

**ALDERLEY AND WILMSLOW ADVERTISER**  
**1875 to 1885**

**1      8 January 1875**

**SAD DROWNING CASE OF A DRUNKARD** On Monday evening last, an inquest was held by F W Johnson Esq, respecting the death of **William Armitage**, a boatman hailing from the neighbourhood of Staley Bridge, whose body had been pulled out of the canal that morning, he having been missing since Saturday night. Samuel Ashton, carter of Lime Kilns, Marple, said he had known the deceased, William Armitage, for some years. He was a boatman, and generally lived in a boat. He was supposed to be about 45 years of age. He saw the deceased last alive on Saturday night about half past ten. He was at the Bull's Head Inn, Marple, and rather "fresh". He left deceased near Hollins' Mill, and went in the direction of the Navigation Inn. He was quite friendly. Witness went into the Bull's Head at half past seven, and stopped there till half past ten, and never saw deceased again. Wright Tymms, of Marple Lime Works, stated that on Saturday night last at a few minutes past twelve, he was passing over Posset Bridge, when he heard a noise. He called out "Oakey", and asked him if he was in the canal. He said it was not "Oakey" but "Jawberry", and that he was in the boat all right. Witness then understood who he was, and went home. The man appeared to be drunk from the way in which he spoke. Witness thought deceased might have been in the water from the noise he made. **John Higginbottom** of Marple, boatman, said he put the boat hook in the canal this (Monday) morning, and found deceased's body near the wharf. He had all his clothes on, and was removed to the Navigation Inn. He was on **Samuel Ratcliffe's** boat, which was tied up on account of the frost. PC William Latham, stationed at Marple, said there was a key and a tobacco box in deceased's pockets, but no money. Witness went with Samuel Ratcliffe, the captain of the boat, and examined the cabin door, when Ratcliffe said it had not been unlocked since Saturday afternoon. The jury returned an open verdict, "Found drowned", there being no marks of violence upon deceased.

**2      29 January 1875**

**SHOCKING DISCOVERY AT LYMM**

**SUSPECTED MURDER** On Wednesday at noon, the body of a woman, whose name is at present unknown, was found in the canal at Lymm, near New Road Bridge. The body was raised to the surface by the steamers, but it gradually sunk again. Grapnels, however, were procured, and the body was got out in the course of half an hour. From the appearance presented, there is reason to suppose that a murder of an atrocious character had been committed. The body is that of a young woman, probably from sixteen to seventeen years of age. It was perfectly naked, with the exception of stockings and boots, and one glove on the right hand. These facts tend to show that it could not have been a case of accidental drowning, but direct evidence of violence is clearly discernible. There is, for instance, a gash in the neck on the left side, under the ear, which could only have been produced by a sharp instrument, and one can see by scratches on the skin that more than one application of the knife had been made. The jawbone is fractured, and utterly knocked to pieces on the right side. The right and left arms are broken – the right exhibiting a serious gash, and there is a fearful wound on the top of the left hip. The boots and the gloves are of such a quality to indicate that the deceased was accustomed to be well dressed.

**THE INQUEST** On Friday afternoon, there was an inquest held at the Plough Inn.

Matthew Statham, wheelwright, said that whilst working in a field about half past eleven o'clock, he was called by a passing boatman, who said there was a child in the water. The witness got grappling irons, and after half an hour pulled up the body of a young woman. The body was quite naked, with the exception of stockings, elastic sided kid boots, and a glove on one hand. The boatman went on.

Edward Rowe, police-constable, was then called, and stated that on Wednesday, about noon, he received notice from the last witness that a body had been seen in the canal. He went to the spot and assisted in taking out the body. It had a pair of elastic side boots, and long cotton stockings of

dark grey, footed with dark brown linsey. There were garters of a light woollen colour, which were tied in a bow, once round the leg. There was a dark brown glove on the right hand. There were several holes in the glove at the joints. There was some hair in the hand on which the glove was. The hair was of the same colour as that of the head, and it was so twisted in her fingers that it seemed as if she had drawn her fingers through her hair. The colour of the hair was light brown, which was tied with a bit of black velvet. The length of the body was four feet nine or ten inches. There was some sand in the gloved hand, which was clenched, but the other hand was open.

Mr J P Cartwright, surgeon, who was next sworn, stated that he had made a *post mortem* examination of the body. Great putrefaction had set in, and the woman was apparently about 22 years of age. The features were rather coarse, and the bridge of the nose was rather broad and flattened. He found an incised wound on the left hand side of the neck, about an inch and a half long, of a superficial kind, which was red on the edges and retracted, and must have been made before death, or ten minutes after death. This wound must have been made with a blunt knife, because there was a scratch before the commencement of the wound. There was a bruise on the right shoulder, and on cutting down on it, he found some clots of blood, showing that the bruise must have been made before death or ten minutes afterwards. This bruise must have been made with a blunt heavy instrument, or might have been caused by falling against a stone from some height. It might have been caused by the blow of a fist. There were no other bruises. On the left side of the pelvis there was a contused wound, and the bone was literally smashed, but this must have been done after death. A passing boat on the canal might do that. On the right side of the skull there was a fracture over the right ear. There was a corresponding fracture on the other side. There was an extravasation of blood on the surface of the brain, on the right side, corresponding to the fracture on the right side of the skull and, in the witness's opinion, this must have been done before death. There was also a fracture at the base of the skull, but this might have been done after death. The lower jaw was broken, and this might also have been done after death. There was also a compound comminuted fracture of the right arm, done after death. The left arm was also broken, the injury being probably caused after death by the passing of a steamer. All the ribs, excepting the first on the right side, and the first and second on the left side, were broken. The spine and both thighs were fractured, no doubt after death. The heart was quite healthy, there being no blood on the left side of it. The lungs contained no water or wind, and there was no froth in the mouth or nostrils. The stomach was healthy, containing about two ounces of partly digested food, but no water. The woman was not pregnant. Judging from the appearance of the body, it might have been in the water for more than a month. The witness's opinion was that death was caused by a blow on the right side of the head, causing extravasation of blood on the brain, and the fracturing of the skull. There were no symptoms of drowning.

This was all the evidence adduced, and the jury returned an open verdict to the effect that on the 26<sup>th</sup> January the body of a young woman had been found in the canal, near the Merchant's stables.

**THE BODY IDENTIFIED** The funeral was about to take place at the Parish Church, Lymm, on Saturday, amid a large concourse of people, when an elderly female came forward to Police-constable Rowen and claimed the body as that of her daughter. The woman's decided answers in reply to the constable induced him to order the opening of the coffin, and a sad scene then took place. When all doubt was removed, the interment proceeded. From the woman's account, whose name is Ann Rigby, belonging to Liverpool, deceased was her daughter Mary, aged 20 years, and was a servant, residing until her death with a Mrs Clare or Clay, 28 Stafford Street, Liverpool. It appears she obtained leave from her mistress, on New Year's Eve, to take a holiday and visit her mother, only a short distance away. She never arrived at the latter's house, nor had any clue been traced to her whereabouts. She left behind her some letters and papers at her situation, and they may probably throw a light on the mysterious affair. The mother described her as a most industrious steady girl. Deceased was the youngest of five now left. A very singular circumstance is that deceased's uncle, who lives in the neighbourhood of Lymm, visited the corpse last week, but was unable to identify her.

The *Liverpool Post* says :- From inquiries made on Sunday night, we learn that the young woman

whose identity has been sworn to positively had for some time lived in the service of Mrs Craik of 28 Stafford Street, off London Road, in this town. After a period of service extending over two years, she left and went to reside with Mr Blakey, boot maker, Brownlow Street. During the time she was in Mr Blakey's service, she was presented with a pair of boots, which had been made for a well to do lady customer, but which, on the ground of their being a misfit, were rejected. In September last, the girl re-entered Mrs Craik's service, and remained there until New Year's Day. On that day, she asked permission to go out to see her mother, stating that they purposed to meet her brother, who was expected to arrive at the railway station from Huddersfield. Her request was granted, and she left the house in her ordinary working apparel. She left the greater portion of her clothing behind and, as she had not asked for the small amount of wages then due to her, it is concluded she had little if any money about her. The story about her intention to meet her brother would appear to have been a ruse ; for, on the girl not returning, Mrs Craik sent to the residence of her mother to ascertain the cause, and then for the first time Mrs Rigby became acquainted with the fact that her daughter had disappeared. As may readily be imagined, she felt great concern about her daughter ; and on Friday night she first heard through the newspapers of the fact of the body of a female being discovered in the canal. On Saturday she repaired to Lymm, and just as the funeral bell tolled, she entered the churchyard. She demanded to see the corpse, and in response to her earnest entreaties, the lid of the coffin was taken off, when she identified the body of the deceased as that of her daughter Mary. She also identifies the boot as one of the pair presented to her daughter by Mr Blakey ; and the fact stated that these boots had been made for a lady in good circumstances explains away the supposition that the deceased had belonged to a class above that to which the identification by Mrs Rigby shows she belonged to. Mrs Craik speaks of the girl as being of a quiet, inoffensive disposition – always simple, but most trustworthy in every respect. Some time ago she was in correspondence with a man in Everton to whom, through the medium of another servant girl in the neighbourhood, she addressed a letter, but this was returned with an intimation that the man had left the house to which the letter was addressed, and the writer was therefore requested to send no further communications.

A few hours after the confirmation of her worst fears, the deceased's mother paid a visit to her brother, a man named Williams, who keeps a beerhouse in Rushgreen, but did not remain long. He it was who failed to identify deceased. The poor mother was overwhelmed with grief, and she said, alluding to deceased, “Mary were a rare steady lass, but too quiet. As soon as the coffin lid was pulled off, the dinge over her poor eye were enough for me. I had hopes the poor lass would turn up, but when they read the doctor's talk at the inquest to me, I lost all hopes. I footed them very stockings myself. However, she's better off, and I hope the villain will be caught”. The excitement has been undiminished in the village during the week. On Tuesday afternoon, a considerable crowd assembled to meet the noon tram, the rumour having got abroad that Police-constable Rowe had been telegraphed for to fetch the murderer from Liverpool.

**APPREHENSION OF THE SUPPOSED MURDERER** On Wednesday night the police apprehended a chimney sweep named Watson Whitley at Tachbrook near Liverpool, on the charge of murdering Mary Rigby, whose body was found in the canal at Lymm on the 27<sup>th</sup> inst. It is reported that the prisoner had been paying his addresses, although a married man, to the deceased girl, and this has been proved by correspondence which passed between them. Today he will be brought before the magistrates at Lymm. The prisoner has been several times separated from his wife.

### **3 9 October 1875**

#### **SANDBACH**

**CHILD DROWNED AT WHEELOCK** An inquest was held at the New Inn, Wheelock, on Thursday last, before Mr Dunstan, coroner, and a respectable jury, on the body of a child named **John Shaw**, aged three years and four months, who was found drowned in the Trent and Mersey Canal on Tuesday evening last. It appeared from the evidence that between three and four o'clock on the day above named, the father, a boatman, left the child playing about sixty yards from the

canal, and on his return, not seeing him, a search was made and the canal dragged, when the father succeeded in bringing the body about eight o'clock. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

#### 4 30 October 1875

ACCIDENTAL DROWNING An inquest was held on Monday before Mr Johnson at the Ram's Head Inn, Disley, on the body of **James Rowbotham**, aged 51. The deceased was a boatman on the Peak Forest Canal, with no settled place of abode, and was last seen at the Dandy Cock beerhouse, Disley, between five and six o'clock, where he had a few pints of ale with the landlord and some friends, and left before eight o'clock ; but before doing so he borrowed a lantern from the landlord, alleging that he had to join his boat. Nothing more was heard of the deceased until the next morning, when his dead body was found in the canal at Higgin's Clough, Disley. His hat and the lantern were picked up a short distance off. No money was found in his pockets.

#### 5 27 November 1875

##### KNUTSFORD SESSIONS

ROBBERY ON THE CANAL AT RUNCORN John Nash, alias Bradshaw, three times previously convicted, was charged, along with Samuel Oultram, with stealing wearing apparel belonging to the crew of the schooner *Ebenezer*, lying in the Duke's dock. The former was sentenced to seven years, and the latter, as it was his first offence, to four months' hard labour.

ROBBERY BY A BOATMAN AT MACCLESFIELD **Joseph Ward**, a boatman charged with stealing ten fowls, the property of Charles Brocklehurst, at Macclesfield on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment.

#### 6 8 April 1876

##### CHESHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

TAKING A CLOCK AT RUNCORN **Frederick Goodier**, boatman, for stealing a clock from Joseph Green on the 19<sup>th</sup> February, two months.

#### 7 15 July 1876

##### SANDBACH

MISCELLANEOUS POLICE CASES **George Shaw**, a boatman, for assaulting Mary Price on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, was dismissed.

#### 8 27 January 1877

##### MIDDLEWICH

ROBBERY ON THE CANAL Rueben Bratt was indicted on Monday for stealing a net at Winsford, the property of **John Poole**, boatman, Mr Cooke appeared for the defendant. **Israel Holden**, a youth residing at Manchester, but who helps his uncle, John Poole, to work a boat named the "*City of New York*" on the canal, said while the boat was at Stokes Bank on the Monday before Christmas Day, his uncle went ashore. Polly Grattan, his cousin, was asleep on board. Bratt and a man of the name of Wilkinson came to the boat and asked him for the net, Bratt saying that he had bought it of his uncle for 10s. He told him it was in the forecastle. Wilkinson went and fetched it, while Bratt remained in the cabin. Witness asked Bratt if he was sure he had bought it, and he replied he had. They took it away. Directly after his uncle came back, and he told him of what had happened. John Poole said he was a flatman on the river Weaver, and the net was his. Some people had called it a rabbit net, but he used it for fencing. The net was afterwards found at Wilkinson's lodging house. The defendant was committed for trial, bail being accepted for his appearance.

## 9 27 January 1877

### RAID AGAINST MIDDLEWICH PUBLICANS

“TIPSY OR NOT TIPSY ; THAT IS THE QUESTION!” At the County Petty Sessions held at Middlewich on Monday, **John Jones**, a boatman, was summoned for being drunk on licensed premises, and Richard Hodgkiss, proprietor of the Navigation Inn, for supplying the first defendant with beer while he was in an intoxicated state. Jones did not appear. Mr Cooke appeared for the landlord. Sergeant Leah said on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December last he, in company with PC Sherwin, had occasion to visit several public houses in Middlewich, and while they were at the Plough beerhouse, Jones came staggering in, and was ordered out. Witness advised him to go home. A short time afterwards they went up Lewin Street and called at Mr Hodgkiss's house, where they found Jones with a glass of beer in front of him. They spoke to him, and called the attention of the landlord, who said he was not aware he was drunk, as his servant had served him. The beer was taken from him. PC Sherwin corroborated in all respects but the fact of the beer being taken from him. He alleged the landlord told him to drink up his beer and go. Frederick Dale of the Plough beerhouse refused to supply Jones because he reeled when he came into the house. He thought he might be drunk, although he could not say he had had drink. The defendant Hodgkiss was called. He said : I am a member of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, and have had this public house between 10 and 11 years. When Jones came into the house, he walked steady. I went away for a short time, and when I returned the sergeant and Sherwin were there, and Jones had, in the meantime, been served with beer. The sergeant told me about it, and I said I was not aware that he was intoxicated. He went away and left the beer. The man Jones is a stranger to me, and I am not aware that he has been living in Middlewich for some time. George Capper, Kinderton Street, said he had some business at Mr Hodgkiss's house on the night in question. John Jones came in the place, and he walked into the house as sober as a judge. He sat him down, and said to Sproston, “Sam, a glass of ale”. He was quiet while he was there. He had not time to taste his ale by the time the police came in. When they came in, they said, “Oh, you're here, and you are in drink”. They asked for Mr Hodgkiss, and when he came they said to him that Jones was intoxicated, and he told Jones he must go out of the house, whereupon he got up, said he was not drunk, and walked out quite as steadily as he came in. I am certain he was not more drunk than I am now. Samuel Sproston said Jones walked in the house as right as any man could do, and he fetched him a glass of beer. The sergeant, when he came in, told him he ought not to have supplied him with beer when he was drunk, when Jones said he was not drunk, and he (witness) thought so too. He thought he was perfectly sober. Colonel France Hayhurst said as there was some doubt in this case, the magistrates would give both defendants the benefit of it, and dismissed the summonses.

