

**ALDERLEY AND WILMSLOW ADVERTISER**  
**1886 to 1899**

**1      26 February 1886**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CASES    A number of cases came before the magistrates where parents were summoned for not sending their children to school. Mr Davies, school attendance officer, prosecuted on behalf of the Northwich School Attendance Committee. **William Carter**, boatman, Middlewich, child Eliza, fined 2s 6d ; **Henry Mellor**, boatman, Middlewich, child Thomas, fined 2s 6d.

**2      26 February 1886**

DROWNING FATALITY    On Thursday evening, **James Palin**, 16 years of age, a native of Sandbach and employed on board a canal boat belonging to **John Crewe**, Stoke-upon-Trent, met his death by drowning. The boat was lying in Ellesmere Port Dock at the time. No one saw the accident, but a boatman named **Ledsham** heard a voice calling, "Father", and searching in the water with a long pole found the body. Grappling irons were procured and the corpse recovered, but all attempts to restore animation proved futile. Mr Churton, county coroner, held an inquiry on the body on Friday at the Bull's Head Inn, and a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**3      28 May 1886**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CASE    **Frederick Jinks**, boatman, was summoned for not sending his child regularly to school. PC White proved serving copy of summons personally. Mr Steele, school attendance officer, stated that the child had been away from school 23 consecutive weeks, and the committee ordered him to take proceedings. Fined 5s.

**4      17 September 1886**

A BOATMAN DUPED IN HORSE DEALING    At the Altrincham Police Court on Thursday, before Messrs E Collins and H T Goddum, **Samuel Rawlinson**, a boatman of Runcorn, was brought up under warrant charged with cruelty to a horse at Sale, on the 24<sup>th</sup> July last. In answer to the magistrates' clerk (Mr Harris) as to why he did not appear in answer to the summons, he said that he told the inspector that he had no money to go with. Inspector Aplin said prisoner told him he would not come, and that they would have to fetch him. This officer further stated that on the day in question he saw the prisoner in charge of a horse drawing a boat. He noticed the animal was very lame. Prisoner was thrashing it. He examined it, and found it suffering from a diseased fetlock joint. He told defendant he should not work the horse, and he replied he was only trying it. He told him it was not fit to work, and he found defendant had since got rid of the horse. Witness had been informed that morning that the prisoner was hardly right in his head. Inspector Meredith, Sale, corroborated. In reply to the Bench, he said he considered it cruelty to work the horse. Prisoner's mother, who was in court, said her son had a bonny horse which he went and swopped for another, and when he took it home, she told him it was a cripple. Defendant denied he had ill used the horse. He was giving it something to eat at the time. Inspector Aplin informed the Bench that there was a man at Runcorn who was in the habit of buying these horses, and letting them out to boatmen at 5s a week until paid for. He did not wish to press the case against the prisoner. The only object was to put a stop to this cruelty. He should be satisfied with costs. The Bench accepted the suggestion, and prisoner was accordingly discharged, his mother paying 19s 7d costs.

**5      11 February 1887**

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS    At the Sale Petty Sessions on Monday, before Mr James Worthington and other magistrates, **Enoch Buckley**, boatman of Wincham near Northwich, was summoned for cruelty to two mares at Sale on the 12<sup>th</sup> January. A police officer proved seeing the man in charge of

the animals in question, and Mr C H Harrison, VS, said that at the request of Inspector Aplin, he examined them. One, a dun coloured pony, was very much emaciated, and suffering from ringbone. It was in a dreadfully dirty condition. A portion of the hair was completely off one side, simply through mange. It was suffering great pain, and not fit to work. The second pony was lame from navicular disease. There was a wound on the withers, caused by the friction of the saddle. The animal was unfit for work of any description. Both of them ought to have been destroyed. Defendant said he had been deceived in the animals. He had only had to do with horses some eight months, and it had cost him £27. He took them to a man who understood horses, and he said they would be all right in the course of a few weeks. They had been out at grass three weeks. He was fined 10s and costs, it being understood they had been destroyed.

**John Bloor**, Runcorn, was also charged with cruelty. Inspector Aplin said that in this case he found the animals had been destroyed, and he did not therefore wish to press the case. All they wanted to do was to stop these animals on the canal from being worked. They received letter after letter, and for the last two or three weeks he had gone in plain clothes to catch the parties. Ordered to pay the costs, 16s.

Another boatman named **Parkins** was summoned for cruelty to a mule. Inspector Aplin said that on the 20<sup>th</sup> January he was at Heatley, when he saw the defendant in charge of two mules drawing a heavy barge. One of them was suffering from contracted tendons, and was in great pain. He spoke to the defendant, who said it had been lame for some time, and declined to take it out. Mr Harrison, VS, who was with the Inspector at the time, deposed that it was not fit for work. Defendant contended that it was, and produced a veterinary surgeon's certificate. He was fined 5s and costs.

## **6 1 April 1887**

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE AT SUTTON** At the Macclesfield County Sessions on Tuesday, **William Harrison**, boatman, was summoned for cruelly ill-treating a mare by beating the same at Sutton on the 17<sup>th</sup> March. Constable Johnson said on the 17<sup>th</sup> ult about eleven a m he was walking along the Leek Road, Sutton, when he saw the defendant driving a mare attached to a boat on the canal. Defendant was flogging the mare in a most disgraceful manner with his whip. The horse was in a thorough lather of a sweat, and was also in very poor condition. Defendant said he only hit the horse twice. Constable Johnson, continuing, said there were a great many weals on the horse. He seemed to be breaking the ice with the horse. The boat was loaded with limestone, and was about a quarter of a mile from Fool's Nook. Constable Clays corroborated Johnson's statement, and added that the horse was too weak to draw the load. Defendant was fined 20s and costs, or fourteen days' imprisonment.

## **7 29 July 1887**

**CHESHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES**

**THE BOYS AND THE BOATMAN** **Reuben Roberts alias Naylor** (on bail), a boatman in the employment of the Shropshire Union Company, surrendered to an indictment charging him with maliciously inflicting upon Thomas Dentith grievous bodily harm at Chester on the 11<sup>th</sup> April. Mr D A V Colt-Williams prosecuted, and Mr Simpson, at the request of the learned judge, defended the accused, who appeared in the dock with his face bound up and looking very ill, having, it was stated, just come from the Chester Infirmary. He was allowed a seat in the dock. The jury found the prisoner guilty of a common assault only, and he was sentenced to a month's hard labour.

## **8 19 August 1887**

**SHOCKING DROWNING CASE IN CHESHIRE** Mr Worsley, coroner, held an inquest on Wednesday at Lymm on the body of Ann Rigby, 52 years of age, a widow, who had lived alone in Fletcher's Lane, Rush Green, Lymm. The body of the deceased, a fustian cutter, was found in the Bridgewater Canal on Tuesday morning. Thomas Rigby, a painter, having identified the body as that of his mother, Martha Drinkwater, Sandy Lane, Lymm, said that on Monday night she saw a drunken woman, supposed to be the deceased, leaning against the gate of a field that adjoins the

canal. Sarah Shallcross said that on Monday night, during the rush bearing festival, she saw the deceased, who had had drink. Deceased said she was “put about” a great deal, and that she would “bottom the water”. Witness said, “Don't talk so silly”, and she replied, “I shall be found in the ranks of glory before this time tomorrow”. The deceased would be steady for several weeks, and then have drinking bouts. A local sergeant of police said the woman was very drunk on Monday night, and he said he should summon her, and if he heard of anything more he should lock her up. He afterwards saw her in a swing boat on the fairground. Mary Johnson, who laid out the body, said that there were no marks of violence on it, but there was a scar that seemed as though it might have been caused by a fall. Evidence having also been given with regard to the finding of the body by a boatman, the inquiry was adjourned to see if any additional evidence could be obtained.

## **9 14 October 1887**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

WASTING WATER For wasting water by not attending to the regulations for locks, **George Jones**, a boatman, was fined £1 including costs.

## **10 18 November 1887**

THE POACHING AFFRAY NEAR BROOKLANDS

TWO MEN BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES

STOCKPORT POACHERS ON (THE ASLINGTON?) ESTATE At the Altrincham occasional police court on Saturday, before Mr H Bleckly, two men named William Scott and Edward Connor were charged with stealing certain geese, the property of Mr Hillkirk, at Brooklands on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> November, and there was a further charge of violent assault upon certain police officers, Sergeant Cooper and Constable Proudlove, with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

Superintendent Leighton was sworn, and deposed that on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> November there was a robbery of geese on Mr Hillkirk's farm, and the police came in contact with a number of men on the railway, near where it had taken place. Sergeant Cooper and Constable Proudlove were violently assaulted, both being confined to bed at the present time. The two prisoners had been apprehended late the previous night, and they had not had time to get up the evidence. He should like the prisoners to be seen by the officers for the purpose of identification. The Magistrate's Clerk (Mr Harris) : You had better tell the magistrate the result of that evidence. Mr Bleckly asked how he connected those two men with the robbery. He ought to have some evidence to justify him in remanding them. Where were they taken into custody? Superintendent Leighton : In Manchester, last night. Mr Bleckly : You ought to have some evidence. Scott was about to make a statement, when he was warned by the presiding magistrate not to do so unless he thought proper. Inspector Britain was then sworn. He said he was the officer detailed to make inquiries into the case by the chief constable. In company with a Manchester detective, he apprehended the two prisoners in a house in Bridgewater Street, off Deansgate. As soon as witness got into the house, prisoner Connor ran out at the back and was climbing over the yard door, but he caught him before he could get away. The Manchester detective apprehended Scott. Mr Bleckly : Were you in plain clothes? Witness : I was, sir. On my apprehending Connor, he said, “Is it for this Altrincham affair? You have made a mistake. I can prove I was not there on Friday night”. That was before I said anything about the affair. Connor : I beg your pardon. Mr Bleckly : Stop. You had better not say anything. Inspector Britain : I brought them to the Town Hall, and they both heard the charge. Mr Harris : When they were both together, what did they say in reply to that charge? Inspector Britain : They said they could prove where they were on that night. Prisoner Scott made a statement to the Manchester detective when on the way to the Town Hall. Mr Harris : Is the statement he made relevant to the inquiry? Inspector Britain : It is, sir. We are unable as the prisoners were brought here late last night to produce any further evidence. In reply to a further question, Inspector Britain said he should be able to bring good evidence against the prisoners as well as apprehend the other men. Mr Harris informed the prisoners they had a right to put questions, but it was a suggestion to them by the learned magistrate that they should not do so at present. Scott : I wish to speak of the

reason of this man (Connor) running away. The other man I do not know. He came about three minutes before the two detectives arrived. He shouts me out of the parlour. I said what is to do. He says I have been told to tell you you must make your escape for stealing ducks at Altrincham, and said tell them as I told you : to mind their own business. Who has told you? During the time I was talking to this man, he heard them telling me about the detective. Both of them ran out into the backyard. They caught Connor, the other man made his escape. I asked him (Connor) what he had brought this man to his house for, to get us into trouble. He said he had brought him to find me a job. As for me making my escape, I am just as innocent as you are. I stood there and did not know what to do.

Connor : I want to speak a few words.

Mr Bleckly said at that stage it would not be right or proper that they should allow him to do so. They would have to answer the charge when it was brought in a proper form. He was not saying they were the persons who did this, but there was sufficient evidence before him to allow that they should be called upon to answer the charge. If they could answer it, they would be discharged.

Prisoners were then remanded until Thursday morning.

The men Scott and Connor were brought up yesterday morning, before Mr H Bleckley and Mr Joseph Gaskarth, charged under circumstances narrated above. The chief feature was the evidence of Hill, a Stockport poacher, who alleges that he saw Scott and others at the Higher Pack Horse, Hillgate, where they discussed the matter. Hill paid for some two or three half gallons of beer for them, which the magistrates remarked was very generous, as Scott indignantly denied that he was there, and that it was a made up case for the Stockport gang to incriminate the Manchester poachers. Hill ultimately admitted he was out with others on the Adlington estate the week before, but denied being out on the morning in question at Brooklands.

