane. They might have sent up nine or ten buckets, fully laden, before the accident happened. An empty bucket was sent down, and the full one dropped. Witness did not see the bucket come down or strike the deceased, but he saw that it had caught the man's head. He did not hear a chain snap, or anything of that kind. The Deputy Coroner : Then you heard nothing to arouse your suspicions until the bucket was really down? No, sir. You had your back to it perhaps? Yes ; I was going to stoop, and had hold of my shovel. When I saw the bucket roll over I observed that the deceased lay in the boat. I was startled at the time, and called out for assistance, and help came at once. The chain was broken, and part of it fell with the bucket. I do not know how long it has been in use, or whether it was a new or old chain. I did not hear Hulse call out. George Hulse of Frodsham, who is engaged as the crane driver at the works, said the deceased and last witness were engaged in the boat unloading bone, when witness heard the chain snap, and shouted out, "Hey up", and then saw the full bucket fall straight on to the deceased's back, as he was in a stooping position. The Deputy Coroner : Did you warn these men against standing under the buckets? Several times. Did you warn them yesterday? No, not yesterday. Had this man Houghton frequently done this kind of work? Yes, sir. And you are certainly able to swear that you had warned him? Yes, sir. It was one of the links that snapped ; but we could not find the other portion of the broken link, which might have fallen into the canal or gone into the works. It was not a new chain ; but he could not say how long it was since the chain was repaired the last time. Mr T Nicholas said every month or six weeks the chain was examined. Witness, continuing, said there was nothing to tell him that there was anything wrong with the chain. The last time that he was loading the boat he looked at the chain, and could see nothing wrong with it. That was about a week ago. Mr Nicholas shouted out for help, and deceased was got out of the boat. His head was completely smashed, his left arm and left leg were broken, and he was bruised almost all over his body. In reply to Mr Shore, a juryman, witness said the bucket was halfway up at the time the chain snapped. He had known the chain to break three times previously, but there had been no accident to any person. It was over six years since it last broke. The Deputy Coroner summed up the evidence, and said it was one of those unfortunate accidents which, notwithstanding the precautions which had been taken by the orders given at the works, would happen occasionally. From the evidence, it appeared that the deceased had met with his death by accident, and that there was no neglect or default on the part of any person. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased had died from injuries received by the bucket falling on him.

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RUNCORN PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

SCHOOL BOARD CASES **John Horton**, Taylor's Row and **Job Jones**, boatman, were each fined 6d and 4s 6d costs for neglecting to send their children to school. In the case of Horton, Mr Bowyer, attendance officer, informed the magistrates that the child was taken with boats, and did not attend school. The Chairman observed that there was no education in this case. A woman who attended said the child was a very weakly one, and was brought to Runcorn to her, and she took care of it until the father could fetch it. She could not take it by the shoulders and throw it into the street. She had sent the child to school. The child was so earnest about learning. The Chairman observed that that would be all very well if she had done anything to show that she went to school ; but she had done nothing. Mr Bowyer : The child is simply transferred from one boat to another. In the case of Job Jones, it was shown that the child had only been present 20 times at school out of 100. The girl went with the boats and, as more girls went with such than boys, the Board were anxious to get them to school. Defendant's wife said they were boatpeople, and had no home, but when they

came to Runcorn they always sent the child to school. On being fined, defendant's wife said the child would not be sent to the same school again, she would send it to a private school. Mr Bowyer : That will be the same thing.