

**DERBY MERCURY**  
**1865 to 1880**

**1 April 12 1865**

SWADLINCOTE POLICE COURT, MARCH 30 **William Carlton** of Measham, a boatman, was summoned by acting Sergeant Stephenson for being drunk and riotous at Measham on the 17<sup>th</sup> February. The defendant pleaded not guilty. The case being proved by the complainant and the parish constable (Mr John Ball), the defendant was fined £1 including costs. Fourteen days' imprisonment in default.

**2 April 12 1865**

FATAL ACCIDENT AT MOIRA An inquest was held at Moira on Monday week, before J Gregory Esq, coroner, on the body of **Henry Humphreys**, five years old, son of **Daniel Humphreys**, boatman, Aynsham, Oxfordshire. On the Friday previous, the deceased was playing on the canal bank near to where his father's boats were moored, and, being missing, the canal was dragged and his body was brought up, he having fallen in the water whilst getting on to the boat. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death".

**3 April 26 1865**

SMALLEY PETTY SESSIONS, APRIL 17<sup>th</sup> **Fergus Simmons** and **George Walker**, boatmen, both of Loughborough, and Thomas Cook, coal dealer of Sandiacre, were brought up in custody of Police-constable Thompson, charged, the two former with stealing two tons 13 ½ cwt of coal from a boat at Sandiacre, and selling it to Cook ; and Cook for buying the same, well knowing it to have been stolen. It appeared from the evidence of Mr Henry Flude, coal merchant of Leicester, that he sent the two first prisoners to Ilkeston with his boat to fetch coal, and on their return they stayed at Sandiacre, and sold the coal in question to Cook. All three prisoners were committed for trial at the next Derbyshire Quarter Sessions.

**4 May 10 1865**

BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY **Henry Hall** was charged with assaulting Police-sergeant Thorpe. The prisoner is a boatman, and the sergeant, with the assistance of Police-constable Holland, having apprehended another boatman named **Conway** on a charge of felony, the prisoner attempted to rescue him, and assaulted both officers with a heavy stick. A severe struggle ensued, and both prisoners were, with the assistance of a militiaman, safely locked up. He was committed for one month with hard labour.

**5 August 9 1865**

BURTON-ON-TRENT

TOWN COMMISSIONERS MEETING The ordinary monthly meeting of this Board was held in the Town Office on Wednesday morning, Thomas Poyser Esq in the chair. The members present were Messrs Worthington, Grace, Gretton, Baxter, W Wardle, Finley, Ordish, Belcher, Stratton, Hodson, H Wardle, Upton and Townsend. The business of the Finance Committee having been disposed of, the reports of the various departments were laid before the Board. The Highways and Sewers Committee requested that immediate inquiry be made of the agent to the Marquis of Anglesey as to what terms he would let the dinghies near Shobnall, for the purpose of collecting water for flushing sewers and watering the streets. From the report of this department, it also appeared that complaints had been made to the Commissioners by certain boatmen of their inability to pass along the Bond End Canal for want of a sufficient supply of water to float their boats. The water was below the level of the shuttles placed in the side of the canal for flushing the sewers, such shuttles being placed in the canal by consent of the agent to the Marquis of Anglesey, under an agreement to pay 5s yearly for the use of each shuttle. Mr Belcher moved "That the Chairman and Mr Upton be appointed a deputation to wait upon the General Manager of the North Staffordshire

Railway Company at Stoke, respecting the want of water in the said canal”.

**6 October 18 1865**

STAFFORDSHIRE

BURTON PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY **Joseph Webster**, boatman, and **William Webster**, his son, were charged with stealing on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst at Barton Turn, a coat of the value of 2s, the property of Samuel Keeling. The younger prisoner pleaded guilty, and from the evidence of Miss Anne Hardy of Barton Turn, who saw the robbery, it was fully proved that the elder prisoner was guilty of the charge, and they were each sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

**7 January 31 1866**

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

**8 February 7 1866**

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

**9 February 21 1866**

BURTON PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY **Frederick Hartshorne**, boatman, was committed for trial to the sessions on the charge of stealing a coat, the property of William Genders of Alrewas, on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst.

**10 March 14 1866**

BURTON PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY **John Faulkner**, boatman, was brought up on three separate charges of horse stealing. The depositions of some seven or eight witnesses were taken, and the following is a summary of the facts elicited :- About nine o'clock on Monday morning, the police received information that a horse had been stolen from a field on the Branstone Road, the property of Mr Sydney Evershed. Inspector Williams and Police-constable Keates went in pursuit of the thief, and after tracing him through Burton and Wichnor, found him at the Royal Oak Inn, Alrewas, partaking of refreshment ; the pony he had just put up in the stable. Faulkner was taken into custody, and the pony brought back to Broughton. After some inquiries, it was ascertained that the prisoner had stolen a horse, the property of Mr Love of Ashley, from a meadow near the Burton Bridge, and had sold it to a man named Donnoffy at Alrewas. It also came to the knowledge of the police that the prisoner had stolen a bridle from the stable of Mr Forbes, Navigation Inn, Horninglow Wharf ; and after that proceeded through Burton on to the Lichfield Road, where he took a roan cob mare belonging to Mr Blaxley of the George Hotel, Burton-on-Trent, and sold it to a man named Green at Alrewas. Green afterwards resold it, and the animal was ultimately found in the possession of a man at Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham. The prisoner was committed for trial at the Staffordshire Assizes on all three charges. In the last named case, the prosecutor

believed that the animal had strayed ; and the police were not made aware of the loss until some days afterwards. In the other one, the owner concluded that his animal must have got into the Trent and been drowned. Luckily, however, Mr Evershed reported his loss immediately, or probably the thief would not have been so speedily captured.

### **11 January 23 1867**

**A YOUTH DROWNED AT MOIRA** On Tuesday an inquest was held at Moira before J Gregory Esq, coroner, upon Arthur Smith, deceased. George Shuttleworth said deceased was nearly 14, and a son of John Smith, a collier of Moira. On Sunday afternoon, he and John Parkes were on the ice of Barratt pool at Moira, when deceased came to them. They were sliding on the ice, which was about an inch and a half thick. Deceased went sliding along before them, when they called to him and told him to keep back, as he was going too far. Deceased did not take any notice, but kept going further, and was about 12 or 14 yards before them when all at once the ice broke and he went in. He came up a time or two before they could get to him. He went as close as he dared to deceased, and held a stick which Parker had, and deceased took hold of the stick and they tried to pull him out, but the ice kept breaking round them, so that they were obliged to leave loose of the stick. They then ran to Mrs Parker's for a rake, but when they returned, deceased was gone. **John Dash**, a boatman, said he went with another boatman named **Ricks** with a ladder to the pond, and got deceased out. He had then been in between one and two hours, and was quite dead. The ice at the place was no thicker than a penny, and the water was not above three feet deep. Verdict : "Accidental death".

### **12 January 23 1867**

**ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH POLICE COURT** **John Seymour**, late of Moira, boatman, was charged by Charles Green with doing damage to a boat shaft, his property, to the amount of 1s. Fined £1, including costs and damage.

### **13 February 13 1867**

**SMALLEY PETTY SESSIONS, FEBRUARY 11** **William Hall**, boatman, was charged by Edward Adams of Stanton-by-Dale with having, on Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> ult, stolen 17 ½ cwt of coal, the goods of George Crompton and others. Complainant, who is agent to the Stanton Ironworks, said that defendant had been in the habit of coming with his boat for cinders, and that he came to the works on the 3<sup>rd</sup> ult for that purpose. After the boat had been loaded, he was informed that the defendant had coal in it, and so he went and ordered it to be brought back, having seen for himself that there was coal in it. The man whom he saw in the boat told him he knew nothing of the coal, and that he should not bring it back. He (Mr Adams) then went to Mr Clarke, the book keeper, and asked him who the captain of the boat was, when he replied, "William Hall". While he was away Hall made his appearance and, with the assistance of his man, lifted the coal out of the boat. Hall begged his pardon, and told him he had not done anything of the sort before. The value of the coal would be 8s or 9s. Committed for trial at the assizes.

### **14 March 20 1867**

**ILKESTON PETTY SESSIONS, MARCH 14** **Richard Booth**, a boatman of Ilkeston, was charged with having, on the 20<sup>th</sup> ult, been drunk in Granby Street, Ilkeston, and assaulted Inspector Brady. Fined 5s and costs for each offence.

### **15 April 17 1867**

**BURTON-ON-TRENT** On Sunday morning, the body of an aged man named Elisha Turner was found in the canal near Shobnall. The deceased was a widower and occupied lodgings in Victoria Crescent. On Saturday afternoon he left his lodgings, and remarked that he should not be at home that night. He found his way to Johnson's beer house in Paget Street, Burton Extra, and remained there until a quarter past ten o'clock. Turner was not sober when he left, and it is supposed that he

got into the canal accidentally, for when his body was found by a boatman on the following morning, he had his walking stick in his hand, and his watch and other articles were safe upon his person. The body was removed to the Navigation Inn, where an inquest was held on Tuesday before Mr Richardson, coroner. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

**16 August 7 1867**

LEICESTERSHIRE

MOIRA

CHILD DROWNED On Wednesday afternoon, **Daniel Seymour**, a boy aged four years, son of **John Seymour**, boatman, was playing in the boat, which was being loaded in the canal at Moira, when by some means not known he fell overboard and was drowned. About half an hour after he was noticed playing about the cabin door, his cap was found floating on the water, and on a search being made he was found in the water, and was got out, but was quite dead.

**17 December 18 1867**

BURTON-ON-TRENT PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY **James Butt** and **Thomas Collins**, boatmen, were charged by **Mr Richard Glass**, Superintendent of the Trent and Mersey Canal, with offending against the statute by wilfully blocking up the lock at Fradley on the 17<sup>th</sup> ult, and then and there obstructing the traffic on the said canal. Fined 20s each and 10s 6d costs, in default one month's imprisonment.

**18 January 8 1868**

DERBYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

A WANDERING PIG **William Bramley**, boatman (on bail) was indicted for stealing, on the 16<sup>th</sup> December last, a pig, the property of Edward Berresford of Long Eaton. Mr Mellor prosecuted ; Mr Lawrence defended the prisoner. The prosecutor had on the 15<sup>th</sup> December two small pigs in his sty, but on the following day one of them escaped and went towards the canal. A gentleman named Clifton, who recognised the porker, chased it, but it escaped from him and went towards the canal bank, where the prisoner met it and took possession of it. On arriving at a lock, he showed it to the lock-keeper, telling him first that he had rescued it from a watery grave, and afterwards that he had bought it for 9s, and he left it with the lock-keeper to be returned to the owner, whenever he claimed it. The gist of the defence was that part of the prisoner's statement relating to the rescue of the pig from drowning was true. **Mr Thomas Whitehead**, who said "he was very nearly a gentleman now", but had been a boat owner for 30 years, gave the prisoner a good character, as did also another witness. The jury acquitted the prisoner.

**19 January 15 1868**

CASE OF STABBING IN THE MORLEDGE On Friday morning last, John Dunn, aged 22, who had only come out of gaol the previous day, was charged before the Derby Borough Magistrates at the Town Hall with cutting and wounding **John Stanger**, with intent to do grievous bodily harm. About one o'clock that morning, a police-constable on duty in the locality of the Morledge heard loud cries of murder just against the Cock Inn on Cockpit Hill ; on arriving at the spot he was told that an Irishman had stabbed a boatman, and he saw the boatman running after the prisoner ; the witness went down and gave the prisoner the meeting against the Castle and Falcon Vaults ; the boatman there gave the prisoner into custody on a charge of stabbing him, and he (the witness) brought him to the lock up ; the prisoner had blood upon one of his hands, and a knife with both blades open was also found, and that also bore traces of blood ; the boatman was bleeding from his left thigh, and his trousers were cut and covered with blood ; the prosecutor was taken to the Infirmary, and he (the witness) had been up and obtained a certificate from the house surgeon that morning.

Inspector Fearn said the prisoner was not a native of Derby, but he had been committed to prison here, once for six months and once for 18 months.

The prisoner, on being asked if he had anything to say why he should not be remanded, said he thought he was not legally in custody, as he did not have a knife in his hand.

Inspector Fearn said it could be proved that he had a knife in his hand previous to this occurrence, and that he was threatening a woman with it before stabbing the boatman.

Emma Lennard said about one o'clock that morning, she saw the prisoner against the Cock Inn on Cockpit Hill ; he had a knife in his hand, and he threatened to murder her if she did not go with him ; she was unwilling to go, and the prisoner repeated his threats, whereupon she cried out for help ; a boatman (the prosecutor) then came up, and told the prisoner he must do nothing of the sort ; the boatman went between her and the prisoner, and got stabbed.

On the application of the Chief Constable, the prisoner was remanded for a week.

## **20 January 29 1868**

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT, TUESDAY Reuben Grocock was charged with having opened his beer house in Erasmus Street at nine o'clock on Sunday morning, the 19<sup>th</sup> inst. Two policemen went to the defendant's house at the hour indicated, and just as they arrived at the back door, he let two men out ; in the house, they saw a half gallon jug full of ale, which appeared fresh drawn, some more in a quart jug, and more slopped about on the tap board. The defendant told them that the ale had been drawn overnight. Mr Leech, for the defendant, submitted that there was no case, as no proof had been brought that the house was open for the sale of beer. The men were boatmen, who had come from Sandiacre that morning, and he believed had a right to some refreshment, but the landlord refused to serve them. One man was called and substantiated this view of the case. The summons was dismissed.

## **21 February 5 1868**

BURTON-ON-TRENT PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY **Thomas Felthouse**, boatman of Burton-on-Trent, for stealing a lock from the premises of the Navigation Inn, Alrewas, on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult, the property of Richard Ingram, was sent to the house of correction for fourteen days.

## **22 February 12 1868**

THE CASE OF STABBING IN THE MORLEDGE John Dunn was brought up at the Town Hall on Friday morning, after having been several times remanded, charged with having feloniously stabbed **John Stanger**, a boatman, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm.

The Magistrates present were the Mayor, and J Renals, H Darby, T B Forman, G Gascoyne and John Bailey Esqrs.

The facts of the case have been already given.

The prisoner was committed for trial.

## **23 February 26 1868**

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

## **24 February 26 1868**

SUSPECTED MURDER IN OR NEAR DERBY About eleven o'clock yesterday (Tuesday) evening, a man coming along the Derby and Nottingham Canal in a boat observed something floating on the water at the back of Mr Greensmith's flour mill on the Nottingham Road, which on closer inspection turned out to be the nearly naked body of a man. The body was shortly afterwards taken out and conveyed to the dead house. There are many most unmistakeable marks of violence

on the body, and there is a cord drawn tightly round the neck, and part of a narrow woollen muffler. The clothing on the body consisted of part of a shirt which the boatman tore in trying to pull the body to the side ; but a wristband still remains on one wrist. There was also a pair of trousers which had been turned down some distance, indicating, perhaps, that an attempt had been made to pull them off. The wounds on the person of the deceased, which is greatly swollen and must have been immersed for several days, include a large gash just under the right ear ; another on the right groin, and several more cuts about the legs and arms ; besides which one thigh is dislocated. Whether these cuts have been inflicted by the man's own hand, or whether they have been caused by boats passing over him while immersed in the canal, it would at present be premature to hazard an opinion, but Mr S W Fearn has been called in to examine the deceased, and a coroner's inquest will most likely be held today (Wednesday), when he will probably state his opinion. The impression is, however, that the man has been murdered ; but, if he turns out to be the man whom Inspector Fearn believes he most resembles, it will be difficult to find a motive for the deed, as he would not be likely to have any great amount of money in his possession. Meantime, the police are zealously making all possible inquiries in order to find out who the unfortunate man is, and where he belongs to.

**25 April 1 1868**

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT, THURSDAY **Robert Bewley**, a boatman, charged with being drunk in Bag Lane at one o'clock this morning, admitted the offence, but said he was not in the habit of doing it. He said he was about to leave the town with his boat, and the Mayor discharged him with a reprimand.

**26 April 22 1868**

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT, SATURDAY **William Capewell**, a boatman, was charged with having been drunk and riotous on the Nottingham Road at half past eleven on Friday night. The prisoner admitted this charge, but said he knew nothing of having assaulted the constable who took him into custody, with which he was also charged. Police-constable Wallis said he found the prisoner lying in the road in front of the "Jolly Toper" public house ; he pulled him up, when the prisoner used very bad language and kicked him several times. The prisoner said he was very drunk and did not know what he did. Fined 5s and expenses for the first offence, and 10s and expenses for the second ; altogether 21s.

**27 May 6 1868**

BELPER PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY **Ferdinand Walker**, boatman, was charged by Jacob Stone, collier, with assaulting him at Heage. The complainant said that the defendant struck him on the back of the head with a stone, knocking him down. The defendant denied the charge, stating that he had two rounds with the complainant, and that he was struck by him with a brass instrument. Fined 10s and costs, or 21 days' imprisonment.

**28 August 5 1868**

COUNTY HALL, DERBY, FRIDAY JULY 31

CHARGE OF ASSAULT **John Turner**, boatman, Sawley, was summoned by James Ward of the same place for an assault on the 14<sup>th</sup> July. This case had been twice previously adjourned in consequence of the non attendance of the parties concerned. Today, both the complainant and the defendant appeared, and Mr J B Smith, for the defendant, stated that a compromise had been effected between them, the defendant having paid the sum of 15s. Consequently, he could not offer any defence, as the assault had been virtually admitted, and he asked the magistrates to allow the case to be settled. The complainant denied that he had received any money, but admitted that his wife had. He wished to have the case then heard, and proceeded to state that on the day in question he and the defendant had some words with each other at Trent Lock, which resulted in the defendant striking him on the head. The Bench, however, said that as he had compromised the affair, he had

no case, and they should dismiss it, the complainant to pay the costs, which amounted to a considerable sum, the result of persons compromising cases between themselves without the consent of the magistrates.

### **29 August 12 1868**

BURTON-ON-TRENT PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY **William Parkins**, boatman, for striking William Hudson, county court bailiff, and pushing him into the canal when struggling for possession of a boat under distraint, on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult, was fined 5s and 14s costs ; in default 14 days' imprisonment.

### **30 October 14 1868**

ILKESTON On Tuesday, the inhabitants of Ilkeston were thrown into a state of excitement by a report that a girl had drowned herself in the Nutbrook Canal at Kirk Hallam, about a mile and a half from Ilkeston. On making inquiry, we learned that the unfortunate girl was a domestic servant employed by Mr John Taylor of the Manor House, Ilkeston, at his farm at Little Hallam. About a quarter past five o'clock that morning, Mr William Hancock's son, who resides close to the canal bridge, heard a scream as if some person was in the water. He at once went on the bridge, and saw her struggling in the water. He then instantly called to his father, who came downstairs partly dressed, and immediately jumped into the water to rescue the drowning girl. The hair of her head being the only part that was visible, Mr Hancock seized hold of it, and got her out of the water, when he heard a gurgling noise in her throat, but all efforts to restore animation proved fruitless. She is only 17 years of age, and her parents reside at Swanwick, near Alfreton. On Wednesday afternoon, Mr Coroner Whiston held an inquest on the body at the house of Mr M Fletcher, the Havelock Inn, Ilkeston. The jury returned a verdict, "That deceased was found drowned", there being no evidence to show how she got in the water.