## 10 24 March 1877

A LAD DROWNED IN THE CANAL On Saturday, a child, son of **David Golbourne**, boatman, by accident fell into the canal near to the Town Bridge. Every effort was made for his discovery, but without success, and in consequence thereof the canal was dragged on Sunday afternoon and night ; but the body was not found until about 11 o'clock on Monday, when it was picked up between the bridge and the big lock. An inquest was held by Mr Dunstan, Cheshire, coroner, on Wednesday, and a verdict of “Found drowned” returned.

## 11 12 May 1877

USING A HORSE WHEN IN AN UNFIT STATE As PC Williams of the Sandbach Constabulary was passing through Tetton on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April, he came across **George Clare**, a boatman, who was cruelly using a horse by working him when he was in a very unfit condition. Williams examined the animal, and found he was suffering from five wounds, two of which were under the collar, one on the hip and one on the hinder extremity. The man was summoned to Sandbach Sessions on Monday, and when the case was heard, he alleged the horse had got the wounds through rubbing himself against the bridges while on a journey from Middlewich. He was fined 10s and costs.

**12 29 September 1877**

MIDDLEWICH

**KEEPING A DOG WITHOUT A LICENCE** At the Middlewich County Sessions on Monday, **John Peach**, a boatman of Winsford, licensed to keep a dog during the year 1876, was summoned by Mr Purchas, supervisor of excise, for not renewing the same for the present year. Mr Purchas stated the defendant alleged he had taken out the licence and left the same in his boat, which had unfortunately met with an accident and gone down. Defendant represented he had taken out the licence at Wigan, but he (Mr Purchas), on making inquiry, found no record of it at Wigan. PC Bradshaw gave evidence to the effect that he had seen the dog at the man's house, and the day after he had found it there, he took out a summons for it. Defendant, whose wife appeared for him, was fined 40s and costs.

**13 20 October 1877**

**THEFT AT WHEELOCK** On Monday last at the Knutsford County Sessions, before J Wood Esq, a man named **Timothy Bailey**, a boatman, was charged with stealing, on the 1<sup>st</sup> August, the sum of £2 belonging to Thomas Bricknall ; he was further charged with stealing a silver watch and guard, the property of Thomas Sherwin, and the sum of £1 10s belonging to Thomas Boxon of Wheelock. The prisoner was found guilty, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment, hard labour.

**14 10 November 1877**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS

**A BOATMAN'S SQUABBLE** **Jane Taylor**, the wife of a boatman working for the Anderson Company, was summoned for an assault upon **Samuel Beckett**, a man employed by the same company. It appeared that the boat of Samuel Beckett, which is called a Flyboat, has a right of way by the rules of their company on the canal. When Beckett attempted to pass the defendant's boat, she objected to the proceedings, and took up a windlass and assaulted him with it. A cross summons had been taken out by Jane Beckett (sic) against Samuel Beckett, for an assault said to have been committed at the same time as the above. Another cross summons had also been taken out against **Thomas Taylor** by **Daniel Theobald**, a man in the employ of Beckett, and this also was for an assault upon the same occasion. The whole business seemed to be nothing but an unseemly, squabbling recrimination amongst themselves, and not of any serious consequence. All the parties concerned in the first two cases were therefore bound over to keep the peace towards each other for six months, each in the sum of £10, with one surety of £10. The last case was dismissed.

**15 27 April 1878**

SANDBACH

**AN INDECENT ASSAULT** **William Jones**, boatman, hailing from Tunstall, Staffordshire, was charged before Mr Latham and Mr Wilbraham on Tuesday with committing an indecent assault on a little girl named Eliza Brereton, daughter of Thomas Brereton, farmer of Elton, on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup> inst. Complainant, an intelligent little girl, said on Thursday she went in Watch Lane to throw away an old can. While she was engaged in gathering some violets for her little sister, prisoner came up to her and assaulted her in an improper manner. She cried, "Mother", but the prisoner did the same thing a second time. He did not say anything to her when he committed the offence. Complainant's sister, Mary Ann, said she was with her sister. She saw the man (meaning prisoner) throw her on the ground and assault her. She got up, but the prisoner followed her and did the same thing again. Thomas Brereton, the father of the two little girls, was next called, and said that on Thursday evening, the 18<sup>th</sup> inst, his two little girls came to him and told him that a man had been assaulting them. Witness went out into the lane, and asked a boy whom he saw there where the prisoner had gone, and the boy told him that the prisoner had gone across the fields. The prisoner, in answering the charge, denied what had been stated, and said that he had been gathering watercresses when he saw the two little girls, and he only told them to go home. Prisoner, who was apprehended at Barnton, near Northwich, on Sunday night last by PC Williams, was committed for three calendar

months with hard labour to Knutsford House of Correction.

**16 11 May 1878**

MIDDLEWICH

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY At the Magistrates' Clerk's office on Monday last, before W R Court Esq, **James Tavernor**, boatman of Middlewich, was charged by PC Sherwin with being drunk and disorderly in Lower Street on Saturday afternoon last. Prisoner was fined 5s and costs, but as he could not pay the fine, he was committed to the House of Correction for seven days with hard labour.

**17 May 1878**

SUDDEN DEATH AT THIRLWOOD, ODD RODE On Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> instant, a man named **Samuel Theobald**, boatman aged 21 years, of this village, died very suddenly. It appeared the deceased had been attending his brother's funeral at Thirlwood on the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant, who it seems had been accidentally drowned at Preston Brook a few days before. He went to his work as usual the following morning, but soon after he commenced his work he was taken suddenly ill, and died the next day (Saturday). There is no doubt that his brother's untimely death caused a shock to the system, and thus hastened his death.

**18 15 June 1878**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

WASTING THE CANAL WATER **Thomas Burton**, boatman, **William Hodgson**, **Benjamin Clowes** and **Daniel Wildblood**, also boatmen, were summoned for drawing the inside clough and wasting the water of the Trent and Mersey Canal, and were each fined 20s, including costs.

**19 15 June 1878**

MALKIN'S BANK

ACCIDENT AT THE LOCKS On Monday morning, a serious accident happened to a poor woman named **Jones**, the wife of a canal boatman employed on the Trent and Mersey Canal. It appears that Jones and his wife were bringing their boat up the canal for the purpose of loading it with cinders from the Chemical Works, and when passing through the lock, the woman (who was assisting her husband) by some unaccountable means got the rope entangled round her legs, severely cutting them. How the rope really could entangle round her legs when she was walking behind the horse remains a mystery, but we are informed by good authority that this was the case, and that it actually pulled the horse down. To make matters doubly worse, the animal fell upon the unfortunate woman, and crushed her ankle joint rather seriously. She is, however, progressing as favourably towards recovery, as can be expected, under Dr Latham's treatment.

**20 6 July 1878**

MIDDLEWICH

ROBBERY FROM A BOAT AT MIDDLEWICH **Henry Perkins**, a boatman, was charged before Mr Court with stealing a silver lever watch of the value of £5, the property of **Thomas Scragg**, boatman of Middlewich. The prisoner, who had nothing to say in answer to the charge, was committed to take his trial at the Knutsford Sessions on Wednesday.

**21 17 August 1878**

DIED On the 11<sup>th</sup> inst at Moss Lane, Elworth, Mary Jane, daughter of **John Barlow**, boatman, aged 10 years.

**22 5 October 1878**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CASES Orders were made that the children of **William Rigby**,

boatman of Church Lawton, and **Thomas Hamblett**, boatman of Lawton, should attend the schools in their respective townships.

### **23 19 October 1878**

#### CHESHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

TRIALS OF PRISONERS **William Jones**, 26, boatman, for stealing four ducks at Runcorn, two months' hard labour.

### **24 19 October 1878**

SUSPICIOUS DISCOVERY AT WHEELOCK On Sunday last, the dead body of a man, name unknown, was found floating in the canal at Wheelock. He appeared to be about 60 years of age, and was about five feet five or six inches in height. He was dressed in dark brown knitted worsted jacket, corduroy waistcoat with pearl buttons on, dark cloth mixture trousers, white flannel singlet, dark striped cotton shirt, blue worsted stockings and lace up clogs. The hair and whiskers of the person were turning grey. The body did not appear to have been in the water any length of time. A long deep cut had been inflicted on the back of the head of the unfortunate man, by what means is not yet known. The only property found on the deceased were a pair of eye glasses and a small snuff box. The body was removed to the New Inn, Wheelock, where it awaits an inquest.

The inquest was held at the house of Mrs F Booth, the New Inn, Wheelock, on Tuesday evening last, before Mr J E Garside, coroner for the district, and a respectable jury, touching the death of the man whose body was found in the Trent and Mersey Canal on the previous Sunday afternoon. The jury having viewed the body, the first witness called was

Alfred Hatton, who said that he was a boiler maker and worked for the Wheelock Iron and Salt Company Limited. On Sunday last, about 12.30 at noon, he was returning from (.....) along the towing path of the canal, when he met the deceased (name unknown) about 400 yards from the spot where his body was afterwards found. Witness identified the deceased by a white felt hat, clogs, and brown buttoned up jersey jacket, which he was wearing when he last saw him alive.

John Davies, horsekeeper of the Shropshire Union Canal Company, stated that he went down to the canal side about 5.45 on Sunday evening. He had heard that there was a man in the canal, and when he went down to see, a boat belonging to the Shropshire Union Canal Company turned up the body of the deceased. The boat that turned up the body had a cargo of flint stone. The boatman of the boat appeared timid, and did not seem to care about pulling the body out of the water. A second boat, named *Osprey*, belonging to the same company, then passed, and the men on the deck, by means of a boat hook and with the assistance of witness, pulled the body of deceased on the boat, and afterwards took it to the coach house of the New Inn.

PC William McClean, stationed at Wheelock, stated that he examined the body of the deceased in the coach house of the New Inn. He believed the deceased to be a man about 60 years of age. The deceased had lost several front teeth from the upper jaw, he was turning grey, and was ruptured. The clothes of the deceased were good, and were not disarranged in any way. There was a deep flesh cut on the back of the skull, extending in length to 2 1/2 inches. In the pockets of the deceased were found a pair of eye glasses and a small snuff box containing a needle and thread and a few pills. He (witness) had made enquiries at the various lodging houses in the neighbourhood, and had had several boatmen to view the body of the deceased, but all had failed to recognise him.

No other evidence was called, and the Coroner, in summing up, pointed out to the jury that there was really no legal proof to show how the unfortunate man got into the water, and it was his opinion that the wound on the head of the deceased was caused by some passing boat.

The jury then unanimously returned a verdict of "Found dead".

### **25 2 November 1878**

DIED On the 28<sup>th</sup> ult at Thirlwood, Odd Rode, **William Jinks**, boatman aged 35 years.

## MOW COP

RECOVERY OF A MISSING WOMAN For the past four weeks, the inhabitants of Mow Cop, Lawton, and the surrounding neighbourhood have been living in suspense and bewilderment as to the whereabouts of the woman Hannah Pointon, who has been missing from her home at Brake Village, Mow Cop, Lawton, ever since Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of October. It appears that the woman, whose age was 26 years, height 5ft 4in, fair complexion, brown hair, and who was dressed in a dark wincey dress trimmed with black braid, black jacket, dark grey waterproof cloak, black hat trimmed with black velvet, was last seen returning to her home from the Mow Cop Hollows at about five p m on that date. Although the whole country for miles round has been plastered with notices offering a large reward for her discovery, the Trent and Mersey Canal for a considerable distance each way has been dragged, advertisements have appeared in the local newspapers, and the police throughout the entire district, under the able management and direction of Mr Superintendent Cooper of Middlewich, have used their utmost vigilance and endeavours in the matter, no clue to her whereabouts could be obtained until Sunday last, when the body of the unfortunate woman was found in the canal by some boatmen who were taking a walk on the banks, at no great distance from the place where it is supposed that she fell in. One of the men, upon finding out that it was the body of a human being, was immediately dispatched to the police to inform them of the occurrence. The corpse was instantly taken out of the water, removed to a neighbouring house, and washed, where it remained until the following day, when an inquest was held at the house of Mr Joseph Elkin, the Rising Sun, Kent Green, Lawton, before Mr John Edward Gardue, the coroner for the district, and a highly respectable jury. The jury having viewed the body, the first witness called was

Elizabeth Cooke, who said that she was the widow of Levi Cooke, and lived in River Street, Congleton. The deceased (Hannah Pointon) was her cousin. She (witness) remembered the deceased from her birth. The deceased was in a situation as a domestic servant up to the time of her marriage, which took place on Sunday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of last month. The last time that the deceased was seen alive by witness was the Thursday before she was married, when she was then in her usual state of health. The mother of the deceased lived with witness, and on that day the deceased came to see her (witness) and her mother. The mother of the deceased is a woman of weak intellect.

**Aaron Jinks** said that he was a canal boatman, and resided at Odd Rode. On Sunday last, he was turning his boat in the canal when he noticed a hat floating on the surface of the water. As soon as he saw the hat, he said to **Richard Turner**, a mate that was with him, "Pick it out, and we'll have a lark with it". When they got the hat out of the water, they found that there was the body of a human being under it. The body, which was that of a woman, was quite erect in the water. He (witness) got her to the surface, and laid her on the towing-path, when he left her with his companion (Turner) while he (witness) went for the police. The clothes of the deceased were not disarranged in any way. It was about twenty minutes to eleven o'clock in the morning when they found the deceased. At the spot where the deceased was taken out of the water, it was about four feet deep in water, and two feet deep in mud. There was more or less mud upon the deceased when taken out of the water.

At this stage of the proceeding, the Coroner announced his intention of adjourning the inquiry until Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> inst, when (after the adjournment) Mr Superintendent Cooper, Sergeant Jones and several boatmen and others procured a boat, lines and other requisites, and proceeded down the canal to the spot where the unfortunate woman was taken out of the water, and where it is supposed she fell in. It is conjectured that she came from the Mow Cop Hollows, crossed the railway by means of a footpath which leads down to the canal with a very steep slope, and, owing to the heavy nature of the atmosphere, stepped into the canal instead of on to the footbridge, which is erected at that part for the accommodation of passengers, and which enables them to cross and recross the water. On accompanying the party, we found that the depth of water in the canal where the slope leads down to was four feet one inch, and the depth of mud two feet. The depth of water in the stream was four feet seven and a half inches at this part, while in the part where the bridge was erected it was exactly five feet deep.

The enquiry was again opened on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> inst, a full report of which will appear in our next issue.