The first witness was PC Proudlove, who stated he was stationed at Altrincham. On Saturday November 5<sup>th</sup>, he, Sergeant Cooper and PC Dainteth went towards Brooklands. They started about one o'clock. They walked down the line past Timperley station, and by the railway embankment they came to a platelayer's hut near the footbridge which passed over the line. He and Sergeant Cooper looked in the doorway and saw it was full of men. It was a rather cloudy night. He should think there were nine or ten men there. He went down the embankment and drew his staff to stop the men coming out. One man was partly out, and he struck him, and he went in. The persons inside got a plank, opened the door, and used it as a battering ram, knocking him over. He got up and rushed at them with his staff, driving them back into the hut. They got the plank and knocked the side out of the hut. There was a boarded space as if where a window had been. They rushed out of this, and he heard one man say, "Are you going to be kept in by those three -----? Rush out and murder them". They got out at the opening they had made, and got up the embankment on to the railway. It seemed to him that there were nine or ten men. To begin with, he was struck under the right eye with a stone. Afterwards he saw a man with a stick, and he hit him on the wrist. He identified Scott as the man who struck him. They were then standing face to face. Witness was then knocked down by a blow from a stick over his right eye. His staff was taken from him after a severe struggle, and he was struck over the head. He then became insensible, and knew nothing more. Before this, he saw both Cooper and Dainteth fighting with the men. He had no doubt about prisoner Scott being one of them.

In answer to other questions, he said that last Tuesday morning he was in the police station, when he saw Scott with three others, all perfect strangers to him. He had not known them before. He then went and picked Scott out. He said, "This is one of the men". Scott hung down his head and never spoke. Ever since the occurrence, he had been in the hands of Dr Luckman.

The Magistrates' Clerk : You have not said a word against Connor, and do not identify him?

Witness : No.

Cross-examined by Scott : It would be about quarter to two in the morning when I saw you. I recognise you from your general appearance. I was close to you. I never saw you before in my life. You did not make any remark when you struck me. It was a walking stick.

Scott : I say I did not see you that night. I was beastly drunk in Manchester. I am as innocent as you.

William Smith, living in Higher Hillgate, Stockport, said he was a labourer, and worked in the brickyard. He remembered Saturday morning 5<sup>th</sup> November. He was in a beerhouse, the Higher Pack Horse, about half past eight. There were others there beside him. He knew one "Scotty" and little Teddy Raney. Scott who was in the dock was the man. They had no conversation. They were not long there. He was there two or three hours. Witness was there from about seven o'clock, and Scott might come in about seven. There were other men there belonging to Stockport. He did not see any man there who had a wound on his ear and had it plastered up. He saw no nets.

Examined by Superintendent Leighton : I paid for two or three half gallons for Scott's party. I was at the other end of the room. There might be four or five of them. I have not known Scott so long, but Teddy a good while. It would be about a year since he knew Scott. He had been out poaching with Bailey.

Superintendent Leighton : I must ask you again about the conversation with these men. You paid for drink for them – what was this conversation?

Witness : They asked me if I had any money, and I said, "No".

Yet you paid for two or three half gallons?

I did not pay for it then, but I had to pay afterwards.

In answer to Mr Bleckley, he stated he ordered the drink. He sometimes paid for drink for other people, and sometimes people paid for him. These men did not pay for him.

Mr Bleckley : It seems a little generous for you in your position to give men drink to that extent at that time in the morning.

Superintendent Leighton cautioned the witness to tell the truth and the whole truth. He asked, "Did not these men tell you they had had an affray with the Sale police?"

Scott said it was a (?????) affair. Twelve months ago, he was brought in and he was innocent. He could see from the way the superintendent put the question what the result would be.

Superintendent Leighton : You have no right to say that.

Mr Bleckley (to prisoner) : You will not improve your case by it.

Scott : It is very hard for a man to stand in a dock and hear it said, and not (.... .... ....)

Mr Bleckley : It is perfectly right to ask him.

Superintendent Leighton : You do not recognise Connor.

Witness : No.

Scott cross-examined him as to whether he had not been at Adlington that night. He said he did not remember saying he had been out at Adlington that week. He could not tell who was with him.

The Clerk : Do you mean to say you do not know who went with you to Adlington on a poaching expedition?

Witness : Yes ; certainly.

The Clerk : Well, Scott asks who they were.

Witness : They were only four.

Scott said that the man told him that he saw a gang of men coming from Adlington in the direction of Timperley. Witness acknowledged that his name was not "Skinner" but "Galloper". He had been out the week before on the Adlington estate, but not on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> November. Witness declined to answer further questions, but he was told he must do so. He then said in reply to Scott that he did not know whether he paid for Scott specially, but for the company he did.

Scott : You must be an ignorant fool to pay for everybody and not know them.

Superintendent Leighton said he had two other witnesses. He sent a constable for them, but he had had a telegram saying he was unsuccessful. They were very important indeed, and he must ask for a remand in order to produce them.

ADJOURNED INQUIRY The prisoners were again brought up shortly after four o'clock in the afternoon, the same magistrates being on the bench. The following additional evidence was offered :-

**Thomas Evans**, Barbridge, Nantwich, boatman, said he was brother to the captain of the *Laura*, of

the Shropshire Union. On Friday evening, November 4<sup>th</sup>, he left Manchester at four o'clock in the afternoon. On the way, at the bottom of Kenworthy's Hole, he saw a number of men, who asked him to give them a lift. He saw about four, but not any more. One of the men who spoke to him was "Mr" Scott. He allowed them to come on the boat. They dared not refuse them. He could only think of four more. There were others, whose occupation he did not know, but one lived at Runcorn. Two of the men (Scott and another) kept in the cabin. They kept talking to witness and another man on the way, first about one place and then another. They went with witness on the boat, very near to Timporley Station. They told witness when they wanted to get off. Scott said, "Please put the boat to the side, and let us get off". Witness was not above two yards away at the time. Scott spoke to his mate. They put the boat to one side, and witness saw Scott and others get off.

Mr Bleckley : Were there other men belonging to them?

Witness : Yes.

In reply to other questions, he said the reason why he thought others got off was that he heard Scott telling them they were always asleep. He did not notice whether they had anything either getting on or getting off the boat. He was frequently in the habit of going to Manchester, and knew the bridge crossing the railway. It was on the Timperley side of the bridge they got off. There was another boat following his, but he had not heard that any men came by it.

Mr Harris (Magistrates' Clerk) asked about the number.

Witness : I was afraid they would knock our brains out.

Mr Harris : But this night there were only four?

Witness : But there were more other nights.

In answer to other questions, he said he could only make out four. Sometimes they came in a "ruck" and jumped on the boat. It was more than their place was worth to prevent them.

Mr Bleckley : It was very improper, no doubt.

Cross-examined : It was Friday night when you came to my boat. I heard you shouting to the man that was steering. I heard you say, "Jack, there's three men wants to go down the canal". This was to my mate.

Scott : And what did I say?

Witness : I said, "All right".

Scott : Did you see any more than three get on?

Witness : Yes. There was one more.

In answer to other questions : I knew you before.

Scott said he did not get on the boat that night, but asked for three others.

Witness said that Scott asked his mate. He was certain another man called him Scott. The men got off on the side of the canal, the houses near the railway.

Scott : I did not ride with you at all that night. I asked for some men, but did not go with them.

In reply to Connor, witness said, "I cannot swear to you at all".

**Thomas Hopley**, St Martin's Moor, near Oswestry, boatman, said he was in the employ of the L and NW Railway Company, and he heard Scott ask for a ride. He had known Scott before, and this would be the third time he had gone on the boat. Scott asked for a ride for three men and Scott, and the others got on the boat. He knew Scott. When the boat pulled up, he saw four men including Scotty get off, but he only knew another man and Scotty. He did not notice whether they carried anything, and did not see any others that night. It would be between nine and ten when they got off the boat on the railway side of the canal. When Scott had come before, he had generally got off about Brooklands.

By Scott : We did not observe where you went when you got off. I did not hear anyone say that it was too light to work that night.

In reply to the Clerk, witness said that he had no doubt at all Scott was the man.

Scott said he was not there that night, and had been on his boat ten times, and had got off at Brooklands.

Mr Bleckley : All the more reason why he should know you.

Superintendent Leighton at this stage said he had had the prisoner Connor mixed up with three or four others, and the witness failed to identify him, and there had been no evidence at present to connect him with the offence. He did not think, therefore, he could ask them to detain Connor. Of course if anything turned up in the meantime, they could apprehend him again. Mr Bleckley : Very well then, Connor will be discharged. Superintendent Leighton explained the circumstances under which Connor had been apprehended, as detailed above. Scott offered to tell the reason why Connor was at his house, and again asserted his innocence. Superintendent Leighton asked for a remand in order to make further inquiries. There were other men implicated in the attack on the police.

Connor was then discharged. Scott was remanded until Thursday next.

We are glad to hear that Sergeant Cooper, who is under the care of Dr Blease, is slowly recovering, but it will be a short time before he is able to leave the house.

## **11 25 November 1887**

### MIDDLEWICH

**BOATMEN IN TROUBLE** At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, **Richard Hammond**, boatman, and **George Hammond**, his son, aged 14 years, were charged with stealing a coat and a silk handkerchief, value 22s, the property of **Joshua Fradley**, at Church Lawton. Mr Cooke, solicitor, Middlewich, defended. It appeared from the prosecutor's statement that on Saturday night last he was going past Church Lawton, and told his mate to leave his coat and silk handkerchief on the wall on the boat side of the canal. Afterwards he told his mate to put it on the boat. The next morning, he asked the younger prisoner if he had got his coat and handkerchief, and he said he had not got it. The elder prisoner also denied any knowledge of the things, but they were afterwards given up to the police-constable. PC White said he asked the prisoners for the things, and the elder prisoner, after some time, said it was a rule on the canal to pick up the boatmen's things and never return them. George Hammond said he found them on the towing-path, and threw them in the boat. Richard Hammond afterwards said that he intended to take the things to the ticket office on the canal at Middlewich. Mr Cooke, for the defence, said the elder prisoner had been employed by the Derbyshire Union Canal Company for over forty years, and for thirty years he had been an Oddfellow. He was the owner of a house, which he had bought at a cost of £200. He had never been charged with a single offence before. The canal company had a system of fining their employees for breaking their bye laws, but the prisoner had never even been fined. The younger prisoner threw the things in the boat without the father's knowledge, but the latter committed an act of indiscretion when he denied the knowledge of the things, because he knew then. He hoped the magistrates would deal leniently with the prisoners, considering their previous good character. After some consultation, the magistrates decided to fine Richard Hammond £2 and George Hammond £1, allowing them until Saturday to pay the money.

## **12 23 December 1887**

### SINGULAR DEATH OF A POLICE OFFICER

#### THE INQUEST

#### AN OPEN VERDICT

**THE HOME SECRETARY TO BE WRITTEN TO** A painful sensation was caused in Altrincham on Saturday by the reported disappearance of PC Davies, an old and reliable officer stationed at Broadheath. He had not returned from night duty as usual that morning, and as the hours wore on Mrs Davies became anxious as to his whereabouts. Superintendent Leighton was communicated with, and he found that Davies had left Sergeant Turner at Marsland's Road Bridge, Brooklands, at two o'clock that morning, and had gone in the direction of Marsland Road. It was stated he was seen on the Manchester Road about a quarter to three, but this is rather unlikely as, to get at the point where his body was subsequently found, he would have to pass his own house and walk some distance to get on the canal bank. Nothing authentic from the time of his leaving Sergeant Turner up to four o'clock has turned up, but about that hour, the deceased officer's dog was seen by the