### **31 October 14 1868**

ILKESTON PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY **William Roe, Thomas Beardoe, Charles Potter** and **George Wall** were charged with stealing a quantity of iron from the Stanton Ironworks, belonging to J G Crompton Esq and others. Mr G B Walker of Belper and Ilkeston appeared for the prisoners, who are boatmen. James Gray said : I am inspector of police at Ilkeston. On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> inst about twelve o'clock, I found a boat on the canal near Barker's Bridge, Ilkeston. Charles Potter was in charge of it, and was the only person on board. I, in company with police-constables Colton and Baker, searched the boat. We found about 327 lbs of iron at the bottom. I brought it away. We asked Potter how he accounted for the iron being in the boat, when he said he did not know it was there. We brought both Potter and the iron to the station. We afterwards apprehended the prisoners William Roe, Thomas Beardoe and George Wall, and brought them to the station. We found them all in bed at separate houses. I told William Roe we had got some iron from Barker's Bridge, and charged him with stealing it. He replied he knew nothing at all about it, as well as Beardoe and Wall, the latter adding that he did not know there was any in it. On Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, I obtained 1 cwt 2 qrs 6 lbs weight of iron of the same sort from Joseph York, South Street, Ilkeston. I told Roe and Beardoe that they were further charged with stealing a quantity of other metal, and selling it to Mr York. At first they said they had not sold any. In a few minutes after, they said, "We picked a quantity of iron scraps out of the boat and sold it to Mr York. We did this when we were unloading the boat". I asked them all who was the captain. Roe and Beardoe replied that they were partners in the boat, and that Wall and Potter were their labourers. Police-constable Colton corroborated this statement. Edward Adams said : I am manager of the furnace at Stanton Ironworks. I know Roe and Beardoe by sight. I saw them at our works on last Friday afternoon with a boat which they had brought for a load of cinders for the Erewash Canal Company. They had been fetching them since the 21<sup>st</sup> ult, and have fetched seven boat loads. The iron produced is what comes out of the furnace when the iron is running, and they lie on the side of the tip where they fetch the cinders from. It would be intermixed with the cinders. Roe and Beardoe would have

to break up the cinders before they took them away. They began to load about half past four in the afternoon. It is quite understood amongst the boatmen that they have no right to take away the iron. It would not be possible to mistake such pieces of iron as those produced for cinders. There is nothing in the iron itself which enables me to say whether it comes from our works or not, but the three cornered piece has been lifted out with the flat stake produced, and bears the mark of the stake, made while the iron was hot, and by that means I can identify the piece of iron. John Stevenson said : I am a labourer at Stanton Ironworks. It is my business to examine the cinders that come from the furnace, and to separate the iron when I find any. Last Friday night, I saw Roe and Beardoe come in with their boat. I found the next morning that they had taken some cinders which I had not examined. They might know whether I had examined them or not, except such as may have happened to be broken when tipped down the bank. They must have broken the cinder from such pieces of iron as those produced. Such pieces would be attached to the bottom of a cinder and so might escape my notice till the cinders were broken up. The persons loading cinders could not mistake the pieces of iron produced for cinders. A cinder the same size would weigh nothing like one of the pieces of iron produced. I can speak to the three cornered piece of iron as one coming from the works. Joseph York said : I am a dealer in rags, bones and old iron, and live at South Street, Ilkeston. Roe and Beardoe live at Ilkeston Pottery. A fortnight or three weeks ago, I bought 1 ½ cwt of stuff like that produced from the prisoners Roe and Beardoe. I gave them 2s for it. They put it out of their boat on the bank. Inspector Grey, I believe, fetched it away from my house. The stuff produced is something like it. Potter and Wall were discharged, and Roe and Beardoe were committed for trial at the sessions.

### **32 July 21 1869**

At the Borough Sessions on Wednesday last, James Murphy, 20, labourer, George Watts, 21, labourer, and **Edward Murphy**, 18, boatman, were charged with breaking and entering the dwelling house of Peter Brennen and stealing three calico shirts, his property. The prisoners all pleaded not guilty. After the evidence had been gone through, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty, there being great doubt in the case, and the prisoners were discharged with a caution.

### **33 July 28 1869**

ILKESTON PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY **George Wall**, a boatman of Ilkeston, was brought up in custody of Inspector Gray, charged with stealing 70 trusses of hay. John Brearley said : I left my farm at Lady Day 1868, and I carted the hay to the canal at Horninglow, and then loaded it on to the boat. When they got to Ilkeston, there were 60 or 70 trusses missing. The prisoner, who is an old man, pleaded guilty, and was sent to prison for one month.

### **34 August 11 1869**

BELPER PETTY SESSIONS, AUGUST 4 **George Kenney** and **Luke Kenney** of Crich, boatmen, were summoned by George Dunn, surveyor of the Cromford and Belper Turnpike Road, for unlawfully releasing an ass then seized for the purpose of being impounded in consequence of having been found straying on the Cromford Turnpike Road. Convicted in a penalty of 2s 6d each and costs. Allowed 14 days to pay in, in default to be committed to gaol for seven days.

### **35 October 27 1869**

ALFRETON PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY Ferdinand Walker, Heage, was charged with having, on the 5<sup>th</sup> last, trespassed in search of game in a plantation at Golden Valley near Riddings. Fined £1 and 17s 6d costs.

**Bandy Frank**, a boatman, was charged with the same offence. He did not appear. The same order was made.

### **36 January 5 1870**

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH PETTY SESSIONS **Joseph Reed**, late of Ashby, boatman, was charged

with stealing, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December at Ashby, a beast's heart, the property of Mr William Robinson, butcher, and sentenced to fourteen days' hard labour.

### **37 March 30 1870**

#### **ILKESTON**

**INQUEST** An inquest took place at the Three Horse Shoes, Ilkeston, before Mr Whiston, coroner, on Saturday, on the body of Jane, wife of John Burkinshaw of Ilkeston, who was found drowned in the Nutbrook Canal on the morning of the same day. The deceased, who was sixty three years of age, had been ailing for some time past, and was missed by her husband at three o'clock in the morning, when he awoke. Her shawl was found on the canal bank at four o'clock by a boatman, and it led to the discovery of her body in the water. Verdict : "That the deceased drowned herself while in a state of unsound mind".

### **38 May 4 1870**

**COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY** Frederick **Turner** was charged with having, on the 15<sup>th</sup> April at Lawley, been on land in pursuit of game, and having in his possession a gun, which he had been using in this pursuit. Police-sergeant Cupit said that he met the defendant and another person on the high road at Sawley, about four o'clock in the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> April. He had heard two shots fired about two hours before. The defendant had a gun in his possession. He stopped, and insisted upon searching him. The defendant refused to be searched, and a struggle took place, during which witness was struck on the forehead with the gunbarrel. The gun was loaded at the time he found it. Mr Briggs, who appeared for the defendant, denied that the latter had been in pursuit of game, and said in explanation of the circumstance of the defendant being found in the road with a gun, that the defendant's brother was a boatman, and that the defendant had gone along with another person to watch some boats that were moored in the canal, because a great many things had been stolen from the boats. The gun mentioned had been lying in the boat for about six weeks, having been loaded all the time. The men brought the gun home because it required repairing. They went to the boats at that early hour because "fly" boats were accustomed to pass then, and they believed that the goods had been stolen by persons in these fly boats. Witnesses were called by the defendant, and they repeated the statements made by Mr Briggs. The Bench said the case had been properly brought before them, but where there was a doubt they never strained a point, and as there had been a defence set up more or less creditable, they would dismiss the case. The case against John Turner, who was also charged with the same offence, was withdrawn.

### **39 September 21 1870**

**COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY** **Thomas Bosworth**, a boatman, charged with stealing straw, the property of Mr Smith, at Sawley, was remanded ; bail accepted.

### **40 September 28 1870**

**COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY** A boatman named **Thomas Bosworth** was brought up on remand, charged with stealing 8 lbs of straw, the property of Mr Smith of Long Eaton. Sergeant Cupitt and Police-constable Harper, at five o'clock in the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> inst, saw the prisoner come from behind Mr Smith's stackyard with the straw in his possession. On being charged with stealing it, he denied it, and said he brought it from the boat of which he had charge, at Trent Lock. They followed him and found that he had taken it to his pig sty, which is near the stackyard. Mr Briggs defended the prisoner. The Bench committed the prisoner to the sessions.

### **41 November 2 1870**

**CHARGE OF PERJURY** At the County Police Court on Friday, a boatman named **William Lester** was remanded for a week on a charge of having committed wilful and corrupt perjury at the recent County Sessions. At those Sessions, a man named **Bosworth** was accused of stealing a quantity of straw from the stack of Mr Smith, farmer, Sawley, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September. The defence that was

set up was an alibi, and Lester, who was one of the witnesses on the prisoner's side, swore that Bosworth passed through Beeston Lock on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, and had given him the toll ticket he had then received. It had been ascertained, however, that he passed through on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and that the figures had been altered. There were other discrepancies in the evidence which justified the prisoner's being apprehended and remanded on the charge of perjury.

#### **42 November 9 1870**

THE CHARGE OF PERJURY **William Lester**, a boatman, was brought up at the County Hall on Friday, on remand, charged with having committed wilful and corrupt perjury at the late County Sessions. Mr Briggs appeared for the prisoner. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, a boatman named **Thomas Bosworth** was committed to the Sessions from the County Hall on a charge of stealing a quantity of straw, the property of Mr J B Smith, farmer, Sawley. The evidence of Inspector Cupit and Police-constable Harpur at that time taken was to the effect that Bosworth, who lives near to Mr Smith's house at Sawley, was seen by them early on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> of September in Mr Smith's stackyard, and afterwards to come out with some straw. On examining the stack, they found all the straw damp with dew except a portion from which some of the straw had recently been taken, and they traced the straw to the prisoner's pigsty. On entering the prisoner's house, they found him and accused him of the theft, which he strongly denied. The prisoner Lester was a witness in his defence, and swore that the straw had been taken from the boat of which he and Bosworth had charge, and that Bosworth was never out of his sight. At the Sessions he made the same statements, and also said that he and Bosworth left Derby in the same boat on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, and that they went down to Trent Lock that day, but as there was not sufficient water to carry them further, they remained there until Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup>. He produced a "permit" or pass, which had not been produced before the magistrates, stating that it was granted to him by the lock-keeper at Beeston on Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup>, but there was a suspicion that the date had been tampered with. The evidence of several witnesses was taken to elicit the above facts, and it was further proved by the statement of the Trent lock-keeper that there was no shortness of water to prevent a boat going from Derby to Nottingham on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September. The prisoner was again remanded on bail for another week in order that further evidence might be adduced.

#### **43 November 16 1870**

THE PERJURY CASE – COMMITTAL OF THE PRISONER **William Lester**, the man charged with having committed wilful and corrupt perjury at the last Quarter Sessions in a case in which a boatman named **Thomas Bosworth** was charged with stealing straw at Sawley, was on Friday last committed by the Magistrates at the County Hall to take his trial at the Assizes. Bail was refused.

#### **44 December 14 1870**

DERBYSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

ROBBERY FROM THE PERSON **David Hulme alias Backhouse** (28), boatman, was charged with stealing the sum of £1 15s from the person of James Payne at Bugsworth on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July. Mr Kirkham prosecuted ; the prisoner was not defended. The prosecutor, whilst in the Navigation Inn, Bugsworth, where he had been drinking on the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, fell asleep, and on awaking found his money was gone, and the prisoner, who was in the house before he fell asleep, was not to be seen. When apprehended, the prisoner admitted that he had helped to spend the money. A verdict of Guilty of receiving the money was returned, and the prisoner, who pleaded guilty to a previous conviction, was sentenced to 15 calendar months' imprisonment with hard labour.

#### **45 December 21 1870**

DERBYSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

ALLEGED PERJURY AT DERBY **William Lester** (36), boatman, was charged with committing wilful and corrupt perjury at the County Hall, Derby, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September and on the 19<sup>th</sup> of

October. Mr Lawrance conducted the prosecution, and Mr Bristowe the defence. It may here be briefly stated that on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September two policemen saw a man coming from a stack belonging to Mr J B Smith, farmer, Sawley, with some straw in his possession. They followed him to his own house and charged him with the offence. His name was **Thomas Bosworth**, a boatman in the employ of Mr Byatt. He was taken into custody and brought before the county magistrates at Derby on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, when the prisoner Lester, also in Mr Byatt's employ, but under Bosworth in the boat of which the latter was captain, swore in Bosworth's defence that Bosworth was never out of his sight from Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> till Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> (the morning of the alleged robbery) ; that he and Bosworth left Derby in the same boat on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of September ; and that they went down to Trent Lock that day, but owing to an insufficiency of water to carry them further, they remained there until Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup>, and that Bosworth then left the boat at four o'clock in the morning with straw which he (Lester) gave him from the bottom of the boat, and went to his own house at Sawley. He also produced a "permit" or pass from the lock-keeper at Beeston, purporting to have been delivered to him on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, but which proved to have been given him on the 12<sup>th</sup>, which date had been altered to the 15<sup>th</sup>. Bosworth was tried at the Quarter Sessions, when Lester again swore to an alibi, and made similar statements as he had done before the magistrates. Bosworth was then acquitted, chiefly in consequence of Lester's evidence. After the learned counsel had addressed the jury, his Lordship, in summing up, said he had a very cloudy apprehension of the dates involved in the case. The jury found the prisoner "Not Guilty", a verdict which was received with clapping of hands by a few persons. This outburst of enthusiasm was at once suppressed. A similar verdict was returned relative to the second charge laid against the prisoner.

**46 June 7 1871**

COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY **John Bear** was summoned, but did not appear, for having been drunk and riotous at Sawley on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May. The defendant, who is a boatman, was in the act of throwing himself into the water at the lock when a policeman fortunately laid hold of him and thus saved his life. A fine of 10s and costs was inflicted.

**47 June 14 1871**

COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY **Charles Wall** was summoned for assaulting an old boatman named **William Hill** at Chellaston on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May. Mr W Briggs appeared on behalf of the defendant, who is also a boatman. The complainant alleged that the defendant, after striking a man named Mycock, struck him (the complainant), knocking him on a heap of plaster, and causing him to receive such injuries as to necessitate his being attended to by a medical man. The dispute between the men had arisen in consequence of the loading of the boats of the respective parties. The Bench were of opinion that the injuries to the old man were accidentally received, and dismissed the case. A charge of the defendant having assaulted another boatman named Hill was also dismissed.

**48 June 21 1871**

BURTON-ON-TRENT PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY **William Hutchinson**, boatman, who had been arrested by Sergeant Gilbrede at Wharf Road, London, was charged with neglecting his family, and allowing them to become chargeable to Burton Union. It appeared that the prisoner's family had been maintained at his sister's house since his absconding from home, and he had now and then sent remittances towards the cost of the same. He was £4 10s in her debt, and while the family had been dependent upon the parish, they had incurred an expense to the union of £1 9s 6d. The prisoner was sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

**49 June 28 1871**

COUNTY POLICE COURT **Joseph Turner, James Wall and Joseph Smith**, boatmen, were summoned at the instance of Mr Gilbert Murray, steward to the Earl of Harrington, for doing wilful

damage to the Trent at Sawley, by getting gravel on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May. Mr Flint appeared for the prosecution and Mr Briggs for the defence. Mr Briggs submitted that the Bench had no jurisdiction in the case, inasmuch as the men were simply carrying out the orders of a man named Turner, who received his instructions from the engineer of the Trent Navigation Company, by virtue of the Trent Navigation Act passed in 1838, the 34<sup>th</sup> section of which provided that the servants, deputies or agents of the company should at any time cleanse, scour, deepen or contract and keep in proper order by all necessary and proper works the navigation so as to enable vessels usually navigating therein to pass along, and by which the company were empowered to remove all earth, gravel, stones or other impediments in the navigation. For the prosecution, it was submitted that the above order was invalid, inasmuch as the engineer alluded to being dead its authenticity was not proved, and that the defendants had got out the gravel from the side of the Trent where it was not navigated, and had sold several tons of gravel to the Midland Railway Company at the rate of 9d per ton. The elder Turner, who it was alleged had received permission to get the gravel, had several times been prosecuted for getting the gravel, and on the last occasion had been let off payment of costs on signing an agreement not to repeat the act. Mr Briggs called Turner for the defence, who affirmed that he had had authority from the Trent Navigation Company for over 40 years to get gravel, and that the defendants were acting by his instructions in obtaining the gravel on the day in question. In cross-examination, he admitted that the two Turners (the defendants), his sons, were in partnership with him, and that he had been twice before the magistrates and the County Court for getting gravel from the Trent. The Bench fined the defendants Turner each 1s and costs, but as the other defendants were not in partnership with the man from whom they received instructions, the magistrates thought the presence of Mr Hopkins, the present engineer of the company, was necessary in order that he might give evidence respecting the authority, and the case was adjourned for a week.

## **50 August 2 1871**

### **LOUGHBOROUGH**

**FATAL AFFRAY NEAR LOUGHBOROUGH – VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER** On Tuesday, an inquest was held at Mountsorrel, before Mr Gregory, coroner, on the body of a boatman named **James Draper**, 45 years of age. From the evidence of two boatmen, it appears that deceased, with a man named **William Burbidge**, were in a boat returning from Leicester to Mountsorrel on Sunday morning, and got rather drunk on the way as they had a bottle and spirits with them, and having quarrelled about something, on getting to Birstall lock, they got out of the boat. A fight commenced, but the disputants were separated and got into the boat again. All along the way to Mountsorrel, they had frequent scuffles, but nothing serious seemed to occur. Both men were somewhat bruised, and had blood on their shirts. Deceased slept on Sunday night in the boat with some other men, and did not complain of any injuries. One of his companions, on awakening next morning, found Draper lying with his face downwards and groaning heavily. He tried to arouse him, but his efforts were futile. After several other attempts to arouse him, he went and fetched another man, but by the time they returned, Draper was dead. On a *post mortem* examination of the body, some severe bruises were observed on the head and ribs, and large clots of blood were found upon the brain. Dr Paulson and Mr S Wright, who made the examination, said that the cause of death was the presence of these clots of blood upon the brain. The jury returned a verdict of “Manslaughter” against William Burbidge. On Wednesday, Burbidge was also committed for trial by the sitting magistrates of Loughborough.

## **51 August 16 1871**

**COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY** **Joseph Turner**, boatman of Sawley, was charged with committing wilful damage by removing a quantity of gravel, the property of Mrs Sutton, at Shardlow on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July. The damage was laid at £4 10s. Mr W Briggs appeared for the defendant. Police-constable Billings saw the defendant, about two o'clock on the morning in question, getting gravel from the bank of the river Trent, at a part which belongs to Mrs Sutton.

Between the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July and the 31<sup>st</sup>, the bank underneath which the defendant had taken the gravel gave way, and fell into the river. The defendant, who is employed by the Trent Navigation Company, said he had only removed gravel from the river which was an obstruction. He was fined 1s, and ordered to pay the amount of damage and costs.

## **52 December 13 1871**

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

## **53 January 24 1872**

BURTON-ON-TRENT

A GAMEKEEPER DROWNED AT FRADLEY – HEARTLESS CONDUCT OF A BOATMAN  
David Holt, gamekeeper for Mr R Ratcliff, Walton Hall, was drowned in the canal at Fradley Junction on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. It appears that Holt, after having three pints of ale at the house of Charles Bailey, the Swan Inn, left for home the worse for liquor, and in a few minutes afterwards was seen by a lad named Walter Dagley of Fradley, and **Edward Till**, a boatman on his way from Nottingham to Preston Brook, splashing about in the canal about thirty yards from Bailey's. Till procured a light, and was called upon by Dagley to assist in getting Holt out of the water, but he refused, telling Dagley to fetch his master, Thomas Bateman, toll collector at the junction. The aid of Bateman, and of Messrs Brawn, Prince and Green, was promptly secured, and the body recovered, but life was found to be quite extinct. Holt left the house at about three minutes to ten o'clock, and was drowned before twenty minutes past. It was the general opinion that had Till gone to the old man's assistance when desired to do so by Dagley, his life would have been saved. Holt was 62 years of age, and leaves a large family. An inquest was held upon the body on Wednesday before Mr E Hooper, coroner, at Alrewas, when the jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

## **54 February 28 1872**

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT Hannah Swinton was charged with stealing a silver watch, a gold chain and gold locket, the property of Benjamin Pym, landlord of the White Bear public house, Exeter Street. It appeared from a statement made by Detective Spibey that a woman went to the White Bear and told such a pitiable tale about her seeking for her husband that she was there given a night's lodging. The next morning she decamped, and took the train for Ripley from the Nottingham Road station. In the train, a man named Robertson saw prisoner pull out the watch and look at it. The landlady at a public house at Ripley also saw her with the gold chain in her hand. Spibey apprehended prisoner at Kirkby, Nottinghamshire, on Wednesday, when she said that "Big Ben" meaning **Thompson**, a boatman, gave her the watch. Prisoner, who is an old offender, was remanded for a week.