## 27 7 December 1878

### MOW COP

ADJOURNED ENQUIRY UPON THE DEATH OF HANNAH POINTON The adjourned enquiry concerning the death of Hannah Pointon, the young woman who had been missing from her home at Brake Village, Mow Cop, ever since Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of October last, and whose body was found floating in the Sheffield and Lincolnshire Canal on Sunday morning the 26<sup>th</sup> of November last, was resumed at the house of Mr Joseph Elkin, the Rising Sun Inn, Kent Green, Mow Cop, before Mr John Edward Garside, the coroner for the district, and a highly respectable jury, the foreman of which was Mr G Baddiley, on Friday afternoon the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. It will be remembered that the enquiry was opened on Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> ult, when the evidence of only two witnesses was taken – viz Elizabeth Cooke, a cousin of the deceased, and that of **Aaron Jinks**, a boatman on the Sheffield and Lincolnshire Canal, who was one of the men who found the body on the Sunday morning floating in the canal. As the report of the evidence of these witnesses appeared in the columns of the Advertiser of last Saturday, and is doubtless fresh in the minds of our readers, it is needless for us to repeat it. The first witness called to give evidence at this enquiry was

**Richard Turner**, who said that he was a boatman on the Sheffield and Lincolnshire Canal. On Sunday morning the 28<sup>th</sup> ult, they were coming up the canal with two of his boats. Aaron Jinks saw a hat as he was walking with the first boat, about 30 yards before the witness. He called out that there was a hat in the cut. He (witness) said, “Jack, get the shaft and reach it out”. When Jack got on to the top of the cabin, he said if it was a hat he would pull it out. Witness assisted to get the body out of the water. Witness told Jinks to go and fetch the police while he stopped with the body. The clothes &c on the deceased were just the same when he came back as when he left. He (witness) remained with the body until PS Jones came.

Ellen Hill said that she was the wife of Thomas Hill, and lived at the Machine House belonging to the Hall o'Lea Colliery Company. She did not know the deceased very well, only knew her by sight, and had not spoken to her. She knew the husband of the deceased (Oliver Pointon) well. She last saw the deceased and her husband together on Monday night, the 28<sup>th</sup> of October. They passed the house of witness at about half past five in the evening. She (deceased) was a little distance behind him. Pointon is employed at Podmore Hall Colliery. That was a direct road to Podmore Hall. By Mr Superintendent Cooper : She was about half a yard behind her husband. It would take about five minutes to walk from where witness saw them to the Mow Cop Hollows. She (witness) was going to look for her little boy when she saw them together. It was a very cold, wet night.

Oliver Pointon said that he was the husband of the deceased, and was an overlooker in the employ of the Podmore Hall Colliery Company. He was married at St Peter's Church, Congleton, on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> of October last. He had known the deceased for five years. He had been engaged between four and five years. He had taken a house at Brake Village, and brought the deceased to it on the Sunday night. They were the only inmates of the house that night. He remained at home on the Monday until between half past four and five o'clock in the evening. He then started to be in time for his work on the Tuesday morning at six o'clock. They went by Mr Plant's fields, by the Machine House, and by Mow Cop Hollows. He met Jeremiah Brown before he parted with his wife. Brown is a furnace man at the Moss Pits. The distance from his house to the Podmore Hall Collieries where he worked was between eight and nine miles. He parted with his wife at the footbridge that runs across a brook to Mow Cop Hollows. That was about three quarters of a mile from his house. They were on the best of terms when they parted with each other at the footbridge. She complained of her head being bad on the Monday morning, and she appeared in a desponding state of mind. When she complained of her head, she said she had done wrong in getting married. Witness had lodgings at Podmore, and therefore did not intend to return home until the following Saturday. A sister of witness was going to stay in the house with the deceased. It was a very dark, wet night. He did not think she knew the roads very well. She had lived in service in the

neighbourhood. He did not hear that she was missing until the following Thursday morning. That information came to him from his sister, as he had written to his wife, and his sister had opened it. He came over home and started to search for her. The fields and old pits were looked over, and he (witness) stayed at home nine days looking for her. The canal was also dragged. The deceased was wearing, when he left her, a black winsey dress, black hat and black cloth jacket. She had the wedding ring on her finger, and a waterproof cloak with her. He did not know whether she had an umbrella with her or not, but one was missing from his house. By the Superintendent : She said she had pains in the back of her head, and afterwards went to bed. The pains had been coming on gradually. The deceased could get by the Cinder Hill Bridge to her home. By a juror : On the Monday, they had dinner and tea with witness's father and mother, who live close to. There was no unpleasantness in his father's house in any shape or form.

Tom Hamblett Osborne said that he was a shoemaker, and lived at Mount Pleasant Mow Cop. He did not know the deceased, but knew her husband very well. He had known him in fact for several years. On the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> of October last, he (witness) saw the husband of the deceased before him, on the turnpike road leading to Kidsgrove. He was sure that it was the husband of the deceased that he saw before him.

Mr Robert Beales, a JP for the County of Chester, said that he was a surgeon and doctor of medicine, and practised at Congleton. He had made a *post mortem* examination of the body, by order of the Coroner. The body had the appearance of having been a long time in the water. There were no external marks of violence, nor any injury to the body in any shape or form. He had examined the organs of the body, which he found in a perfectly healthy state. In his opinion, death had resulted from drowning. He thought from the state of the body, and from the condition that the hands and feet were in, that the body had been in the water for some weeks. He was certain that the woman had died by drowning, and that she had died very quickly.

Mr Benjamin Cooper said that he was superintendent of police for the Northwich Division, and resided at the Police Station, Middlewich. On Monday last, the witness Aaron Jinks pointed out the place where the body was found. He had measured the water in the canal at that part where the body was found. He found it 4ft 1in at that part, and about that part the bottom was quite hard. He then tested the centre, and found 4ft 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>in of water, and on the off side 4 ft of water and 2ft of mud. That was the side where it was supposed that she had fallen in. There was a road leading to the Cinder Hill Swing Bridge from Little Moss, and a very dangerous place it is. There is a very sharp turning down to the canal, which anyone might easily walk into. By a Juror : A nephew of mine lived there, and he pulled no less than five different persons out at the same place.

Sergeant Jones of Scholar Green said that he went to the canal on Sunday morning, November 24<sup>th</sup>, and he found the deceased lying dead on the towing-path. She had on a black winsey dress and black cloth jacket, which was covered in mud. She had dark spots on her hands and face, which were very difficult to wash off. She had also a wedding ring on her finger. With assistance he removed the body to this Inn, and had it stripped and washed. It was in the same condition when Dr Beales received it (with the exception of being washed) as when it was found. He received information from Oliver Pointon on the 31<sup>st</sup> October last that she was missing. The canal had been dragged by two drags (only up the centre), and the old pits had been searched, but no trace of her could be found. The clothes of the deceased were not disarranged, and gave no signs of any struggle having taken place. The face was covered with a brown mossy kind of paste.

This was all the evidence forthcoming, and the Coroner, in summing up, said they seemed to have exhausted all the evidence. Nevertheless, it was satisfactory to the public generally to know that the body of the unfortunate woman had been found. By the evidence they had heard that she had after marriage had two meals with the father and mother of her husband, and it was quite evident that they had parted on the most friendly terms. Their house was situated some eight or nine miles from where the husband was employed, and it appeared that when he started for his home on the Monday evening with the intention of reaching Podmore and thereby being in time to commence his work at six o'clock the following Tuesday morning, the deceased accompanied him part of the way. They were also seen by the witness Ellen Hill at about half past five in the evening, walking together past

her house. Pointon, being unable to reach home from his place of employment before the following Saturday, had got his sister to remain with his wife in the house until his return. They had parted on the best of terms with each other, and the witness Osborne saw the husband on his way to his work after they had parted. The question then was, how she came by her position in the canal? There is a road on the off side by which she might have gone, and fallen in the canal in the manner described by the Superintendent. Still they had no evidence to show how she got in the canal, only evidence to show that she was found in the canal. It seemed to him (the coroner) a very singular thing indeed that she should have been in the water for such a length of time before being found. The drags used for the purpose must have been very ineffectual indeed, or they would have turned up the body when they were being used. A *post mortem* examination of the body had been made by Dr Beales, and they had been informed by that gentleman that she had met her death from drowning, and that she had been in the water for some weeks.

The jury, after a short consultation, returned a verdict of "Found drowned in the canal".

## **28 14 December 1878**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

ALLEGED PERMITTING GAMBLING Mr John (?Guerney?) Bushbridge, landlord of the Red Bull public house, Church Lawton, was summoned for permitting gambling at his house on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October last. **Enoch Green**, boatman living at Odd Rode, said that on the day in question, soon after dinner time, he went to the Red Bull. He went in with a relative, and called for a glass of beer for him, which was supplied. A man named Robert Bagnall was in, and he (Bagnall) asked witness to drink. They tossed for the ale, and were supplied with as much as they liked to call for. He (witness) should think that they tossed for six quarts of ale altogether, and Mr Bushbridge himself brought the drink in. He (Mr Bushbridge) was present when they were tossing for the drink. They tossed for a quart at a time, and he (the landlord) did not interfere with them. He (witness) paid for ale about 4s. Mrs Cotton said that on the day in question she went in the Red Bull to wait for her husband. Whilst there, she saw Green and Bagnall tossing for beer. She saw Mrs Bushbridge tell them to stop gambling as she did not allow it as soon as she noticed that they were tossing. Green replied that they would not do the landlady any harm, and after the landlady had gone they continued tossing. Edward Bagnall said that he was in the Red Bull, when Green persuaded him to toss for beer. They tossed for three quarts of beer only. Mrs Bushbridge hearing them toss stopped them. William Wright said that Enoch Green came to him in his stables and asked him if he would "make it up" with him about the case of refusing to quit. The charge preferred against the complainant, out of which the present case ensued. When witness refused, Green said he could thrash him (Wright), and would "make it up" with Bushbridge, as he would swear that he (witness) had been gambling with other men in the house. Charles Bushbridge gave corroborative evidence. Mr J Bushbridge said that he was at home on the day in question, and saw Green at about 3.30 p m. His wife called his attention to the fact that he with other men had been gambling, but that she had stopped them. Mrs Bushbridge having given evidence in support of the defence, Mr Payne, Hanley, who appeared for the defendant, addressed the Bench on his behalf after which, the Magistrates differing in opinion, gave no decision.

## **29 16 August 1879**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

A DANGEROUS INEBRIATE **Samuel Archer**, a boatman living at Rode Heath, was charged by PC Wright with being drunk and disorderly. The constable called at the Broughton Arms on Saturday night last, when the defendant was found in a drunken state. He accompanied the defendant towards his home, when Archer became outrageous and drew a clasped knife, which he opened. The officer at once threw the defendant down and disarmed him, after which he was confined in the lock ups. Archer in defence denied drawing the knife, and said it dropped out of his pocket. The Bench imposed a fine of 40s including costs, remarking that so free a use of the knife could not be allowed.

### 30 6 September 1879

#### CONGLETON

A MAN FOUND IN THE CANAL AT ASTBURY As a boatman named **William Maxfield** of Hall Green, Odd Rode, was proceeding along the canal bank, he found the body of a man on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. On being taken out, he was identified as James Wilson, 36 years of age, a joiner of Mow Cop. It appears that he had been missing since the 30<sup>th</sup> ult from his home, and it is supposed that he had fallen in the water. An inquest will be held on the body.

### 31 20 September 1879

#### CONGLETON COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY

THEFT OF COAL AT CHURCH LAWTON Robert Wheedle, labourer of Church Lawton, was brought up on remand, charged with stealing a lump of coal weighing 62 lbs, the property of Mr William Wade, coal merchant of Church Lawton, on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr J E Garside (magistrates' clerk) read the evidence first of Mr Wade, the complainant, which stated that he was a wharfinger at the Red Bull Wharf, on the North Staffordshire Railway at Church Lawton. He had heard that Police-constable Wright had arrested a man for stealing coal, and on examining his "ruck" on Wednesday morning shortly after nine o'clock, he found that a lump had been taken away. It was his property, and the coal produced was of similar quality to that which was missed. **James Smallwood's** evidence was that he lived at the Rookery Bridge. He had not seen the prisoner at that time, and he did not give him the coal. He had, however, given the prisoner coal some months ago. His (witness's) boat was at the Red Bull Wharf on the morning that the coal was missed, and also went through the lock at the place. He did not see the prisoner at that time. The next witness called was Police-constable Joseph Wright, who apprehended the prisoner. Shortly after midnight on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> inst, he met the prisoner at the Red Bull Bridge, who was carrying a lump of coal. It was about 30 yards from the lock where he met him. He asked him where he had got the lump of coal from, and what he was doing out at that late hour. The prisoner did not then make any reply, but afterwards stated that a boatman named James Smallwood had given it to him off his boat. He afterwards took the prisoner to the lock ups. The next morning, he charged him with stealing the lump of coal, but he did not make any observation. In answer to the Magistrates, Mr Wade (the complainant) said that he had frequently missed coal from his heap, but never knew before who had taken it. The Bench then committed the prisoner to the Knutsford House of Correction for seven days.

### 32 18 October 1879

#### CONGLETON COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY

THEFT OF A STONE BOTTLE **Thomas Stephens**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a stone bottle of the value of 1s 6d on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. Enoch Sherratt, labourer of Buglawton, said that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst he saw the prisoner's boat lying at the Buxton Wharf of the North Staffordshire Canal. Witness was sent to search for a stone bottle which was missing from the Wharf. He had some conversation with the prisoner about the bottle, but he said he did not know anything about it. Richard Washington, farm labourer residing at Buglawton, said he heard that this bottle was missing from the wharf in question. He did not see prisoner about it. Police-constable Woodrow stated that about eight o'clock in the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst, he went to the prisoner and found him at the third lock on the canal. He had left the Buxton Wharf that morning. He apprehended the prisoner and charged him with stealing the bottle, and he stated that he had taken it. Prisoner, in defence, said he only took the bottle and put it in the cabin, intending to return it. The Chairman said, considering the prisoner had been locked up nine days, no doubt that had been punishment enough for him. They would discharge him, and they hoped that it would be a warning to him in future.

THEFT OF A SPADE **William Johnson**, boatman, was charged with stealing a spade, the property of C W Hogg Esq of Buglawton. Richard Washington proved that the spade belonged to the above named gentleman, and that he missed it on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. **Thomas Stevens** proved that the prisoner's

boat was about 100 yards ahead of his boat. He heard that a spade was missing, and he asked the prisoner if he knew anything about it, to which he replied, "Yes, he had drowned it", meaning that he had dropped it into the canal. The Bench discharged the prisoner with a caution.

### 33 8 November 1879

**A SANDBACH WOMAN DROWNED** An inquest was opened late last Tuesday evening, before Mr J E Garside, coroner, at the Rookery Tavern, Sandbach, concerning the death of Mary Roscoe, whose body was taken out of the canal on the previous evening.

**Thomas Roscoe** said : I am a boatman, and live at the Rookery. The deceased is my mother, and is about 68 years of age. She has lived with myself and wife for the last six months. She kept house for me while I was away with my boat. I have a family of two, but they go with me when I go away with my boat, and the deceased took charge of the house in my absence. I last saw her alive on Saturday last, before I started for Runcorn with my wife and family. I did not hear of her death until seven o'clock this morning. I live in a cottage house by the side of the canal. It is only about three yards from our garden walk to the canal, and about eight yards from the house to the towing-path. A man named James Smallwood lives in one of the houses next to us, and Samuel Rowbottom in the other. My mother was a steady and healthy woman. That is all I know about the case. The Coroner : How long have you been a boatman? Witness : All my life. The Coroner : Then, having been a boatman all your life, you have probably seen several cases of drowning? Witness : Yes, sir, several.