night watchman at the Bridgewater Navigation Company's warehouses at Broadheath roaming about the village as if in search of its master, to whom it is said to have been devotedly attached. After tramping about, it seems to have gone to the officer's house, and there is a patch of blood on the back doorstep, as also one on the front, as if it had met with some accident. Superintendent Leighton having obtained all the information possible, and knowing the officer's sober character, decided upon having the canal dragged near the bridge at Broadheath. Meantime the news spread in the town like wildfire, and scores of persons proceeded to the spot to witness the dragging operations being carried out. The most absurd reports were circulated – amongst them, the poor fellow's dog had returned home covered with blood, and that the man himself had been brutally murdered by poachers and then pitched into the canal. There was certainly something in the report as to the dog having sustained a slight wound, but nothing beyond. The men who were dragging confined their operations to about a couple of hundred yards or so on the Manchester side of the bridge at Broadheath in the morning, and soon after dinner began to drag the other side as far as Broadheath Steam Mills. The headquarters at Chester had been communicated with by telegraph, and about two o'clock Detective-Inspector Britten arrived and had a conference with Superintendent Leighton on the matter. It was decided that the dragging should be continued on the Dunham Massey side, and that a further search be made of the hedges, ditches and fields stretching out into Sinderland, as it was understood Davies had kept a very watchful eye recently on the farmers' hen roosts and other portable property in the vicinity. It is no secret that the incursions of poachers have been numerous, and probably this might have led them to other acts of rapacity than those connected with game, had it not been for the vigilance of the officers of the constabulary. No trace of him, however, could be found, and dragging went on monotonously until after three, when news arrived at the bridge that the officer's body had been taken out of the water near the Sixty Steps, a footbridge crossing the South Junction line beyond Timperley Station and, singular to say, in the vicinity of the recent poaching affray in which Sergeant Cooper and Constable Proudlove were so severely handled. This turned out to be in part true. Immediately there was a rush on the part of the excited crowd in that direction. The tow line of the boat from which the dragging had been carried on was seized by a number of willing hands and pulled down at high speed. On arriving at the bridge which crosses the road at Timperley Station, it was found that the unfortunate officer's cape had been turned up by the propeller of a passing tug, and the engineer stated that he distinctly saw the body rise to the surface. The cape was taken possession of by Inspector Meredith and Sergeant Leather, and dragging was commenced about 100 yards lower down. The canal at this particular point is very wide, and although the dragging was carefully performed, the efforts of those in the boat were not attended with success. Having dragged one half, they proceeded across with the intention of examining the other half. They had scarcely got there when one of the men felt something heavy resist his boat hook. He partially raised the body, and another boat hook being used, all that was mortal of Constable Davies was fished out and laid in the boat, amid a scene of tremendous excitement. The poor fellow had evidently died hard – his hands were clenched, and few who witnessed the corpse will forget the fearful expression on the features, as if the death struggle had been a terrible one. There was a wound on the head, but otherwise he did not appear to have been injured. His lamp was in place, but his hat and stick were not to be found. How he got into the water is a mystery. The body was conveyed, by direction of Superintendent Leighton, to the deceased's late residence at Broadheath to await the inquest.

Meantime, there have been different surmises as to how the deceased got into the water ; but the real cause will never be satisfactorily solved, as the only known actor in the tragedy is himself no more. The idea has not quite been dismissed that he met with foul play, but this, from the conditions surrounding the body, is somewhat improbable. The more feasible supposition is that he fell accidentally into the water. He was a man slightly under medium height, but of a physique denoting great strength, and although the night was stormy, and the wind from three to five blew with hurricane like strength, the sheltered position where the body was found renders it unlikely that he was blown in. Although apparently in the best of health, we are informed he has consulted Dr Blease of Altrincham for sudden fits of dizziness which had come over him, and it is just possible

that while temporarily overcome with one of these, he met his death. At all events, suicide is out of the question, and to support the theory of foul play, more information will have to be got than is at present forthcoming.

The deceased officer was about 44 years of age, and was enrolled in the constabulary in August 1869, and went from headquarters at Chester, of which city he was a native, to Sale. From Sale he was transferred to Hyde, and after serving in other parts of the county, returned to the Altrincham division four or five years ago. He was always a quiet, steady, well conducted man, and the zeal with which he discharged his duty had not rendered him too popular with certain portions of the community. Amongst his brother officers, however, he was looked up to with respect, and by his superiors was regarded as exceedingly reliable and efficient.

The inquest on the body of James Davies was held at the Navigation Inn, Altrincham, on Monday, by Mr H C Yates, coroner. Superintendent Leighton was also present. Mr R Stanley was chosen foreman of the jury, and the other members were Messrs C Grubb, S Brookfield, W Smith, Joseph Hay, T J Farrall, W Grogan, R J Bowett, J Wood, William Johnson, George Arrowsmith and Thomas Clarke. Sergeant Martyn had charge of the arrangements for the inquest. The jury proceeded to view the body, which was lying at deceased's late residence.

The first witness called was Mrs Davies, widow of the deceased, who wept bitterly. She deposed : I live at Broadheath, and the deceased was my husband. He was 44 last October, and had been in the constabulary 18 years. He left home on Friday evening last for night duty at half past nine. He had on his greatcoat and cape, and carried his lamp. He had a stick. He was accompanied by a favourite dog. He was very cheerful and well when he left home. He told me he was going with a boatman up to Bollington, and he should come through Dunham Park back again. He said that he should come along the Manchester Road to meet the sergeant at Marsland's Bridge, Brooklands, at two o'clock. From there he would come by Sinderland Lane, past the Atlantic Works. He never returned. The dog came back, but I don't know what time. I examined it all over, and one of the forefeet appeared to be sore. It was very wet.

In reply to Superintendent Leighton, she said the Broadheath watchman came about six o'clock. He asked if her husband had come home, and she told him he had not. He ought to have been home at four o'clock. I did not know he was subject to giddiness after meals, but it was very little. He did not complain on Friday night, and had been all right for three weeks. He told me that the boatman had told him they said another officer would be gone very soon, and he said it might be his turn for what he knew.

The Coroner said he was on protection duty in accompanying the boatman as far as Bollington. Superintendent Leighton said that was so.

Sergeant Turner stated : I am a sergeant of police in the Cheshire Constabulary. On Saturday morning I went to visit the deceased at two o'clock, at Marsland's Bridge. He and another constable – Constable Ennion – went down Wastway Road. The deceased and I turned up Marsland's Road together, and walked to the canal bridge. We arrived there about five minutes to two, and stood against the station. It was blowing very hard and was very cold, and he said he had been sweating. We crossed the road into the Brooklands Hotel, and remained there for nearly 20 minutes. I then left him, and said I should go down Hope Road, and he crossed the road to go the way he had come. I believe he said, "Good night", but I am not certain. He said something, but it was windy. It was very dark, and while we were there a very severe storm came on. His duty expired at four o'clock, and he could get home comfortably under an hour. It would be fully a quarter past two when I left him. He had been in company with PC Ennion, in charge of the boat to Bollington, and they had been through Dunham Park back. He did not report anything unusual. I have known him eight or nine years, and he has complained of giddiness. Some three weeks ago he was taken, and fell in the arms of a gentleman then in the room. He had his dog with him, and had his stick and lamp, and was well wrapped up. He was a reliable officer. He was not present at the affray at Brooklands, but came on immediately after. The wind was terrific about four o'clock, and it was very dark, but there was not so much rain as wind.

By Superintendent Leighton : I was at Sale Public Hall at three o'clock.

In answer to the jury, it was a south west wind and blowing across the water from the towing path. It was gusty and veering round from one point to another. I am confident he did not intend to return by the canal bank when he left me.

George Bradshaw, market gardener, Broadheath, said on Saturday morning he met a police officer beside the Joy Cottages on the Manchester Road. He said, "Good morning", and I replied, "Good morning", back. He was on the footpath, and I had charge of a horse and cart on the road. I did not see any dog with him. I recognised Davies by his voice. I could see his cape. I live close to him, and feel confident it was him. He was coming in the direction of Broadheath, and I was going to Manchester. I did not see anyone else about.

By Superintendent Leighton : I did not meet anyone else about there.

Henry Barlow deposed : I am night watchman at the Bridgewater Trustees coal wharf. I was on duty on Friday night from six o'clock and went off duty at six on Saturday morning. I called on Mrs Davies about seven o'clock and asked if her husband had come home. I had seen his dog and felt strange about it. I heard something pattering along the road and saw it was a dog. It was ten minutes to four. I went about ten minutes past four to the cabin, and the dog stood at the door, it ran in, looked wildly about, and its coat shined and looked wet. I was then satisfied it was Nelson, the deceased's dog. It looked round, and then ran away. All the boats tied up the previous night were there about that time. I did not see any pass. I again met the dog about twenty minutes past four near Mr Arrowsmith's, and it was then coming from the direction of the canal. I did not notice any blood upon the dog. The dog came again about half past five near the navigation corner, smelled at me, and ran away. There was nothing unusual taking place on the canal that night. It was very rough and stormy. I fancy there were steamers passing about five o'clock, going Runcorn way, but I have seen them so often I did not take notice.

By the Jury : The dog was not in the habit of coming to my cabin except with its owner. I did not see anyone come from the canal bank in the direction deceased would come.

Dr Luckman was next sworn. He said : I saw the body of the deceased on Saturday at his house, about six o'clock in the evening, and examined it. The face was placid, the eyes closed, and mouth firmly clenched, tongue behind the teeth. Gooseskin throughout the body, well marked. Hands and feet of a bluish grey colour and the skin corrugated. I made a *post mortem*. There was a wound over the right temple region three inches long, and a fracture of the skull beneath. On examining the scalp, there were no clots of blood on the surface of the brain, or within the brain. Had this been done before death, there would have been clots. The characteristics of the wound and the condition of the brain showed clearly that the wound and fracture had been produced after the body had become cold. In the chest I found the lungs overlapping the heart and very much distended. The stomach contained some water. The remaining organs of the body were congested. All these taken together are what one would expect in death by drowning. I may also mention here that the man suffered from giddiness, and this would account for the diseased valves of the heart. There were no bruises about the legs, but an old scar which might have been done many years ago. It is quite possible that he might have been walking along the canal and been attacked with one of these fits of giddiness, and fallen in.

By Superintendent Leighton : The cut on the face had probably been done by the screw of the steamer.

Dr Gotland was present, who had joined with Dr Luckman in making the *post mortem*, but as his evidence was somewhat similar it was not deemed necessary to take it.

Thomas Cockram, labourer, Broadheath, said he was engaged grappling on Saturday for the body of the deceased. He hooked the body at Timperley Bridge about four o'clock.

Mr Clarke asked if the deceased could swim, and the foreman (Mr Stanley) said he knew he could.

Sergeant Leather, stationed at Bowdon, said he was searching for the deceased on Saturday afternoon. He followed a steam tug nearly to Brooklands Bridge, and met another and asked the engineer to give the water a good stirring up. He did so, and witness saw the clothes near Timperley Bridge. The screw of the tug cut the cape, and he examined it. It was torn at the back.

(The cape was here produced, and had evidently been dragged off by the screw). Examination continued : I examined the canal bank, and there were no marks of a struggle. I examined the stone work close to the foot of the bridge, and on the stone I saw what I thought were two spots of blood. The place would be about three quarters of a mile from Marsland's Bridge. A blade of grass appeared to have blood upon it, but I could not say whether it was fresh blood or not.

Sergeant Martyn, stationed at Sale, said that at nine o'clock on Saturday morning he was ordered by Superintendent Leighton to work down the canal from Marsland's Bridge to Broadheath to see if there were any marks of a struggle, but found none. He afterwards assisted to drag the Bridgewater Canal from Broadheath to Timperley in a boat. The body was conveyed home, and I searched it. The deceased was dressed in his top coat, belt, lamp on belt at left hand side. He found his "snaps" loose in his breast, and he had his handcuffs and pocket book in his tunic pocket. In the right hand of his trousers pocket he found his staff, and in the watch pocket he found his watch, which had stopped at nine minutes past three. In his left hand pocket he found his purse, containing 3s 4d and a bunch of keys. His cap and walking stick had not been recovered. His clothes were not disarranged, but there was a sharp cut in the shoulder, which he thought was done by a boat hook. When the body was conveyed to the house, there was a large quantity of blood came from the ear.

Mr Bowett asked if he saw anything of the blood on the doorstep.

PC Robinson said that this might be caused by the dog's feet.

Sergeant Martyn said he had measured the distance from the bridge to where the body was found, and it was about 25 yards. The distance from the towing-path to the centre of the canal where the body was found was four yards, and the depth of the water 5ft 10in. The depth on the opposite side was 5ft. On the towing-path side it was 3ft. The body was right in the centre of the bridge. From where the body was found and where the witness Bradshaw last saw him, it was more than half way.