## **55 March 8 1872**

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT Hannah Swinton, a young woman, on remand, was charged with stealing a watch and chain, the property of Mrs Pym, landlady of the White Bear

public house, Exeter Street. On the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> ult, the prisoner went to the house in question and said her husband was a boatman but that she was destitute and wanting lodgings. Mrs Pym had compassion on her and allowed her to stay there all night. Prisoner said her husband's name was **Thompson**. Thompson was sent for and came to the house, and on his arrival he began quarrelling with the prisoner. He afterwards went away, and the prisoner quitted the house on the following morning, and the watch and guard were missed from a room upstairs. Shortly after she had decamped, it was ascertained that she had gone by a Ripley train, and had frequently exposed a watch whilst she was in the train. She was subsequently apprehended at Kirkby, Nottinghamshire, but neither the watch nor the guard had been found. In the absence of sufficient evidence, the prisoner was discharged. She has been several times convicted of various offences.

**56 August 7 1872**

ILKESTON An inquest was held last week at the Three Horse Shoes Inn, Derby Road, before Mr Whiston, coroner, touching the death of **William Davies**, a boatman of Kegworth. As it appeared that deceased had died suddenly, the jury returned a verdict accordingly.

**57 August 14 1872**

TWO ACQUITTALS FOR MURDER On Wednesday at the Leeds Assizes, **John Dearon**, aged 60, a boatman, was tried for the wilful murder of his wife, by shooting her through the head with a six barrelled revolver. The defence set up was that the pistol had exploded accidentally. The jury took this view, and returned a verdict of "Not Guilty".

Edward Byons, a labourer charged with murdering his mother at Skipton, was found "Not Guilty" on the ground of insanity.

**58 August 28 1872**

BURTON-ON-TRENT PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY **John Bratton**, boatman of Alrewas, charged by Police-constable Devey with being drunk in the Shobnall Road on the previous day, was fined 5s and 8s 4d costs.

**59 October 23 1872**

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

**60 November 6 1872**

COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY **Henry Upton**, boatman, was summoned for assaulting Henry Brown and Joseph White. The men live at Spondon, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult the defendant was wheeling night soil. The complainants remarked upon its offensive smell, whereupon he threw some of it upon them. Fined 2s 6d and costs.

**61 November 13 1872**

BURTON-ON-TRENT

ACCIDENTS **Samuel Till**, boatman of Scropton, near Derby, was admitted into the Infirmary on Saturday. Whilst the boat of which he had charge was at Horninglow on Saturday, he started to walk along the plank stretching from the stern to the bow, but before he had gone along the whole distance, he slipped and fell amongst some Mountsorrel stones with which the boat was loaded. It

was at once seen he was seriously injured, and he was therefore brought to the Infirmary. It was then ascertained that he was suffering from a compound fracture of the right leg.

### **62 November 20 1872**

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

### **63 January 15 1873**

**ILKESTON** On the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, an inquest was held by Mr Whiston, coroner, at the Railway Hotel, Station Road, Ilkeston, in the occupation of Mr Isaac Parkin, on the body of **Mary**, wife of **John Draper**, boatman. Deceased was 52 years of age, and died on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. Verdict : "Exhaustion".

### **64 January 29 1873**

**ILKESTON** On Monday an inquest was held at the Bull's Head, Little Hallam, near Ilkeston, before Mr Whiston, coroner, on the body of a boatman named **John Pepper** of Sutton Bonnington. It appeared from the evidence that on Friday night, deceased was with a wide boat in the Nutbrook Canal, Little Hallam. He had left the boat to open the lock doors to let the boat into the lock. Being a frosty night, he slipped and fell into the canal. A boy who had charge of the horse drawing the boat called out to another boatman in the boat, and told him what had taken place. The boatman immediately left the boat and went to deceased's assistance. He laid hold of him and tried to pull him out of the canal, but felt that he could not do so as quickly as he had thought. Unfortunately, the horse, a restive one, started off. The result was that deceased was jammed between the boat and the lock wall. He cried, "Oh, oh", and sank. The body was recovered as soon as possible, life being, of course, extinct. Verdict : "Accidental death".

### **65 July 9 1873**

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

**66 August 20 1873**

**THE MURDER BY POACHERS IN LEICESTERSHIRE** The adjourned inquest on the body of Thomas Monk, farm bailiff to Colonel Sir Henry St John Halford Bart, Wistow Hall, Leicestershire, who was killed in an affray with poachers on the morning of Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup> ult, was resumed on Friday in the servants' hall at Wistow Hall by Mr E M Clarke, coroner for the Framland district, in the place of Mr John Gregory, the Leicester coroner, who died the previous day. Mr Blunt watched the case on behalf of Sir Henry Halford. The jury having viewed the body which, owing to the death of Coroner Gregory had, according to law, been exhumed and lay in Wistow Church, the evidence given on the former inquiry was necessarily retaken, after which John Monk, son of the deceased, who was seriously injured in the affray, was called. He still appeared very weak, and had his head bandaged. It seemed from his statement that shortly before four o'clock on the morning in question, he heard the report of guns. He got up, and seeing two men, called his father, who lived in the same house, and Enor (Enos?) Atkinson, the head gardener. His double barrellled gun, which was loaded with No 4 shot, he gave to the deceased, and the other two armed themselves with flails. Still hearing the reports of guns, they went in search of the poachers, and saw four men in a field near to the canal side. They pursued them for a little time, when the poachers turned back over a fence and began to throw stones. Two of them had guns, and on one of them pointing his gun at John Monk, the other said, "Put it into the -----". They however retreated, but after crossing the canal bridge, returned, throwing stones and coming close up to them, deceased calling to his companions to, "Go into them", immediately after which John Monk heard a shot, and on looking round saw deceased fall, and a man with a gun pointed towards the deceased. This man had his own gun and deceased's gun, which he passed on to another, who then struck at John Monk with the butt and of it, and felled him. As he lay on the ground, the poachers also beat him about the head and legs, and at length asked him if he had had enough. After which one of them went up to deceased as he lay on the ground and beat him several times about the head, fracturing his skull, causing, according to the medical testimony, injuries sufficient to cause death, independently of the gunshot wound. The poachers then left, and John Monk, being unable to stand, crept to his father, and found that he had been shot in the right groin. They were afterwards removed, and Thomas Monk expired about noon the same day. Enos Atkinson was also much hurt in the affray. In the field was subsequently found a billycock hat belonging to the poachers, and the broken stock of the deceased's gun. **John Woodhouse**, a canal boatman who was passing his boat through the lock close to, stated that he saw the poachers throw down their bags on the canal bridge, and then return to stone the keepers. The tallest poacher levelled his gun at the keepers, and soon he heard a gun go off. He then noticed that two of the keepers were down, and three of the poachers were "beating them with guns and other instruments". The third keeper was running across the field pursued by a poacher, who threw a gunstock at him. He slipped down, when the poacher, using both hands, beat him about the head with another gun which he had, after which they returned to the bridge, picked up their bags on the bridge, and went away. On being censured by the Coroner and jury for not rendering assistance to the keepers, the witness curtly replied that he had enough to look after his own boats without looking after other people's business, for which he was not paid. Police-constable Grainger produced two broken gunstocks and some stones found near the scene of the affray, and deceased's flail, hid afterwards by the poachers in some rushes as they crossed a brook. The barrel of deceased's gun had not been found. The 19 shots extracted from deceased were proved to be No 5 shot, whereas deceased's gun was loaded with No 4 shot. After being shortly addressed by the Coroner, the jury returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against prisoners not yet in custody", and considered the boatman highly culpable for his inhumanity.

**67 April 8 1874**

**DERBY COUNTY POLICE COURT, THURSDAY** **Robert Bancroft**, boatman, in his absence, was charged with allowing a dog to be at large, contrary to regulations of the magistrates, and was fined 2s 6d and costs.

## 68 April 29 1874

INQUESTS On Friday at Borrowash, on the body of **James Phesant**, a boatman, who was drowned the previous day by falling into the Borrowash Lock. An attempt was made to rescue the deceased, but it failed owing to his cap only being seized whilst the deceased was in the act of sinking. Verdict : "Accidentally drowned".

## 69 July 8 1874

DERBYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

THURSDAY

STEALING COAL AT ILKESTON **Thomas Jones** (on bail) and **John Rigley** (28), boatmen, were charged with stealing, on the 15<sup>th</sup> April last, six tons of coal, the property of Richard Evans of Ilkeston, coal owner. Mr Buszard prosecuted ; Mr Lawrance defended. The prosecutor, Mr Evans, has a coal wharf on the side of the canal at Ilkeston, and the two prisoners are in the employ of Messrs Webb and Austin, owners of boats, at Leicester. Prisoner Jones was captain of the boat, and Rigley was one of his men. On the 15<sup>th</sup> April, prisoners came to Ilkeston with a barge for a load of slack which had been purchased from Mr Hopewell, coal agent, by Webb and Austin. On Mr Evans's wharf was a heap of slack and a heap of coal side by side, and prisoners went there not to load coal but slack. In loading a boat, a few lumps of coal are allowed to back up the slack and keep it in position. On the arrival of the boat at the wharf, prisoners, along with Samuel Scattergood, a wharfman in the employ of the prosecutor, commenced loading the boat about eight o'clock in the morning. Scattergood was also assisted by his son. Prisoner Jones and Scattergood were loading at one end of the boat, and Rigley and Scattergood junior at the other end. Scattergood noticed that they were loading a great quantity of coal with the slack, and he remonstrated with Jones about it, and he replied, "All right, I will put no more in". The loading proceeded, and Scattergood noticed that both prisoners were putting coal in the boat. This went on until three o'clock in the afternoon, when prosecutor arrived at the wharf, and Scattergood complained to him of what had been done. Mr Evans went away, and came again in about two hours afterwards, and said all the coal must be taken out of the boat, and the cargo turned over. Prisoner said they must go back to Leicester, but prosecutor said he should not allow them to take the boat away. The boat was detained, and at five o'clock the next morning the boat was unloaded, and from five to six tons of coal were taken out. Subsequently the men were charged with stealing the coal. It was elicited in cross-examination of one of the witnesses that after the prisoners were committed for trial by the magistrates, and bailed out, they had been twice to prosecutor's wharf for slack, and once Mr Evans asked them to take some coal because he was short of slack. After the examination of Mr Hopewell, coal agent, who said he sold the slack to Webb and Austin, the case broke down, and the accused were discharged.

## 70 October 7 1874

THE RECENT EXPLOSION OF GUNPOWDER Some local interest is attached to the recent terrific explosion of gunpowder in London, from the fact that the dangerous cargo of the canal boat *Tilbury* was destined for Derby. There are things more unlikely than that the people of this town have been blissfully unconscious, for years past, of the occasional presence amongst them of masses of gunpowder sufficient to lay half the houses in ruins. Derby is the centre from whence the blasting powder for a great mining district is distributed, and the casks with which the ill fated barge was laden were in all likelihood destined for Codnor Park, Staveley, or some other of the numerous places in this county where ironstone and coal are continually worked.

That the terrible calamity has befallen London and not Derby is merely a circumstance in the case. The conditions under which the powder appears to have been carried render it just as likely that an explosion should have happened in this neighbourhood as in the Regent's Canal, with one exception – the steam tug. How the accident happened will probably never be known, since the only men who could have given information are both dead, and those who survive are strictly reticent as to the manners and customs which govern boatmen in charge of explosive substances. We have not much

faith in the hypothesis that the powder was ignited by a spark from the funnel of the steam tug, and incline rather to the opinion that the inevitable tobacco pipe is at the bottom of the mischief. Habitual familiarity begets recklessness, as everyone connected with a colliery knows ; and a statement made by one of the crew of the *Dee*, a barge that now lies sunk at the bottom of the canal, serves to prove the carelessness with which the traffic in explosives is now carried on. Although the *Tilbury* was attached to the *Dee* and formed one of the same convoy, he “did not know she had powder on board”. In fact there was nothing to distinguish the barge carrying gunpowder from other similar craft conveying the most innocent substances. Nor does greater care appear to be taken when placing explosives on board a barge than if they were ordinary goods. The Grand Junction Canal Company receives gunpowder direct from the consignors at the City Basin, without having any intermediate magazine for storage on the premises. In the case in question the *Tilbury* was loaded with a miscellaneous cargo, probably packed anyhow, comprising sugar, foreign beef and groceries, besides about five tons of gunpowder. It is far from improbable that petroleum formed part of the freight, judging from some of the remarks made by observers of the stupendous catastrophe, and if, as has been suggested, dynamite was also being conveyed, we need not go far to find a reason for the explosion.

It is idle to speculate, as some of our contemporaries have done, upon “what might have happened” to London had not the force of the explosion been directed upwards by the high banks through which the canal is cut. The accident “might have happened” in Derby, in which case a speedy road would have been opened for some of those town improvements which Mr Alderman Roe is so fond of advocating, with this additional advantage, that the centre of operations would most likely have been the neighbourhood of Siddals Road, Bag Lane, the Morledge and parts adjacent. The stability of the Shot Tower “might have been” tested, and it is just possible that the Corn Exchange “might have had” a finish put to its reign of beauty and usefulness. Such a sweeping improvement is, however, by no means desirable, and we should be glad to hear of some change in the existing mode of conveying and storing explosives in our own immediate neighbourhood. It has been suggested that all in work connected with the storage and conveyance of explosives, no men should be employed but such as are accustomed to handle these substances and know their danger. In obtaining men of this sort, no difficulty need be experienced.

The enquiry which is now proceeding into the cause of the explosion will not, as we have hinted, throw much light upon what has already occurred, although it may lead to valuable results in the future. There can be no doubt that the great increase in the manufacture and sale of explosives has added considerably to the dangers incident to life in great cities ; and it will be interesting to learn what are the usual precautions adopted by the Canal Companies in the transport of these perilous commodities. The Globe suggests that :-

*Every barge and every cart employed in the trade should bear some distinctive mark, denoting its purpose, and should contain a fireproof magazine, with a single opening, capable of being secured under lock and key. On explosives being placed in this magazine under the care of a responsible person connected with the firm dispatching them, his duty would be to lock the doors, take out the key, and forward it direct to the consignees, who alone could unload the contents. In this simple way, a similar accident to that which shook London to its foundations would be rendered impossible, since the crew of a barge or the drivers of waggons could not set fire to the contents of their conveyances, even if they desired to do so.*

This appears to us to be sound in principle and to have the additional recommendation of being practical. Next Session, a Bill is to be introduced on the basis of the Report of the Select Committee on Explosives, and we may be sure the recent terrible affair will receive its share of consideration at the hands of Government.

## **71      January 13 1875**

DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT      **Thomas Camp** was charged on summons with being drunk and disorderly on Cockpit Hill on the 29<sup>th</sup> December. Police-constable Barker said it took four or five boatmen to take the defendant into his own house. Fined 5s and costs, or seven days.

**72 August 18 1875**

DERBY COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY

STABBING AT LONG EATON **John Major**, a boatman, was brought up in custody, charged with stabbing **Thomas Gilbert**, another boatman of Mountsorrel, Leicestershire, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> ult. The prisoner was committed for trial at the Sessions.

**73 September 22 1875**

OUR CANAL POPULATION With all due respect for the labours of Mr Plimsoll, the dwellers in the very heart of England (who are his constituents) cannot well be expected to take so much interest in his shipping schemes as though they dwelt within hearing of the roar of the breakers or were enabled, through close proximity to the coast, to catch an occasional sight of one of those "coffin ships" which his imaginative genius has taken such pains to depict. There is, however, another local philanthropist who does not occupy quite so much of the public time, or stand in such prominence before the public gaze ; but who, nevertheless, is engaged in a work quite as important as that which has earned notoriety for Mr Plimsoll, and which, for various reasons which we shall specify, ought to be far more interesting to people inland.

Mr George Smith of Coalville, who has put forth a not unsuccessful hand to help the children engaged as slaves in the brickyards of England, has now enlisted his sympathies on behalf of a class of men, women and children whose status in society (if such a term does not convey too ridiculous an idea when used in relation to a canal boatman and his family) is a disgrace to our boasted civilisation, and a source of danger to those who have hitherto thought little or nothing of these modern Ishmaelites. "Our Canal Population" is the title of a paper which Mr Smith has recently contributed to magazine literature, and the facts therein disclosed are so striking that we are impelled to gather some of them together and comment upon them after our own fashion.

Do our readers know what sort of beings comprise our canal population? It may be taken for granted that they are human, because they can swear and get drunk ; two accomplishments which are seldom to be found united in any member of the lower (?) orders of creation. Well then, they are "floating gipsies", a sort of race of human beings apart from the rest of the world. Swearing and drunkenness appear to be their two ruling passions. Public houses of the lowest kind are along the side of the canals. There the men, women and children are to be seen at all hours of the day, and by them fighting, ruffianism and blackguardism of the worst kind are indulged in. Swearing is taught to the children before anything else ; for nearly every sentence begins with an oath and finishes with blasphemy, and the children can do as much of it as their parents. The boys, as a rule, take up their father's occupation when they grow old enough and, as the daughters of the boaters grow up, they go to live with other boaters, the marriage tie being very lightly considered. Of their "manners and customs", it may be said, as of some Aborigines described by the quaint traveller of old, that "of manners they have none ; and their customs are beastly". How a man, his wife and six or seven children can live, wash, cook, and sleep in a cabin containing little over 200 cubic feet of space, scarcely large enough to hold a good sized bed, is a mystery to Mr Smith, and will strike a good many of our readers as being somewhat of a puzzle. Yet, in such cabins, men and women live and die, and children are born ; and when it is taken into account that children of both sexes, and of different families, and of various ages, are all huddled together in this wretched hole, we come to the conclusion that it is quite time the Government came to their rescue.

Adverting, in the first place, to the physical mischief which this curiously dangerous floating population may, and undoubtedly does, spread abroad in the land, we need only instance the cases quoted by Mr Smith of "a boatful of typhoid fever" ; of smallpox and other fever patients and dead bodies carried about from place to place in the suffocating cabins of the boats, with the manifest risk of infecting healthy localities. We hardly dare follow our informant into this unsavoury part of his subject ; but all that he advances will readily be understood when taken in conjunction with the following quotation:-

Smallpox and fever are the two principal diseases the boaters suffer from. They *wash and cook*

*with , and in many cases drink, the water of the canal.* A medical officer in his report to a Town Council a few weeks ago said that in the canal passing through the town “the water was inky black, and the stench was intolerable. Large bubbles of gas were continually rising to the surface, being unmistakeable proof of decomposing animal and vegetable matter”. This will refer to all canals passing through or close to our large towns ; so thick in many places are dead animals floating on the surface that the “boat ganger” has to push them out of the way before he can gauge the boat. This is sowing the seeds of disease with infernal effect, and it is in this atmosphere “our floating population” have to live”.

In the event of a choleraic condition of the atmosphere arising, what mode of life can one imagine to be better fitted for fulfilling all the conditions of the disease, and for giving pestilence the fullest chance of making its way throughout the length and breadth of the land?

Nor are the surroundings of our Canal Population less revolting from a moral point of view. Mr Smith has computed, from sources of information and figures which we need not introduce here, that on the canals and rivers of England there will not be less than 22,400 women, 22,400 men and 72,000 children. A gentleman who has held a responsible position under the Grand Junction Canal Company for nearly thirty years, and is daily brought into contact with boaters, told Mr Smith that “not more than 60 per cent of the men and women passing as man and wife are married”. A kind of ceremony is gone through at a low public house some four or five miles from the boat, finishing up with a “kind of spree”. This is how the “knot is tied”, and for a time at least it lasts, until either the family is grown too large, or from other causes the boater leaves his “woman and the young brats” to care for themselves as best they can. Others say that two thirds of the men and women living together in boats are unmarried. If this estimate be correct, and it is probably within the mark, we have more than 13,000 men and 13,000 women living as men and wives in an unmarried state, and 40,000 illegitimate children – floating up and down our country on our rivers and canals. One of Mr Smith's informants, a gentleman who resides close to a basin in which there are nearly a hundred boats at a time waiting to be loaded, says that he has only seen three or four persons who have attended a place of worship while staying there during the last twenty years ; and further, that he was recently speaking to a woman who said she had not slept in a dwelling house for twenty four years, scarcely seen a feather bed, and had reared a family of eight children. We agree with him that no stronger language is necessary than to point out that “there are from 80 to 100,000 men, women and children connected with boating, the most ignorant, degraded, drunken, neglected and forgotten human beings in this enlightened Christian country of ours, not to be equalled in any country in the world, when it is taken into account that it is a “land of Bibles and Christian privileges””.