**Edmund Eastcourt** said : I am 55 years of age, a boatman, and reside at the Rookery. I knew the deceased, and have known her for the last 30 years. I last saw her alive at about six o'clock last night. The deceased came into our house while we were at tea. I live in the fourth house in the same row as the deceased. She left our house at seven o'clock, and my little girl followed her to the gate leading on to the towing-path of the canal. The night was very dark. The deceased, to reach her own house, would have to go from my house to the towing-path of the canal, and then would have to pass on the water side for about 20 or 30 yards. I do not know whether she was short sighted or not, but she was quite sober when she left my house. In a minute or two after she had left, my daughter, who was in the house, said she had heard the deceased scream, and at once went out with a lamp, and then saw the woman struggling in the canal and trying to reach the side. I went into my yard and got a clothes prop to pull her out. The deceased got one slight "grab" at the prop, and then my lamp went out, which "banked" me rather. She did not sink, but was face downwards in the water. I pulled her to the edge by the use of the clothes prop, and then got her to the bank side. The Coroner : How long was it from the time you first got hold of her with the prop to the time you got her out? Witness : It would be about 10 minutes. The Coroner : Were there any more persons on the spot? Witness : A great many people came up after I got her out, and assisted me to carry her into her own house. The Coroner : In what state was she when you got her out? Witness : The water was running from her mouth. The Coroner : In what position did you carry her into the house? Witness : Face downwards. The Coroner : Didn't you carry her with her head down and her legs straight up? Witness : No. The Coroner : Then you ought to have done, how could the water run out of her when you carried her in the position you describe? And what was done when you got her into the house? Witness : Two women then came and carried her upstairs. The Coroner : How long was she on the towing-path before she was removed into the house? Witness : Perhaps 10 minutes. The Coroner : And why did you allow her to remain on the towing-path that length of time? Witness : It was that time before I got help. The Coroner : And whilst she was on the towing-path, did you attempt to restore breathing? Witness : Did I do what? The Coroner (sharply) : Did you try to bring her round, man. Witness : No, I knew she was too far gone for that. The Coroner : Don't you know, or have you not heard of, persons who have been apparently dead being brought round again after the lapse of half or three quarters of an hour? Well, who helped you to carry her into the house? Witness : Thomas Hodgkinson was one who helped me. Continuing : I was shouting for someone to help me for some time. I thought she was too far gone to do anything with her. The Coroner : Why didn't you walk with her instead of sending your little

girl with her? Witness : I don't know, she had seen her home before. The Coroner : Now, what depth of water was there where the deceased fell in? Witness : About three feet or better. The Coroner : And did it never strike you to jump in and fetch her out yourself, instead of pottering about 10 minutes with a line prop? Witness : I got her out with the line prop. The Coroner : Yes, yes ; but after what length of time? Why did you not go in like a man and fetch her out? Witness : There is no recompense for fetching folks out of the water, and that is my reason for not going in. I have never got recompense in other cases, and I don't know that I should in this. The Coroner : Oh, and that is your reason, is it? Now how many people have you pulled out of the water without receiving recompense, as you term it? Witness : I have pulled five out. One old woman told me once she would give me a glass of rum if I would get her daughter out of water, and when I got her out, she would not give it me. (Laughter). The Coroner : And who else have you got out? Witness : I got an old sailor chap out, and a lad at Runcorn, but the lad was dead when I fetched him out. The Coroner : But how many have you got out alive? How many have you saved? Witness : I have saved two or three women. The Coroner : And never got anything for it? Witness : No, I didn't. The Coroner : And I take it, then, that because you have not received recompense in the other cases, you would not fetch this old woman out? Witness : I had no cause to go in and fetch her out, I got her out with the line prop. The Coroner (sharply) : You ought to have gone in and fetched her out.

Mary Eastcourt said : I am 11 years of age, and the daughter of the last witness. The deceased was at our house last Monday evening. At about seven o'clock she left to go home, after staying at our house for about one hour. I went to the bottom of the garden path with her, and saw her get on the towing-path of the canal. It was a very dark night, and I told her to rub her hand against the side of the garden fence, and not get in the canal. I then went in our house, and in about a minute after, I heard her call, "Mary". I told my father, and he went out with the lamp. I went with him, and we saw her in the middle trying to get out. My father then went to get a clothes prop to pull the deceased out. She was at the side soon after, and my father laid hold of her dress to lift her out. My father was about three minutes in fetching the clothes prop, and he was about five minutes when he had got it before he got her out. The deceased was about a yard from the side when he arrived with the clothes prop, and it was about fifteen minutes from the time I heard her scream to the time when some assistance came.

This being the whole of the evidence, the Coroner said : Well, Mr Foreman and gentlemen of the jury, this seems to me to be a most extraordinary case. In the first place, I consider that this man Eastcourt is to blame for not seeing the old woman home himself instead of sending his little daughter with her. Then again, when he knew she was in the water he first came out of his house with a light, and then went back to fetch a line prop which, in my opinion, was a very foolish thing to do. This man, living by the side of the canal, knew the exact depth of water in the part where the deceased fell in and, having been a waterman all his life – knowing there was only three feet of water – should have jumped in and rescued her himself. The deceased, he told us in his evidence, made a grasp at the prop but could not maintain her hold, and after that was struggling and trying to get out, but could not. If you believe the evidence of the little girl – who seems very intelligent – it appears that the deceased was about eight minutes in the water before she was pulled out, as three minutes were occupied in fetching the clothes prop, and five minutes in getting her out with the prop. This man, instead of doing what any Englishman with a grain of pluck in him would have done, goes deliberately down his garden to get the clothes prop, instead of going in the water only three feet deep himself and trying to rescue her. Instead of that, I reiterate, he obtains a line prop, and what does he do next? Why, he stands upon the towing-path and tries to fish her out with one end. I could not have believed that a so-called Englishman, who is 55 years of age, especially when he has been on the canal for 30 years, from a mere boy as it were, could have been so ignorant as this man has proved himself to be. Then, there is another inference to be drawn from his conduct in the present case – namely, that he has rescued – according to a question I put to him – two or three women, and never received anything, or, as he terms it, any recompense for saving them ; that he never was promised anything only once, and that was a glass of rum, which he never got. It is not,

one would think, the natural feeling of a person, that because he is not going to be rewarded for his trouble, that he will not make an extra effort to save the life of a fellow creature. Then again, when he gets her to the towing-path, there is no attempt made to restore respiration, but on the other hand she is, after lying on the towing-path for several minutes, conveyed into the house lying in a horizontal position. In my opinion this woman, although she might have appeared dead, might not be dead ; it was, I think, a case simply of life being suspended. Had the deceased been placed on the ground with the face downwards, and one of the arms under the forehead, the water would have escaped by the mouth, the tongue would fall forward, the entrance to the windpipe would be left free, and then breathing might have been restored. There are rules and instructions for the treatment of the apparently drowned, which are circulated by the Royal Humane Society, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and others, and I myself think it is a great pity – without attaching blame to anyone here – that this man did not know the method of treating an apparently drowning person. I think, under the circumstances, gentlemen, the only true and proper verdict you can return, will be “That the deceased fell into the water, and was drowned”.

The jury returned a verdict accordingly.

The Advertiser was the only paper represented at this enquiry.

### **34 27 December 1879**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CASE John Kimblin of Newton, boatman was summoned for breach of the bye laws under the Education Act. Mr Caleb Davis, school attendance officer, proved the case, and Kimblin was fined 5s.

### **35 24 January 1880**

SANDBACH

THEFT FROM A CANAL BOAT **Edward Howe**, a youth of no settled residence, was brought before Messrs G W Latham and J W Makin at the Sandbach Police Office on Wednesday afternoon, for stealing, on or about the 5<sup>th</sup> inst, a waistcoat, shirt, pair of corduroy trousers and a billycock hat, the property of **Thomas Bricknell**, boatman. The prosecutor took the prisoner in his employ a few days previous to the above date, when the boat on which they were went to Ellesmere Port. The prisoner was left on board at that place, whilst prosecutor went to see his wife and family. He left the above articles of wearing apparel in the boat, but when he returned he found that the prisoner was wearing his trousers, and said to him, “Hello, what are you doing with them on?” The prisoner said, “My own are scarcely worth looking at, and I saw them in the cabin and put them on”. The boat proceeded to Etruria in Staffordshire, and the prisoner kept on the clothes. Owing to the frost, they were compelled to remain at that place, during which time the prisoner absconded. Prosecutor had never been able to find him before Tuesday last, when he met him on another boat. Prosecutor then gave him the opportunity to come in the cabin and take the clothes off, but he declined to do so, and laughed at him. Prosecutor followed the prisoner to Wheelock, and gave him in charge of the police. PC McClean apprehended the prisoner at Wheelock at four o'clock on Tuesday, and the prisoner did not make any reply. Prisoner, who had previously served a term of three months' imprisonment for stealing money from a boat's cabin, was committed to the Sessions at Knutsford for trial.

### **36 28 February 1880**

SANDBACH

WANDERING ABROAD At the Sandbach Police Office on Thursday, before J W Meakin Esq, **William Groom**, alias “Billy the Devil”, boatman, late of Church Lawton, was charged with wandering about without having any settled residence. Sergeant Jones proved that Billy had a fit opposite the house of Mr S Massey, the Lawton Arms Inn, Church Lawton, on the previous evening, and he thought that it was unsafe for him to be at large. Mr Makin ordered his removal to the Arclid Workhouse.

**37 28 February 1880**

CHESHIRE ADJOURNED SESSIONS

**THEFT OF WEARING APPAREL AT CHURCH LAWTON** **Edward Howe alias Harwood**, 20, boatman, was charged with stealing one pair of trousers, one waistcoat, one hat and one shirt, the property of **Thomas Bricknell**, at Church Lawton on or about the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1880. The prisoner had lived on the same boat with the prosecutor, and had been allowed to wear the clothes he was now charged with stealing. On being apprehended, he had admitted the theft. He had been convicted of felony on four previous occasions, and was now sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour.

**38 13 March 1880**

LAWTON AND ODD RODE

**DROWNED IN THE CANAL** An enquiry was held at the house of Mr George Perkins, the Broughton Arms, Rode Heath, Odd Rode, before Dr T W Bird, the deputy coroner, on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst, concerning the death of **John**, aged five years, son of **James Atkins**, boatman, Odd Rode, who was drowned in the basin of the canal at the Lawton and Odd Rode Salt Works on the previous Tuesday. James Atkins said he saw the deceased (his son) going in the direction of his boat at about a quarter to three o'clock on the previous Tuesday afternoon. He was then in his usual health. The next thing he heard was that he was in the canal. Witness ran and jumped in after him, but could not find him, and ultimately his son's body was pulled out of the water by William Fowles, a salt boiler. He was then quite dead. The jury unanimously returned an open verdict.

**39 13 March 1880**

**DEATHS** On the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant at Odd Rode, John, son of **James Atkins**, boatman, aged 5 years.

**40 29 May 1880**

MIDDLEWICH

**DISPUTE AND ASSAULT ON THE CANAL** At the Middlewich Petty Sessions on Tuesday, before Lieut-Colonel Francis Hayhurst (chairman), Messrs W R Court, E H (?Miss?) and John D Kay, **Charles Williams**, boatman, was charged with assaulting **John Tuckey**, likewise a boatman, and **Harriet Tuckey**, his wife. John Tuckey said that on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, he and his wife were in their boat laden with crates, going to Runcorn. As they approached Lowe's Lock, and already within the "distance post", Williams, who was going in his boat in the opposite direction, began to draw off the water. He went to him, his wife at that time being on the towing-path, and Williams knocked her down, at the same time using abusive language. Tuckey went to her assistance, when Williams, saying, "I'll kill you", struck the complainant with the windlass he held in his hand three or four times on the head, and kicked him in the body. In answer to Mr Cooke, the complainant said that at the time of the occurrence their boat was about 150 yards from the lock ; and the defendant's boat, which was lying below the lock, was run against the lower gates and forced open, the water at that time not being out of the lock, and not ready to receive his boat. He denied having kept the paddle up after the defendant had said his boat was sinking. **Sarah Wilkinson**, daughter of the lock-keeper, said the gates were open ready for Tuckey to come through, as his horse had passed the distance stump, and because he came to fill the lock again, Williams struck him several times with a windlass, and then threw it into the garden. The Chairman thought the case had been proved, and ordered Williams, for the assault on John Tuckey, to pay 20s and costs ; and for the assault on the woman 10s and costs, or in default 14 days.

**41 29 May 1880**

KNUTSFORD QUARTER SESSIONS

**THEFT BY A RUNCORN BOATMAN** **Henry Watson**, 41, boatman, was charged with stealing 53lbs of rope from William Bellhouse, and 35 lbs of rope from the Bridgewater Navigation Company Limited, at Runcorn on May 12<sup>th</sup>. About half past three on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> May, a

man called Booth saw the prisoner with a quantity of rope, and he found it belonged to Messrs Bellhouse. He took the prisoner and gave him into custody. On the first charge he was sentenced to one month's hard labour ; and for the second charge, one day's imprisonment.

**42 14 August 1880**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

MAINTENANCE CASES **William Allcock**, boatman of (C????? Bridge), was summoned for being in arrears of maintenance. Mr Clarke said it was incurred in the support of his father who is now deceased, and £3 7s was due up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of May last. His father died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June last, and the defendant was well able to pay if he liked. The Bench made an order of payment.

**43 4 September 1880**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

BOAT PEOPLE'S ANTIPATHY Maria Cotton was summoned by **Sarah Shaw** for assaulting her on the 10<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Selfe defended, and Mr J H Cooke, solicitor of Middlewich, appeared for the complainant. There was also a cross summons taken out by Cotton against Shaw. In the first case, Sarah Shaw stated that she was the daughter of **George Shaw**, boatman of Odd Rode. On the 12<sup>th</sup> inst she had to obtain a pass, and in order to get it had to cross a bridge. When she was in the act of crossing the bridge, Cotton caught hold of her and "punched" her in the mouth, breast and left shoulder. Her mouth was full of blood through the ill-treatment she had received, her head was cut and skin knocked off her shoulder. **Samuel Hodgkinson**, boatman of Elton Moss, near Sandbach, Martha Ann Hodgkinson and Sarah Shaw, mother of the above complainant, corroborated. Maria Cotton, in proving her case against Shaw, stated that Shaw caught hold of her by the hair of her head and pulled her about. George Clare corroborated. The Magistrates dismissed the cases, and ordered the parties to pay the costs between them.

**44 13 November 1880**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

ASSAULTING A BOATMAN Thomas Eyres was summoned by **James Knibbs**, boatman, for assaulting him on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October at Newton. Prosecutor was coming along the towing-path of the canal, when he met the defendant with another man. Before prosecutor got up to the defendant, he heard the latter say, "This is the man I should like to have my revenge on". When he got up to them, the defendant came round his horse and hit him, and he still walked on, whereupon he again struck him on the side of the face. Witness ran to get on his boat and Eyres followed him, and got on his boat by getting on another "flat" first. Ultimately witness's wife and two or three others came to his assistance. The Bench fined him 10s and costs, in default of payment 14 days' imprisonment. The money was paid.

**45 27 November 1880**

CHESHIRE ADJOURNED SESSIONS

THEFT OF ROPE AT PARTINGTON **George Webster**, 26, boatman, for stealing 280 lbs of rope, the property of Robert Occlestone, at Partington on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, two months' hard labour.

**46 November 1880**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

ASSAULT AT CHURCH LAWTON **Edwin Jones**, boatman, was summoned by **Thomas Price**, also a boatman, for assaulting him on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant. The complainant stated that the defendant met him, and struck him three times. This took place at Sam Taram's Lock, Lawton. Defendant : I only struck him once. I was walking along the towing-path and he began to "sauce" me, and I hit him. This was after we had gone out of the lock. The Bench bound defendant over to keep the peace, and also ordered him to pay the costs of the hearing.

**47 18 December 1880**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

DAMAGING A CANAL LOCK **James Burgess**, boatman, whose mother appeared for him, was summoned for damaging the canal property at Lawton. **James Billington** said he was in charge of the lock in question, and the defendant, in passing through, knocked the corner off one of the steps with his windlass. Witness asked him why he had done it, and the defendant said he did not know. Witness asked him if he thought he felt any better for doing it, and the defendant said he did not think he did. Defendant's mother stated that her son was 17 years of age, his father was dead, and he had had to get his own living since he was seven years of age. The Chairman remarked that that was perhaps worse for him, for had he been to school, he would have been taught not to damage other people's property. He was ordered to pay 5s damages, 5s fine and the costs, or go to the House of Correction for seven days.