The Coroner, in summing up, said this was the evidence, and a sad and inexplicable case it seemed to be. The unfortunate man, who was an old and valued member of the Cheshire constabulary, having been 18 years in its ranks, and the question as to how he got to Timperley Bridge would forever remain a mystery, for they could hear nothing of his movements after a quarter to three, and Sergeant Martyn produced the watch which had stopped at nine minutes past. This was an important factor in the case, as it proved conclusively when the unfortunate man met his death. The doctor found no marks on the body except a sharp cut on the face, caused probably by the blade and the screw of the boat, and that the marks were consistent with a man having met his death by drowning, and therefore there was no foul play seemingly at work before. Whether he had been thrown in or not, he was afraid they would never know, but as the case was surrounded with so much suspicion he would suggest that they should not fetter the police except by a verdict of "Found drowned". He knew it was not the custom of the Government to offer a reward in such cases, but if the jury approved, he would write to the Home Secretary on the subject. He thought in the interests of justice no stone should be left unturned to find out this terrible mystery. He had known the man some years, and always found him an excellent and conscientious officer. He was very sorry for the widow and family in their terrible loss. Superintendent Leighton said that Davies was deserving of all that the Coroner had said of him. Mr Farrell said that he was puzzled whether the officer had been seized with a fit before or after he got in the water. His eyes were closed, and they would not have been if he had had a fit. The Coroner said that all the indications were consistent with drowning. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned", which the Coroner said was a very proper one. He would, if they wished, write the Home Secretary. Deceased was an officer of justice, and if he could see his way to offer a reward it would be a great blessing. The jury unanimously approved of the Coroner's suggestion. Mr Farrell said there was another point about the remark that there would soon be another officer missing. Could they trace these people? Superintendent Leighton replied they could. Mr Clarke : And why was this particular protection required? Superintendent Leighton replied that had nothing to do with the body being found. Great sympathy was expressed for the widow and family.

### 13 6 January 1888

THE BROOKLANDS POACHING AFFRAY At the Quarter Sessions held at Knutsford on Wednesday, before the Deputy Chairman, Mr Horatio Lloyd, William Scott (31), labourer, and James Lee alias Chitty alias Leigh (40), blacksmith, were indicted for wilfully and maliciously wounding Sergeant Cooper and PC Proudlove at Sale on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, and further stealing 17 geese, the property of William Hillkirk. Mr Marshall appeared for the prosecution. Both prisoners pleaded not guilty, Scott saying he never was at Sale that night, and Lee that he was innocent. Mr Marshall stated that the prisoners were indicted on various counts for unlawfully wounding, doing grievously bodily harm and assaulting the police-constables. He narrated the circumstances as detailed in the evidence, and said that the medical men would tell them that a very severe assault had been committed.

Sergeant Cooper stated that in consequence of the information received on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> November, he went in the direction of a pond and hut near the railway between Brooklands and Sale. There was a footbridge, crossing the line from the canal. Near this was a pond, the plan produced had been prepared by PC Bullock of Altrincham, and showed both the hut and the pond. (Mr Marshall remarked that the plan was an excellent one). He started about one o'clock with Constables Dainteth and Proudlove. He saw the door of the hut slightly move, and he asked, "Who's here?" There were from what he saw nine to ten men in the hut. The man replied, "We'll give you who's here, you ----", and put a stick through. Another man put his head out, and said, "There's only three ; let's go out and murder them". Shortly after he said, "Reach down that b----- gun". They then used a plank as a battering ram. They smashed the side of the hut, and some came from the door. The first man he struck behind the ear, and he was hit on the forehead and knocked down. He jumped up, and was hit behind the head and again knocked down. He became insensible, and on coming round, was about a yard and a half from the metals. He got on the line and staggered along until he came to Sale bridge, where he saw Inspector Meredith. He was brought down the line by the late PC Davies, and had been under the care of Dr Blease for six weeks. He suffered very much. Scott said they were hard questions to ask for an innocent man.

Scott proceeded to ask about previous affairs in which he had been engaged 14 months before, but they had no bearing on the case. Lee declined to ask any questions, he had nothing to do with it.

PC Proudlove said he went to the hut door. A man came to the door and he hit him and forced him back. Those in the inside used a plank to keep him at bay. It was moonlight, but rather cloudy. As soon as the men got out, one of the men hit him over the eye with a large stone. He was surrounded, and while there Scott struck him over the eye. Lee came to him whilst on the ground, and was one of those kicking him. He recognised Lee by a muffler and peaked cap he wore. Before he became insensible he saw Cooper and Dainteth fighting. He was about eight weeks under medical treatment. On the 14<sup>th</sup> there were a number of men in the police station, and he identified Scott. He said, "He's the man", (Scott : I did not know he was an officer at the time). In regard to Lee, on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> November he identified him amongst a number of men at the police station. By the prisoner Scott : I gave a description of you to Superintendent Leighton. I said I recognised you by your moustache. I don't recollect saying I could tell Scott by his voice. The first time I saw you was at the police station. You were close to me in the fight. I had a good look at you, because we were face to face. I did not examine the moustache, and I cannot swear whether it was real or false. I have not much doubt it was false. I never took a man on suspicion unless he turned out to be correct. I am as likely to be mistaken as other men. I told him one man was a dark man with a dark moustache. The superintendent wrote the description and said nothing. He did not say it was Scott. I knew nothing about you when I picked you out at Altrincham. Scott : It's a wonder God does not strike you dead where you are standing. In reply to other questions, witness said he did not hear the sergeant tell Scott to fall second in the line. Prisoner appealed to Mr Bleckley, who was on the Bench, if Connor was a dark man, but Mr Bleckley said he could not tell what complexion he was. Prisoner further cross-examined the officer as to the appearance of the men he was brought into the station along with, and also as to his statements before the magistrates at great length. In the course of one of his remarks, Scott said he thanked

Superintendent Leighton for having refused him bail. If he had been out, he would have been had for murdering Davies, and ready for the rope. The Deputy Chairman : You must refrain from these observations. Scott : My mind is in an uproar, sir, I don't know what to do. The Chairman : You know very well what to do. We have allowed you a good deal of latitude and will allow you more, but you must not exceed it. After asking a number of other questions, one or two of which the court told Proudlove to decline answering, the Chairman said he would give him ten minutes more and then call upon Lee. Lee : I have nothing to do with this affair at all. I'm innocent.

PC Dainteth also described the affray, and identified Lee as one of those who took part in it. Lee said the witness was telling lies.

Dr T T Blease deposed that on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, about a quarter past four, Cooper came to his surgery. He was suffering from incised and contused wounds of a very dangerous character, penetrating to the bone. The wounds on the front of the head might have been caused by a moderate sharp instrument, and that behind by a blunt one. He was under his care for six weeks.

Dr Luckman, who had Proudlove under his care, said he found six severe scalp wounds, each one penetrating to and exposing the bone, wounds under the eye and another on the nasal bone, and a bruise on the right forearm. Two of the wounds appeared to have been done by a sharp instrument. All the wounds were dangerous, and he was under his care for about eight weeks.

Inspector Meredith said he found topcoats, capes, and lamps, stones and loose bricks lying about the embankment. The end of the hut was pushed out.

**Thomas Evans**, boatman, stated that on the 4<sup>th</sup> November he was on the boat *Laura*, and started about seven o'clock on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> November from Manchester. There were three more men with Scott, and Scott cried. Scott asked him to give them a ride, and before he knew it they were on board. He had given Scott a ride once or twice before. They got off near the signal box at Brooklands. He thought he came near eight or nine miles. He was partly asleep in the cabin when he heard Scott tell **Hopley**, the mate, to pull to the side, and he got off along with the other men. In reply to Scott : You and Gayter were on the bank at the time you got on. I did not tell you to get into the cabin. You did not need any. You soon got in. (Laughter). It was not that dark. I could find my way about. I never heard any of the men say, "It's going to be a good night, Scott". I did not hear a man say, "It's no good going ; they can see a man ten miles off". (Laughter). I did not hear you say that you would go back. You had your hat in the bed berth.

The Chairman had again to interfere on account of the length and irrelevancy of Scott's questions.

In reply to further questions, witness said he saw the instrument produced in Gayter's hands. Scott asked him what he was doing, breaking a stick belonging to another man.

Mr Harry Leonard Harris, son of the magistrates' clerk for Altrincham, stated that PC Davies was examined in this matter at Altrincham on the 24<sup>th</sup> November. Prisoners were present, and had an opportunity of cross-examining.

Superintendent Leighton said the late Constable Davies was in his division, and he deposed to seeing his dead body at Altrincham on the 19<sup>th</sup> December.

Mr Marshall then put in the depositions, which were read by Mr Potts.

Inspector Meredith said he received the weapon produced from PC Davies on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> November.

A man named Hopley corroborated the evidence of the other boatman, Evans. In reply to Scott, he said he never saw any set sticks used for poaching on the boat after Scott and the others left. Scott had never gone down the country by himself. Sometimes gangs of ten and thirteen had gone on the boat. Sometimes gangs came from Dunham to Manchester. He once received tenpence from Scott for giving his gang a ride, and he gave his mates threepence each and kept fourpence. He had never seen Scott with any fowls. He never heard him say, referring to other gangs, that if there was anything missing from a boat, they had no need to show their faces in Manchester again. He had seen him give his mate a rabbit, but had not seen him give him a couple when they had an unusually good catch. Witness told him (Scott) that there was a "bobby" on board, and he did not get on board that night. (Laughter).

PC Robinson stated that coming to Knutsford Gaol, Scott admitted he was on the boat, and got off

near the wooden bridge, between Brooklands and Timperley, and was going home, as it was too light for poaching.

Detective Britten deposed to the apprehension of Scott in Manchester, and he said he was never near Brooklands that night ; he was drunk in a beer house up to eight o'clock.

William Smith was called into the box and examined by Scott. He said he was in the Packhorse, Higher Hillgate, Stockport, about seven o'clock in the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> November, when Scott and four or five others came in. One asked if he could have a gill of beer, and witness replied he could. He paid for three half gallons of beer for the company. He did not know a Scott in Stockport except Police-sergeant Scott. (Laughter). He (witness) did a bit of poaching himself. He saw Scott one morning in Ancoats at a timber yard, and he had not his coat on. He (witness) had been out to Heston Park that morning. Witness had never been with Scott in Dunham Park poaching. He had gone out with a gang from Manchester, but he was not aware Scott was with him. Prisoner Scott was here stopped by the chairman as he was going on with questions which had nothing to do with the enquiry.

This was the case for the prosecution, and Scott proceeded to read a statement he had drawn up respecting his movements on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> November, and was proceeding at some length, when the foreman of the jury said they had heard this two or three times over. Scott concluded by saying the Lord above knew he was not implicated in that scandalous affair. He called Alfred Hewitt, a Manchester beer seller, to speak to his character. He could not say, however, that he saw Scott later than six o'clock on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> November.

In his defence, Lee called his mother, who said that he went to bed about half past ten on the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> November, and was in the house all night.

Frank Ardern, son-in-law of the previous witness ; Susannah Ardern, sister of the prisoner ; and William Entwistle, then a lodger at the Lees, gave similar evidence. The last witness stated that Lee slept with him on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> November, and he awoke him the following morning between five and six.

Lee again asserted his innocence.

Mr Marshall having replied on the case, the Deputy Chairman summed up.

The Jury, after a few minutes consultation, returned a verdict of guilty against Scott on both charges, and not guilty against Lee.

This was received with some slight applause in Court.

Mr Marshall intimated that he did not intend to proceed with the charge of felony.

The Deputy Chairman said : Lee, all I can say is you are a most fortunate man. You have had a very narrow escape, and I wish to remind you of what your previous character has been. You have been four times before this convicted of felony, a month twice, six months and twelve months, and to my mind there is not the slightest doubt you were out this night with the rest. (Lee : I am innocent). You have had a lucky escape and you had better take care you do not come here again. Addressing Scott, he said : You have been convicted, and rightly. (Scott : I am innocent, your worship, I have not had a fair trial). I can tell you we are not going to submit to this kind of thing in England. We pass upon you almost the largest sentence we are by law allowed, and that is one of eighteen calendar months' imprisonment with hard labour.