What is to be the remedy for this sad state of affairs, which cannot now be ignored, seeing that it is thus brought home to our very doors and forced upon our shrinking acquaintanceship? Mr Smith places no reliance upon missionary systems, upon tract distribution, visiting, and the rest of the small arms with which ignorance is so vainly assailed by well meaning and zealous people. Such efforts, he naively says, are “not much better than throwing water upon a duck's back to drown it”. He would rather push Acts of Parliament to their logical conclusion, and trust them to do the work for which they are intended. He relies on :- 1 The Education Act, made compulsory, pure and simple ; 2 The Workshop Act, to prohibit children under certain ages working on boats ; 3 The Sanitary Act and thus prevent the overcrowding of the boats. Finally he had drawn up the following articles which he thinks will be found satisfactory to both boaters and boat owners :-

- 1 I would not allow boys under thirteen to sleep or work on boats.
- 2 I would not allow girls under the age of eighteen, unless married, to live and work on boats.
- 3 I would not allow less space in each cabin than seventy five feet for each adult above eighteen, and fifty feet of space for each youth between the age of thirteen and eighteen.
- 4 I would have the name of the boat owner, with the name of the captain, painted on each boat, and properly registered as to the amount of tonnage the boat carries, and the number of persons allowed to live and sleep in the cabin.

- 5 I would give power to the workshop inspectors, sanitary inspectors or other officials, which will ere long be appointed by the Government, to assist the sub inspectors of factories to enter a cabin and detain the boat until all the law required was carried out.
- 6 Power to be given, as in the case of the workshops, to inspectors to summon either the captain or owner, whichever he thought well.
- 7 A proper certificate, as to the date of birth, duly signed by the parish authorities, should be deemed sufficient proof as to the age of the children. This to be carried about with them.
- 8 The Act should not come into operation for two years, and then the children only be required to pass the second standard of the Education Act.

Enough has, we hope, been said to convince our readers that Mr Smith has made out a case for the urgent attention of the country. His facts are open to anybody's observation who may choose to make enquiry ; he is not supported by "great men" and he "has had no purse, the strings of which he could untie".

"Living close to the canals in Staffordshire in early life, I there saw sights which have haunted me night and day since. Independently of the love of the work, it became a matter of deep conviction, and a strong sense of duty with me in connection with these movements, so that I could not keep my hands folded any longer. I have had all sorts of hard things said about me, but this I was determined should not deter me from what I considered to be right in the interests of my young clients, the brickyard and canal children, and I must leave my actions in the future, as in the past, to speak for themselves".

Fully convinced of the rectitude of such intentions as are contained in the foregoing remarks, we heartily commend Mr Smith's good and unpretentious work to all true philanthropists. A canal boatman is not so picturesque as the "British Seaman" ; and his barge crawling through mud and slime is not so sensational a theme as the "bounding barque on the foaming billows" ; but his position before God and man is one which, for the honour and credit of the English nation, must not be overlooked much longer.

#### **74 September 29 1875**

**A CHILD DROWNED AT DERBY** Mr Coroner Vallack held an inquest yesterday afternoon (Tuesday) to enquire into the death of **James Vaughan**, aged six years, the son of **James Vaughan**, a boatman in the employ of the Grand Junction Canal Company. **Harriet Vaughan**, the mother of the boy, said they generally lived on board the boat, and were so living on Sunday last, the boat then lying in the basin at the Grand Junction Wharf. Between two and three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, they missed the deceased, and they instituted a search for him, and also on Monday, and had him cried by the public crier. They dragged the canal on Sunday and again on the Monday, when upon the water being drawn off, they found him near their own boat. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

#### **75 December 8 1875**

##### **ALLEGED MURDER NEAR CRICH**

**COMMITTAL OF THE ACCUSED** On Sunday morning last, the body of a boatman named **William Thurnman** was found in the canal, just below the Canal Inn, Bull Bridge, under circumstances which leave very little doubt that a murder has been committed.

An inquest was held on the remains on Monday last by William Whiston Esq, county coroner, and from the evidence it appears that the deceased man was last seen alive at the Canal Inn on Saturday night. As he was about leaving, he told a man named John Rains that he had pawned his clothes, and had got half a crown on the ticket, which he was going to fetch or he should lose it altogether. Rains cautioned him not to be late, and deceased replied that he was waiting for **Walker**, who owed him 3s. Walker, however, did not appear, and John Rains gave the deceased some bread and cheese, and he went away, being sober at the time. Shortly afterwards Walker came in, and Rains told him

that Thurnman wanted 3s from him and had been waiting for it ; but Walker made no reply. He waited until ten o'clock and then went away.

Luke Kenyon, a labourer who was also at the Canal Inn on the night in question, deposed that about half past ten he was at home and heard a noise on the *Hero* boat belonging to the Butterley Company, about 5 or 6 yards from the bridge end. Going out of doors, he saw Walker alone, and said to him, "You had best be quiet and let him alone till morning when he is sober". Walker said it was Thurnman who was making the noise, and that he wanted him out of the boat, and if he did not go he should hit him with the "tiller" - a large piece of wood used for guiding the boat. Walker was tipsy when he was at the Canal Inn. Next morning about seven o'clock, witness looked out and shouted to Walker, "Have you no fire?" He replied in the negative and asked for a match, which witness did not give him. Shortly afterwards, Walker came running up, crying, "Oh dear! O dear! Thurnman is in the "cut"". Witness asked where, and he replied, "Down by the side of the boat". Witness took hold of deceased's coat, and drew him to the side. Help being obtained, the body was drawn out of the water. Witness examined the head, and found marks of violence ; the police were then sent for. Walker was in the boat, but did not assist in getting deceased out of the water. Walker admitted to witness that he hit deceased with the "tiller" and that he then went away, he did not know where.

Emma Cooper deposed that she went out of doors with a light on Saturday night to fetch a dog in the house. She heard Walker making a great noise in the boat, and asked him what was the matter. He said, "Mrs Cooper, bring a light ; Thurnman wants to take my food". Witness did not see Thurnman, but asked Walker where he was ; the reply being that he was "there" - pointing to the side of the canal. On the following morning, Walker asked her for some matches. She gave them to him, and she again asked where Thurnman was, to which Walker answered, "I do not know. I gave the ----- two or three blows on the head with the tiller". Witness exclaimed, "Why, you've killed him, somewhere!" He made no reply.

Samuel Rains deposed that about half past seven o'clock on Sunday morning, he was passing along the towing-path of the canal at Bull Bridge, and saw James Walker washing his hands. He took up a wet cloth and wiped the tiller, which looked black and dirty. When Walker saw witness observed him, he went quickly into the cabin, dropping the tiller as he went.

Isaac Rains, landlord of the Canal Inn, deposed that about nine o'clock on Sunday morning, James Walker came running and said, "Thurnman has got drowned!" Witness ran down to the bridge and found deceased in the water. Witness assisted Kenyon, and Walker also assisted, in getting the body out of the canal. Witness observed two very large wounds on the head, and on proceeding a little further on the bank towards the cabin end, he said to Walker, "What is this blood doing here?", and he replied, "He must have fallen or something". There were marks of blood on Walker's trousers.

James Hogg, a labourer living at Heage, said that on his way to Fritchley on Sunday morning he found the body of the deceased man, and assisted the other witnesses in getting it out of the water. Walker also assisted, and witness observed that the backs of his hands were covered with blood. Blood was also observable in large quantities on the ground, and upon a large mat. There were some small spots of blood on deceased's shirt and trousers.

Robert Cholerton, a police-constable stationed at Crich, said : On Sunday morning, about ten o'clock, I went to Bull Bridge, and was there shown the body of William Thurnman. His clothes were wet, and he had two long scalp wounds on his head. I apprehended a man named James Walker, whom I found in a boat at Bull Bridge. I said to him, "I charge you with the murder of William Thurnman". He said in reply, "He came to my boat last night to take my food out of the cabin. I pushed him off. That was all I did to him". I afterwards examined the boat, and found it smeared with blood in several places. I also examined the tiller belonging to the boat, and this was also smeared with blood, and had been apparently recently washed. The tiller produced is the same. I then examined his clothing, and found his trousers, waistcoat and shirt (produced) marked with fresh spots of blood. I asked Walker how he accounted for the stains of blood on his clothes ; he answered, "I cut my finger the night previous, whilst getting my supper". Walker's finger was, in fact, wrapped up in a piece of rag. It was only a slight cut, and a recent one. I also produce a

counterpane, which was in the cabin of the boat Walker had charge of ; it was in the cabin, and had marks of blood on it.

Mr R R Allen, surgeon of Belper, was called in to examine the body of the deceased. He found three lacerated wounds on the left side of the head (two of them an inch long, the other two inches long) down to the bone. A *post mortem* examination exhibited great extravasation of blood between the scalp and the cranium. The wounds might, most certainly, have been caused by an instrument like the tiller produced, and must have been inflicted during lifetime. The skull was fractured from the seat of the blow to the right ear, and the brain on both sides was covered with coagulated blood. The wound was sufficient to cause death.

Mr Thomas Johnson, assistant to Mr Allen, concurred in the previous opinion.

The learned Coroner, having pointed out the bearings of the evidence to the jury, a verdict of "Wilful Murder against James Walker" was returned, and the prisoner was committed to take his trial at the forthcoming Assizes.

## 76 December 15 1875

THE MURDER NEAR CRICH On Thursday, **James Walker** was charged before J H Woolley at Belper with the wilful murder of **William Thurnman** at Bull Bridge. On the previous day, a man presented himself before the Bench, and stated that he was the murdered man's father, and that he wanted to see Walker ; the man made this request with great iteration and vehemence, and he was referred to the Superintendent of Police, Mr Lytle. On Thursday, after the repetition of the medical evidence and the calling of John Hartshorne, the following evidence was called, in which are embodied all the facts :-

John Raines said he was a platelayer living at Bull Bridge, and knew deceased by sight. He always went by the name of "Thrumston". The last time he saw him alive was on Saturday night last, the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. Then saw him at the Canal Inn, Bull Bridge. Deceased spoke to him and left the public house first. Did not know what time it was when he went away, but it was after dark. Did not see which way he went. He had not been gone long before the prisoner came in. Witness told him that the deceased had been waiting for him, telling him that deceased said prisoner owed him three shillings. Prisoner did not make any answer, but remained in the inn until nearly closing time. The other persons who were in the house went away about the same time. Saw prisoner on the following (Sunday) morning about half past nine o'clock, when he was in the cabin of his boat, which was lying in the canal a short distance from the public house. Did not see anyone with him in the boat. Saw the body of the deceased lying on the canal bank close to at the same time.

**Henry Walters** said he was a boatman and lived at Pentrich. On Saturday night December 4<sup>th</sup>, was at Wragg's beerhouse, Hartsay, which was about two miles from Bull Bridge. Deceased entered the beerhouse whilst witness was there, about eight o'clock. He stayed until closing time at ten o'clock. Deceased appeared to be quite sober, and witness did not see which way he went. No one accompanied deceased from the beerhouse. Witness, deceased and another had been drinking together during the time they were in the house, and had only two quarts of ale. Did not see the prisoner that night at all. Prisoner and deceased were not working together at that time ; they were not both employed on the same boat. Knew that the prisoner was in charge of the Butterley Company's boat *Hero*.

The Bench : He had sole charge of it?

Witness : Yes.

Examination continued : Deceased was not in the employ of the Butterley Company at all. Prisoner had previously been working on board the *Hero*. It was one day during the same week, and the week before, deceased was on the boat.

Luke Kenyon said he was a labourer and lived at Bull Bridge. Had known the deceased about three years, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> December saw him at the Canal Inn, Bull Bridge. Witness came out, and he saw deceased leave. It was dark at the time. Never saw deceased alive again. Went from the public house home, and there heard deceased's voice as he passed by. He knew deceased's voice. The man was not quarrelling, but was shouting to someone. Witness afterwards left his house and returned to

the public house, where he stayed until ten o'clock. Prisoner was in the house "a goodish bit", and stayed until closing time. Saw prisoner go into a shop, and then walk away in the direction of his boat, through an arch of the bridge. Witness then went home, and about half past ten, as nearly as he could guess, he heard a noise outside. Witness immediately went out of his house on to the bridge over the canal. The Butterley Company's boat *Hero* was lying on the water five or six yards away, and the noise seemed to come from the boat.

Mr Hextall : What did the noise appear to be like?

Witness : Like someone swearing.

Did you think there were one or two people quarrelling?

I really could not say, but I heard the prisoner's voice. Witness continued that he saw prisoner on the boat. He could just discern him in the "slide hole". Witness was standing on the bridge for a few moments, and guessed that deceased was there. Witness shouted, "You'd better be quiet", to which the prisoner replied, "There's Thrumston here, and he won't go". Prisoner replied, "I'll hit the ---- with the tiller if he does not go", and witness told him they both had better be quiet or the "bobby" would come and take both of them. He told prisoner to let deceased stay there till morning. Nothing more was said, and witness went home to bed. On the following morning (Sunday), he got up about seven o'clock, as near as he could guess, and went to his bedroom window. He looked out, and saw prisoner's boat lying in the same place in the canal, but he did not see the prisoner. Seeing no smoke issuing from the cabin of the boat, witness, who was at that time outside his house, shouted prisoner's name loudly. Prisoner came to the "slide hole" in the hatchway and opened the cabin doors. Witness first said, "I see you've got no fire", and prisoner asked for a match, but witness told him he had not got one and he must go somewhere else. He then asked prisoner where deceased was, and how they went on during their row, Walker replying, "The ---- gone somewhere". Prisoner added, "I hit him over the top of the head with the tiller". Witness merely replied with an ejaculatory remark, and then went home and to bed again. He saw the tiller of the boat then lying on the top of the cabin. The tiller produced by Police-constable Cholerton was the same one. A tiller was a piece of wood forming the rudder handle. Witness came downstairs again about nine o'clock, and was about to get his breakfast when prisoner came running in. He said, "Oh, dear, Thrumston is in the cut". Witness asked whereabouts the man was, and prisoner replied, "Down at the side of the boat". Prisoner ran out of the house again, and witness put on his boots and followed him. He heard prisoner shout to someone, but could not tell who. Witness went to the side of the wharf where the boat was lying, and saw the lap of a coat underneath the water. He partly lifted the body up, but was unable to raise it alone, and it was not taken out of the water until someone else came. The body was laid on the canal bank, and there were some large wounds on the head, and "jellied" blood in the right ear. Prisoner was near the boat when the body was got out, but he never said anything.

Mr Hextall : Did prisoner say anything about how the body got into the water?

Witness : When the prisoner came running into my house, I asked him how he found the body in the canal. Prisoner said he was stooping over and getting water out of the canal to wash his hands when he found the body. I never saw any blood on the ground.

Emma Cooper said she was the wife of Samuel Cooper, who kept a grocer's shop at Bull Bridge. She remembered prisoner coming to her shop on Wednesday night about ten o'clock. He made some purchases and then went away. The shop was in the direct line of road from the Canal Inn to the wharf, the road passing through an archway close to. Prisoner seemed as though he had had some drink, but he was not drunk. About half past eleven o'clock, she went out of her house to look after their dog, which was in the back yard. The garden adjoins the canal. She took the dog into the house, and having heard a noise when in the yard previously, she returned down the garden. She had heard someone swearing and quarrelling, and distinguished Walker's voice. Prisoner called out, "Mrs Cooper, bring a light down here". Witness shouted, "Jim, what is the matter?", and prisoner said deceased wanted to take his food. She advised him to hold his noise and go to bed, but after that she went down the garden with a lantern, and called to prisoner, asking him where deceased was. Prisoner said, "He's there", and pointed to the canal bank, but witness could not see

what he was pointing at. She then went into her own house to bed. On the following morning, she saw prisoner about half past seven o'clock. He was running through the archway in the direction of the canal, and he came to witness and asked for a few matches. She fetched some from the house and gave them to him, asking where deceased was. Prisoner said he did not know, adding, "I've gave the ----- two or three good strokes over the head with the tiller". She said to him, "Then, Jim, you've killed him somewhere?", and prisoner made no reply, and went away towards the boat. A short time after, she saw the body of the deceased lying on the canal bank. She saw blood on the ground in the wharf before the body was taken out of the canal.

Samuel Raines said he lived at Bull Bridge, and was a labourer. He lived with his father, who kept the Canal Inn. About half past seven o'clock on the morning of Sunday, he was standing on the canal bridge, when he saw the prisoner. Prisoner was then aboard his boat, which was about ten yards from the bridge. He was then washing his hands. He saw prisoner take up the tiller, which was lying on the top of the cabin, and wipe it with a wet cloth. He washed it with water from the canal. Witness never spoke to prisoner who, however, on turning round, caught sight of witness. He had at that time left the bridge, and was walking past the boat on the towing path. Prisoner immediately dropped the tiller and got into the cabin as fast as he could, witness being then about five yards away. He identified the tiller produced as the one which prisoner was washing.

Isaac Raines said he was landlord of the Canal Inn, Bull Bridge. On Sunday morning, December 5<sup>th</sup>, he saw prisoner running from the direction of the canal towards witness's house, and he said, "Thrumston's got drowned". Witness went to the canal side, following prisoner, who ran all the way there. Witness assisted in getting the body out of the water. Prisoner also assisted. The body was then quite stiff, and witness saw two large wounds on the head. Afterwards he came back under the archway with Hogg, and in consequence of something Hogg said to him, he went to prisoner, who was standing close to the body. Prisoner had his hands in his pocket so that witness could not see them. He looked at the prisoner carefully, and saw some blood on the front of his trousers. There were large patches of blood on the trousers (produced). There was blood on the ground near the body, but witness could not say whether it was there before the body was got out. Prisoner got no blood on his clothes through getting the body out of the water, as no blood flowed from it.

James Hogg said he was a labourer living at Heage. On the Sunday morning, he was going from Heage to Fritchley, and had to cross Bull Bridge. His attention was called to a dead body in the water of the canal, and he assisted in getting it out. Prisoner also helped, and witness noticed his hands, on the back of both of which there was blood. Did not observe his finger nails, and after the body was taken out, he saw blood on the canal bank in two places, and also an old mat. Witness saw blood on the trousers and shirt which prisoner had on, the stains on the latter garment being principally on the shoulders and breast. Did not think it likely that the blood could have got there by prisoner lifting out the body.

PC Cholerton said he was stationed at Crich, near Bull Bridge. On the morning of Sunday December 5<sup>th</sup>, he went to Bull Bridge, where he saw a dead body lying on the canal bank, and recognised it as the body of a man who had gone by the name of "Thurmaston". There were several large wounds on the head. He went on board the *Hero*, of which prisoner was in charge, and examined it. He apprehended the prisoner, and charged him with murdering a person named "Thurmaston". Prisoner said, "He came to my boat last night to take my "tommy" and I pushed him off the boat. That is all I did to him". Witness examined the boat, and found the side of the cabin smeared all over with blood, and there was blood on the tiller, which appeared to have been washed. He took possession of it, and now produced it. He examined prisoner's clothing, and found stains of blood on the upper part of the shirt, front of the trousers, and waistcoat. He produced all the clothing. The stains were rather damp. He asked prisoner how he accounted for the stains on his clothing.

The Clerk : Had you ever cautioned prisoner before this?

Witness : Yes, I told him that whatever he said would be given in evidence against him.