**48 12 March 1881**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

REMOVING CATTLE **Thomas Rigby**, boatman, Church Lawton, was summoned for breach of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act by removing a cow and a calf along the high road without first obtaining the necessary licence according to the order in Council. PC Thomas stated that on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February at Church Lawton, he saw a lad driving a cow and a calf along the high road. He asked the lad who was the owner of them, and he said Mr Thomas Rigby was. Witness went to Rigby's house and asked if he had got a licence for their removal and he said he had not, and did not know that he required one. Defendant, who did not appear but sent a man to appear for him, was ordered to pay the costs of the case.

A ROW AMONGST BOATMEN **George Shaw, William Shaw and Samuel Davies** were all summoned on the charge of assaulting another boatman named **George Cotton**. The assault complained of was alleged to have taken place as the boat of the defendants' was passing that of the complainant on the canal, but the evidence was somewhat contradictory, and the Bench dismissed the case, ordering the costs to be paid amongst them.

**49 12 March 1881**

DEATHS On the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, drowned in the canal at Betchton, **James**, son of **George Brooks**, boatman, aged 14 years.

**50 12 March 1881**

SANDBACH

DRUNK AND INCAPABLE **William Kay** of Wheelock, a retired boatman, was brought up at the Sandbach Police Court, before G W Latham Esq, on Friday, on the charge of being drunk and incapable in Wheelock Road, Sandbach, on the previous evening. Kay, who is an old offender, was found on the night in question helplessly drunk and unable to walk, therefore he was removed to the Police Station. He was fined 5s and costs, with the alternative of seven days' imprisonment. He went to prison.

**51 19 March 1881**

SAD FATALITY NEAR MIDDLEWICH On Wednesday morning, a sad fatality happened in the town of Middlewich, and close to Whatcroft Hall. Between nine and ten o'clock several men were felling trees near the towing-path of the canal, and whilst a young woman, the wife of **Walter Chatwell**, a boatman in the employ of the Anderton Carrying Company and living in the Potteries, was driving the horse and passing the trees, one of them fell, knocking both her and the horse down. In order to extricate the unfortunate woman, several of the larger boughs had to be cut away. She was put in the boat and conveyed with all possible haste to Middlewich, whilst her husband proceeded on horseback for a doctor. Dr Swindells met the boat, and attended to the woman's

injuries, but when she arrived in Middlewich, she only lived a few minutes, death resulting, it is supposed, from a fracture of the vertebrae of the spine. An inquest on the body will be held in due course.

## **52 19 March 1881**

**EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF A STOCKPORT LAD** A boy named Randolph Wilkinson, aged four or five years, and residing at 13 John Street, Hillgate, has this week experienced an extraordinary adventure. On Monday morning it appears that he attended the Roman Catholic School, Edgeley, as was his wont. On leaving at dinner time, he was persuaded by two or three other lads, among whom was one named Robert Gay aged eight years, to accompany them to the canal bank, Lancashire Hill ; arrived there, they commenced throwing stones and the like into the water, and at length one of the number took off little Wilkinson's cap and threw it into the canal. The little fellow at once set about trying to get it out again, but in doing so slipped, and fell into the water. The rest of the boys, seeing him immersed, at once ran away, telling no one what had occurred. On Monday night, the lad being missing, information was given to the Police that he was lost, and the usual inquiries were instituted. On Tuesday night, however, Gay told the police all he knew. He had seen Wilkinson fall into the canal, and had no doubt he was drowned. The police were of the same opinion, and having had the spot pointed out to them by Gay, ordered two officers to drag the canal. The operations were carried on throughout the night, but without success. On Wednesday, information was received from the Salford police that the boy who had been reported missing was there alive and well. The report proved to be correct. It appears the child did fall in the canal, as was stated by his companions, but either scrambled out again or was helped out by a boatman. At any rate he was, in his dripping clothes, taken into a boat which was bound for Salford. The good hearted boatman took him into the cabin and dried his clothes before the fire, giving him some dinner and otherwise reviving him. At Salford he handed him over to the police, and now the little fellow is at home again, none the worse for his remarkable experiences.

## **53 19 March 1881**

**MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY**

**DRUNKENNESS IN THE DISTRICT** **Henry Fox**, boatman of Middlewich, was summoned for being drunk at Booth Lane on the 15<sup>th</sup> ult. He pleaded guilty. PC Elliott stated that on the 15<sup>th</sup> ult at nine o'clock at night, he was going down the lane, and as he was in the act of passing some waste land he heard some person coughing, and on going to the spot, he saw it was the defendant. He was fined 5s and costs 14s 6d.

## **54 26 March 1881**

**THE SAD FATALITY NEAR MIDDLEWICH** Last Friday, Mr H C Yates, the district coroner, held an inquiry at the Navigation Inn, Middlewich, relative to the death of **Harriet Chatwin**, the wife of a boatman of Stoke-upon-Trent, who died from injuries sustained by a tree falling upon her on the previous Wednesday, under circumstances briefly reported in last Saturday's Advertiser.

Mr Jones, Inspector of the Trent and Mersey Canal Company, and Mr Rawlinson of the Anderton Carrying Company, watched the case on behalf of the Companies they represented.

**William Chatwin** said : I am a boatman and live at Stoke-upon-Trent. The deceased was my wife, and was 25 years of age. On the 16<sup>th</sup> inst, we were just coming past Whatcroft Hall along the towing-path of the canal. I was in charge of the boat, and my wife was leading the horse and walking along by its side. Opposite to the Hall, I saw a tree fall on top of my wife and the horse. I was standing in the hatchway, and I pulled the boat in as soon as I could get ashore, and saw that she was alive. She muttered something about her shoulders. I asked the two men for their names, but they declined to give them. Afterwards the same two men who were felling the tree assisted us with my wife on board the boat. I then got two boats tied together and jumped on the back of a horse, and came as hard as I could to Middlewich for a doctor. The doctor came directly I got to him. My wife was just alive when I telegraphed for her mother. The men at the tree had not taken

the branches off, but they were obliged to cut some of them off in order to extricate her. I did not hear them call out to her. By the Coroner : I might not have heard them call even if they did. My wife was not deaf in the least, and her sight was good. It was a very big tree. There was no wind at the time, and it was a very fine morning. There was not a rope fastened to this tree ; the men who were cutting it could not even tell which way the tree would fall, and there was no one near to warn people of the danger. The Foreman : Did you notice which way the tree was growing? Witness : It was growing on the bank and sloping towards the canal, and the tree fell along the towing-path. Had it fallen in front, it would have sunk the boat. The towing-path and the bank were about a level. By a Juror : My wife was on the right side at the time of the accident. I saw plainly enough there was not a rope fastened to the tree. I did not hear any warning given.

Mr J A Swindells, surgeon, Middlewich, said he was called by the last witness, and found the deceased suffering from emphysema and laceration of one of the legs. She was moaning, and perfectly unconscious. The tree had hit her across the chest and in front of the legs. She only lived about an hour and five minutes after he was called to her. As soon as he saw her, he was convinced that there was no hope whatever of saving her life, but he told them to get some brandy from a neighbouring boat. The tree falling upon her had caused her death. As far as he could judge, she was a healthy woman.

**Elizabeth Taylor**, the wife of another boatman, said she was before Chatwin's boat about a boat's length, and noticed that two men were cutting the tree, and they shouted, "Stop", and then afterwards they said, "Come on". She told her little girl to go on with the horse, and the tree directly afterwards fell abreast of the first boat, and broke the boat line. When witness passed the tree, it was cracking. The deceased "unpegged" her horse. Witness did not know whether she heard the man say, "Stop", but thought she did. The tree had branches upon it, and it was the branches that caught the deceased, and not the tree itself. She was certain the tree had not a rope to it, and it might have fallen any way. There was a "bit of a corner", and they could not see the men felling before they got to them, and there was no one to warn people of the danger. It was a very large tree. One of the tree fellers said after the accident, "Hold your noise, missus, and make as light on it as you can".

**William Taylor**, boatman, Middlewich, said he was going with his boat to Middlewich from Runcorn. Chatwin's boat was close behind. Witness was steering, and saw two men cutting the tree. One man shouted, "Stop", and then "Come on", when he pegged the line of the horse and went as fast as he could. The deceased was just behind. She unpegged her horse, when the men told them to come on again, and she went as hard as she could and, in so doing, one of the branches caught her and knocked her down. If she had not unpegged her horse, the whole body of the tree would have caught her. There was not a rope to the tree at all, and no one to warn people of the danger. Chatwin himself asked one of the men his name, and he refused to give it. The tree would be more than a yard round it, and it was as long as a boat. The tree was cracking all the time they were passing, but the men told them all the time to "Come on". If the deceased had kept with the boat instead of unpegging the horse, the whole lot would have caught her. The horse itself is very much injured. The deceased saw the danger, and was trying to get out of the way.

At this stage of the hearing, the jury proceeded in vehicles to the scene of the accident. Having inspected the place and reassembled at the inn, the Coroner said they could not go any further with the inquiry that day. The two men were, in a great measure, responsible for what had happened, and the evidence clearly showed that there was very great blame to be attached to them for not having a rope fastened to the tree. He proposed to adjourn the inquest in order to give them an opportunity of being present, and for the jury to hear what they had to say.

The enquiry was then adjourned until Monday, when it was resumed at the same place.

The Coroner said in the first place he proposed calling Thomas Barker and Thomas Cash, the two men who were engaged in felling the tree, and reading the evidence of the witnesses taken on Friday to them. The men were then called into the room, and the Coroner warned them to be careful as to what they said.

Thomas Cash then made the following statement : I am a labourer, and was engaged by Mr Gleave

of Whatcroft Hall to cut down the tree. On Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> inst, as soon as we saw a boat coming up the canal, we gave them notice to stop. They were 50 or 60 yards away, and we warned the people in charge of the boats not to come. Taylor's boat was the first. They loosed the boats then, and came on a little further, and we told them not to come on. We told them a third time. I put my coat on the towing-path and told them not to come past that particularly. One of the men at the first boat shouted to two on the bank (a girl and a woman), "Be sharp past, the tree is not down yet". We tried all we could to stop and prevent them coming. Then the girl gave the horse a "scutch" and ran along the bank. When the second one saw she had got nearly clear, the other woman went after her in a like manner, and when she got half way the tree began to crack. By the Coroner : It is not true that the tree was cracking when Taylor's boat went past. On course when I saw the danger, I shouted to the deceased to run as fast as she could. She then loosed the horse's head and attempted to run, but it was too far gone, and it came down very suddenly. The Coroner : Is it true that the branches caught her? Witness : Yes, sir. We told them to stop all the time. The Coroner : Then it was not true that you told them to come on? No, I knew the danger better than that. The Coroner : Did one of you say to Elizabeth Taylor, "Hold your noise, missus, and make as light on it as you can". Witness : No, that is not true. As soon as the tree fell, I ran and picked her up immediately, and I called to Barker to bring some tea that we had got in a can to give her to drink. I sent for **Richard Beeson**, the banksman on the canal, to be there when we cut down the tree, as the boatmen curse us, and the banksman can prevent them coming better than we can ourselves. The Coroner : The tree was lying in the hollow, but you must have been getting it to fall on the towing-path. Witness : It is how we were ordered to fell it by Mr Gleave. The Coroner : Is it true that you declined to give your names when you were asked? Witness : No ; we were never asked for our names. I asked the husband of the deceased for his name and he did not give it, whilst the other man (Taylor) said he came from Anderton. The Coroner : This tree was not lopped, as is usual, and besides there was no rope attached to it. Witness : In my own opinion, we did not require any rope at all. The tree just laid in the way we wanted it to go. The Coroner : Is it not a fact that some of the branches of the tree had to be cut off in order to get her out? Witness : No ; the woman was quite loose from the tree, for she was between two limbs. The Coroner : But you cut some of the branches away? Witness : The reason we cut the branches away was to make a better way to get her to the boat on the canal.

Thomas Barker, the other man engaged in felling the tree, in answer to the Coroner, said, "I have nothing any different to that to say. What Cash has said is quite true".

Mr Jones, the canal inspector, in answer to the foreman of the jury, said that the man Beeson, the banksman, was absent when the tree was being cut down. Mr Thornton (one of the jurors) : You said something about people cursing you. Did these people curse you? Witness : No, but others have done so last Spring. Mr Thornton : And did you think it was right and reasonable to fell trees so near the towing-path of the canal without having any protection whatever to prevent them falling on people? How was it that you had neither ropes nor chains to this tree? Witness : If we had had 40 ropes, it would have been all the same.

The Coroner pointed out that the negligence of a person causing the death of another must be proved to be gross and culpable before a verdict of manslaughter could be arrived at. It was for the jury to say whether Cash and Barker were grossly and culpably negligent of the way they felled the tree and thereby caused the poor woman's death ; and he asked them, if they had the least doubt about it, to give them, by all means, the benefit of it.

The Jury then stated they should like to ask Elizabeth Taylor, a witness called on the previous Friday, a few questions ; consequently she was recalled, and the Coroner addressed her as follows :- In your evidence taken on Friday last, you said that one of the men engaged at the tree remarked to you, "Hold your noise, missus, and make as light of it as you can". Witness : Yes, one of them did, but which I don't know, as I was too badly put about. Mr Thornton : But don't you really know which of the men said that, as that remark has a tendency to lead us astray? Witness : No, but I think it was this man (pointing to Cash). The Foreman : I should like to ask the gentleman connected with the canal who are present whether they think it possible to have stopped the boats in

that distance before they got to the tree? Mr Rawlinson (for the Anderton Carrying Company) : No ; a boat would run on for 20 or 30 yards even if they stopped the horse. Mr Thornton : Did either of these men tell you not to come on? Witness : No, they did not. Mr Thornton : And did you see a coat or anything on the towing-path, as a warning not to go past? Witness : There was neither coat nor anything else on the towing-path that I saw. It was not a boat's length from the tree when the little girl stopped our horse. Mr Thornton : Could you see them on the towing-path, Cash? Cash : Yes, I could. Mr Thornton : When you were cutting this tree, how much was there to be cut through before they came past? E Taylor : The tree was cracking when I was on the top of the cabin. Cash : It was an elm tree, and when one is cutting a tree of that kind, the moment they begin to crack, they go down at once ; they are not like an oak or an ash tree.

The Jury then, in company with the Coroner, consulted privately for half an hour, at the expiration of which time the men Cash and Barker were recalled into the room, and the Coroner said : The jury have come to the following verdict : That the deceased was accidentally killed by a tree falling upon her in the township of Whatcroft, and that Mr Gleave, the agent, is highly censurable for failing to provide the means for warning people of their danger. Addressing the men, he said : I may also tell you, Thomas Barker and Thomas Cash, that you have run a great risk by your conduct in the matter, and that you have escaped by a very narrow thread indeed. Let me advise you, in future and on all occasions, to provide all means possible in your power to save human life. Don't let such a case as this ever occur again, for if it does, I can assure you it will be worse for you. You may now go. Cash and Barker then left the room, and the jury was discharged.

## **55**      **7 May 1881**

### SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

WASTING THE CANAL WATER    For wasting the canal water, **James Burgess**, boatman, Middlewich, and **John Littlemore**, boatman, Lawton, were each fined 5s and costs. Henry Morris, boatman, who did not appear, was, for a similar offence, fined 10s and costs.

ASSAULT AT WHEELLOCK    **Charles Williams**, boatman, was summoned by **James Billington**, a canal inspector, for assaulting him. The complainant stated that he was at the Wheelock bottom lock when the defendant came to him, took him by both arms and shook him, called him very offensive names, and threatened to kill him dead on the spot. Defendant, who impudently remarked that he had only been summoned so that the complainant could have a day's holiday by coming to the Sessions, was fined 40s and costs.