## **14 10 February 1888**

**THE POACHING AFFRAY AT BROOKLANDS** At the Altrincham Police Court on Friday, two men named Edwin Bailey and James Peers, from Manchester and Salford, were charged on remand with assaulting, with intent to do grievous bodily harm, Sergeant Cooper and PC Proudlove, on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> November ; also stealing 19 geese, the property of Mr William Hillkirk, farmer, Brooklands. The magistrates on the Bench were Messrs H Bleckley (chairman), C Lister and J Gaskarth. Dr Blease and Dr Luckman repeated the evidence they gave at the hearing of the case against Scott and Lee. Both the officers were dangerously wounded. Dr Luckman added that PC Proudlove was suffering from inflammation of the knee joint, and it would be a week before he could attend. Mary Jane Scott, wife of William Scott, 19 Little Bridgewater Street, Manchester,

deposed that her husband was now in Knutsford Prison. She remembered the night of Friday November 4<sup>th</sup>. Several persons were at her house – Ted Connor, Dick Conway, Ted Bailey, her husband, Gater and a man who went by the name of “Six Weeks” from Macclesfield. Bailey came into the house and asked for her husband. She said he was in, but told him not to go near him, as he had had some drink. Two boatmen went out along with them, and her husband. Bailey was not in the house above two minutes. They left her house about seven o'clock. She did not see Peers at her house that night. Edward Thomason, a stoker on the South Junction line, deposed to seeing a number of men in possession of game, and giving information at the Altrincham station. Thomas Pritchard, farm labourer, stated he saw the geese safe on a pond in Mr Hillkirk's field. Sergeant Cooper stated that he could swear positively to Bailey being the man who threatened him. Witness saw him three distinct times. He did not recognise Peers, although he knew him personally. He had no knowledge of Bailey before. PC Dainteth said he saw the two prisoners amongst a lot of others in the Altrincham Police Station. He was questioned very closely by the magistrates as to the circumstances under which he identified Peers. He stated he did not know any of the men before. Sergeant Cooper was recalled. Mr Lister : When you identified Bailey at Manchester, where were you when the men fell in? Sergeant Cooper replied that as soon as he got into the office, he was asked if he was the officer from Cheshire who had come to identify a prisoner. He replied he was, and he was then put in a room by himself. He was not allowed to see the man who apprehended Bailey, and one of the clerks came and called him. Bailey was amongst the others. **Thomas Evans**, boatman in the employ of the Shropshire Union Canal Company, stated that on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> November, four men got on his boat, and two went forward while two went to the cabin to speak to witness. He could not say he saw Bailey there on that occasion, but he had been with them at other times. The two men at the stern got off the boat between Brooklands and Timperley. In reply to the Bench, he said he was half asleep and half awake. He heard Scott tell the man steering the boat to draw up to the bank. Scott called out to **Hopley**, who was steering, to draw up to the side, and shouted to the men, “Now you are always asleep when you ought to be awake”. There was an altercation between Scott and Gater on the boat, as Gater was breaking a weapon he had with him. William Smith, Higher Hillgate, Stockport, said he was a labourer in the employ of Mr Holt. He remembered Saturday morning, November 5<sup>th</sup>, and was at the Pack Horse Inn about seven o'clock. There were four Stockport men in when he first went in. While there Scott and Bailey and three or four more men came in. Bailey came in a little after the others. He could swear that Bailey was there. He was at one end of the vault, which was a relatively long one, and Bailey was at the other. Witness paid for three half gallons of ale. He did not ask where they came from. They asked him if he had any money, and he said he had none, but could get it on credit. Witness had a “sup” of beer the night before. He had been out with Bailey at Adlington Park before. He had been with him possibly two or three times. They did not always go to one place. He had been to Dunham Park, but not to Lyme Park. Bailey said he went into the “Big Lamp” public house when Scott and the others came in. He had been to Stockport to look for work. In reply to Peers, witness said he did not see him in the public house. John Foster said he was a platelayer on the L and N W Railway, living at Cheadle Hulme. On the 4<sup>th</sup> January, he found a police-constable's staff in a “grip” at the end of some sleepers at Adswold, near Stockport. It had the mark of the Altrincham division upon it. It would be about three quarters of a mile from the Pack Horse in Higher Hillgate. Superintendent Leighton asked for a remand so far as Bailey was concerned. The Chairman said there was not sufficient evidence to justify them in remanding Peers. He would therefore be discharged. Superintendent Leighton stated he hoped to have the other men in custody shortly.

## **15      24 February 1888**

**NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING AT STRETFORD : SAVED BY A POLICEMAN** On Saturday a boy named George Barlow, eight years of age, residing at 10 St James's View, Radnor Street, Stretford, fell into the Bridgewater Canal. The accident occurred shortly after three o'clock, and soon afterwards Police-sergeant Lynn met a boatman named **Thomas Hughes** carrying the boy head downwards from the canal. The lad was black in the face and life appeared to be extinct.

Hughes handed the lad over to the officer with the remark, "The lad is done for, and no good can be done as he is dead." Sergeant Lynn is a member of the St John's Ambulance Association, and he at once laid the boy on his back, unloosed his scarf and commenced attempting to restore animation by artificial respiration, a very valuable method in cases of persons who have been rendered unconscious by immersion in water. This was continued for about ten minutes, with the gratifying result that the lad was brought round. A considerable crowd of people assembled to watch the operation, and expressed their appreciation of the officer's very commendable conduct.

## **16 2 March 1888**

### **ALTRINCHAM AND BOWDEN**

**IN THE TOILS : POOR PEOPLE AND TRAVELLING SCOTCH DRAPERS** There were as usual a good many cases brought by travelling drapers against poor people living in the neighbourhood. In one instance the amount was £9, and the man earning about 15s a week when in work. Of course, very low orders were made, and in some instances these "merchants" were non suited. William Riddick sued **Thomas Cheetham**, boatman, Broadheath, for £5 goods supplied. His wife appeared, and admitted £2 1s. His Honour carefully examined plaintiff's ledgers, and said that although the books were kept in a slovenly manner, he thought the money owing, and gave an order for payment at the rate of 4s per month. In a second case, Riddick sued Thomas Barber, labourer, Broadheath, for £5 5s for goods sold and delivered. Plaintiff enumerated the goods supplied, which included a suit of clothes for which he (plaintiff) had measured him. Defendant strenuously denied that plaintiff had ever measured him for a suit of clothes. In reply to the defendant, plaintiff said he had received money from his wife. He denied he had cursed her and called her bad names. He also denied he had used bad language. Defendant is out of work. His Honour gave judgement for the plaintiff, payable at 2s per month for three months, and 4s per month after, when he would probably be in work. He said he had no doubt defendant had had the suit of clothes.

## **17 1 June 1888**

### **SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY**

**A HUMOUROUS DEFENDANT** **Hugh Barlow**, boatman, Stoke, was summoned for cruelly ill-treating a horse by beating it with a windlass at Church Lawton on May 9<sup>th</sup>. William Hambleton, constable in the employ of the North Staffordshire Railway Company, prosecuted, saying he received information of the affair on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, and he took out a summons. John Travis, smith, Lawton, said on May 9<sup>th</sup> he saw the defendant wilfully ill-using his horse by hitting it on the head and other parts of the body with a windlass. It caused the horse great pain, but he could not say whether there were any "whales" on the horse, as it went away. Another witness corroborated. In answer to the defendant, Hambleton said the defendant did not usually ill-treat his horse, which was a good one. Defendant said he had as fine a horse as ever trod on English soil. (Laughter). He bought it a year ago for £30, and he would not ill use it. He took it as thin as a rook, and now it was as fat as butter. (Laughter). He made an amusing speech, and altogether conducted himself most humorously in the court, and wound up by saying, "My horse is better than my wife". (Renewed laughter). He added that the reason why he struck the horse was because he had got some drink. Defendant was fined 5s and costs.

**A NEGLIGENT BOATMAN AT WHEELLOCK** **John Jones**, boatman, Stoke, was summoned for leaving the Wheelock bottom lock over, thereby wasting water at Wheelock, on the 28<sup>th</sup> April. Mr W Hambleton, canal constable, prosecuted. John (?Llandies?), lock tender, Wheelock, said he saw the defendant go through the locks at Wheelock, and noticed him leave one open, thus causing a waste of water. It appeared that defendant had been cautioned several times previously, and on the day in question left another lock open beside the one for which he was summoned. Defendant was fined 10s and costs, or one month's imprisonment.

**18 15 June 1888**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

BREACH OF THE RABIES ACT **Alfred Crump**, a boatman, was charged with keeping a dog without a licence and with allowing the same to go unmuzzled. Sergeant Bossons stated that at 2.15p m on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> inst, he was on duty at Newton when he saw defendant's wife in charge of a dog. He asked her if she had a licence for it, and she replied that it was only seven months old, and that she was going to take out a licence at Runcorn. The dog, in his opinion, was more than the age named. It was unmuzzled. Defendant did not appear, and was fined 1s and costs for the first offence, and ordered to pay the costs for the second.

**19 22 June 1888**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

WASTING CANAL WATER AT LAWTON **Abraham Carrington**, boatman, was summoned for wilfully wasting water at Lawton on the 29<sup>th</sup> May. **John James**, lock-keeper, Lawton, said the defendant, instead of putting his boat through the lock properly, left one of the side "pans" open, thus wasting water. He had no particular object in doing this, as it hindered him from going along the canal at a proper speed. It was really carelessness. Defendant had been fined previously for similar offences, and was now fined 20s and costs. William Hambleton, constable, appeared on behalf of the North Staffordshire Railway Company.

**20 17 August 1888**

MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

CANAL OBSTRUCTION AT MIDDLEWICH **Edwin Owen** and **John Lowe**, boatmen, Stoke, were summoned for obstructing the canal by leaving their boats there at Middlewich. Mr Ellis of Burslem represented Lowe. William Hambleton, canal constable, said both the defendants acknowledged the offence when he served the summonses. **John Woodworth**, lock tender of Middlewich, said on the 13<sup>th</sup> July he saw two boats in charge of the defendants on the canal. He asked them to remove, but they refused to do so. There was a block caused for one hour and three quarters. John Davies, night watchman, said he was at the King's Lock and saw Lowe, steerer for the Anderton Company, and Owen, steerer for the Shropshire Union Company, had their boats jammed. He asked them to remove and they did not. Mr Ellis, for the defence of Lowe, said the jamming arose between a dispute caused by Owen going along the canal in his client's place. Lowe was steering along the main canal, and when he got within the bridge over the branch canal, Owen called out to slack his horse, and said if he did so he would allow him to take his turn. A boy named **Prichard** said he was leading the horse belonging to the boat steered by Lowe, and an agreement was made between the two people on the boat that Lowe should be allowed to take his boat through the lock first. Owen said he ought to have gone through the lock first but Lowe would not allow him. Fined 10s and costs (16s 6d).

UNMUZZLED DOGS **John Jackson**, boatman, for allowing his dog to be at large at Newton on the 24<sup>th</sup> ult, was fined 5s including costs.

KEEPING A DOG WITHOUT A LICENCE **Benjamin Clowes**, boatman, Stoke, was summoned for keeping a dog without a licence at Middlewich on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, and was fined 5s and costs.

STRAY HORSES **Frank Smith**, boatman, Newton, for allowing his horse to stray at Booth Lane, Newton, on the 13<sup>th</sup> August, was fined 5s, including costs.

**21 7 September 1888**

MIDDLEWICH

DRUNK, SOBER AND MARRIED IN A DAY At the Middlewich Police Court on Tuesday, **Henry Fox**, a boatman of Tetton, was brought up charged with being drunk and disorderly on the

previous night in High Street. The case was proved by PC Gill, and prisoner was fined 5s and costs. He paid the fine, and the same afternoon was married at Northwich.

## 22 14 September 1888

SAD DEATH OF A BOATMAN An inquest was held on Saturday before Mr C Blunt, deputy coroner, at the house of Mrs Beckett, Newton, touching the death of **William Silbury**, boatman, Nantwich, aged 19, who was drowned in the Trent and Mersey Canal at Newton on the previous Thursday morning. Ambrose Clarke said deceased was his stepson. He last saw him alive about a fortnight ago. He was a farm labourer, but for the last few months had been boating. **John Owens**, captain of the Shropshire Union boat *Beatrice*, said the deceased was in the boat about 1 a m on Thursday. He sent deceased to get Lowe's Lock ready for the boat. The night was very dark and wet. When he (Owens) reached the lock with the boat, it was not drawn off. **George Grainger** was there, and he asked him if he had seen Silbury about. Witness said he had not, and then Grainger said, "He is in the lock". They got a rake and dragged the lock, and found the body at the bottom, quite dead. Deceased must have been in the lock half an hour. George Grainger, captain of a boat, said he was just leaving his lock when deceased began to get the lock ready for the other boat. Deceased said, "It is a very wet night", and witness said, "It is". He heard deceased drop the top paddles and push the gate, and he then heard a sigh. He said, "The man is in the lock". He was 200 yards away, and he went back and, with the last witness, dragged the lock. Mr Jones watched the case on behalf of the canal company. A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned.