Witness went on to say that prisoner accounted for the stains by saying he had cut his finger on the

night previous whilst getting his supper. The forefinger of prisoner's left hand was wrapped up at the time, and prisoner unfastened the bandage and showed the cut, which was very slight and apparently quite fresh. He found a counterpane in the cabin, and found some stains of blood upon it. He conveyed prisoner to the lock up.

Sergeant John Clarke said he was stationed at Belper, and on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> December, he had prisoner in custody bringing him to the lock up at Belper after the inquest ; Police-constable Hall was with him. On the way, witness or the other constable never spoke to prisoner, who however said, "I don't care if they only send me away for it. I'll tell the God Almighty's truth. He came to take my "tommy" out of the locker in the stern of the boat, and I put my head through the hatch at the top of the cabin door, and he struck at me. I drew my head in, so he missed his stroke, and I struck him three times on the head with the tiller of the boat. I knocked him down, he got up, and I knocked him down again. I then went to bed". Witness only put one question to prisoner, and that was to ask him if the man got up again after the first blow, to which prisoner answered in the affirmative.

Police-constable Hall was examined in corroboration, and this closed the case for the prosecution. Prisoner was then formally charged with the wilful murder of Thurnman, and the usual caution was administered by the Clerk, who asked prisoner if he had anything to say in answer to the charge.

Prisoner : I have nothing to say.

This observation having been recorded, the Clerk asked prisoner if he could write his name to the statement, to which prisoner replied in the negative, saying he had never been to school.

He was then formally committed for trial at the Derbyshire Winter Assizes, which commenced on Friday.

## **77 December 15 1875**

### DERBYSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

THE MURDER NEAR CRICH **James Walker** (22), boatman, was charged with wilfully and with malice aforethought killing and murdering **William Thurnman**, boatman, at Crich on the 4<sup>th</sup> December. Mr Horace Smith and Mr Sutton, instructed by Mr Hexstall of Derby, appeared for the prosecution. On the prisoner being arraigned, he handed to his Lordship a request that the case might be adjourned till the next Assize. His Lordship thought it a very proper request, and Mr Smith did not object. The case was accordingly adjourned to the Spring Assizes.

## **78 February 2 1876**

SAD DEATH OF A WOMAN Mr Coroner Vallack held an inquest at the Derbyshire Infirmary on Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> January, on the body of a married woman named **Hannah Hughes**, aged 27, whose death occurred on Saturday. Her husband is a boatman, and on the 9<sup>th</sup> they were with a boat in Cheshire. The husband left his wife in the cabin while he went on deck, and on his return found that she had had a fit and fallen into the fire, one of her hands being burnt almost to a cinder. Subsequently they started for Derby. On arriving at Burton, the water having frozen over, they were unable to proceed further, and the deceased then came to Derby by train and became an in patient of the Infirmary, but she only remained there a day or two, and went to live in a lodging house in Wright Street. When her husband arrived in Derby she was very ill, and he insisted on her re-entering the Infirmary, where she died on Saturday. The jury returned a verdict of "Died from tetanus, brought on by being burnt while in a fit".

## **79 April 5 1876**

### DERBYSHIRE MARCH ASSIZES

THE MURDER AT CRICH **James Walker**, labourer, was indicted for maliciously and of his malice aforethought killing and murdering **William Thurman** at Bull Bridge, near Crich, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December. Mr H Smith, with Mr Kennedy, appeared for the prosecution ; Mr Weightman had been instructed for the defence.

Mr Horace Smith, in opening the case, narrated the circumstances as detailed in the depositions, and

said it might be thought that the prisoner received some degree of provocation which would reduce the crime to that of manslaughter, but taking all the circumstances into account and the expressions used by the prisoner, there was a degree of premeditation which would remove all considerations of provocation. He then called the following witnesses :-

Mr W Popplewell, surveyor of Derby, who had prepared plans of the scene of the occurrence, was called, and he spoke to the distance between the various places indicated on them.

John Hartshorn, labourer of Butterley, said : On Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, I saw the body of a man in Mr Rains's house, and identified it as that of William Thurman, whose occupation was that of a labourer and boatman.

John Rains, labourer, Bull Bridge, said : I knew the deceased by the name of Thurmaston, which was his nickname. On Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, I saw the body of the deceased. On the previous evening, I had seen him at the Canal Inn, Bull Bridge. He left there between seven and eight o'clock. The prisoner entered the Canal Inn about half an hour afterwards, and remained there until about ten o'clock. When he came into the public house, I told him that Thurman had been waiting for him, and had told me he owed him three shillings. The prisoner made no reply to this observation.

By Mr Weightman : I cannot say what amount of drink the deceased had. He was drinking ale when I entered the public house, but I cannot say how many times he had his glass filled. When Thurman was leaving the house, he told me that he had pawned his clothes, and received half a crown upon the ticket. He also said that if he did not fetch the ticket that night he should entirely lose his clothes. He said he was going for the ticket, but he did not tell me where he was going to. The prisoner left the public house just before closing time. He was drinking rum. I did not see him drink any ale, although he paid for a quart or two for the company.

Re-examined by Mr Smith : The deceased man appeared quite sober when he went away, and I cannot say that the prisoner was the worse for liquor.

**William Walters**, boatman, Pentrich, said : On the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> (*sic*) December, I was at the Gate Inn, Hartshay, which is two miles from Bull Bridge. I saw deceased there ; he came in about eight o'clock, and remained there until closing time. He went away alone, but I did not see the direction he took. The prisoner never worked with the deceased.

By Mr Weightman : The deceased had been employed by the Butterley Company. I never heard anything about a fight between the prisoner and another man. The deceased left the employ of the Butterley Company about a week previously, and the prisoner had gone to supply his place. The deceased had two quarts of ale at the Gate Inn.

By Mr Smith : The deceased did not drink the whole of the two quarts himself, and was quite sober when he left.

**Luke Kenyon**, boatman of Bull Bridge, said : I knew both the deceased and the prisoner. On the evening of Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup>, I heard the deceased go by the Canal Inn, and saw the prisoner there about ten o'clock. I came away with the prisoner at closing time, and called with him at an eating house, after which he went to the boat. I was afterwards in the house, when I heard a noise caused by persons quarrelling. I heard Walker use bad language, and I called out to him. I afterwards went to the Canal bridge and spoke to Walker, who said, "Thurman is here, and I shall not have him". I told them to be quiet, and the prisoner said, "If he does not go away, I shall make him. I shall give him the tiller". I heard no more, and shortly afterwards went to bed. On the following morning, I got up at seven o'clock, and on arriving near the canal bridge, I shouted to prisoner and said, "Walker, how did you go on with the row last night? What have you done with him?" He replied, "He's gone somewhere". He afterwards asked me for a match, but I declined to give him one, and went to bed again. I got up again at nine. The tiller produced belonged to the prisoner's boat. At nine o'clock on the Sunday morning, the prisoner came running to my house, and exclaimed, "I have found Thurman drowned in the cut". I replied, "Where?", and on proceeding to the canal I saw the body of a man in the water. The prisoner went with me to the canal. When I first saw the body, it was about two yards from the prisoner's boat, and close to the canal bank. During a conversation which I had with the prisoner, he said he was getting water to

wash his hands when he found the body.

By Mr Weightman : When the deceased passed my house, he was telling a man that he was going to Hartshay. When the prisoner left me on the Saturday night, he seemed a little the worse for liquor. When I heard the noise in the boat, I did not hear the voices of more than one person.

By the Judge : The deceased was a strong active man.

Emma Cooper, wife of Samuel Cooper, grocer, Bull Bridge, said : Our shop is near the canal. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, the prisoner came to our shop about ten o'clock. I did not see him again that night, although subsequently, when I went out of the house to fetch a dog, I heard him swearing and using very bad language. The voice appeared to proceed from the boat. He asked me to take a light, and in answer to a question from me, he said Thurman was there and wanted to take his food. I told him to hold his noise and go to bed. I went out again, and asked Walker where Thurman was. He replied, "He is there", pointing to the canal bank. The next morning, Walker was running under an archway near our house towards the boat. He asked me to give him a few matches, which I did, and I enquired where Thurman was. He said, "I do not know. I gave him two or three good strokes with the tiller". I replied, "Then you have killed him". He made no reply, but I subsequently went down to the canal bank, and saw two or three pools of blood there.

By the Judge : I did not hear the voice of the other man during the quarrel.

Samuel Rains, whose father keeps the Canal Inn, said : On the morning of Sunday December 5<sup>th</sup>, I was standing on the canal bridge, close to where the prisoner's boat was, and observed the prisoner washing his hands and also the tiller of the boat. When he saw me, the prisoner dropped the tiller into the hatches of the boat, and went into the cabin.

Isaac Rains, landlord of the canal public house, said : On the morning in question, the defendant came running from the direction of the canal, and told me Thurman had been drowned. He then ran towards the canal, and I followed him. I assisted Walker and Kenyon to get the body out. There were two very large wounds on the head, and the body was stiff. On proceeding a long distance on the canal bank towards the cabin end of the boat, I saw blood, and spoke to Walker about it. He replied, "He must have fallen there". There were marks of blood on Walker's trousers.

James Hogg, a labourer living at Heage, said : I assisted to get the body of the deceased out of the canal on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. I noticed the prisoner had blood on the back of his hands ; and also on his trousers and shirt. That was after he had assisted in the recovery of the body.

Police-constable Robert Cholerton of Crich, said : On Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, I saw the body of the deceased lying on the canal bank. The clothes were wet, and there were two large wounds on the head. I afterwards arrested the prisoner, who was in a boat near, and on charging him with the murder of Thurman, he said, "He came to my boat last night and wanted to take my tommy. I pushed him off the boat, but that was all I did". I examined the boat and found it smeared with blood on the outside. There was a large quantity of blood on the thick end of the tiller, and there were spots of blood on the prisoner's clothes. The prisoner said the blood had been caused by cutting his finger while he was getting his supper. There was a cut, skin deep, on one of his fingers. A counterpane which I afterwards found in the cabin also had small spots of blood upon it.

Mr R R Allen, surgeon of Belper, said : On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, I examined the body of the deceased, and found four lacerated wounds on the head. Three of them were on the left side of the head, and one on the right side near the crown. Two of them were at least one inch long, and the others two inches long, and they penetrated to the bone. After examining the wounds, I am of opinion that death was caused by the wounds, which would be likely to be produced by the tiller. On a subsequent examination, I found the skull was fractured from the seat of the injury to the right ear, and the brain was covered with blood. A man would live but a very short time after receiving such wounds, and would not be able to walk after they had been inflicted. I am of opinion that death ensued before the body was immersed in the water.

By Mr Weightman : There were no appearances of drowning.

Mr F Johnson, surgeon, agreed with the evidence given by him.

Police-sergeant Clarke of Belper said : On Monday December 6<sup>th</sup>, when I was taking the prisoner from the inquest to the lock up at Belper, he told me he struck the deceased three times, and

knocked him down. He got up, but he again knocked him down. He added, "He came to take my "tommy" from the boat, and struck at me, but I evaded the blow".

By Mr Weightman : Prisoner told me the story in a different order from what I have given it, and mentioned at the first about the deceased wanting to take his "tommy".

Police-constable Hall corroborated the last witness.

This was the case for the prosecution.

Mr H Smith then addressed the jury, observing that if they thought the blows were struck without such provocation as to induce a reasonable man to inflict those wounds, it would be for them to say the prisoner was guilty of the crime of wilful murder. They would consider the nature of the wounds which were inflicted, and if they arrived at the conclusion that the blows were struck with intent to do actual serious bodily harm without there being any sufficient provocation, then it was their duty to convict him of the capital crime. According to his own statement, he had struck two or three blows with the deadly weapon, as the tiller was, and could it be possible that a man would use such a weapon without intent to do some bodily harm. They must distinguish between the provocation which would justify a man in retaliating and in acting as the prisoner had done in the present instance, for it was not for a person to excuse himself of the crime of murder on account of slight provocation. He pointed to various portions of the evidence, and said that evidently the deceased was killed, and, after lying upon the canal bank during the night, was pushed into the water on the following morning by the prisoner.

Mr Weightman followed in an able speech for the accused. He referred to the fact that the prisoner had taken the situation of the deceased under the Butterley Company, and said that up to the time he inflicted the blows, the prisoner was a quiet peaceable man. The deceased paid a visit to his boat in the dead of the night, and aroused him from, perhaps, a drunken sleep. Careless of the way in which he inflicted the wounds, he took up the tiller and struck the deceased with it in order to get rid of him from the boat. There was however in this case sufficient evidence to prove there was no malice, and that sufficient provocation had been given to justify the Jury in saying that whatever crime the prisoner had committed, he was not guilty of wilful murder. He then called

**William Jelf**, boatman of Codnor Park, who said he had known prisoner from his boyhood, and that he had always borne the character of being quiet and peaceable.

The learned Judge then summed up the evidence with great care, and said unquestionably the deceased came by his death in consequence of the blows he received. The question for the Jury to consider was what were the legal consequences of death produced by the use of such a weapon as the tiller. *Prima facie* it was wilful murder, and in reducing it to that of manslaughter they must consider whether the prisoner was attacked before he struck the blows, and whether the blows he gave were in proportion to the attack which had been made upon him.

The Jury then retired to consider their decision, and the Court adjourned for half an hour. The jury returned at the end of that period, and in answer to the Clerk of the Arraignment,

The Foreman said : We find the prisoner guilty of manslaughter.

The Clerk of Arraignment : Prisoner at the bar, you have been found guilty of manslaughter, have you any reasons to give why sentence should not be passed upon you?

The Prisoner : I am very sorry at what has occurred, and hope you will deal mercifully with me.

The Judge said the Jury had taken a very merciful and lenient view of the circumstances under which the prisoner had killed the deceased ; but it was impossible for him not to remember the serious nature of the case. It was most important for people to bear in mind that if under such slight circumstances of provocation, as were proved in this instance, they killed other people, it was a most serious affair. He should be wanting in his duty if he passed a more lenient sentence than 15 years' penal servitude.

The prisoner, who had been accommodated with a chair during the hearing of the case, was very pale, and trembled greatly when the jury returned into Court.

## 80 August 16 1876

FOUND DROWNED IN THE CANAL AT OSMASTON An inquest was held at the Navigation

Inn at Osmaston on Saturday last by Mr Coroner Sale, touching the death of John Wood, who was found dead in the canal at Osmaston. The following evidence was taken :- Henry Dodd, a shopkeeper of Litchurch, identified the body as that of his lodger, John Wood, a labourer, who he believed to be 66 years of age and a widower. He had been poorly since February and out of work, but was receiving pay from a sick club. Deceased left witness's house about 11.15 on the previous morning, saying he was going to draw his sick pay, and that was the last time witness saw him alive. He did not think deceased a likely person to commit suicide. Ellen Peat, the landlady of the Navigation Inn, said deceased came to her house about two o'clock on the previous day and had a glass of ale. He was quite sober, but seemed quite exhausted. James Moore, servant at the Navigation Inn, saw the deceased pass over the canal bridge, and about ten minutes after, a boatman told him that a man was drowned in the canal. Witness went over the bridge and saw deceased in the water, and he and Aaron Hill pulled him out. They laid deceased out and worked his arms up and down, but he was quite dead. The only property he had about him was sixpence, a penknife, and some tobacco. The jury found that deceased was "Found dead in the canal at Osmaston, but by what means he came into the water of the canal, there is no evidence to show".

### **81 August 23 1876**

**ACCIDENTS AND OFFENCES** On Wednesday morning, **Samuel Parkin**, a boatman living at Aston, found the lifeless body of John Gateley, labourer, aged 40, in the Birmingham Canal near the borough boundary, the hands of the deceased being tied together. There is nothing to show whether Gateley has been violently dealt with by others or whether he fastened his hands himself and then committed suicide.

### **82 September 27 1876**

**DERBY COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY** **Richard Marples** (who did not answer) and **William Copewell**, boatmen, were charged by Superintendent Scoborio of the RSPCA with cruelly ill-treating a horse on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. William Turner, builder of Rose Hill, said that on the 4<sup>th</sup> he was near Shelton Docks, and saw the defendants walking on each side of a horse, which was very old and lame. They carried a hedge stake, with which they were belabouring the poor beast about the head and body. When witness remonstrated with them, they threatened to serve him the same. George Smith corroborated. Police-constable Bonner followed the defendants, and found them in Nottingham Road. He corroborated Mr Turner as to the weak and emaciated condition of the horse, and said that the defendants stated they had brought the horse to be killed for a farmer at Chellaston, and they did not think they were doing any harm. Fined 18s and costs each.

### **83 October 25 1876**

**INSPECTION OF BRICKYARDS AND CANAL BOATS** Mr George Smith of Coalville, Leicester, read a paper "on the inspection of brick and tile yards and canal boats" at the meeting of the Social Science Congress at Liverpool on Friday. He said that disorder, confusion and laxity characterised to a large extent the carrying out of the Brickfields' Act of 1871. How could it be otherwise when we take into consideration that the inspectors, by the passing of the Act, had, in addition to their other duties of visiting 100,000 factories and workshops, some 4,000 or 5,000 brick and tile yards, on which are employed nearly 20,000 men and woman, and the same number of children and young persons, to look after? Many of these yards – as is mostly the case with brickyards – are up to the knees in mud and clay, and far away from any railway station. Under the Brickfields' Act, no female under 16, and no child under ten or between 10 and 13, unless upon half time, can be lawfully employed in making bricks and tiles, not being ornamented tiles. It has been estimated that 10,000 children were sent out of yards on January 1 1872, to home or school to be educated. Mr Smith has visited brick and tile works and potteries in various parts of the country over and over again, which have been in operation for years, and an inspector had not set his foot upon the place, nor had any papers been sent to the employers informing them that they were under the Act. As a rule, it is the selfish employers and not so much the men that are opposed to the Act.

In many cases the cry raised about the hardships of prohibiting the employment of children and girls in making bricks, tiles, and at collieries and ironworks, is only to throw dust into the eyes of the public. The Brickfields' Act has been a peg upon which to hang all sorts of complaints, such as high prices, scarcity of labour, and a host of other things which, when looked at, will not bear the light of day. Some of the sub inspectors have allowed children to be worked for 14 hours per day in making bricks and tiles. It would save a vast amount of trouble if all brick and tile works were registered, and this could be done by the registrar of births and deaths. The inspector would know of their existence and locality without waiting to hear by chance of them. The certifying surgeon should visit all factories and workshops ; but in factories and workshops employing under 20 hands, his visits should be monthly instead of fortnightly.

With regard to the inspection of canal boats, the paper said that it had been clearly established that there are 100,000 men, women and children living and working on our rivers and canals in a state of wretchedness, misery and immorality. Not five per cent of the men, women and children can read and write ; and nine out of ten of the men are drunkards – they buy rum by pints, and drink it like water. In the little village of Braunston, near to Rugby, there are ten public houses adjoining the canal in a distance of little over a mile, at which the boatmen, their wives and children are to be seen at any time of the day. One boatman, who has worked between the Potteries, Birmingham and London during the past 40 years, does not know half a dozen boaters who are members of a Christian Church. He further says that two parts out of three of the men and women living as husband and wives are unmarried. A governor of one of our large gaols states that they are the worst class of criminals he has to do with. Many of the boats carry not more than 25 tons. The cabin is scarcely the size of a gentleman's dog kennel, into which are stowed or huddled together man, woman and six or seven children of both sexes, to live, sleep and die in. Mr Smith advocates the entire prohibition of women and children living and working on canal boats. The work can be done cheaper without them. The men would become more sober and industrious if “the women and children were out of the way”. The evidence given before the commission, and in Mr Baker's report, backs up this statement. The Royal Commission recommends that no child above the age of three and no female under sixteen should be allowed to reside in a canal boat. This will accomplish to a large extent, in the long run, the education and protection of the women and children living and working on canal boats. The Education Act, as it now stands, will have a damaging effect upon the better class of boatmen, who have homes on land ; it has given the boatman an open door through which to escape the compulsory clauses of the Education Act. All he has to do is give up his house, and live with his children in the cabin, and he cannot be compelled to educate his children. The Home Secretary and the President of the Local Government Board are preparing a Bill on the subject. No inspection could, in Mr Smith's opinion, be carried out so effectively and cheaply as the inspection of canal boats. With the assistance of the lock tenters or boat gaugers, two inspectors would be sufficient ; and if they were stationed at proper places, they would be able to see the 20,000 boats on our 4,800 miles of rivers and canals twice a year, much easier than a factory inspector would visit 1,000 factories and workshops. He would station one at Birmingham, and give him the Black Country and all the canals south and east ; and another at Manchester, and give him all the canals north and west of Birmingham. And their duties should be not to look after the children only, but to inspect the boats and canals generally, and report where life and property are in danger. Overcrowding in boat cabins must be stopped. Sunday travelling – except in special cases – done away with, the cabins cleaned as if they were on land, and the children educated. Anything short of this will not be satisfactory to the country.