## **56**      **21 May 1881**

### SANDBACH

IMPUDENT ROBBERY    At the Sandbach Police Court on Monday afternoon, before G W Latham Esq, two prostitutes named Elizabeth Tomkinson of Burslem and Mary Ann Fullard of Tunstall, were brought up on the charge of stealing 4s in copper, 30 postage stamps, two packets of toilet soap and one bottle of fruit syrup, the whole of the value of 7s 8d, and the property of Joseph Shields of Alsager, on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. They were also further charged with stealing about 36 lbs of beef and about 8 lbs of mutton of the value of £2, the property of Thomas Parks of Alsager, on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. Richard Parker, a labourer of Tunstall, was also charged with receiving a portion of the above property, well knowing it to have been stolen. No evidence was taken, but the prisoners were remanded until Thursday. When they were again brought before Mr Eastham and Mr Wilbraham, along with another woman named Emma Lowndes. Mr Thomas Parks said he was a butcher, and lived at Alsager. He shut up his shop about 10.30 in the evening of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. It was a lock up shop. He left on a shelf near the window in the shop a bed of beef cut in two parts, and one neck of mutton. The shutters and windows were closed, and the door was locked at the back and bolted at the front part of the shop. The piece of beef produced was the thin end of the bed, and he knew from the manner it was skewered that it was his property. He did not see the prisoners about the place. The mutton produced was part of the neck, and corresponded with the

portion missing from his shop. James Parks, son of the last witness, stated that he went round, on Saturday morning, to the shop at about 6.30. He found the shutters were open for about six inches, and the window was open behind the shutters. He looked in the window and missed the bed of beef, and then he went to his father and asked him what he had left in the shop the previous night. Sarah Evans said she lived at Alsager. Last Saturday morning about 3.30, she went out of the house to pick manure on the roads. She saw the three women on the highway opposite to the Alsager Mere. Lowndes had got her shawl over her arm. She followed them for about 100 yards, and lost sight of them about 300 yards from Mr Parks's shop. One of them said something about witness picking manure. After that, she did not see any more of them. William John Hopkinson, collier, Alsager, said that about 20 minutes to four on Saturday morning he left home to go to his work, and as he was going out, he saw the prisoner Fullard with a piece of meat in her dress. That was about 50 yards from Mr Parks's shop. He saw the other two women afterwards. He followed them, and about half an hour afterwards, he saw the three women together on the canal side. **James Moseley**, boatman, Odd Rode, said that on Saturday morning, between four and five o'clock, he saw Lowndes and Tomkinson on the Church Bridge at Lawton. One of them stood on the stone near Mr Chaddock's farm, and they then came off the bridge and walked alongside of his boat. The little one (Fullard) had something rolled up in her frock. It seemed to be a good weight. She said, "I have ----- well had to pull my shoes off for this, and if you won't help to carry, you won't help to eat". The prisoners wanted to ride on his boat to Harecastle, but he refused to allow them. He lost sight of them at the Red Bull. Fullard went up the canal side, and the others up the road. Ann Cartwright said she lived at Tunstall. Fullard sent for her to Duke Street, Tunstall, on Saturday afternoon, and asked her if she wanted to buy a bit of meat. Witness said to her, "Mary, have you come honestly by it?" She said she had, and witness gave her 3s for it. The piece of beef produced was the piece she purchased from her. Eliza Tabiner said she was married and lived at Tunstall. Fullard and witness lodged together at the prisoner Parker's house. Fullard came in the house about 6.30 on Saturday morning, with some meat in her dress. She told witness to tell Parker she had not brought him any money except 1s 6d, but she had brought money's worth. She asked what she had brought, and she said meat. Witness and Fullard had some cooked for breakfast on Saturday morning. Fullard asked witness to go down to her aunt's, and ask her whether she would buy a piece of meat. Parker said she must make money for herself. Sergeant Jones, Scholar Green, Odd Rode, said he apprehended Fullard on Sunday, and charged her at Burslem Police Station with stealing the meat from the shop at Alsager. She said, "I had it given me". PC John Sherwin of Alsager said he received a report of the robbery on Saturday, and on Sunday, from further information he received, he went to Burslem and apprehended Tomkinson. On the way to the lock ups, she said, "I reckon you have come for me for that ----- beef". She was then charged by him with being in company with the other two prisoners and stealing the meat. In reply, she said, "I was there, but I had nothing to do with it". He afterwards apprehended Lowndes, and charged her with being in company with the other two. She denied it, saying, "I was not with her. I had nothing to do with it". The three prisoners were afterwards charged together at Sandbach. Lowndes then said, "I was there, but I know nothing about it". Fullard made the same reply as before. On the Sunday after Fullard was apprehended, he went to Parker's house in Duke Street, Tunstall, and there he found the piece of mutton in his pantry. He asked Parker how he accounted for it, and he said he bought it at Hanley Market on Saturday night. He denied any other knowledge, and he (witness) then charged him with receiving the mutton, well knowing it to have been stolen. He said, "I did not like to say anything. I thought I should get into trouble". Witness then took him into custody. In answer to the Magistrates, Fullard said she had the meat given to her, Lowndes said she knew nothing about it, Tomkinson said she was as innocent as a child unborn, and Parker said he had nothing to do with the meat. The whole of the prisoners were committed to take their trial at Knutsford Sessions next week.

**57**      **4 June 1881**

CRUELTY TO A HORSE    At the Sale Police Court on Thursday before W Joynson Esq, **William**

**Peers**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a mare by working it with sore shoulders and lame legs at Sale on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. Prisoner was ordered to pay 3s 4d costs and have the horse destroyed.

**58 2 July 1881**

**DRUNK AND DISORDERLY AT WHEELOCK** **Joseph Bell**, boatman, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Wheelock last Tuesday afternoon, and also for assaulting **James Palin**, another boatman. Prosecutor stated that the defendant struck him several times and threatened to "smash him up in smunch meat". The policeman of the village said he apprehended Bell on Tuesday afternoon. He found him on the Wharf at Wheelock, and he was very drunk and disorderly. Mr William Jinks said the defendant was drunk, and he saw him strike the complainant several times. He remonstrated with him, whereupon he (Bell) said he would serve him the same. The Bench sent him to Knutsford House of Correction for seven days with hard labour without the option of paying a fine.

**59 6 August 1881**

**LIFE IN A CANAL BOAT** On Tuesday, Mr Prior, coroner, held an inquest at Droylsden respecting the death of a child aged three months, daughter of **Richard Seymour**, residing at English Row, Runcorn. The father of the child is a boatman, and is assisted by his wife in the boat. On Saturday they were making a journey from Manchester to Bugsworth, and about eight o'clock they moored their boat for the night at Fairfield Top Lock, Droylsden. The father and mother retired to bed in the cabin with the child. The mother awoke at five o'clock next morning, and found the child dead and cold, lying on her left side. The mother stated that the child had only been vaccinated the previous Monday. She had ten other children living at Runcorn. The Coroner said the child might have been suffocated because, as the jury had seen, there was not over much room in the cabin for sleeping accommodation. He trusted he would live long enough to see a law passed to prevent families sleeping in the cabins of these canal boats. The jury returned an open verdict of "Found dead in bed in the cabin of a canal boat".

**60 29 October 1881**

**CHESHIRE WINTER ASSIZES**

**BURGLARY AT MACCLESFIELD** **William Jones**, boatman, Tunstall, pleaded guilty to breaking into the dwelling house of W Stanway at Macclesfield, and stealing various articles of apparel.

**61 10 June 1882**

**STOCKPORT COUNTY POLICE COURT, THURSDAY** **Isaac Cooper**, boatman of Marple, for being drunk, was fined 2s 6d and costs.

**62 29 July 1882**

**CHESHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES**

**CHARGE OF MANSLAUGHTER** Thomas Edwards, 31, farmer, surrendered to his bail on the charge of killing and slaying **Richard Biddle** at Buglawton on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 1882. Mr Bankes appeared in support of the prosecution, and the prisoner was undefended. It appeared that in the month of February last, an arrangement was made between Biddle, a boatman, and Mr Dale, a farmer, that Biddle was to bring a boat load of manure along the canal to Mr Dale's farm, and was to take back a boat load of Mr Dale's hay, the difference in value to be adjusted between them, and paid one to the other as the case might be. Biddle went with his boat load of manure to Buckstone Bridge Wharf, near Buglawton, and having unloaded it and taken the hay on board, which was brought down by the prisoner, who was a relative of Mr Dale's, a dispute arose as to the hay. Mr Dale wanted 24s difference between the value of the hay and the manure. Biddle refused to give it, and Mr Dale said he would take some of the hay off the boat again. Prisoner went on to the boat to take off some of the hay, and pushed Biddle, either intentionally or accidentally, with the result that he sustained a severe injury to his back which resulted in death. The prisoner was found not guilty.

THE RIGOUR OF THE LAW **George Sumner**, 19, a boatman, was charged with having at Church Lawton on 7<sup>th</sup> June last committed an unnatural crime. The evidence is unfit for publication. Although the judge's summing up was favourable to the prisoner, he was found guilty and sentenced to 10 years' penal servitude, the judge remarking that the law allowed him to pass no lighter sentence for an offence of that kind.

**63 5 August 1882**

SANDBACH

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING On Friday last near the half way house between Sandbach and Middlewich, two girls, children of a boatman, narrowly escaped being drowned in the canal. The elder child was carrying her little sister in her arms and, at the time of the unfortunate immersion, was in the act of walking along a plank, one end of which was resting upon the bank and the other upon the boat. By some means she slipped into the water, at the same time having the presence of mind to cling to her younger sister whilst in her dangerous predicament. Luckily both children were rescued by their parents.

**64 16 September 1882**

DEATH OF A CENTENARIAN The death is announced, at the advanced age of 100, of **Mrs Mary Ashley** of 15 Fisher Row, St Thomas's, Oxford, who expired on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Mrs Ashley, who enjoyed very good health almost up to the time of her death, was the widow of **Thomas Ashley**, a boatman, who died a few days since at a very advanced age. The remarkable age of the deceased has been verified by the registrar of births, deaths and marriages.

**65 25 November 1882**

COLLISION AND FATAL ACCIDENT IN THE BRIDGEWATER CANAL On Monday, the Deputy Coroner for Manchester held an inquest relative to the death of a young man named **Joseph Hinde**, 17 years of age, a boatman, lately residing at 11 Shaw Street, Runcorn. It appeared from the evidence that deceased was engaged as deck hand on board the *Stretford* steamer, and was on board that vessel on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, as she was proceeding along the canal towing several flats. As they approached Manchester, and when in the neighbourhood of Stretford, they met another steam tug, the *Heywood*, having also several flats in tow. A very strong wind was blowing at the time, rendering the flats somewhat unmanageable, and those in rear of *Stretford* were blown to the side of the canal opposite the towing-path, the side which the *Heywood* should have taken. The *Heywood* had just passed one of the "stops" or narrow places in the canal when, seeing the effect of the wind on the *Stretford's* flats, she tried, after making an attempt to get past on the wrong side, to regain her proper course, when a collision occurred. The *Stretford* got between the *Heywood* and the first boat she was towing, when the rope connecting the tug with the flat caught the funnel of the *Stretford* and knocked it down, the deceased being also carried down into the coal bunkers, receiving such injuries that he died in the Infirmary on Sunday. Every effort on the part of both crews appeared to have been made to prevent any accident. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**66 9 December 1882**

TRAGIC END OF A GIRL An inquest was held on Tuesday morning at the Bull's Head Inn, Marple, before Mr F W Johnson, coroner, on the body of Henrietta Hodson, aged 14 years, which was found in the canal at Marple on Sunday morning. Matthew Hodson, father of the girl, spoke to seeing his daughter last on the night of the 19<sup>th</sup> ult. He was absent till the following Friday night, when he heard his daughter was missing, and made every inquiry, besides dragging the canal frequently. He was present on Sunday morning when her body was taken out of the water in the Black Wharf Pond. She had never complained to him of any ill-treatment or want of attention from her mother. Eda Jackson spoke to seeing the deceased near Mr Vaughan's shop on the 24<sup>th</sup> ult, when she was asked by deceased to give her 2s 3d, but she only laughed at her. She afterwards saw her standing near Mr Somerset's shop. No complaints of anything wrong had been made to her.

**William Higginbottom**, boatman, deposed to seeing the pond let off, and finding the body of deceased in the middle of it. He got her out, and assisted in carrying the body home. Mr Rowcliffe, manager at the Hollins Mill, gave the deceased an excellent character for working. He had stopped a penny out of her wages because she had left about a yard of cloth unpicked. She would receive 10s 11d for the week. She had only been fined 6d in six weeks. She was a good average weaver, and of quiet demeanour. Alice Goe stated that she knew deceased. On Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> ult, she was in a very playful state, and joked with witness. Some time ago, deceased had told her that her mother had beaten her, but that she would run away some Friday with her wages, and then her mother would feel the want of her. She did not make any further statement. Caroline Stuttard, a neighbour, spoke to hearing cries from the girl some weeks ago. She asserted that the girl had been stripped, and she had seen a black mark upon her back. John Bromiley or Bottomley, joiner of New Mills, spoke to being in Mr Vernon's Coal Office on the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> ult about six o'clock, and hearing a heavy noise as of something falling into the water, but saw nothing. William Vernon also spoke to hearing the noise. Mrs Hodson, in reply to the Coroner, denied that she had used any undue violence to the deceased, except beating her with a strap some weeks ago, for telling her a falsehood. The jury found an open verdict upon the evidence given, of "Found drowned without any marks of violence upon her body". They however had a strong opinion that deceased had been led to (presumably) destroy herself through fear of going home and incurring the severity of her parents. This was represented to Mrs Hodson by the Coroner in a reprimand, which he afterwards administered. Mrs Hodson, however, still denied the truth of the rumours, and the Coroner reminded her that if she had acted rightly towards the deceased, that would be her consolation.

## 67 9 December 1882

### MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL

WILL IT BENEFIT STOCKPORT? Nothing could be more highly discreditable to that inestimable institution – our railway system – than that it should now be found preferable to revert to the bygone system of transit by road as a cheaper means of conveyance for goods. Transit by canal was, however, the most associated with the original development of our trade, and contrasting the comparative cost, and the working experience of each, it may easily be seen that canal transit is the most advantageous. The greatest authority on the subject gives the following :-

	Road	Canal	Railway
Original cost of construction per mile	£2000	£8000	£40,000
Cost of working per ton per mile	3d	1/2d	1s 1d

Notwithstanding this, the railway interest still predominates. Originally only intended as a sort of superior tramway connection over short distances, the steam tramway made astonishing progress, its speed being sufficient to outweigh all other advantages of the canal. What is known as the railway mania was created, and this attracted an unparalleled flow of capital. For a quarter of a century previous to the introduction of the steam engine, canals had been at their best. The railway capitalist soon discovered that the security of his position rendered it necessary to destroy, as far as possible, canal competition, and a persistent struggle commenced, which has resulted in 1530 out of the 2000 miles of English canals finding their way into the hands of the railway companies, and has been devoted to the annihilation of canal traffic. With one or two exceptions, this has been attended with heavy loss, and consequently increased railway tariffs have had to be imposed to supply the deficiency, as evidenced by Mr W B Forwood, Mayor of Liverpool, before a select committee in Parliament, March 1881, when he stated that "he was confident if the profits of that portion of the London and North Western line between Manchester and Liverpool could be shown separately, they would very largely exceed ten per cent". Wherever navigation has been excluded or is impossible, and especially in manufacturing districts, where exists the greatest bulk of goods traffic, these excessive rates have been applied, as shown by the same authority. The average rate for carrying

goods from Manchester to Liverpool is (?39 1/4d) per mile, whilst the average rate to other places is (?197d) per mile, which in round figures is nearly 24 per mile more for the carriage of those goods to Liverpool than the Railway Company are willing to carry them for to other ports. From Glasgow, cotton may be brought for 13s 6d per ton per mile. The subject of excessive rates has been undergoing the tedium of enquiry before Parliamentary committee since 1880. Now, a more powerful investigation has been caused by the general public, through the Ship Canal Scheme, and a more speedy revision will be the result.