## 23 2 November 1888

### MIDDLEWICH

DRUNKENNESS At the Middlewich Police Court on Monday, before Messrs F H Moss and C P Lees, **Thomas Shaw**, boatman, Rode Heath, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Lewin Street, Middlewich, on the 27<sup>th</sup> October. Fined 5s, including costs. At the same court, **William Barnett**, boat captain, was charged with being drunk and resisting the police in the execution of their duty in Lewin Street, Middlewich, on Saturday night. When the last prisoner was being arrested by Police-constables Robinson and Gill, prisoner attempted to rescue him. He was fined 10s, including costs.

## 24 14 December 1888

SUDDEN DEATH IN A BOAT An inquest was held at the Junction Inn, Middlewich, before Mr H Yates, coroner, on Tuesday, on the body of **William Bunn**, aged five months, son of **Thomas Bunn**, a boatman of Wolverhampton. It appears that the child three weeks ago was seen by a doctor in Wolverhampton, and stated by him to be suffering from water on the brain. The child was put to bed at ten o'clock on Friday night, and was then apparently in good health. This was at Newton, where the boat was staying. At half past five in the morning, the child was found dead by its father. After the evidence had been given, the jury returned a verdict of "Died from natural causes".

## 25 28 December 1888

WASTING WATER At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, **Hugh Reynolds**, boatman, was summoned on two charges of wasting water at Malkins Bank on two days in October. Defendant pleaded guilty, and under the circumstances Constable Hambleton did not press the cases. The magistrates ordered the defendant to pay the costs in each case (7s 6d).

## 26 25 January 1889

SUDDEN DEATH OF A CHILD On Tuesday morning, Mr H Churton, coroner, held an inquest at Hassall Green, on the body of **Jane Colclough**, aged seven months, daughter of **George Colclough**, boatman, Ellesmere Port. Evidence was given by the mother of the deceased to the effect that the child had been weakly from its birth. Some time ago she was attended by a doctor. The child was poorly when they started on their journey in the boat from Stoke on Saturday, and got

worse on arriving at Hassall Green. The mother went out of the boat and called at Mrs Chester's grocer's shop to inquire for the nearest doctor. She also asked Mrs Chester to go back with her, and she did so, but on arriving at the boat the child was dying. It appeared that the child had been taken ill with difficulty of breathing at three o'clock, and died three hours afterwards. Dr W Latham made an examination of the body on Monday, and found the child had died from general debility. A verdict of "Died from natural causes" was returned.

**27 22 March 1889**

**CHURCH LAWTON**

**A BOATMAN HEAVILY FINED** At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, **Samuel Lunt**, boatman of Audley Street, Wolverhampton, was summoned for wasting water at Church Lawton on the 30<sup>th</sup> January. Defendant did not appear, but admitted the offence when seen by the canal constable. It appeared from the evidence of **Thomas Edwards**, lock-keeper at Church Lawton, that the defendant was in charge of a boat going northwards. He did not manage the locks properly, and the consequence was that he wasted a considerable quantity of water. It was simply carelessness on the part of the defendant. The magistrates inflicted a fine of £1, including costs.

**28 29 March 1889**

**MACCLESFIELD**

**CRUELTY TO A CANAL HORSE** At the Macclesfield County Police Court on Tuesday, **John Wilson**, a boatman on the MS and L Canal, was charged with working a horse whilst in an unfit state at Hurdsfield on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Inspector Ford of the RSPCA deposed to seeing the horse and examining it on the canal side. On the off shoulder there was an old wound about the size of a crown piece, whilst on the other there was one about 5 1/2 inches long. Defendant admitted the offence. The Bench considered it was a bad case, and fined him 20s and costs.

**29 5 April 1889**

**ALTRINCHAM AND BOWDEN**

**CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AT ALTRINCHAM** **Reuben Holroyd**, canal boatman, was summoned for working a horse with sores on its shoulders. Inspector Nicholls and PC Carter gave evidence, and he was fined 10s and costs.

**30 19 April 1889**

**SAVAGE ASSAULT BY A BOATMAN** At the Altrincham Petty Sessions on Monday, **Job Taberner**, boatman, was charged with unlawfully wounding Thomas Taberner, his brother, at Altrincham on the 13<sup>th</sup> April. Dr Golland deposed that he was called to see the prosecutor at his house in Borough Road on Sunday morning about one o'clock. He was suffering from three contused wounds on the top of the head, two extending to the bone, the other not quite so deep. They ranged from an inch and a half to three quarters of an inch the least. They were caused by some blow on the head. Such wounds might have been caused by the stone produced. He had a bruise on the right hip, and was suffering from considerable shock to the system. The stone produced (a piece of boulder) was stained with blood. The wounds were not immediately dangerous, but the danger from such wounds was erysipelas. William Drinkwater, joiner, Borough Road, Altrincham, stated that he and Thomas Taberner, and his wife were standing at the front door of the house about midnight on Saturday evening. There was another man, and witness and he bid them "Good night". In a minute or two, prosecutor's wife said that Job had Thomas down. He saw Job strike him three times on the head. Someone called out, "He has got a stone in his hand, and is knocking his brains out". Witness pulled Job off, and prosecutor lay on the ground unconscious. He was carried into the house, and was in an unconscious state an hour. Witness took a stone out of the prisoner's hand. Thomas Taberner stated that he and his wife lived at the house of the last witness. Defendant was his brother, and was a boatman. He met his brother in George Street first, and he then threatened to take his life. Witness and a young man went into the Bridge Inn, and

prisoner stripped to thrash him. Afterwards witness heard he was thrashing his mother in the house. He went in and told prisoner to be quiet. He was standing at the door when prisoner rushed at him and got him down. Prisoner picked up a stone from the rockery, and he remembered being struck with the stone once, but nothing afterwards. By the prisoner : I never struck you with a strap with a buckle on it. By the Bench : I never took my strap off. Prisoner said that he took it off, and they began wrestling together. Priscilla Taberner, wife of the last witness, said that she asked her husband to go in. He afterwards got him down, and witness saw him take the stone off the rockery heap and hit him several times before she could prevent it. Margaret Booth, living in Borough Road, deposed that she picked up the stone produced, and it had blood on when she picked it up. PC Jones stated that between twelve and one o'clock on Sunday morning he saw Dr Golland dressing the prosecutor's head. About half past one he saw the prisoner in (????) Street, and he had neither coat nor hat on. He arrested him for being drunk and took him to the police station. Superintendent Leighton handed in a list of previous convictions. Prisoner, on being charged, said, "He struck me first with his belt, and if he had let me I should have gone to bed". Prisoner was then committed for trial. He was admitted to bail, himself in £200 and his mother in £100.

### **31 26 April 1889**

MIDDLEWICH

THROWING STONES INTO THE CANAL **Abraham Carrington**, boatman, was, at the Middlewich Petty Sessions on Wednesday, charged with throwing stones into the Staffordshire Canal on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. Charles Hampton, labourer, said the stones weighed from one half to three quarters of a cwt. Defendant was fined 1s and costs.

### **32 5 July 1889**

AN EXASPERATED FATHER **David Marlow**, a Birmingham boatman, having been annoyed by his boy, **William Clifford**, flung him into the canal. The lad very narrowly escaped being drowned, and was rescued by a desperate effort. Marlow has been sent to gaol today for six weeks.

### **33 5 July 1889**

ALSAGER

DAMAGE TO A DOOR At the Sandbach Sessions on Wednesday, a charge of doing damage to a door at the house of Mr C Bebbington was preferred against **Elijah Bennet**, boatman. Mr Bebbington said the defendant came up drunk and kicked the door, "splitting it right open". They put the damage down at 30s. He had kicked the door once before. An order was made for the payment of the costs and £1 damages.

### **34 12 July 1889**

MACCLESFIELD BOROUGH POLICE COURT, MONDAY

DISORDERLY CONDUCT **Charles Edge**, boatman, Clayton, was ordered to pay 2s 6d and costs for disorderly conduct in the King's Head, Chestergate, and refusing to quit the house on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst, and also with obstructing Inspector Swindells whilst in the execution of his duty.

### **35 26 July 1889**

ALSAGER

SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST A BOATMAN At the Sandbach Police Court on Friday, before Mr F H R Wilbraham (chairman) and Mr G B Baker, **George Carter**, a boatman of Kidsgrave, was charged with stealing 1 lb of bacon, 1 lb of sugar, two ounces of tea, 1 lb of bread, one hat and one bass, the property of **William Ellis**, a boatman, at Odd Rode on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. The prosecutor stated that on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July he was coming down the canal at Odd Rode on a fly boat. He had his hat on his head, and a bass in the boat, similar to the one produced, full of provisions. The prisoner was on the towing-path, and had charge of another boat. There were two other men in the fly boat with witness, and as they were passing the prisoner's boat, the prisoner stepped on to witness's boat, took

his hat off his head, and stole the bass containing witness's provisions. The prisoner then jumped off the boat and went to his horse. In answer to the Bench, witness said he did not know the names of the two men who were with him in the fly boat, and he had no money to summon them as witnesses. The prisoner, in addressing the Bench, said one of the men who were in the fly boat asked him for a knife. He (prisoner) got on the boat for the purpose of lending the man his knife, and when he did so, the man laughed at him. He then stepped off the boat, and as he was doing so one of the men in the fly boat threw the prosecutor's hat and bass at him, and they fell on the towing-path. The Bench bound the prisoner over in the sum of £50 to appear when called upon. The case came up at the Sessions on Wednesday, when no further evidence was offered, and the prisoner was discharged.

### **36 6 September 1889**

#### **CHURCH LAWTON**

**WASTING WATER** At the Sandbach Sessions on Wednesday, **George Shaw**, a canal boatman, was fined 10s for wasting water at the locks at Church Lawton. **John James**, lock-keeper, proved the case.

### **37 11 October 1889**

#### **MIDDLEWICH**

**DEATH FROM CONVULSIONS** Mr H C Yates, district coroner, held an inquest at the Talbot Inn, Middlewich, on Monday, touching the death of the infant of **John Wood**, boatman. The evidence showed that the deceased had been suffering from convulsions, and the jury returned a verdict to that effect.

### **38 15 November 1889**

**SUICIDE OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER** On Saturday morning, an inquest was held at the Talbot Hotel, Stretford, before Mr F Price, touching the death of William Harwood, who was found drowned in the Bridgewater Canal at Stretford on Thursday last. John Henry Harwood of 12 Grosvenor Street, Stalybridge, said the deceased was his brother, and lived at Matley Lane, Stalybridge. He was a chemical labourer, but had not worked for the past three weeks, and had previously been irregular in his employment. He had been living alone for some time, and had never been properly right since the death of his mother nine years ago. He had lately been in trouble, having been before the magistrates and fined. He believed this was the cause of his committing suicide. The police held a distress warrant against the deceased for the non payment of the debt and took his furniture out of the house, and deceased said he would rather go to prison than pay. Witness, however, paid the fine, and the furniture was returned. Deceased then said his mind was made up, but he did not tell witness what he intended to do. The police afterwards told witness that deceased had said that he intended to drown himself. Witness saw him about three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon at the house of his sister. Deceased was depressed, and told them they could divide his goods, as he meant to go away. Witness followed him to the canal bridge at Stalybridge, and then lost sight of him, and never saw him again alive. Deceased had no money in his possession. He was a single man, and had been a teetotalter and Sunday School teacher all his life. He could not say how or why he came to Stretford. PC Wood stated that about eight o'clock on Thursday morning last, a canal boatman, who gave the name of **James Starkey**, came to the police station at Stretford and showed him a man's jacket, hat and scarf. They were quite dry, and he said he had found them under the hedge on the side of the canal towing-path opposite Inman's rustic works, near Edge Lane Bridge. Witness kept the clothing, and with another constable went with the grappling irons to the canal. He found the body at eleven o'clock that morning in the water near Edge Lane bridge. The body was fully clothed, with the exception of the jacket, hat and scarf. Two old envelopes were the only articles found in the deceased's pockets. There was a wound at the back of the head which might have been caused by a passing tug boat. The jury returned a verdict that deceased committed suicide whilst temporarily insane.

### 39 14 February 1890

#### SANDBACH

**THE SAD BURNING CASE** On Friday morning, an inquest was held by Mr H Churton at the Red Lion Inn, Hassall Green, respecting the death of **Mary Jackson**, aged 60 years, wife of **John Jackson**, boatman of Hassall Green, who died on Tuesday night week from injuries received in consequence of being burnt the previous night. It appears from the evidence that, whilst Mr Jackson had gone to visit a friend who was sick, his wife's clothing became ignited. Someone rushed after him and informed him of the circumstance, and he immediately ran home. He found his wife, who had managed to get to the door, completely enveloped in flames, and after some little time he succeeded in extinguishing them. Dr Bennett of Sandbach was summoned, but despite his strenuous efforts, Mrs Jackson lingered in great agony, and died about seven o'clock on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

### 40 25 April 1890

#### SANDBACH

**DRUNKS** At the Sandbach Sessions on Wednesday, **George Clare** (boatman) and **William Grainger** (boatman) were each fined for being drunk.