#### **84      December 6 1876**

**OUR CANAL POPULATION** On Friday afternoon, Dr Diplock, Coroner for the Western Division of Middlesex, held an inquiry at the Foresters' Arms, Starveall, near Hillington, touching the circumstances attending the death of **Emma Burrows**, aged 9 years, who was drowned whilst in charge of a barge horse in the Grand Junction Canal on the 27<sup>th</sup> ultimo. From the evidence of **William Burrows**, father of the deceased, who stated that he was a boatman and lived on board the

vessel with his family, it appeared that the child (who had been accustomed to lead a horse along the towing-path ever since she was five years old) was proceeding along the canal to fetch a boat up when, by some unexplained means, the animal with the little girl on its back fell into the water. The horse, however, managed to get out safely, and was found walking on the towing-path. On the animal being stopped, and it being noticed that it had been in the water, a search was made for the missing girl, who was discovered, but was quite dead. The coroner, in summing up, strongly remarked on the disgraceful conduct of parents living in canal boats putting children of such tender age to work, and thought it high time the Factory Act should be made to apply to boatmen. A verdict of "Accidental drowning" was recorded. As an instance of neglected education by the canal side, eight persons at the inquest, including some of the jurors, were unable to write their names.

## 85      **January 3 1877**

### BREACH OF PROMISE OF MARRIAGE AT DERBY

#### SHERIFF'S COURT, DERBY, THURSDAY

[Before Mr Leech]

On Thursday a Sheriff's Court was held at the County Hall, Derby, when the following gentlemen were sworn upon the jury :- Mr John Hives (foreman), Mr C J Storer, Mr Robert Wilson, Mr Henry Fley, Mr Robert Ratcliff, Mr R Keene, Mr B Brindley, Mr Samuel Steele, Mr Thomas Merry, Mr J N Hefford, Mr Samuel Evans and Mr Francis Carter.

Massey v Byatt was an action for breach of promise of marriage remitted from the High Court of Justice, where a plea had been entered by the plaintiff, to which the defendant had put in no answer. The only duty of the jury, therefore, was to assess damages. Mr Hextall appeared for the plaintiff ; Mr Briggs for the defendant.

Mr Hextall, having opened the case for the plaintiff, called the following evidence :-

Sarah Jane Massey said she was a single woman, and lived with her father and mother at 33 Exeter Street. She had known the defendant, **Samuel Byatt**, for seven years. He first commenced to keep company with her six years ago, and promised her marriage in 1873. He frequently repeated that promise. In the early part of 1875, witness found that she was in the family way, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> December in that year, she was delivered of a male child, of which defendant was the father. When she told defendant of her condition, he said he would make her his wife. About three weeks before Christmas 1875, witness and defendant went to the clerk of St John's parish, and requested him to put up the banns of marriage. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, defendant bought a wedding ring in Sadler Gate and gave it to her. The marriage did not take place, but up to August last, the defendant paid her 10s a week for the maintenance of the child. In August 1876, the defendant promised to marry her at the races. A few days afterwards he absolutely refused to marry her, and declined to give any reason for this course. In 1870, defendant was working for his father, who was a carrier, and shortly afterwards she saw some boats on the canal with the name "Samuel Byatt" upon them, and he told her that they were his. Defendant's father died in June 1875, and last September she noticed that the name of Samuel Byatt had been painted off the boats. She had noticed no alteration in the names upon the boats until after he (Mr Hextall) had sent a letter threatening the defendant with an action of the 30<sup>th</sup> August last. On the 25<sup>th</sup> September last, she obtained an order from the borough magistrates affiliating the child upon the defendant, and ordering him to pay 3s 6d per week for 13 years, and to pay costs. No offer of compensation had been made to her to settle this matter.

By Mr Briggs : When before the magistrates, the defendant admitted the paternity of the child. She wanted to obtain an order for 5s a week, but only obtained one for 3s 6d a week. The circumstances of the defendant were gone into before that order was made. Her father was a tailor, and prior to her confinement she had been working for him. In 1870, when witness began to keep company with the defendant, she was 24 years of age. Defendant was about 35. Their acquaintance arose from their being neighbours and going out walks together. In August last, defendant did not tell her anything about indebtedness to his father's estate, but he paid her 10s a week up to that time. She did not know that the rest of the family had insisted upon a division of the estate, that he had now nothing coming in from his father's business, and that he was very much in debt. She believed he

was now working as a boat maker, but employed men under him. She had also seen him working canal boats, but she did not think he reckoned himself a labourer.

By the Under Sheriff : Her average earnings in full time were 14s or 15s a week, but she was now on “half time”, and had been since August last.

Ann Massey, mother of the plaintiff, said the defendant kept company with her daughter for six years, and visited her night after night. On the night of the confinement, defendant came to her house, expressed his intention to marry her daughter, and his great regret that the child had been born before marriage took place.

Mr Briggs addressed the jury in mitigation, and contended that the plaintiff had sustained no great injury from the conduct of the defendant but, on the contrary, had benefited from the breach of promise which he had made. That breach was due to the altered circumstances of the defendant, who was now a journeyman boatman in the receipt of 25s a week. The only loss plaintiff had sustained, therefore, through the breach of promise, was that she had missed becoming the wife of a person in that position. The only other point to be considered was the injury which had been done to the feelings of the plaintiff ; and no evidence had been offered on that point. He put in the letters of administration, which showed that the defendant's father's personal estate was sworn under £300, and called

Herbert Byatt, brother of the defendant, master painter, Exeter Street, who stated that both before and after his father's death he advanced money, amounting to about £110, to the defendant to carry on business. His mother also lent the defendant money after his father's death. In September last, he and his mother pressed the defendant for payment of the money, and he then assigned everything which he possessed to witness and his mother in payment of debts due for money borrowed from his father, from witness and from himself. Defendant was now a boatman in the employ of witness and his mother. They paid him 25s a week, and out of that he paid 12s a week board to his mother, and 3s 6d a week towards his child. His father's estate realised about £250 after the debts were paid, and that had to be divided between his mother and three children. Defendant owed more to the estate than his share, so that he would get nothing from that.

Mr Hextall replied upon the whole case, and asked the jury not to be deterred from doing their duty by anything which Mr Briggs had said, or by the evidence which he had called. He asked them to give the plaintiff substantial damages for the injuries which she had sustained.

The Under Sheriff summed up the facts of the case as above stated, and said it was a matter entirely for the judgement and discretion of the jury.

The jury retired, and after a short consultation, assessed the damages at £75.

## **86**      **January 3 1877**

OUR CANAL POPULATION    Marriage is to a great extent an unknown ceremony among the canal population of England, and deplorable revelations of the social state in which this much neglected class of our fellow subjects live are sometimes the result. One such revelation was made at the Runcorn Police Court on Thursday. A boatman named **Carrington** “bought” for 18s **Sarah Tyrer**, who lived with **John Taylor**, another boatman, as his wife. The woman contentedly took up her abode with her new lord, and received a sum of money from him for family expenses. Returning next day to her former floating home to fetch away her wardrobe, she found Taylor disconsolate, and elected to remain with him. Carrington was naturally furious over his threefold loss – the purchase money which he had paid, the article purchased, and the amount which he had handed over to the new mistress of his cabin. He accordingly appeared before the Runcorn magistrates on Thursday and unfolded the tale of his wrongs. This expedient, however, availed him nothing. The answer which he received was that he had no assistance to expect from the police authorities in a transaction which was in all its features of so disgraceful a character.

## **87**      **January 24 1877**

RACING ON THE PEAK FOREST CANAL    A case affecting the traffic on the Peak Forest Canal, the property of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company, came before the

Ashton magistrates on Wednesday. It appeared that for a considerable time boatmen have been in the habit of racing, or trying to pass each other in order to get first through the locks at Clayton, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> December last, there were nearly a dozen boats together, some of them completely blocking the canal. The defendants, **George Potts** and **James Higginbottom**, were in charge of boats on that date, and although warned by the lock-keeper to keep back and take their proper turn, they insisted upon going into the lock before others who had been waiting nearly two hours. Potts, in his hurry, ran against a boat in the care of a man named **Swires** who, finding he was in a perilous position, gave way, and let him into the lock ; Higginbottom also ran into Swires's boat, and both Potts and Higginbottom passed through the lock before the other boats, all of which arrived previous to them. Defendants pleaded that they had followed a general custom, and that the Company had no printed notice to guide them in the matter. Mr Harper, for the Company, said he would undertake that the Company would cause such notices to be posted. Potts was fined 10s 6d and Higginbottom 15s ; in default of payment, 14 days' imprisonment each.

### **88      March 28 1877**

**A MAN DROWNED IN A CANAL AT DERBY** The body of a man, name unknown, was found in the canal near the wharf of Messrs Cockshott and Gandy, on Monday. The body was taken out of the water by **John Bold**, a boatman, and Thomas Garratt, waggoner for Messrs Cockshott and Gandy, and was conveyed to the dead house, where it lies at present waiting an inquiry. The deceased man appears to be a navvy, from 35 to 40 years of age ; and the body, which appeared to have stood 5 ft 6 in high, was dressed in flannel and cotton shirts, moleskin trousers and vest, grey worsted ribbed stockings, heavy boots, with a leather strap passed round the waist.

### **89      May 9 1877**

**KILLING FISH WITH DYNAMITE AT SAWLEY** At the Derby County Police Court on Friday, **James Wall** was charged on a summons taken out by Reuben Bailey with taking and destroying fish in the canal at Sawley, over which a Nottingham club has the right of fishing. Mr Briggs appeared for the prosecution and Mr Hextall for the defence. Mr Briggs said he appeared to prefer a charge against the defendant of a somewhat serious nature, and he thought when they had heard the evidence that he should produce, that they would say that the case was about as bad a one of the sort as there could possibly be. The information was laid under the Larceny Consolidation Act, which provided for a penalty not exceeding £5. But the defendant was charged not so much with taking fish as with destroying it. He was a person living at Sawley, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> March last, he was seen with six or seven others in a boat (the other men being from Stapleford), and he was seen to throw a charge of dynamite into the water, which exploded and killed large quantities of fish of all kinds and of all sizes, and it was needless to remark such a proceeding inflicted very serious injury on the persons who had the right of fishing in the canal. They not only destroyed fish which were fit for catching, but a great deal that was not. The effect of this explosion was that the top of the canal was bestrewn with dead fish. These the defendant and others picked up, and took them away, and on the next day, he believed they were being sold in Sawley and other places at very low prices. Mr Briggs then proceeded to call the following evidence :-

John Roper, a subpoenaed witness, said he lived at Sawley. He knew the defendant, Wall, who was a boatman. Had known him between five and six years. On Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> March, he was on the canal side going from Sawley towards Shardlow. He saw a cob boat on the canal ; the boat contained seven men, one of whom was the defendant. Witness saw another man (who belonged to Stapleford) take something like a shot of dynamite, light a fuse, and Wall said, "Give me hold of the ----" ; Wall then took hold of the dynamite and threw it into the water. When he threw it in, the water began to boil, and a "certain quantity" of fish came up to the surface. Some of the fish were dead and some were living ; there were hundreds of fish of all descriptions. Witness saw James Wall pick out two fish from the water, and witness then went away, but he saw the men in the act of getting the fish out. Cross-examined by Mr Hextall : Was 50 yards off when he heard Wall call out, but witness was walking towards them. Was in the habit of speaking to Wall when he saw him.

Witness knew that something wrong was going on, but knew that it was no business of his. Had been in Derby gaol for three months ; this was for “insulting” a policeman. Mr Hextall : With a hatchet? (Laughter). Witness : Yes. Mr Hextall : In fact you insulted him with a pointed remark. (Laughter).

Richard Savage said he lived at Nottingham. He had the right of fishing in the Canal from Sawley to Shardlow.

Mr Hextall objected to this question, and called for the deed, as a right of fishing could be only shown in this way according to the legal provision.

Witness said he could produce the half year's receipt.

The Chairman made a note of the objection, and the case proceeded.

Sarah Chatterley, as witness for the prosecution, was called at the suggestion of Mr Hextall, and examined by him. She said she lived at the Derwent Lock House, at which place the affair took place. At about a quarter past three they heard the noise of some explosion, but could not say where it was. She went out on hearing a second explosion at half past 5, and went out between the two explosions, but saw no fish on the surface. Saw Wall towards 6 o'clock in company with one or two others, one of the men being the father of the witness Roper. Did not remember whether she said to Wall, “You have just missed the pantomime”, or whether she made further remarks. Cross-examined : At 5 o'clock she saw a quantity of fish on the water.

Mr Hextall said the information was not laid until the 27<sup>th</sup> April, the affair having taken place on the 25<sup>th</sup> March. He admitted that a large quantity of fish was destroyed, but he said that his client was not there, and that Roper either made a great mistake or wilfully stated that which was false. Bailey, the keeper, was a zealous man ; and he was brother-in-law of the witness Roper ; Roper said nothing about the matter until the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, after which, as he had admitted, they adjourned to a public house. He should call witnesses before the Bench to prove alibi, and that at the time this happened Wall was asleep in his own house.

**Thomas Mills** said he was a “butty” of the defendant Wall ; they both worked in the same stable, which was at the rear of Wall's house. Remembered Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of March ; at a quarter to three, went to the defendant's house. He called at the door and saw defendant's wife. He asked her where the defendant was, and she said “in bed” ; witness said, “Never mind waking him, I'll do it myself” ; but witness found that he should require Wall's assistance in the dressing of a horse which had been kicked, and so he went back to the house and stood talking to Mrs Wall for three quarters of an hour. Then Mrs Turner (Mrs Wall's mother), who lives in the same house, said, “Why don't you call Jim, and not keep Dusty waiting?”, (“Dusty” being witness's nickname). Defendant was then called, and he answered, and then came out. He had no shoes on, nor coat ; he looked between sleeping and waking.

Cross-examined : Mrs Turner's son has a boat on the river ; but does not live at Wall's house.

Elizabeth Turner, defendant's mother-in-law, gave evidence of a similar nature.

Amos Smith said he went to Shardlow on the day in question, starting from Sawley at three o'clock. On reaching the “Hully-gully” bridge, he saw seven or eight persons on the bye water on the side of the river opposite the towing-path. He heard something go off like a gun. When he got up to them, he saw one man in the water picking fish up and throwing them on to the bank, when the other gathered them up. Did not notice Wall there, but would not swear positively that he was not there. In coming back from Shardlow, he saw the same men at Derwent Lock picking fish out there. Did not take more notice of the men there than he did previously. His impression was that Wall was not there.

Cross-examined : Did not see a boat at all. Mrs Chatterley was looking at the same men when he passed Derwent Lock.

The Bench, the Chairman said, had sufficient doubt in the matter to dismiss the case.

Frederick Turner was charged with the same offence on the same day, but Mr Hextall asking for an adjournment, it was adjourned for a week.

**90 August 8 1877**

SHOOTING AFFAIR AT SALFORD On Friday morning, information was conveyed to the police at Weaste that a boatman named **James Hamlett** had shot his wife. Two constables went after the flat on which it was reported that the affair had occurred, and found it at Barton. Hamlett was apprehended, and his wife, whose face was bleeding, was taken to the Salford Hospital. The boatman stated that while he was shooting at a bird, his wife left the cabin, and the shot accidentally struck her. Further inquiries were afterwards made, and the story of Hamlett appearing to be true, he was liberated by the police.

**91 September 5 1877**

The Rev M R Graham of Sedgley has been appointed by the Bishop of Lichfield to labour among the boatmen of this diocese. Mr Graham will hold services as far as practicable at convenient meeting points, and it is expected that a moveable church will soon be ready.

**92 November 28 1877**

CRICH An inquest was held on Saturday last at the Canal Inn, Bull Bridge, before W H Whiston Esq, coroner, touching the death of **George Barker**, a boatman aged 70. The jury returned the following verdict, "Found drowned in the Cromford Canal, without any marks of violence upon him".

**93 January 2 1878**

ILKESTON PETTY SESSIONS, THURSDAY

DAMAGING A CANAL LOCK GATE **John Pulky**, a boatman of Loughborough, was summoned by Charles Pounder of Ilkeston for having wantonly and negligently opened a lock gate belonging to the Nutbrook Canal Company, and damaging it. The defendant was stated to have drawn a boat out of the lock without first opening the gate, which was damaged, but to what amount was not yet known, as it had not yet been repaired. The defendant, who stated that his butty was to blame, was fined 20s and 19s 2d costs.

**94 April 3 1878**

BURTON-ON-TRENT PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

ASSAULT AT ALREWAS **Thomas Palethorpe**, boatman, charged with assaulting James Ellsley at Alrewas on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst, was fined 40s and costs.

**95 April 10 1878**

DERBYSHIRE SPRING ASSIZES

STEALING A SHIRT **John Bown** (18), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing a shirt on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1878, the property of Walter Read. There were no previous convictions, and he was sentenced to six months' hard labour.

**96 April 24 1878**

BURTON-ON-TRENT PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Charles Keene**, boatman, was brought up in custody charged with cruelty to a horse at Dallow Lane, Horninglow, on the previous Sunday. The prisoner's boat was passing through the lock on Sunday afternoon and, because his horse drew it a little too near the lock gates, he threw his windlass at it and broke one of its fore legs. The magistrates committed the prisoner to gaol for a month with hard labour.

**97 May 15 1878**

DERBY COUNTY COURT, THURSDAY

A QUESTION OF BRICKS *Bennett and Leese v Bennett* was an action by a Derby firm of brickmakers to recover the sum of £82 15s for bricks and tiles supplied to a Mr Bennett, surgeon of

Branstone near Rugby, for the building of outhouses at Breaston. Mr Hextall for the plaintiffs, and Mr Briggs for the defendant. One of the defences was a set off in consequence of the bricks being bad, but this part of the case was met by the plaintiffs. From the evidence of Mr Henry Leese, one of the plaintiffs, it appeared that the firm have an office in St James's Street, Derby, and carry on the business of brickmakers at Spondon. About the month of February 1877, a man named Howe called at the office, and having presented a card, gave Mr Leese an order for goods to be consigned to Mr Smith of Breaston Fields. As Mr Smith was a customer of the plaintiffs, the goods were sent without making further inquiry, and in course of post an invoice was forwarded to Mr Smith, but it was returned accompanied by a letter. In consequence of the statement which the letter contained, the plaintiffs wrote to Mr Howe, who lived at Branston, near Rugby, where the defendant, who was interested in the property at Breaston, also resided. In reply they received a letter from Howe, dated March 20<sup>th</sup>, stating "the owner of the property, Dr Bennett, is doing the brickwork himself. I have taken your bill to Dr Bennett, who will pay for them at the end of April, the rents from his Breaston property falling due on Lady Day". Mr Leese on the same day wrote to Dr Bennett, and in reply received a letter from him stating "in case of default on the part of Howe, I will undertake to pay your account against him so far as materials are required for the work at Breaston. I am told the bricks are too soft for the outside. If so, we must have some more". Some time afterwards, Howe called at the plaintiffs' office, and complained of the quality of some of the bricks, and in consequence 2,000 bricks were supplied to replace the number which had been rejected. For these, no charge was made. After some further correspondence, Dr Bennett repudiated the claim, asserting that the goods were supplied to Howe, and not to himself. William John Parker, clerk in the employ of the plaintiffs, said that Miss Allestry, the defendant's sister-in-law, came to the office in St James's Street at the beginning of April, and she afterwards called, with Mr Howe, and saw Mr Leese. They complained that some of the bricks were bad, and it was arranged that the foreman should go over, and the bad bricks replaced with good ones, without charge. Joseph Watts, plaintiffs' foreman, deposed to making the inspection accordingly. There were about 2,150 bricks which were said to be bad. Witness sent 2,000 in place of these a few days afterwards. **William Sims**, boatman in the employ of the plaintiffs, having been called, Mr Briggs submitted that the plaintiffs must be non suited on their statement of claim. The goods were sold to Howe or Smith, and not to the defendant at all. The plaintiffs had supplied bricks to Howe, the builder, and then, as was often the case, they asked the defendant to be responsible for the materials. If there was anything in the letter of Dr Bennett, he ought to have been sued as guarantor. His Honour said it was very close to a guarantee, but he should not like to say it was off hand. Mr Briggs went on to say that Howe had become insolvent, and the defendant had paid him all, including everything, and also another man to finish the work. Mr Bennett, surgeon and apothecary at Branstone, was then called. The property belonged to his wife and her sister ; it was necessary to build some farm buildings, and he suggested that Howe should be employed. It was not correct that witness was doing the brickwork himself. There was no agreement between Miss Allestry and Howe, who is a carpenter. A man named Brightman was engaged by him to do the brickwork. When he wrote saying he would pay in case of default of Howe, he meant to refer to the future orders, and not anything in the past. Howe never brought the plaintiffs' bill to witness. Cross-examined : Did not say that he understood that Mr Smith had paid for the goods. Miss Allestry had paid Howe, At this stage, in consequence of the non production of the agreement between Howe and the defendant, the case was adjourned till Saturday at noon.