The rate of about 6d per ton per mile now charged to Stockport from Manchester, made up by cartage to 6s 8d for the journey, is most exorbitant. If this gets reduced to through carrier's rate, (????), 4s 6d or 5s, a very beneficial change will have been effected. As previously pointed out, that present Liverpool dues and charges being amply sufficient to cover all tolls and charges of the Ship Canal, it is not difficult to make out that Stockport will be a gainer of, at the very least, 5s per ton on goods from Liverpool, that being about railway rate from Liverpool saved, less the rates that will have to be paid from Manchester. Other advantages will however accrue. At Liverpool, cotton passes through a buying and a selling broker, each obtaining a commission of 6s per ton. With importation of cotton to Manchester, the manufacturer would be enabled to make his own purchases, and thus save the 6s per ton buying commission, as well as much valuable time. Cost of Liverpool sampling is somewhat underestimated at 6s. Half of this will also be saved. Without accounting for many minor advantages, the saving on cotton imported into the Stockport district may be roundly said to be 14s per ton. This includes Stockport, Reddish, Heaton Norris, Heaton Mersey and Hazel Grove, in which there are employed, as nearly as can be ascertained, 5000 looms, 150266 doubling spindles, and 1,301, 452 mules and throstles. The looms may be taken as being supplied from the spindles, the yarn for doubling as from Manchester and adjacent towns, and the spinning cotton, of course, as from Liverpool. The average consumption of cotton per year, for spinning, will be 40lb per spindle, which gives a total of 23,294 tons. That of yarn for doubling, 75lb per spindle, which makes with a tare weight for skips of 3 cwt per ton, 5791 tons. The Manchester Ship Canal, therefore, will benefit the cotton trade of Stockport, per annum, at a moderate estimate – 14s per ton on 5791 tons yarn on 23,294 tons of cotton from Liverpool, £20,964 12s ; 2s per ton on 5791 tons of yarn, tare weight, from say Manchester, £579 2s ; return of whole, say to Manchester, 29085 tons at 2s per ton, £2705 10s ; total £24,152 4s. One firm alone employing 90,000 spindles uses 250 bales of cotton per week, which, averaging five bales to the ton, would represent a saving of £2000 per annum. On a capital of £120,000, the would amount to close upon 1 3/4 per cent.

## 68 21 April 1883

### SANDBACH

VICTIMS TO INTEMPERANCE On Saturday at the Sandbach Police Court, before Edmund Ashton Esq, two men named **James Heath**, boatman, Manchester, and **William Davy**, boatman of Birmingham, were charged with being drunk and disorderly on the previous day in Middlewich Road, Sandbach. The case was proved by PCs Williams and Blackham, and the defendants were each fined 5s and costs, with the alternative of seven days' imprisonment. They both went to prison.

## 69 2 June 1883

A SHAREBROKER AND MONEYLENDER DROWNED On Saturday afternoon, Mr Price held an inquest on the body of the late Mr Alfred Moss (39), sharebroker of Fletcher Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, and who also carried on business as a moneylender at 8 Warren Street, Stockport, whose body was found in the Manchester and Huddersfield Canal at Whitelands, under somewhat mysterious circumstances. Mr Cooper, solicitor, Manchester, watched the inquiry for the Lancashire Accident Assurance Society, in which the deceased was a policy holder, and Mr John Clayton represented the widow. The evidence went to prove that on Friday morning Mr Moss left his office to go to Stalybridge in his usual health, with the exception of some intermittent rheumatic pains in one of his legs. As the nearest way to his destination, he chose the canal toting-path, and

was seen walking in the direction of Stalybridge at half past 10 o'clock. At a quarter to 11 o'clock a boatman was getting his boat into a lock some distance higher up, when he noticed the body of a man in the water. It was immediately pulled out, and identified as that of Mr Moss. The body was warm, and his watch was still going, which was an indication that he could not have been in the water long. No one appears to have seen him get into the water, and rumours were current that the deceased had committed suicide. The jury, however, took the view that Mr Moss, whilst attempting to cross from one side of the canal to the other by means of the narrow wooden platform attached to the lock gates, might possibly have been seized with pains in his legs, and fallen into the water. They returned a verdict that the deceased gentleman was found drowned, and added their opinion that he fell into the water accidentally. Mr Cooper, in answer to the Coroner, said there was a clause in the deceased's policy of assurance to the effect that if any member committed suicide, his friends were not entitled to recover. The jury, however, did not consider there was the slightest evidence pointing to suicide.

## **70      28 July 1883**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

**STEALING FISHING RODS** **James Lamb** (12) and **John Lamb** (11), a boatman's children, were placed in the dock and charged with stealing two fishing rods of the value of 5s, the property of Mr Cross, Winsford. Thomas Bostock Hulse said he was assistant to Mr Samuel Wooliscroft, ironmonger, Winsford. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst, he saw the two boys about the shop, and he saw them take two fishing rods from the inside of the door. They took one each ; then they ran away. Witness gave chase, and captured the elder one. They threw the rods into the street, and a Mr Barratt picked them up. One rod was worth 4s 6d, and the other worth 6d. He recognised the smaller boy the same evening. By the father of the boys : He did not ask them twice to go away from the shop. Thomas Barratt said he lived near, and on the night in question, hearing a noise and seeing a crowd, he went out. The last witness had caught the elder boy, and there were several boat people around threatening him. He picked up the smaller rod. The bigger boy was very violent, and he kicked witness. Sergeant Gosling proved that he went to the shop and found the elder boy in charge of Hulse ; the two rods were upon the counter, and Hulse said that the boy and his brother had stolen them. The elder defendant made no reply, and witness told him he would have to go with him. Two police officers found the little boy upon his father's boat. He charged them both with stealing the rods, and they made no reply. The little boy said he was only five years of age. Mr Superintendent Hindley stated that his age was entered as eleven, both from his own and his father's statement. The Chairman said they would give the lads the benefit of that case. They were both very young, and if they were sent to prison they might be worse afterwards ; therefore they would not be sent to prison, but the punishment they would receive would be short, sharp and decisive ; and it was that they be privately whipped, each six strokes with a birch rod.

## **71      18 August 1883**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

**CANAL CASE** **George Granger**, boatman, was summoned for that he did through carelessness unlawfully cause his boat to strike the top lock. **John Wilkinson**, lock-keeper, Newton, proved that the defendant's boat struck the paddle and broke it. Defendant stood in the hatches at the time, but this defendant denied, adding that he was in the cabin, and that his man was working the boat. Fined 5s and costs.

## **72      22 September 1883**

MIDDLEWICH

**AN UNKNOWN MAN FOUND DROWNED** At about half past six o'clock on Friday morning last, **Moses Bunn** of Middlewich, a canal boatman, observed the lifeless body of a man floating in the canal a few yards from the Hall Bridge, in the township of Whatcroft, near Middlewich. He gave information to **Richard Bossons**, a canal banksman residing three quarters of a mile lower

down the canal, who at once proceeded to the spot indicated with a rake, got the body (which was almost in an upright position) out of the water, and placed it in an adjacent field. The deceased, who appeared to be about 30 years of age, and whose height was 5ft 7in, was dressed in a grey tweed suit, and had on a white shirt, a white flannel vest, a plaid necktie, woollen stockings and a pair of clogs. His hat has not been found. From the greasy appearance of his clothes, it is thought that he has been a cotton operative. Information on the discovery was sent by Bossons to PC Marshall of Davenham, who had the body conveyed in a cart to the mortuary at the Northwich Workhouse. No clue to the identity of the deceased has been obtained. On Thursday night about nine o'clock, Bossons saw a man on the towing-path opposite to his house, but he was unable to say whether the body was that of the same man. The depth of the canal where the body was found is only 4ft 6in. An inquest was held at the Workhouse before Mr Blunt, deputy coroner, on Monday, and the jury, of which Mr James Parry of Shipbrook was foreman, returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

### 73 22 September 1883

A BOATMAN DROWNED AT MIDDLEWICH **Albert Jones**, aged (?23) years, boatman of Middlewich, was accidentally drowned in the canal at Middlewich on Saturday evening last. It appears that at 7.30, the deceased, along with his wife, were on the boat, and on reaching the big lock near the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Factory, he left his wife on the boat whilst he went to open the big lock gate. He had opened one side, and went round for the purpose of opening the other side of the gate, and whilst doing so, it is supposed he overbalanced himself and fell backwards into about ten feet of water. The deceased's wife called to her husband, but not receiving any reply, she stepped off the boat and went into the public house opposite the lock to see if her husband had entered there. Finding he was not there, a search was instituted, and the man's hat was discovered floating upon the water. Shortly afterwards the unfortunate man was pulled out of the canal and taken to the public house. Medical aid was immediately summoned, and as soon as Dr Swindells arrived, he stated that life was not then extinct, but that there was really no hope of the man's recovery. The poor fellow expired in a few minutes afterwards. The body was then removed to a house in Lower Street, there to await a coroner's inquest. Jones leaves a widow and one child.

### 74 10 November 1883

ALTRINCHAM PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

CASE OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS **Henry Duke**, a boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse at Sale. PC Brown said that on the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup> October he was in Egerton Street, when his attention was drawn to a boat horse in charge of the defendant. It was lame, and on looking under the collar of the off shoulder, he found a sore about the size of the palm of his hand. On the collar was an small piece of old shirting to keep the collar off the sore. Fined 5s and costs.

GAME TRESPASS : A VIGILANT DOG **Joseph Appleton**, boatman of Barnton, was summoned for being in pursuit of game on the farm of Mr Samuel Howard at Sinderland. A gamekeeper named John Bamford, in the employ of Mr George Hardy, Pickering Lodge, Timperley, deposed that on the 25<sup>th</sup> October he saw the defendant come off the canal bank and go on to a field. Defendant had a greyhound, which he set on to a hare. Defendant denied that he was ever off the canal bank, and that the dog belonged to him. The keeper said that he had the dog outside, and the Bench ordered it to be brought in. This was accordingly done, but it did not seem to recognise the defendant, and some amusement was caused by the persistent efforts to make it know its master. On the other hand, it seemed to know the gamekeeper. **John Goodyear**, boatman, was called by the defendant, and he swore that Appleton was never off the canal bank. The Bench entertained some doubt in the matter, and dismissed the case. As the two men were leaving the court, the dog made desperate efforts to follow them, but was held back with difficulty by the keeper.

**75 1 December 1883**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

**ALLEGED THEFT OF TOOLS** **Richard Jinks**, boatman late of Wheelock, was brought up on a charge of stealing a plane and various turning tools, the property of John Dean, chair maker, Sandbach. Prosecutor proved that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June last he stopped at the “Half Way” house, Tetton, and he left the tools produced in a cart outside. He valued them at 6s. Henry Hockenhall, shoemaker, Wheelock, proved that he attended a sale held at the prisoner's house about two months ago, and he bought several of the tools produced. Mr Dean informed him that they belonged to him, and he told witness to keep them until he saw him again. Witness handed them to the police about a fortnight or three weeks ago. PC Bladon stated that he went with Dean to Hockenhall's house on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, and received some of the tools produced. The hammer he got from another house. PC Doyle proved arresting Jinks and charging him with stealing some tools from the “Half Way” house, Tetton, near Sandbach, and in answer to the charge, prisoner said that his father-in-law lived in the house before he did, and he found the tools in the place when he (prisoner) took the house. Mr Superintendent Hindley said if the Bench would remand the prisoner – as he was only arrested late on the previous night – further inquiries could be made respecting the case. The magistrates remanded the prisoner until the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday next. He was admitted to bail in the sum of £20.

**76 26 January 1884**

**FEROCIOUS ATTACK ON A BROADHEATH WOMAN** On Saturday morning at the Runcorn Police Court, **Robert Jones**, boatman, was charged on remand, under a warrant, with having on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst unlawfully assaulted a young woman named Annie Cady of Broadheath.

Complainant said she belonged to Broadheath, and for the last three weeks had been living with the prisoner on board his flat, the *Cricket*, belonging to Mr C T Faulkner of Manchester. On Sunday night the 15<sup>th</sup> inst, prisoner abused her in a shameful manner, pulling her about by the hair and fastening her in the cabin. When at Runcorn, he pulled out a knife and threatened to destroy her. She got the knife from him, and thrust it in her bosom. Afterwards she went ashore. When he beat her, she implored his mercy, but he threatened that he would make her a “coffin suit”. She was carried into a hut in an insensible state at Runcorn by some lock porters. Examined by Mr Superintendent Williamson : Prisoner followed her from the flat and threatened to drown her. When her mother knew she had been living with the prisoner, she turned her out of the house. Cross-examined by prisoner : She did not come on board the flat at Manchester and ask him to let her ride to Altrincham. She went to Runcorn with him because her mother would not have her at home. She did not threaten to drown herself at Liverpool, nor did she shout that she was mad when at Runcorn. Re-examined by Mr Superintendent Williamson : She had not been following the flat up and down. She had been sufficiently long with the prisoner to be dishonoured and beaten into the bargain.

Peter Lowe, labourer, Mersey Street, Runcorn, said he helped the prisoner with his boat down the locks on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst. He saw the prisoner go to the cabin, and then heard screams. The mate told witness not to interfere. When the prisoner was coming up the cabin steps, the complainant pulled him back, and he fell on her breasts with his knees several times. The prisoner kept asking complainant to go ashore, and dropped with his knees on her breasts several times. The woman aggravated him to do it. Mr Superintendent Williamson : Did he drop with his knees on her purposely? Witness : I could not say. Every time she pulled him down, he dropped with his knees upon her breast. Mr Johnson : Did you see her struck at all? Witness : I saw prisoner pull her out of the bed place and knock her on the floor. Mr Superintendent Williamson : When all this was going on, did the woman say anything? Witness : Only screamed. Mr Superintendent Williamson : What age are you? Witness : 19. Mr Superintendent Williamson : And could you stand there and see the woman abused without taking her part? Witness : There were two of them, and I was frightened of interfering myself. Mr Superintendent Williamson : What would you have done if you could have had your own way? Witness : I should have done him the same.

**Robert Brown**, a lock-keeper, said that when the prisoner's flat came through the locks on the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> inst, he heard someone moaning on board. He saw the complainant standing on the deck, and she told him what the Court already knew. He told her to come into his hut if she were afraid, but she refused. When the flat got through the fourth lock, the complainant came running back. He crossed the lock to meet her. She fell to the ground before he got to her. If she had not fallen, she would certainly have run into the lock. The woman was then taken into his hut, where she produced a knife from her bosom. Witness said, "Whatever are you doing with that knife in your bosom?" She replied, "He was going to put an end to me with it". Complainant remained in his hut until six the following morning. She was very weak, and once she pointed her finger and said, "See". The watchman said, "What is it?", and she said, "Heaven".

Inspector Hollingworth gave evidence, stating that Dr McDougall attended the complainant, who had, no doubt, been very badly abused.

The prisoner, in defence, denied that he even struck the complainant. He alleged that she persisted in coming to the boat and annoying him.

Mr Superintendent Williamson said the prisoner ought to know well enough what to do if he had been persistently annoyed as he stated, and under no circumstances should he have assaulted the woman. He could have obtained the assistance of the police, and he was sure he had made no application, or he should have heard of it. He had tried to stain the woman's character, and had made some allusion to drink, but he wished to point out that when the woman came to the Police Station, she was perfectly sober, and he had learned that she had never tasted drink in her life. After what he heard of the prisoner, he had scarcely patience to address their Worships, and he could not help losing his temper. The prisoner was said to be one of the most brutal men on the Bridgewater Canal, and was a terror, not only to women, but to men also.

The Chairman said the Bench considered the case proved. The prisoner's conduct had been brutal in the extreme, and he would be sent to prison for three months with hard labour, at the expiration of which term, he must enter into his own recognisances of £5 to keep the peace for six months, failing which he would be imprisoned for another month.