### 41 16 May 1890

#### SANDBACH

**"BILL THE DEVIL"** **William Groomie** alias "Bill the Devil" of Tunstall was in custody at Sandbach on Friday, charged with stealing a pair of trousers, value 15s, the property of **John Evanson**, a boatman, at Wheelock on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1890. The prosecutor stated that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January the prisoner and another man were instructed to bring his boat from Tunstall to Middlewich. On arrival at Wheelock wharf, the prisoner left the boat, taking with him a new pair of trousers out of the cabin. On the 8<sup>th</sup> inst, witness saw the prisoner at the Wheelock wharf, and he was then wearing the trousers which he had stolen. Information was given to the police, and the prisoner was taken into custody. PC Bailey stated that in answer to the charge the prisoner admitted stealing the trousers, and expressed his sorrow. The prisoner, who had been previously convicted for various offences, was now committed to Knutsford gaol for six weeks with hard labour.

### 42 23 May 1890

**A CREWE MAN DROWNED AT WHEELOCK** Mr H C Yates, the district coroner, held an inquest at the Commercial Hotel, Wheelock, on Wednesday afternoon, on the body of a Crewe man named Albert Henshall, a lamplighter. Mr W Jinks was elected foreman of the jury. After viewing the body, which lay in an adjoining stable, the following evidence was adduced :- **Thomas Proudlove**, boatman of Malkin's Bank, said he was employed by the Canal Company. About ten minutes past five on Tuesday afternoon, the previous day, he saw a body floating on the canal at Yerwood, and he at once gave information to the police. A boat had just passed the spot. Witness had been working on that part of the canal all the day, but he had not seen any man about. The road there was simply for the canal people. PC Bailey said that about five o'clock he received information from the last witness that there was a dead man in the canal near Astle's Bridge, and he went to the place with Proudlove. A man had got the body on to the towing path. Witness afterwards brought it to the New Inn, Wheelock, and on searching it, he found a knife, purse and a small bunch of keys. The Coroner : There was no money or papers upon him? Witness : No, sir. The Coroner : What was he? Witness : A lamplighter in Crewe. There were no marks of violence upon the body, except a bruise on the head, which appeared to have been caused by a boat. It was only a slight cut. Proceeding, witness said he saw the very man standing on the bridge in Wheelock about a fortnight ago. His clothes were not cut in any way. There was no public road within a mile of the spot where the body was found. Deceased might have got in at Wheelock and then floated down. Jonathan Dooley of Crewe said he had seen the body, and he recognised it as that of Albert Henshall. Henshall was a single man, about 33 years of age, and resided with his mother, who

depended upon his support. He was last at home a week on Friday. He left home about one o'clock to go to the deviation works of the L and NW Railway Company for his wages. He had been away from home once or twice before, but did not say where he went to. Witness did not know that deceased had been in any trouble in any way. Coroner : Did he draw his wages? Witness : He did. Coroner : He was not in trouble with any other man? Witness : No. The Coroner said that in cases where bodies were found like that, the evidence must be shallow and somewhat unsatisfactory. They heard that deceased was a man who lived in Crewe, and had left home. He had apparently spent his wages, for no money was found upon him. Where and how he had got into the canal they would never know ; and they had no evidence as to the state of his mind. All that the jury could do under the circumstances was to return a verdict of "Found drowned". The Jury agreed upon a verdict to this effect.

**43 27 June 1890**

**SANDBACH**

**WASTING CANAL WATER** A charge of wasting canal water was at the Sandbach Police Court on Wednesday preferred against **William Bevan**, boatman, the offence being committed on the 9<sup>th</sup> May at Sandbach. The Bench ordered a fine of £1, to include the costs, to be paid.

**44 11 July 1890**

**DAMAGE TO A LOCK** At the Middlewich Petty Sessions on Wednesday, **Reuben Roberts**, boatman, was charged with doing damage to Rumps Lock on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. Evidence was given by W Hambleton, and a fine of 10s was inflicted.

**45 18 July 1890**

**ALSAGER**

**WASTING CANAL WATER : HEAVY FINE** At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, a charge of wasting water at Church Lawton was preferred against a boatman named **Henry Rowland**. William Hamilton, police inspector for the Canal Company, said the defendant had bolted since the summons was served upon him, but he had admitted the offence. The Bench ordered a fine of £1 to be paid.

**46 25 July 1890**

**KICKED TO DEATH BY A HORSE** Yesterday morning a boatman named **Thomas Carrington** died at the Blackburn Infirmary of shocking injuries caused by the kicks of a horse. While the horse was drawing a boat on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal near Chorley, the deceased struck it on the hind quarters with his hand. The animal immediately lashed out, and battered Carrington in the face with his hoof, inflicting terrible injuries from which he died.

**47 8 August 1890**

**LAWTON**

**INQUEST** An inquest was held on Saturday morning at Mr E Nall's, the Red Bull Inn, Lawton, before Mr H C Yates, county coroner, touching the death of **Alice Hollinshead**, who was drowned in the canal at Church Lawton on the 30<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr William Hill was foreman of the jury. **Joseph Hollinshead**, boatman living at Cannock Road, Penridge, said the deceased was his daughter, and was 3 years and three months old. On the 30<sup>th</sup> ult, he was walking in the fields with his child, and picked some flowers for her. He had hold of her hand, and went through the stile with her at Church Lawton, and they went along the footpath. He let go her hand to look after the towing line, and before the boat was in the lock he missed her and called to her, but got no reply. He got a boat hook and got her out of the canal, but she was dead. The jury recommended that the North Staffordshire Railway and Canal Company should erect a mortuary in the district, and the Coroner promised to write to Mr Phillips on the matter. Mr Hill, the foreman, said that they were about forming an ambulance corps in the neighbourhood, and a mortuary was necessary, and would, if

erected, prove very useful. Verdict : “Accidentally drowned”.

#### **48 22 August 1890**

**THE TRAGIC DEATH OF A POACHER AT STRETFORD** On Saturday morning, Mr F Price, county coroner, held an inquest at the Talbot Hotel, Stretford, respecting the decease of a man unknown, who was drowned in the Bridgewater Canal on the previous Thursday. The first witness called was Robert Gamble, gamekeeper to Sir Humphrey de Trafford, who stated that about ten o'clock on Thursday morning he saw the deceased in Trafford Park, near 21 coops of pheasants. He ran after him, and deceased threw away a bundle he was carrying, and after running about half a mile, jumped over an iron fence on to the towing-path of the Bridgewater Canal. When witness got near the canal about a quarter of a mile from Watermeetings, he lost sight of the deceased. Thinking he had jumped into the canal, witness walked along the bank, and shortly afterwards saw a boatman named **Daniel North** in the act of dragging a man out of the water with a boathook. He recognised him as the man he had seen amongst the coops. Life appeared to be extinct. Witness sent information to the police, and then went to look for the bundle which deceased had thrown away during his flight. He found it contained a hen and a pheasant, and in a dyke he discovered another hen covered with herbs. PC Ormerod then gave evidence, stating that he received information from the last witness of a man having been drowned in the canal at Stretford. He searched the body on the spot, and found four snares such as poachers use in his pockets, and about three or four pounds of potatoes, also two tobacco boxes. There was nothing to lead to his identification. He saw the body an hour after it had been taken out of the water, and the chest was still warm. He had the body conveyed to the mortuary at Stretford Cemetery. The deceased was a middle aged man, about five feet seven or eight, dark brown hair, heavy dark moustache, but no whiskers. He wore a black cloth jacket, brown tweed waistcoat, cord trousers, lace up clogs, red and white striped shirt and a red flannelette undervest. The Coroner, in summing up, pointed out that there was no evidence to show that the case was one of suicide, or that deceased had preferred death by drowning to capture and imprisonment. The deceased appeared to be an experienced poacher, and it was more reasonable to suppose, and the evidence clearly justified the supposition, that deceased endeavoured to cross the water as a convenient and effectual way of escaping from the keeper, Gamble, and probably he chose a spot where the water was deeper than he expected. The jury returned a verdict that the deceased was drowned whilst attempting to cross the Bridgewater Canal to escape apprehension. The deceased has since been identified as Samuel Johnson, City Road, Hulme.

#### **49 22 August 1890**

**EXCITING INCIDENT AT SANDBACH** An exciting incident occurred at Booth Lane, Sandbach, on Sunday afternoon. It appears a lad named George Shaw, son of Mr C Shaw of Red Row, was playing with others near to the canal, when he accidentally fell into the water. He sank twice, and was about to go down a third time when a boatman named **Skerratt** came up and, seeing the dangerous position of the child, he at once plunged in and succeeded in saving him. The little fellow was taken home in an exhausted condition, but we are pleased to learn that he is now almost right again.

#### **50 29 August 1890**

##### **SANDBACH**

**CHARGED WITH DESERTING HIS WIFE** **George Shaw**, canal boatman, was summoned to the Sandbach Police Court on Wednesday on a charge of neglecting and deserting his wife. Mr A E Stringer appeared for the defence. Mrs Shaw said her husband left her about a week or two ago whilst in Sandbach. Clerk : What was the cause? Complainant : Well, he wanted to take the children and leave me. He said there was no home for me. He left my clothes. Proceeding, complainant said she had no home to go to, and she had to go into the workhouse. The boat he lived on belonged to him. There were six children, and she had had two with her in the workhouse. Cross-examined : She did not bring a man in her husband's boat and take beer with him, nor did any

intimacy take place. She was not a drunken woman. Her husband had been to the workhouse two or three times to see her. Mr Stringer : Hasn't he told you that if you behaved yourself he would take you back again? No. Mr Stringer contended that so desertion had been proved. Shaw said he lived formerly at Lawton, and he had to break up his home in consequence of her drinking habits. Drink had been the cause of all the unpleasantness. They afterwards went to live in their boat. He had offered to take her back several times. The Bench dismissed the case.

### 51 5 September 1890

THE IMPECUNIOUS BOATMAN AND HIS HORSE At Sale Petty Sessions on Monday, **Thomas Hulse**, captain of the boat *George Harry*, was summoned for cruelty to a horse on the 16<sup>th</sup> August. Sergeant Maddock stated that he saw the defendant in charge of the horse, and standing under Marsland's Road bridge. The animal was in poor condition. When he saw him, he was throwing water on the horse's legs. The defendant ran at it and struck it with his whip most brutally. It was pitiful to see the poor thing. He spoke to the defendant, who afterwards put it up at Broadheath. It had a load of 57 tons behind it. The horse had since been destroyed. Mr W H Pugh, VS, Altrincham, said he examined the animal on the 17<sup>th</sup> August, and found it suffering from diseased foot and ringbone. It was totally unfit for work and he advised him to have it destroyed. In reply to the Bench he said it must have been going lame for some time. Inspector Wilson, RSPCA, said it was an old racehorse, and was destroyed the day following. The Society did not wish to press the case, as the defendant was very poor. Defendant was fined 5s, including costs.

### 52 10 October 1890

#### MIDDLEWICH

A BOATMAN DROWNED An inquest was held on Wednesday by the Manchester Deputy City Coroner (Mr Smelt) touching the death of **Allen Wilday**, boatman, 16 years of age, late of Newton Bank, Middlewich. About three o'clock on Monday afternoon, the deceased was missed from his boat, which was lying in the Chorlton Street Arm of the Rochdale Canal, and his body was afterwards found close to the boat. He had had a fit whilst at breakfast that morning, and it is supposed that he may have fallen into the water while suffering from a second attack. An open verdict was returned.