## **98 July 31 1878**

**BELPER PETTY SESSIONS** **William Walters** of Ripley, boatman, was charged with stealing a watch, value 20s, on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, the property of **Abraham Leeke**. The complainant said that he placed a silver watch in a cupboard in the boat cabin on the night named ; the following morning when he awoke the prisoner had absconded, the watch being missing. He pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

## 99 September 11 1878

**TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE ON THE THAMES** An appalling catastrophe occurred on Tuesday evening on the Thames, near North Woolwich. The *Princess Alice*, a saloon vessel belonging to the London Steamboat Company, was returning from Sheerness and Gravesend, laden with passengers, when it was run into by the *Bywell Castle*, a large steamer, and sunk, the result being a loss of life which is probably almost without parallel even in similar calamities.

The catastrophe happened just after darkness had set in (about eight o'clock), in the middle of the river, off the City of London Gasworks at Beckton, a little below North Woolwich Gardens. As the *Princess Alice* was rounding the point nearly opposite Beckton Gasworks and about a mile below Woolwich, her passengers were startled by hearing Captain Grinstead call out, "Hi! Hi! Hi! Where are you coming to?" Up to this moment the 700 passengers, confident in security, were as gay and merry and happy as holiday people on saloon boats generally are. In the next instant, a tall massive screw steamer was seen dimly in the darkness, bearing right down upon them. The head of the *Princess Alice* was turned in shore to avoid collision, but the catastrophe was too near to be averted. The big iron steamer crashed into the comparatively slight frame of the handsome saloon boat, striking her just in front of the starboard paddle box, and sending a dreadfully significant shiver throughout the whole ship. From a scene of pleasure and contentment, the saloon boat became an abode of horrors. Women and children rent the air with their screams and agonised shrieks. The big iron steamer, that towered aloft like some huge monster, drew back from the blow she had struck, and as she did so the water rushed in, and the *Princess Alice* began not only perceptibly but rapidly to settle into the deep channel of the river. The tide was ebbing fast in about 24 ft of water. Imagination can more readily picture than pen describe the awful consternation on board the doomed saloon boat. Little or nothing was available in the way of help. Some hundreds of people, rendered frantic by terror, were struggling towards a single rope. No earthly power could help them. Within five minutes of the first shock and thrill of the collision, the *Princess Alice* sank into deep water, leaving her freight of 700 souls screaming, shrieking and struggling in the dark cold water of the Thames driving rapidly down towards the sea. Narratives of survivors, given in simple, unvarnished language, tell more forcibly the tale of the disaster than any description gained from a collation of facts and such narratives as we are able to give. The captain of the *Bonita*, rightly named, had the honour and gratification of drawing several poor, half drowned and despairing mortals into his craft and saving their lives. The crew of the iron steamer threw over lines and buoys among the struggling mass below. Men clinging to buoys and floating timbers that drifted near the steamer clutched her chains and dragged themselves on board. A few women and children were saved, but of the 700 passengers fully 600 were, there is reason to fear, overwhelmed by the waters and drowned.

Following the *Princess Alice*, at a distance of about a quarter of a mile, was the passenger steamer *Duke of Teck*, belonging, as did the ill fated *Princess Alice*, to the London Steamboat Company, and commanded by Captain Funge. Passengers on board the *Duke of Teck* saw the collision, and saw the *Princess Alice* heel over towards the shore and sink. Steaming up to the spot, the boat pushed into the midst of what was now scarcely other than a mass of floating lifeless bodies. Two at least of the passengers, Mr Warren Hawkes and Mr Placet, of Woolwich, exerted themselves manfully in pulling on board all those whom they could reach, dead or alive. Some others on board appear to have been so completely stupefied by terror and consternation as to be unable to render assistance. Among the first of those raised on board the *Duke of Teck* was Mrs Towse, wife of Mr Towse junior, one of the chief managers of the London Steamboat Company. Mrs Towse, it is said, although unconscious, was still alive, but died soon afterwards. Three of her children, their nurse and governess shared the same melancholy fate. For every one saved alive, six or seven or more were drowned. Captain Grinstead and most of his crew met their graves with their passengers.

One of the survivors, Mr Henry Totman of 28 Upper George Street, gives the following clear and plain account of the catastrophe :- "I was a passenger on board the *Princess Alice*. She left Sheerness at a quarter past four. I should imagine there were 600 or 700 on board, a great many women and children. I never saw such a lot of children suckling. I have no idea of the time the

collision occurred, but it was dark. I had my brother-in-law with me. I was on the aft part of the paddle box. Up to this time, we were all merry and lively, and everything very nice. My first idea of danger was on hearing the captain shout out, "Hi, hi, where are you coming to?" The next thing she (the steamer) seemed to squeeze into us right amidships. There was no great shock. It was a thrusting in, and it seemed to crush her (the saloon boat) up. Then it was a scene, and no mistake about it. The steamer that had struck us seemed as if she backed out and let water in, and we were all gone in less than five minutes. It was indeed so. She went down in a mass. Children were crying, women screaming for ropes or anything to get hold of. In fact I stood back resigned ; I felt there was no earthly chance of getting before other people. She went down in many feet of water. I was saved by a buoy from a boat that went over my head. I caught hold of it, and that saved my life, and two others as well. The buoy was thrown from the *Bywell Castle* (the steamer in collision). For my own part, I do not believe there is one quarter of the passengers saved. I did not see 50 people. The *Bywell Castle* was such a big thing. Looking up at her, she seemed like a castle. The shrieks were something indescribable. It was something terrible to see 400 or 500 trying to get one rope. She was under water in five minutes. Everybody on board knew she was going. I heard one of the crew say directly the other ship came on, "She is sinking". I followed the crew about till they got frantic. There were bodies enough to be picked up ; but the boatmen and everybody wanted to save those that were alive. The water was thick with them. It was a little boat that picked me up. They threw ropes over from the steamer, and they did throw buoys over and saved me and two others – three of us altogether".

Claude Hamilton Wiele the younger says :- "I am a clerk in London, and was returning with my brother after a three days' holiday at Sheerness. I was standing on the lower part of the after gangway at the time of the accident, having left my brother somewhere on the top of the saloon deck. She had come up slowly against the tide from Gravesend, which we left at six o'clock. The captain was in his usual place on the deck. All the crew were sober, and everything appeared to be in good order. The *Princess Alice* was fully loaded, and the fore part especially was crowded. I estimated the number on board at 700 – quite that number. The saloons and cabins were full. I did not notice the collision, nor did I see the ship which struck us until I was in the water. Our vessel seemed almost cut in two, and in a few minutes seemed to double up in the middle and sink in deep water. The people rolled down the decks towards the opening ; it was so steep they could not stand. I did not wait for her to sink, and after giving a peculiar whistle which my brother might recognise, I jumped into the water. Presently I found my brother swimming about. We are both good swimmers, and we made for the screw steamer. The water was full of people, especially about the hull of the screw, and we had great difficulty in avoiding them. A woman clutched me, but I got away, and I saw her go down like a stone. The *Princess Alice* sank as I jumped off, and I was one of the last left on board, working my way to the stern. Before I jumped, I took off my boots, coat and waistcoat, and reached here in my trousers and shirt only. My brother is 21 years of age, and I am 20".

Thomas Harrison, captain of the *Bywell Castle*, states that he stopped the engines directly he saw the collision inevitable, and used every effort for saving life. He launched the starboard boat as quickly as possible, and then the port boat. These were very nearly swamped by the large number of people who clambered into them. Altogether 40 were saved by the *Bywell Castle* boats. The captain further says the collision was undoubtedly due to the *Princess Alice* improperly starboarding her helm when she ought to have continued her course on the port tack. Had she done this, no collision would have occurred. The *Bywell Castle* escaped uninjured, and is almost unscratched. The captain of the *Bywell Castle* has also made the following further statement :- Immediately I saw the collision inevitable, I stopped the engines, and ran forward myself. Finding that the people on the forecastle were saving life by throwing ropes overboard and hauling people up over the bows, I came aft again and got together the chief engineer, the cook, the donkeyman and the steward, and sang out to get out the starboard aft boat, which was soon done. By this time, we were joined by some of the passengers who had been saved, and I called loudly upon them to help and assist in pulling out boats, After getting to the starboard aft boat, we put out the port aft boat,

and then the port lifeboat. After this, I kept doing all I could, and had at the same time to keep the ship, which was rapidly drifting down, in position. The first two boats were immediately surrounded, and very nearly swamped by the people, who floated around like bees, and the water almost black with their heads and hats and clothes. The lifeboat, the last boat launched, was however unable to save many lives, most of the people having by this time sunk exhausted. The three boats would hold 70 persons, but I should say they did not save more than 40. They rowed immediately ashore, and afterwards returned to the ship, but by this time all was still, and there was nothing to show how many hundred death struggles had taken place there just before. Those who had been saved by hauling over the bows and by ropes thrown from the ship were afterwards taken off by the *Duke of Teck*, which came alongside about an hour afterwards, so that when the ship put up for the night off Barking, about a mile below the wreck, where she had drifted, we had none of the survivors on board. After casting anchor, I determined to abandon the voyage and return to London next morning to make my report and await the official inquiry. About 11 p m, Mr Chapman, the North Sea pilot, suggested taking one of the boats onshore, and seeing if we could render any assistance. He went near Beckton, and found 22 bodies lying in a factory covered with bags. Finding he could do no good, he afterwards returned to the ship. The *Bywell Castle* was quite uninjured. The *Princess Alice* must have been as thin as an eggshell, for she broke right up when touched. The morning was foggy, so that we were unable to start early, but we weighed anchor at eight o'clock and ran up to London. The collision was undoubtedly caused by the *Princess Alice* starboarding her helm when she ought to have continued her course on the port helm”.

The following is the narrative of George Thomas Long, the first officer of the *Princess Alice*, who was saved from the wreck :- The crew of our boat consisted of 18 hands all told, and when we left Sheerness on the return trip we had as nearly as possible 550 passengers. As we called at Gravesend and Rosherville later on, we must, on leaving the latter place, have had fully 600 passengers on board. We started from Rosherville at a quarter past six, and all went well until on running up Gullion's Reach, while standing on the fore saloon, the captain being on the bridge and a man and a boy on the look out, I observed a large black steamer coming down the river. It was then just half past seven, and the weather was fine and calm, and the moon shining beautifully over the water. On rounding Tripcock Point, the vessel's helm had been starboarded to pass a screw steamer bound down the river, and still remained so, and at this moment we saw the vessel, which proved to be the *Bywell Castle*. Our engines were immediately stopped. The other vessel appeared to be coming down upon us stem on and, looming in the evening haze like a great black phantom, gave me a foreboding of the unhappy disaster. She was then about 150 yards distant, and each vessel was, of course, rapidly nearing the other. Our whistle was at once sounded, and loud shouts raised by the man at the look out and others on deck to the *Bywell Castle* ; but it was then, I fear, too late. Seeing the collision inevitable, I ran to the lifeboat, but before I could reach it the *Bywell Castle* had twice crashed into us. She struck our vessel with her stern on the fore sponson, cutting clean through into the engine room. For a moment, we were locked together, and then we heard the water rushing in below, and a minute later we sank with the boat. I soon rose to the surface and, striking out for shore, was picked up by a waterman. We rescued our second mate and six passengers. The helm of the vessel was still at starboard when we struck and the engines stopped.

The *Bywell Castle* is a splendid iron built ship, nearly 260 feet in length, and rearing her bows, when light as now, fully 80 feet above the water. At the most moderate speed, the effects of a blow by such a mass of iron with ram like bows on a fragile craft such as the *Princess Alice* must have been instantaneously destructive. If, however, instead of backing out at once after the blow, the *Bywell Castle* had pressed on, and so plugged the hole she herself had caused, more of the passengers might possibly have scrambled up her bows. She had been formerly engaged in trade with Silene, and was now on her way to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in ballast, to take in a cargo of coals. She is of 891 tons register, and is the property of Messrs Hall of Newcastle. At the time of the occurrence, she was drawing about 10 ft forward and 14 ft aft.

The survivors generally agree in the description of the circumstances of the accident after it became inevitable. They speak of the lofty bows of the *Bywell Castle* passing over and overshadowing the

side and saloon deck of the *Princess Alice*, grinding along the bulwarks and ploughing into her amidships till the water rushed through her side and swept into the engine room. The boiler exploded, the saloon seemed to be lifted bodily from the deck, and the vessel broke in two, her bows and stern rising as her centre went down ; and then she plunged to the bottom with the vast bulk of her human freight hopelessly engulfed in a gigantic trap.

Among the many distressing incidents that were to be met with on every hand was one particularly touching. A party of four from the shop of Mr Durant, a tobacconist in the Brixton Road, consisting of Mrs Durant's father and mother, her sister and her little daughter, aged 8, started upon the excursion in the morning. Mrs Durant was confined but a week ago, and of course kept her bed. The party not returning, Mr Durant and his father repaired late on Tuesday night to the house of his wife's parents at Tulse Hill, only to find they had not arrived there. On returning to Brixton, they learnt the fact of the collision, and in the meantime the only survivor of the four who had left in the morning was brought home. This was Mrs Durant's sister, a young woman of 18, who had by some unaccountable means been saved from the wreck, and was found wandering about the streets of Woolwich in a state of temporary mental aberration. The only words she could utter were "Father" and "Mother", and these she continually repeated. It is stated that one young lady, a governess from Queen's College, took seven young ladies for the excursion, and that they were all drowned, the governess alone escaping, after being three times under water. Perhaps one of the most painful scenes in connection with South London is that which has been experienced at No 17 Ferndale Road, the residence of Mr Elliott. He and his wife were amongst the excursionists, leaving their children at home. A correspondent went to the address indicated as above by a police officer, and a child said, "Sir, there is nobody in ; but we see that there have been 120 persons saved, and surely father and mother will be home soon. I hope they will ; don't you, sir?" and the child burst into a fit of grief. Mr Frederick Thomas, an organist of repute, and his friend Mr James Westall, are also among the missing ; and the Rev Mr Rowley, curate in charge of St John's, Plumstead, who was himself saved, has been bereft of his son and daughter, aged respectively 12 and 14 years. Mr Drew, manager of the packing department of Messrs Leaf, silk merchants, Old Change, was on board with his family. He was saved, but his wife and three children were drowned.

On Wednesday afternoon, a message was received from her Majesty the Queen, dated Balmoral, Wednesday, in which her Majesty expresses her deepest sorrow and her sympathy with the relatives and friends of the poor creatures who perished by the disastrous occurrence. This news was forwarded to Woolwich. Her Majesty also telegraphed the Board of Trade for particulars, and deputed Lord Stanley, Lord Lieutenant of the county, to personally convey, through the coroner and jury, a sense of her deep grief and sincere condolence with the bereaved.

The operations at the scene of the wreck have disclosed the fact that the *Princess Alice* was broken up into three sections. At high water on Thursday night, the staff employed by the Thames Conservancy had succeeded in raising the fore part of the vessel where, however, no remains of the missing were found. Bodies have been discovered over a space extending four or five miles below the place of the collision to two miles and a half above it. Whatever contention there may be or may arise as to who is to blame for the actual collision, the significance of Captain Harrison's assertion, which is easily capable of proof, cannot be overrated in seeking for an explanation of the disastrous result of the accident.

An inquiry has been opened before the coroner. The proceedings on Wednesday and Thursday consisted entirely of the identification of the bodies that have been recovered. The bodies more recently brought up numbered 80. There was amongst them a mother with her child clasped to her breast, and there were two sisters, apparently about sixteen and eighteen, linked together in death. The sheds after dark were lighted with lanterns, and up to a late hour on Thursday the friends of lost relatives were minutely inspecting every face. William Wrench Towse, superintendent of the London Steamboat Company, identified the bodies of his wife, Emily Towse, aged 32 ; his son, Edgar Stuart, aged 10 ; his daughter, Winifred, aged three ; his son, Bernard Wrench, aged 14 months ; Mrs Eliza Hooper, his mother-in-law, a widow aged 63. His eldest son, his cousin and the nurse were still missing. He was not on board the boat at all during the day. George Hunt of 22 St

Mark's Villa, Kingsland, identified the body of his wife, Sarah Jane Milles Hunt, aged 45. He had lost four children, but their bodies had not yet been found. John Freeman, 96 New Western Street, Borough, identified his father, the fore cabin steward on board the *Princess Alice*. The father, mother, sister, baby and nurse were all lost, making six of one family. John Law, manager of the Charterhouse Street Branch of the London Joint Stock Bank, identified his sister, Susannah Law, a maiden lady residing with witness. Another sister was also missing. The deceased lady took out 48 of her Bible class for a treat, and out of that number only two were saved. William Samuel Page, Buxton Villas, Peckham, identified the body of his father, Samuel Mann Page, 47. Witness's wife, aged 21, a child, a brother (12), and a sister (16) were all lost, in all six. Witness was saved by clinging to the chains of the *Bywell Castle*. He had his wife and child clinging to him. He said to his wife, "You must sacrifice the child and cling to me, or we shall all be lost". The wife clung more closely to her infant and, as he could not save the two, both perished. Many others were identified.

A fund for the relief of persons bereaved by the calamity has been started at the Mansion House. The Queen has promised to contribute 100 guineas. A Board of Trade investigation will be held before the Wreck Commissioner. The usual preliminary examinations are already being made under directions of the Board of Trade.