## **77 23 May 1884**

### **MIDDLEWICH**

**THEFT OF COALS FROM A CANAL BOAT** **Edward Prestwich**, a boatman, was charged in custody before E H Moss Esq and Captain Kennedy, at the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, with stealing coal from a canal boat at Middlewich the same morning. Prisoner pleaded guilty. PC Wood stated that about six o'clock that morning, he was informed that prisoner had taken some coal from a boat which was tied up near Messrs Verdin's salt works. Whilst passing in another boat, prisoner took up a panful of coal weighing about 20lbs, and worth threepence or fourpence. When apprehended, prisoner pleaded guilty. Witness found the coal on his boat. Numerous complaints had been made of similar thefts from canal boats from time to time. Prisoner's boat was attached to another which had passed through a lock, and was, therefore, out of sight when the theft was committed. The captain on board the first boat did not observe the theft. Prisoner said he was very sorry. He had had no fire for some time, and it was very cold. He did not know that he was doing any harm. Mr Moss said that, although he might be starving, he had no right to steal. The Bench gave him the option of a fine of £1, including costs, in default of which he would have to go to gaol for 14 days with hard labour.

## **78 25 July 1884**

**FATAL DROWNING ACCIDENT** Dr Iliffe, the district coroner, held an inquest at the Punch Bowl Inn, Nuneaton, on Monday, on the body of **Fanny Elizabeth Humphries**, the daughter of a boatman living at Eynsham, near Oxford. The evidence showed that the father of the deceased was in charge of two empty boats, which stayed at Nuneaton for the night. The deceased, who was nine years of age, was playing with a kitten, and while in the act of stepping from one boat to the other, she accidentally fell between them, and was not found until some time afterwards, life being quite

extinct when the body was pulled from the water. A verdict of "Accidental death" was recorded.

**79 28 November 1884**

SHOCKING INHUMANITY NEAR SANDBACH One day the other week, a most shameful act of cruelty was exhibited on the part of a person named **James Palin**, a boatman who resides near Malkin's Bank. On Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> inst, a man named Barrow, a mechanic, was going to the chemical works at Malkin's Bank when, as he passed the house of Palin, he heard children screaming. He entered the house and said, "Hulloa, what's up". No sooner had he said that than he got, to use his own words, "a blow on the jaw". To his astonishment he caught Palin in the act of kicking a girl under a sofa. The man Palin was summoned at the Sandbach Petty Sessions for the offence, but did not appear. PC White said he saw Palin in the house very drunk. He saw the girl which defendant had been kicking. She was bleeding in several places about the head and face, and her mother, who was in the house at the time, was also drunk. The magistrates inflicted a fine of 5s and costs.

**80 16 January 1885**

FATAL ACCIDENT Mr H C Yates, coroner, held an inquest at Church Lawton on Tuesday, on the body of a child named **John Morris**, son of **William Morris**, a canal boatman, that met with its death on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst by falling upon a coal box. A verdict that the child had died from congestion of the brain caused by accidentally falling on a coal box was registered.

**81 6 March 1885**

ALTRINCHAM AND BOWDEN

THEFT OF COALS AT BROADHEATH At the Altrincham Police Court on Wednesday, before Mr T Allen, **Joseph Webster**, boatman, was charged with stealing coal belonging to the Bridgewater Trustees at Broadheath on Tuesday night. The prisoner was seen by a watchman named William James Ackerley to take the coal from a heap and put it on a narrow boat. There had been many thefts of coal lately. This was confirmed by Mr Green, agent to the trustees. Prisoner was apprehended by PC Shaw, and in reply to the charge, he said that he did not remember it, but he saw no harm in taking a bit of coal. Prisoner was remanded until Saturday next.

**82 20 March 1885**

ALTRINCHAM PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Peter Walker**, boatman, was summoned for ill-treating a horse at Altrincham on the 24<sup>th</sup> February last. Inspector Greenwell, RSPCA, stated that about two o'clock in the afternoon of the day in question, he saw the defendant on the canal bank in charge of a brown gelding drawing a boat. He stopped and examined the animal. On the near shoulder he found a wound the size of a florin. It was bleeding, and the collar was saturated. He had the animal taken into the stable and the wound bathed. Defendant had come from Manchester that morning with 50 tons of manure. PC Shaw corroborated. Defendant was fined 20s and costs.

**83 10 April 1885**

CHESHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS Frederick Whittaker (10), indicted for stealing a mare, the property of **William Wignall**, a boatman, at Marston, Northwich, was acquitted.

**84 19 June 1885**

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING On Wednesday afternoon, a child three years of age named Cherrington met with a narrow escape from being drowned, about half a mile from Wheelock. It appears that the child was in charge of a bigger boy, and that when they had strolled as far as what is known as Sherwin's Bridge, the larger boy left the child near the canal. During the lad's absence, the infant fell into the canal, and would most certainly have been drowned had not a canal boat been coming along at the time. The boatman in charge pulled the little one out of the

water, and his wife took off the wet clothes, wrapped it up in a shawl, and brought it on to Wheelock. The child was unconscious for some time, but Dr Jack, who happened to be in the village at that moment, prescribed the necessary restoratives, and we hear that it is now recovering.

**85 28 August 1885**

STOCKPORT COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, YESTERDAY

WARRANT A case appeared on the charge sheet against **John Lally**, tramping boatman, for being drunk and disorderly in Marple on a recent date. As the defendant did not appear, the magistrates granted a warrant for his apprehension.

**86 11 September 1885**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CASE Mr Caleb Davies, school attendance officer, prosecuted in the following case :- **Peter Taylor**, boatman, Middlewich, fined 5s.

**87 18 September 1885**

DESERTED BY HER LOVER Mr T W Johnson, deputy coroner, held an inquest at the Navigation Inn, Woodley, on Friday afternoon, touching the death of Sarah E Mann (27), daughter of William Mann, wharfsman, Strines, whose body was recovered from the Peak Forest Canal at Woodley on Wednesday. William Mann said the deceased left his house of her own accord on Thursday week, and went to her brother's. He had accused her of being *enceinte*, and she did not deny it. She was rather low spirited. He did not see her alive again, but heard of her death on Wednesday night. **Noah Swindells**, boatman, said that at about midnight on Monday, he was on the Peak Forest Canal, and at Woodley swing bridge found a hat, an umbrella, a bag, a wool shawl and a parcel of clothing (produced) on the canal bank. He picked them up and took them to Romiley, where he informed the police of the discovery. Daniel Mann, 280 Mottram Road, Godley, drayman, stated that the deceased was his sister, and came to his house on Thursday week. She left last Monday night, without saying where she was going, but witness expected she was going back to her father's house. She spoke to him about her condition, and appeared very low spirited. She did not threaten to do anything to herself. Witness heard of her death on Wednesday at noon. On Monday, she received a letter signed "M E Dyson", and after reading it she appeared very much distressed, and sat for some hours without speaking. Sergeant Foden, of the Cheshire County Constabulary, stated that on Tuesday he examined the clothing etc of the deceased, with the object of gaining a clue to the owner, and in the satchel found three letters, two of which were sealed but unstamped, the other, stamped and addressed to the deceased, being open. On Tuesday night, he and two other persons dragged the canal, but without avail. Dragging was resumed on Wednesday by Constable McClean and others, and the body was then recovered. Constable McClean, also of the Cheshire County Constabulary, stated that, while dragging the canal on Wednesday afternoon, he hooked the body and had it conveyed to the Navigation Inn. He searched the clothes, and in the pocket found a purse containing 2s 5 1/2d, a thimble and a brooch. The only mark on the body was a discoloured bruise under the right elbow. At this point, the foreman of the jury referred to the grappling irons used by the police, and said they were not of the proper kind. He thought better ones should be supplied, as bodies might then be recovered quicker, for that was not the first case of drowning in the canal in that neighbourhood. The deputy coroner then read the three letters found in the deceased's bag, as he thought they would throw some light on the case. The first was to the deceased from M E Dyson, sister of the young man said to have been intimate with the deceased. It ran as follows :-  
*"Dear Sarah. Just a word to say. I have spoken to Willie about you, and I have asked him what he is going to do. He told me he thought it was not altogether his, and therefore he cannot marry you. I hope you got to Hyde all right last night. In haste ; yours etc. M E DYSON"*.  
The second letter was one of those found sealed, but unstamped. It was addressed to Miss Dyson, and read as follows :- *"Dear Lizzie. I received your letter this morning, and I am very much hurt to think he thinks it belongs to someone else, but he has made a very great mistake, but I have written*

*to him and told him so, so he can please himself what he does about it as it does not matter very much to me which way it is, as I have told you what I shall do, and I intend sticking to it. Ask him to let you look at it, and see what you think about it. Please to write and tell me soon. I shall never think any worse of you for I know that you cannot help his faults. Yours, S E MANN”.*

The third letter was to Dyson himself, as follows :- *“Dear friend. In writing to you, I want to know whose it is if it is not yours, as I am sure it belongs to no one else but you, and if you did to me as you promised to do, I would have explained all to you ; but I suppose your conscience would not let you. But I am willing to give in if you can tell me who it is it belongs to. It has taken you a long time to give me an answer. You got me turned out of both home and service, to do the best I can alone ; but if you do not marry me, you will have to abide by what comes, as your path shall be rough if it lies in my power to make it so. You can please yourself about marrying me, but please to let me know as soon as you can. S E MANN”.*

The Deputy Coroner said there was no doubt that the letter first read preyed upon the mind of the deceased, and she wrote the others intending to take them to the post, but changed her resolve, and went and threw herself in the canal. That drowning was the cause there could be no doubt, but the jury would have to determine what was the state of her mind when she jumped into the canal. Personally he felt convinced that her mind was unbalanced. Without hesitation, the jury returned a verdict of “Committed suicide whilst of unsound mind”.

## **88 18 September 1885**

### **THE SANITARY CONDITION OF SANDBACH AND ALSAGER**

**THE TREATMENT OF CONSUMPTION** Dr Fox, the medical officer of health to the Congleton Rural Sanitary Authority, submitted his yearly report at the yearly meeting of that body, held on Friday, in the course of which he made allusion to the Alsager sewer and the state of things at Booth Lane, near Sandbach. The report read as follows :-

During the year 1884, exactly the same number of deaths was recorded as in the previous year. It is remarkable in how many respects the vital statistics of the two years are found to correspond. Thus, in regard to number of births, the variation is only 7, or 445 in 1883 and 438 in the year 1884. And in both years the number of deaths, at all ages and from all causes, is 212. The birth rate is therefore 30.5 per 1000 ; and the death rate, as in the former year 16.8. In other respects the correspondence is remarkable. Thus in 1883 the number of infantile deaths is 40, the same in the latter year being 41, and the old age deaths number 91 in 1883, and 86 in 1884 ; in each case, the old age deaths being more than double those occurring in infancy. When the deaths from zymotic diseases are taken into account, the correspondence apparently ceases ; for, whereas in 1883 the deaths from this class of disease numbered only 9, in 1884 as many as 23 deaths are referred to diseases of this character. And yet of both years it may be said that infectious diseases have never assumed an epidemic form. During the year 1884 as many as 13 deaths have been occasioned by scarlet fever. The bulk of these occurred in the townships of Hassall Green and Elton. There is no doubt that the complaint was imported into Hassall Green by means of the close relation of the canal with this part of the district. Two out of four deaths in this township are members of one family, the head of which is a boatman. It is suspected that the house is overcrowded. But there can be no doubt that the complaint was imported from other towns, to and from which the family were constantly repassing, and from which towns the complaint is never entirely absent. Still, at Hassall Green, much valuable sanitary work has been done. Owing to representations made by the authority, the late Mr Wilbraham, who was the principal owner of property there, was induced to construct a system of sewerage, by which means much organic filth is diverted from pits, which lie near to the road and to houses, and is now consigned to land suitably situated ; and thereby much nuisance has been abated. Much stress has been laid upon the importance of keeping a strict watch upon parts where the district is brought into connection with other districts by means of the canal ; and the inspector under the new responsibility imposed upon him in this respect, may render essential service to the district, in being able promptly to deal with infected cases of infectious disease. In Elton, where three out of the 13 deaths from scarlet fever occurred, it is feared that

known insanitary conditions may have been a contributing cause to the mortality. There is a group of 50 houses in this portion of the district, which are entirely without a proper source of water supply, or the means of disposing of their sewage. What can be looked for but outbreaks of disease, marked by blood poisoning, amidst such a state of things? After most anxious consideration, it has appeared that this is a singularly placed locality, to which, for the accomplishment of sanitary arrangements, the 277<sup>th</sup> section of the Public Health Act is applicable. A reference to the Local Government Board on this point will possibly arise, with a view to the prevention of many houses being closed as unfit for human habitation.

Alsager is a township where the inhabitants from time to time make many complaints as to their sanitary conditions. It has, for the year 1884, a death rate of (?13.7) per 1000. Last year the death rate was 13.0. From repeated personal inspection, I have reason to believe that the system of sewerage is working well, and the source of water supply is beginning to be found adequate to the requirements of the township. It cannot be to the professional interest of Dr Crutchley to maintain as he does the untiring oversight of all sanitary operations, but I should be wanting in my sense of justice if I did not place upon record my opinion of how much the township is indebted to Dr Crutchley for the influential part that he has played in the promotion, if not inception, of all sanitary movements for the benefit of the township of Alsager. The subject which, from a consideration of the vital statistics of the year, should be of most interest to the authority is, I think, that as many deaths are recorded as due to one disease alone, namely consumption, as are due to the whole group of diseases classed under the zymotic or preventable order. There is this different feature in regard to deaths from consumption, that they occur amongst persons of middle age. Thus, the 23 deaths referred to the entire group of zymotic illnesses are, with two exceptions, deaths of infants, young children, or aged persons. But the 23 deaths, almost the identical number referred to consumption alone, are all of persons in the middle age period of life. What I am anxious to point out is that the operations of ordinary sanitary law may do much to influence advantageously this large mortality. If the country generally be taken, it will be seen that this has been the case ; for the returns of the Registrar General show that the mortality from consumption has been reduced from 2500 per million of the population to a little over 1800 in the last three years. In other words, about 18,000 per annum are now saved from this terrible disease. The conditions favouring the development of this disease are over crowding, or the re breathing of already breathed air ; dampness of soil, or the absence of drainage of the foundations of houses. It will be apparent that operations tending to a diminution of the number of sicknesses and deaths from this order will be a great economic benefit to the community. Consumption is always a lingering and disabling illness ; it is an incurable one ; and it removes people – bread winners – who can least be spared. It will be my object in the future, having regard to the disproportionate mortality from this complaint, to report always to the board such conditions for correction as may be favourable to its development. Outbreaks of infectious diseases have been investigated ; but no facts of interest, beyond such as have been alluded to, have arisen out of such investigations, or are now worthy of record.

A discussion upon the report then took place. The Chairman (Mr G W Latham) asked under what section of the Act Dr Fox proposed to remedy the state of things at Sandbach Station. Dr Fox replied under the section that enabled them to connect one portion of their district with another, and form a special drainage district. The Chairman enquired if Dr Fox thought there was any possibility of persuading the Sandbach Local Board to take over the district. Dr Fox should not like to say there was no possibility. He thought, from a conversation he had with a member of the board, that it was open to argument. He did not think the district would cost much, but would rather help to pay, as there were three very important works in it. The Clerk (Mr J Latham) said the subject had been mentioned, but never fully discussed. The Chairman said Dr Fox had told him the Local Government Board never consented to the formation of a special drainage district. Dr Fox replied that he had never yet succeeded in gaining such consent. There were a great deal of separate expenses incurred, and he thought it was on those grounds that they objected. The Clerk reminded the board that the railway company had objected to them allowing the sewage to flow down the line.