Operations at the scene of the wreck, under the experienced direction of Mr Woods, one of the officers of the Thames Conservancy, have been more rapidly successful than might have been anticipated. With Thursday night's high water, the staff engaged in raising the *Princess Alice* from the bed of the Thames succeeded in placing the fore part of the boat high and dry on the shore of the Thames just above Tripcock's Point, known in the Admiralty charts as Margaretness. The saloon steamer was 220 feet in length. The portion recovered is 90 feet long, consisting of the fore cabin and fore saloon, the first boiler space and coal bunkers. Lying on the strand, the section of the vessel presents an appearance exactly realising the anticipations formed of her having been completely cut in two. The bows and bulwarks of the ship, as far as the sponson or small platform in front of the paddle box, are uninjured ; the fore deck saloon has broken up by the action of the tide on, or after, submergence, but apart from that, the fore part of the boat, with her name "*Princess Alice*" lies as she might be if waiting for repainting. The starboard sponson gives mute evidence of the nature of the blow that was struck. The *Princess Alice* was an iron boat of single plate about 3/8 of an inch in thickness. Through this the supporting belts and beams the tall sharp bow of the *Bywell Castle* pressed by the huge bulk of iron behind, must have crashed as if they were cardboard. Broken, torn and jagged, the edges of the fracture tell plainly enough that the destruction was instantaneous and complete. The *Bywell Castle* must have crashed through the sponson and side of the vessel and into the engine room, displaced the front boiler, and all but broken the vessel in half. On the opposite side of the ship, the part remaining extends fully ten feet further aft than the starboard side, indicating that the blow was not direct but oblique. Her bottom, covered at about three feet above the keel by the flooring of the saloon, was as entirely and sharply broken as the sides. The fore part of the boat had, in fact, swung round with the ebbing tide, and when found the stem was pointing down the river in the same direction as the stern of the after part of the boat, and at a short distance laterally from that portion of the wreck. Internal appearances were not altogether what might have been anticipated. On the beaching of the boat, when men went on to explore, it was found that the fore saloon, where many passengers might have been expected to be sheltering from the night air when the accident occurred, was almost clear of bodies. Five only were found, and one of these was so tightly jammed in the bannister of the stair that the woodwork had to be cut away before the leg of the drowned person could be extricated. In the fore-castle, just abaft a watertight compartment at the bows, a place that is ordinarily speaking sacred to the crew, no fewer than seventeen bodies were found, the majority huddled together under the table. A man and a woman were clasped in each other's arms. A child was found close pressed in his mother's arms, his toy trumpet in one hand entangled in her hair, his other hand clasping her neck. A well dressed lady was discovered holding fast between her teeth a locket containing a portrait, and secured to her neck by a guard that had in the last struggle passed over her ears ; she

wore gold earrings with red stones. The bodies were cleared away during the night. During the whole of yesterday, crowds of people flocked down by land and water to see the wreck. An extensive flotilla of heavy cobsles carrying passengers hung around five or six deep. None were admitted on board but those whose business entitled them to be there. It was not an inviting situation. The whole carcase of the ship from the deck to the bottom was covered, on each floor and on every flat projection, with full three inches of slippery, slimy mud. Strewn and piled along the deck in rough confusion were fractured tables, benches, the roof and window work of the saloon, intermingled with umbrellas, parasols, handbags, women's hats with spoiled feathers, men's hats and caps, full bottles of beer and aerated waters, empty bottles, flasks, scarves, shawls, lamps and lanterns, ropes and canvas, ship's fenders, small casks, and a large number of miscellaneous articles, all coated or saturated with mud, and mixed up in the most heterogeneous fashion. A number of men under the direction of Mr Denton, chief shipwright of the London Steamboat Company, were engaged in all parts of the ship, wading and fishing down deep in the mud and throwing up whatever came to hand. Outside the fractured section of the bottom, men were employed in forcing away the bulkheads below the engine room floor, to drain away more rapidly the water and mud that was rushing out at every crevice. In the fore peak was a single small watertight compartment that had been filled from above when the ship sank, and now held about six feet of water. Had the *Princess Alice* struck another ship and simply stove in her own bows, she would still have been safe. In the forecabin, where seventeen bodies were found, the men had taken up, or the water had forced up, the centre planks of the floor, thus allowing the water to drain into the bottom. The men were wading in thick muddy water, bringing up sometimes a handbag, an umbrella, parasol, or other articles of personal use. In the fore saloon below deck, the same process was in operation. There the hair cushioned seats that were ranged around had been torn up, and the loose hair was floating around, suggesting more than anything else the frisettes or paddings used in dressing ladies' hair. Almost everywhere bottles of beer had been washed about in the most erratic fashion, and had finally settled in the mud.

The *Princess Alice* was originally built by Caird for the Wemyss Bay Company to run from Glasgow to the Isles of Bute but, not being fast enough for that service, was purchased, with the *Albert Edward*, by the London Steamboat Company. Since then she has been several times strengthened.

A BUXTONIAN'S ESCAPE IN THE THAMES DISASTER Mr Shaw, ironmonger, has just received a letter from Mr Albert Heath of this town, who narrowly escaped drowning upon the occasion of the shocking accident on the Thames last week. In his letter, Mr Heath says :-  
"On Tuesday morning, I and two friends decided to go and spend the day at Brighton, but we were too late for the train, and decided we should go down as far as Gravesend by steamer, which started about 9.30 a.m. We got off at Rosherville (Gravesend), and spent the day there, and at 6.20 p.m. we embarked on board the unfortunate saloon steamer, *Princess Alice*, and started with between seven and eight hundred passengers on board (being chiefly women and children), and about 7.30 p.m. I had just left my friends amidship whilst I walked towards the stern, but I had scarcely turned my back on them before there was a tremendous crash, and I heard the captain say the vessel was sinking fast, so I looked towards the bow and saw that the fore part of the vessel had already sunk (being completely cut in two), and the stern was fast sinking when they managed to lower a boat near where I was standing and, just as she was going, I scrambled in, and a dozen fell on the top of me, and then I heard the sailor say that the boat was sinking, and I saw that it was indeed so, and that we were being sucked in by the vortex of the steamer, and the next moment I found myself struggling underneath the surface of the water, with people floating all round and above me. At that moment, I gave myself up for lost, but I struggled hard for dear life, and at last managed to get my head above water, and saw a large vessel a few yards on, so I swam to it, shouted for a rope, which they threw me and tried to haul me up, but I was so weak and had so many pulling at me from underneath, that the rope was gradually slipping from my hands, when a man came up in a boat and picked me up and rowed me, along with a dying woman (who had lost her husband and only child),

whom I was supporting against my knee, and a young girl also, to a place called Beckton, about 11 miles from London, as I was informed, on the North Woolwich side of the Thames. I was then separated from my companions and stripped of everything and rubbed over by a lot of sailors &c, who were there to render assistance, and then I was taken before a roaring fire and made to swallow brandy, and then I was wrapped up in an old shirt and coat and my own wet trousers and then put into a cart with several other poor creatures and driven to a canteen, and from there we were put into a covered van and huddled ourselves together for warmth ; and oh! the shrieks, groans and prayers were something heart rending. One poor fellow would ask if his brother was there as he was put in the van, and another husband would ask for a poor wife and four young children whom he had lost, and we got on like that to Woolwich Railway Station, where we were put into the train. One poor young fellow who volunteered to see me right, he living near me, and I got a cab from Fenchurch Street Station, and we rode home to this poor fellow's house, and, oh! the mourning of that house was awful to witness. I was then half naked, and dreaded going home to face my friends, not having seen either of the two who had accompanied me on the trip ; but when I got home, I found that one of them had arrived safely, but the other was missing ; but fancy the joy when, in about five minutes, he appeared. People say that it is wonderful and miraculous that, out of only about 100 saved, three out of one house should meet again alive. In the bustle consequent on the stripping and removal of me, I lost my waistcoat, front, tie, collar, one boot and stockings, and my hat got lost on my first entry into the water”.

#### **100 November 13 1878**

Lord Beaconsfield has written a letter to **Mr Mark Addy**, boatman of Salford, in which he says, “The attention of the Sovereign having been called to the repeated acts of heroism performed by you in saving, at the risk of your own life, the lives of many of her Majesty's subjects from drowning in the river Irwell, I have the gratification to inform you that the Queen has been graciously pleased to confer on you, in recognition of your gallantry and daring, the honour and distinction of the Albert Medal of the first class”.

#### **101 May 21 1879**

**BELPER** At the Magistrates Clerk's Office on Monday, **Thomas Hogg** of Bull Bridge, boatman, and Edward Smith of Milford, framework knitter, were fined 5s and costs each for being drunk.

#### **102 July 30 1879**

**DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT**

**AN UNGRATEFUL FELLOW** **Joseph Wilkins**, a boatman, was charged with assaulting Police-sergeant Waldron on the 21<sup>st</sup> July. The sergeant stated that, about a quarter past eleven on the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup> July, he was on duty in Bridge Gate, when he received information of a fire, which he found to be at the defendant's house in Court No 3. He went there, and met the wife of defendant coming away with a child in her arms, which she said was burnt. When the constable got to the steps leading to the house, the defendant stood on the landing. He (Waldron) had his light turned on. Defendant shouted that he did not want him there, and that he had better put that --- light out. He had a bucket containing a quantity of water, and when the sergeant went in he threw it over him. Witness stayed about a quarter of an hour and assisted to put out the fire, having found that the mattress was burning. During the whole time, defendant continued threatening and using filthy language towards him. Mr Bailey : Did he strike you? Witness : No, he only threw the water over me, and used bad language. Mr Bailey : And he did that after you went to put out a fire in his own house? I suppose he thought he had a right to do as he liked in his own house even in such an emergency. Was he sober? Witness : He was. Defendant would not give any account of how the bed took fire, but offered as an excuse that he was throwing the water on the bed, and it accidentally went over the officer. Waldron said the man turned round and threw it at him. The Magistrates considered that he had been very ungrateful, and he would be fined 40s and costs, the total amounting to 47s 6d, or one month's hard labour.

**103 August 20 1879**

LOUGHBOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY **Henry Leatherland**, boatman, was charged with assaulting Police-constable Shepherd at Loughborough on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. Defendant attempted to rescue Thomas Jorran from the custody of the police. Sent to prison for six weeks.

**104 November 26 1879**

DERBY COUNTY POLICE COURT, FRIDAY

A BOATMAN AND HIS DOG **William Day**, a boatman, was charged with trespassing in pursuit of game and conies on land in the occupation of Sir J H Crewe, Bart, at Swarkestone on the 4<sup>th</sup> November. William Foster stated that on the date named he saw defendant's dog on the canal bank. He drove it towards a boat defendant was in, and then told the latter he should summon him. Witness said he had cautioned defendant before. Defendant denied that he had been cautioned, and said he had no control over the dog because it leaped over the side of the boat and got to the bank. The Magistrates said there was some doubt about the caution, and he would therefore be discharged. They hoped these proceedings would be a caution to the defendant.

**105 December 10 1879**

LANGLEY MILL

A CHILD BURNT TO DEATH On Thursday afternoon, an inquest was held in the Navigation Inn, Langley Mill, before Mr Coroner Whiston, touching the death of **Charlotte Elizabeth Lewers**, a child six years of age, who died on the previous day. **Elizabeth Lewers**, mother of the child and the wife of **William Lewers**, boatman, Langley Mill, said that on the 20<sup>th</sup> November, in the absence of witness for a few minutes, deceased was putting sticks on the fire, when her clothing took fire and she was severely burnt. Dr Forbes, Eastwood, was called in, but the child died from the effects of the occurrence. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

**106 January 21 1880**

LONG EATON

A BOATMAN'S WIFE DROWNED An inquest was held on Saturday at the Navigation Inn, Long Eaton, by W H Whiston Esq, coroner, on the body of **Sarah Amelia Wakeling**, aged 47 years (the wife of **John Wakeling** of Loughborough), who was drowned in the canal on Friday morning. The husband of deceased, who is a boatman, residing at Loughborough when off his boat, stated that on Friday morning he started from Mount Sorrel about six o'clock. The boat was empty, and they (witness and his wife) were making for Shipley. A young man was driving the horse whilst travelling on the river Soar, and when near Zouch Mills deceased, who was steering, slipped and fell into the water. Witness was in the cabin, but on hearing the splash hurried to his wife's assistance. He got a boat hook and deceased was lifted into the boat. She had, however, sank once, and came up again on the other side of the boat. Her clothes were taken off and whiskey administered and blankets supplied. At Kegworth, medical assistance was procured, but deceased then seemed better, and the doctor said they might take her away in the boat. Deceased afterwards became worse, and died about six o'clock, whilst on the river Trent. Deceased was 47 years of age, and had been married 25 years. **Mary Ann Jones**, wife of another boatman, who was travelling in front of the last witness's boat, also gave evidence as to the accident, after which the jury returned a verdict that deceased was "Accidentally drowned".

**107 February 11 1880**

BARTON UNDER NEEDWOOD

THE SHOOTING CASE On Tuesday at Barton Police Court, William Duddell, who has been on remand for a considerable time, was again charged before the sitting magistrates with wounding **Thomas Wood** at Barton on November 5<sup>th</sup>. It may be remembered that on the evening of November 5<sup>th</sup>, several youths were discharging fireworks near to the canal at Barton, and the prisoner fired a pistol, the charge from which seriously wounded the prosecutor, who is the son of a

boatman residing at Wolverhampton. Mr Clement Palmer stated that after the occurrence Wood was taken to his surgery, and he directed his removal to the Cottage Hospital. He was suffering from a gunshot wound in the lower part of his body, and the charge had passed out of his side. No shot had been used. For many days the youth was in great danger, and it would be at least another month before he would be able to leave the hospital. Other evidence was given, and the Bench retired to consider the case. On their return, Mr Clay said they were unanimously of opinion that there was no proof of malice or intention to do harm, and the case would be dismissed. They hoped, however, that the case would be a warning to the prisoner and others not to play with dangerous weapons.

### **108 March 10 1880**

#### **PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY**

**CRUELTY CASES** **Samuel Scattergood**, boatman of Stratton, and **Alan Scattergood**, his son, were charged with cruelty to a donkey on the 12<sup>th</sup> ult. Inspector Campbell of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was on the towing-path of the canal near Shobnall Bridge, Burton, when he saw a donkey dragging a boat laden with iron. The animal seemed exhausted, but the younger defendant was beating it violently with a thick stick, his father, who was in the boat, encouraging him to do so. On examining the donkey, the inspector found that it was quite unfit for its work, and was marked all over its body by the blows from the stick. Neither of the defendants appeared. The younger one was fined 6d and 9s 6d costs, or seven days' imprisonment, and the father 20s and 19s 6d costs, or a month's imprisonment.

**Joshua Street**, boatman, Borrowash, who did not appear, was charged with cruelty to a horse. Inspector Campbell was on the towing-path of the canal near Shobnall Bridge on the 21<sup>st</sup> ult, and saw the defendant in charge of a horse which was drawing a boat laden with iron. The animal was in a weak exhausted state, and totally unfit for work of any kind. The defendant, who it was said had since disposed of the horse, was fined 5s and 12s costs, or seven days' imprisonment.

### **109 May 19 1880**

#### **DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT**

**MAKING THEMSELVES AT HOME** George Ragsdale and Joseph Dean were charged with doing damage to the extent of 1s to a boat, the property of the Derby Sanitary Authority. **John Day**, a boatman in the employ of the Authority, said about six o'clock on Saturday evening, one of the canal boats was left in the Nottingham Road Depot, the cabin being locked. At three o'clock that morning he went to the boat, and found the two prisoners in the cabin, it having been broken open. They had a large fire, and one was smoking a pipe while the other was asleep. In reply to witness's question as to what they were doing there, they said they did not know, and they were given into the custody of Police-constable Brown. At the Police Station, both said they were "fresh" and had nowhere to go, so they went there. Ragsdale now said they found the door open, and broke nothing. Mr Clarke, inspector of nuisances, said this thing was constantly occurring, and it gave the officials a great deal of trouble. They were each fined 5s and costs 6s 6d, and ordered to pay the damage, with the alternative of seven days, which they both accepted.

### **110 June 2 1880**

**MYSTERIOUS DROWNING CASE AT LITTLE EATON** During the night of Wednesday last, a coal dealer named Frederick Parker was drowned rather mysteriously whilst on his way to Little Eaton from Derby. The inquest was held at the New Inn, before W Harvey Whiston Esq on Friday afternoon, Mr W Tatham being the foreman of the jury.

Caroline Parker, sister to the deceased, said she lived at Little Eaton. Her brother was a coal merchant, and lived in Furniss Road, Brook Street, Derby. He was 41 years of age. Witness lived with her mother at Little Eaton, and her brother (the deceased) was in the habit of coming over to Little Eaton. On Wednesday morning last he came twice to see them. Not feeling very well, he said, he had walked from Derby. He left at half past ten in the morning, but he said he had had it, and he had no appetite, being unwell.

Andrew Cocking, quarryman living at Little Eaton, said on Wednesday night he was walking from Derby, when he heard a horse coming after him at a gallop. On finding that it was riderless, he stopped it just against the canal bridge. He heard a man call, "Whoa", and therefore went back with the horse as far as the wooden bridge. It was dark, and raining fast. On finding nobody, he took the horse to the policeman. The horse had a cart bridle on, but no saddle.

Police-constable Jesse Arms said about 2 a m on Thursday, he was returning from work when he received information from his wife of the horse being found. He accordingly went out and examined the sides of the roads and fences from the canal bridge down to the wooden bridge, but found no trace of anyone. At 10 a m on the same day, he received information of the body being found, and on going to the canal bank he saw the deceased. He searched the clothing and found a watch, which had stopped at six minutes past eleven.

**Charles Elk**, boatman of Bridge Gate, Derby, said on Thursday morning he was on the towing path at Little Eaton, a little below the stone bridge. He was in charge of a boat. He saw the body of the deceased on the water, and he called out to his mate, "They are getting on with the dogs well here – here's a big black one", thinking at the time that it was a dog. On getting up, however, he found the deceased, who was floating face downwards. On turning the body round, he recognised it as being that of Frederick Parker. On the previous evening he saw him going into the Punch Bowl, and he noticed at the time that he was talking wildly, and he had been rather "funny" for some time. He was sober when witness saw him. The water was about two feet deep.

The Coroner, in summing up, said the occurrence was probably accidental, and there was no evidence to show that the deceased contemplated suicide. Probably he fell from his horse near the heap of stones, and in trying to regain the horse, fell into the water. There were no marks of violence about him to show that there had been any foul play, and therefore he imagined that the best verdict would be one of "Found drowned".

The Jury returned a verdict accordingly. One jurymen remarked that the deceased had been in an asylum, and another (the landlord of the New Inn) said that the deceased was very rambling in his talk on Wednesday when he called at that house.

### **111 November 16 1880**

**SUICIDE IN THE CANAL NEAR DERBY** On Monday afternoon, a boatman discovered in the canal at Alvaston the body of a man. Information was given to Police-constable Wheatley, and the body was got out and conveyed to the Navigation Inn, where it awaits an inquest. From part of deceased's clothes and a letter, which were found at the side of the canal, it was found that he was George Albert Milner, a brewer's traveller, and the terms of the letter left no doubt that he met his death by his own will.

### **112 December 8 1880**

#### **ILKESTON**

**THE BODY OF A CHILD FOUND IN THE CANAL** On Friday evening, Mr W H Whiston, coroner, held an inquiry at the Sir John Warren Inn, Ilkeston, touching the finding of the body of an unknown male child in the Erewash Canal. The circumstances are as under :- **Thomas Bull**, boatman of Leicester, said that he was emptying a boat of slack on the Erewash Canal at Ilkeston on Thursday morning for Mr S Shaw, when he saw a cigar box floating in the canal. He lifted it out of the water with a shovel, then opened the lid of the box and took out a piece of paper and a piece of calico. The latter was rolled up, and inside it was the body of an infant. He put the child in the box again and took it into the office, where it remained until fetched away by the police. The lid of the box was tied down with a piece of string. Robert Wood, surgeon, said he had examined the body of the child in question at the police station, and found it to be that of a prematurely born child. It appeared to have been in the box a length of time, and was much decomposed. It was the body of a still born male child, and had probably been in the box a fortnight. The Jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony.

**113    December 22 1880**

**DERBY BOROUGH POLICE COURT**

“A COWARDLY FELLOW”    **Henry Highley**, boatman in the employ of Messrs Pegg, Morledge, was charged by the police with assaulting his wife in Albion Street on Saturday night. Police-constable Walden said he saw prisoner's wife, who had a baby in her arms, trying to persuade him to go home. He refused to do so, and struck her violently, and afterwards kicked her on the legs, knocking her full length in the road. The prisoner had been previously charged with assaulting his wife, and the summons was then withdrawn, and it seemed that in this case the woman had tried to beg him off. The Bench thought prisoner a cowardly and good for nothing fellow, and fined him 40s and costs, which was paid. The Bench said if prisoner was convicted again of such an offence, he would be sent to gaol without the option of a fine.