### 53 17 October 1890

THE BOATMAN AND THE SHERRY At the Macclesfield County Police Court on Friday, before Mr J C Nicholson, **Samuel Hancock**, canal boatman, Hardings Wood, near Harecastle, was charged with burglariously entering the Royal Oak Inn, Sutton, and stealing therefrom, on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, a four gallon bottle of sherry, value £4. Mr H A W Hastings appeared for the prisoner. Mr Bolshaw said that on Wednesday last he left home in the morning about 11.30 a m to go to Manchester, leaving Mrs Harriet Atkinson in charge of the house. When he returned about 11.30 p m he went down the cellar, and found a four gallon bottle of sherry had been taken off the shelf in the wine cellar. The sherry had been on the shelf about 12 months, and the cellar was secure when he left the house. He afterwards went to the five boats stationed at the canal wharf at the time, and found all the inmates asleep except in one boat, where they used bad language to him when he spoke. He informed the police about 1.30 a m on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst. By Mr Hastings : He saw prisoner and told him that he had taken the wine, but if he would apologise he (witness) would overlook the offence. He thought it was trivial at the time, but since then he had missed 2 ½ gallons of rum from a keg. Prisoner only used bad language in reply. Harriet Atkinson said that at 9.30 in the evening she was in the bar parlour and heard a noise. On going in the direction of it, she found prisoner lying on the stairs. She told him he was going the wrong way, and he got up and went down the lobby towards the yard. After that, she went down to the cellar and drew some beer, and saw the prisoner lying on his back in the coal cellar with the bottle of wine at his feet. She did not speak, but ran upstairs again and got the assistance of two gentlemen who came in, but on going to the cellar again prisoner was gone. The cellar window was open, and he must have gone out that way. By Mr Hastings : The

window was fastened on the inside. Prisoner was quite accountable for his actions at 9.30. There was a large company then, and they had several quarts of liquor during the day. PC Appleton said that when he apprehended prisoner, he said, "I know nothing about it". Cross-examined : Prisoner looked as if he had just recovered from the effects of drink. A remand was granted, prisoner being allowed bail, himself in £20 and one surety of £10.

**54 31 October 1890**

SANDBACH

WASTING CANAL WATER At the Sandbach Sessions on Wednesday, **William Stevenson**, boatman, was fined £1 and the costs for wasting water on the 9<sup>th</sup> October.

**55 14 November 1890**

MIDDLEWICH

NEVER BEEN TO A DAY SCHOOL At the Middlewich Petty Sessions on Wednesday, **Mrs Taylor**, wife of a boatman, appeared in answer to a summons charging her husband with illegally employing his child, 10 years of age. Mr W Shaw, school attendance officer, said he found the lad pushing the boats with a stick on the 25<sup>th</sup> September. He was in a very dirty condition, and seemed to be utterly neglected. He said he had never been to a day school. Mrs Taylor said her husband was a cripple, and they were obliged to let the lad assist them. Fined 7s 6d to include costs.

**56 21 November 1890**

DISAPPOINTED IN LOVE

YOUNG WOMAN DROWNED NEAR NANTWICH

A MOTHER'S INTERFERENCE On Tuesday morning a boatman found in the canal at Swanley, near Nantwich, the body of a young woman. Great excitement was aroused in the locality, and on inquiries being made, the corpse was found to be that of Emma Sadler, aged 28, who was missed from her sister's home close by on the previous night. The body was removed to the Star Inn, Acton, and the fact was at once reported to Mr H Churton, county coroner.

Mr Churton held an inquest at the Star Inn on Wednesday. Mr Reuben Clough was foreman of the jury.

The only witness called and sworn was Hannah Smith, a married woman of Burland, who identified the body as that of her sister. They had lived together for six months. The deceased went out to work as a dressmaker. At 10 o'clock on Monday night, Emma left the house saying she intended to be away only a few minutes, and putting on her hat and a shawl. That was the last time witness saw her alive. There was nothing in her manner to cause witness to suspect she was going to destroy herself. She had not been in the house long on Monday, having returned in the evening after being engaged all day at the workhouse.

Mr Clough (to witness) : Now tell us the truth.

Witness added that her sister had left their mother to come to stay with her, and on that occasion remarked that "before she would walk the road, she would bottom the canal". The Coroner asked if the deceased had since said anything to the same effect. Mrs Smith replied that she had been informed that the deceased had said the same thing to a neighbour, Mrs Potts, but she (witness) never heard her repeat it. In reply to more questions, the witness said she did not know whether her sister had anything on her mind to cause depression. She had been regularly employed and in receipt of good money. The spot where the body was found was 300 or 400 yards from the house. Witness had not directly given information to the police. She first told her neighbour. She and her husband made search on Monday night when they thought it was time for the deceased to return, but could find no trace of her. The Coroner : Did you ever have any words with her? Witness replied that a few sharp words had arisen between them on domestic matters, but not recently. The Coroner : And when she made that curious expression to you, did you really believe that she meant to bottom the canal? Witness said she did believe her, but she never took any means to prevent her from doing anything to herself. She could not assign any reason for her sister taking her own life.

In answer to a juror, Mrs Smith said a sister was drowned in Spurstow Pool twenty years ago. That was through disappointment in courtship.

Mr Clough, who remembered the circumstances of that case, explained that the mother would not allow the daughter to marry her sweetheart, and the young woman drowned herself. The young man was not permitted by the family to see the body, but he attended the funeral. In his distress, he enlisted in the army. He had returned to the locality, where at the present time he remained in a destitute condition.

The Coroner said he also remembered the case, and he was greatly shocked at it. It was an extraordinary case, and no doubt if the mother had consented to the girl's marriage, she would not have done what she did.

Mr Clough said he had known the deceased, Emma, as an exceptionally good, industrious and amiable girl. (To the witness) : Do you remember, about two months ago, me coming to your house, and your sister saying that if you had not taken her in, she would have bottomed the canal? That she would never return home?

The witness replied that she did remember it. She had heard her sister say she never would go back to live with her mother, whose home was in the same district.

Mr Clough remarked that the girl's reason for leaving home was that the mother locked the door one night at nine o'clock, when it came to her knowledge that she had a sweetheart.

In reply to the Coroner, Mrs Smith said it was a fact that her sister kept the company of a young man. His name was Woodall. His father was one of the jury. The couple had been engaged for about three years. The Coroner : Was there any objection by the mother to their being married?

Witness : Yes, sir. The Coroner : That would prey upon her mind? It is that which has done it, I believe. ("Yes", from a juror).

The Coroner remarked that the witness was now beginning to speak out. It was difficult to get all the details from her. He wished her to make it clear whether or not it was in consequence of the mother's objection to marriage that the girl was unhappy.

Witness supposed that that was the cause, and several jurymen expressed themselves in agreement with her on the point.

Mr Clough said he had been informed that Mrs Cooper of Burland Hall met the deceased near the canal after she left her sister's home on Monday night, and they bade each other a good night.

In further reply to the Coroner, Mrs Smith said she supposed her mother's reason for objecting was that the young man was not good enough for the deceased.

The Coroner : When young women arrive at the age of twenty, I should think they are the best judges. They are not always children at eight and twenty, and want very little guidance from their mothers. I am surprised that she did not take the case in her own hands and marry him.

Witness : I have said so all along.

The Coroner added that the deceased would have been a wise person had she done what her married sister had done.

Mr Faulkner understood that the mother objected to any young men. The witness, however, said she was agreeable in her case, but if she had not been, the marriage would have taken place notwithstanding. The mother was 75 years of age. Her son lived with her.

The Coroner : She is getting in her dotage, it seems. (To Mr Clough). I am very glad you put some facts to the jury, for I was very much in the dark in the matter. Commenting on the evidence, Mr Churton proceeded to say that the evidence pointed to the real and absolute cause why the young woman had committed suicide. It was entirely as the witness had stated – it was entirely owing to the mother's objection to the deceased getting married to Woodhall, who seemed to be a very steady and respectable young man. (Mr Clough : Yes.) No doubt he would have made her an excellent husband. The statement made by the deceased evidently showed that it was her inclination to do away with herself.

PC Jackson informed the Coroner and jury that Woodhall was waiting outside the room ready to answer any question that they might wish to put to him.

Woodhall was called in, but not required to give formal evidence. In reply to one or two questions

put by the coroner, he said he was with deceased in Monk's Lane for about 45 minutes on Monday night, and left her at her sister's gate as the Acton church clock rang nine. Emma did not say what she intended to do. A fortnight ago, she told him she had something very heavy on her mind. She also said she and her sister could not agree. He did not ask her why. Mrs Smith was standing at the gate when he left the deceased, and they spoke.

Mrs Smith, recalled, admitted that sometimes sharp words had been said by her and her sister, but she never had any objections to the engagement.

PC Jackson said the time the body was discovered was 10.30 Tuesday morning. He saw it on the boatman's boat. He searched the clothing, and found only a packet of needles.

The Coroner, after expressing surprise that a thorough search was not made when the deceased was missed, asked the jury to consider their verdict.

The jury concluded that deceased committed suicide while temporarily insane.

The Coroner said it had come under his notice during his long experience that three young women drowned themselves in the same pit on different occasions because of parental interference with their courtship.

### **57 27 March 1891**

**CRUELTY TO A BOAT HORSE** At the Sandbach Sessions on Wednesday, **Joseph Kimberley**, a boatman, was charged with working a horse whilst in an unfit state on the 25<sup>th</sup> February. Inspector Dowty of the Royal Society, said he found the animal attached to a barge laden with 15 tons of blue clay. It was sweating very much, and was in very poor condition. It was very lame on the off fore leg and the off hind leg, the latter having been badly pricked. It was totally unfit for work. PC Moss corroborated. Fined 10s and the costs.

### **58 27 March 1891**

**SERIOUS ASSAULT WITH A POKER AT SANDBACH** At the Sandbach Police Court on Saturday, before Major Kennedy, **Thomas Newton**, boatman of Church Lawton, was charged with unlawfully wounding George Banks, an old man of 80, at Lawton on the previous day. It appears the two men had been living together in a hut, and on Thursday night the prisoner brought a strange woman with him. The old man interfered, and said he should not allow the old woman to stay in the hut, whereupon a quarrel started between the two men. Prisoner picked up a poker and struck Banks on the head, inflicting serious injuries, and rendering him insensible. Information of the affair was given to the police, and Constable Beech paid a visit to the hut, and took Newton into custody. The injured man was removed to the hospital at Arclid Workhouse. Prisoner was remanded.

On Wednesday, prisoner was brought up at the Sandbach Police Court, when Constable Beech again gave evidence. The injured man appeared in court with his head bandaged. The officer stated that on going to the hut he found Banks lying on a bed, and his face was covered with blood. He made a statement, and witness then went to Chatterley and apprehended the prisoner, and brought him to the hut. Witness asked Banks whether that was the man who had struck him with the poker, and he replied in the affirmative. Witness then charged Newton with unlawfully wounding Banks, and Newton said, "What I've done to him I did with my fist. I wanted to wash him this morning, but he would not let me. He's got me out of the cabin, and now he wants to get me out of the hut, but if I go, he will have to go as well. If we'd been drunk, I should not have thought anything about it, and if he says I hit him with the poker, he tells a lie". Witness then picked up the poker (produced), and asked if that was the one which had been used, and Banks replied that it was. Witness examined the hut, and found bloodstains on the four walls, and a quantity of clotted blood on the floor. Banks had lived in the hut for about five years. The hut had been used for canal boat "leggers" to stay in. There was only one room in it. There were some bloodstains on the prisoner's shirt sleeves, and the handle of the poker was also stained.

Clerk to prisoner : Have you anything to say? Prisoner : There's three witnesses to come. Have you brought them? PC Beech : I have enquired, but they could not enlighten us, because they did not

see anything. Prisoner : Well, there's that woman. Constable Beech : I believe there was a woman, but I don't know her whereabouts.

Complainant was then called, and stated : On the Thursday there came a strange woman to the hut. She was in drink, and she asked us to let her lie down. She lay down and went to sleep. I then said to Newton, "Let's go and have a pint of ale apiece", so we went to the Red Bull. We had this ale, and then we came back to the hut. The woman was then very talkative and beastly drunk, so I ordered her out, but Newton was not willing for her to go. She then stayed till morning. We had some words about the woman not going, and he struck me with the poker, which knocked me insensible. I knew nothing until the middle of the next day. There was no person about when he hit me. There was only the woman, but I don't know where she is now. I don't know her, and I had not seen her before.

Prisoner (to complainant) : Didn't you say that the woman knew her road to the hut when she came in? No. Didn't the woman say you had not been hit with the poker, but had jammed your head against the hut? No. Who was in the hut? I didn't see anybody. How many times have you been in prison? I have been in twice. Have you been transported? No.

Dr W H Latham of Sandbach deposed : I examined the injured man at Arclid on the Saturday. I found a cut over the left eye two inches long, irregular in shape and down to the bone. There was a small cut a little above this one. On the left side of the head, there was a cut two inches long, and at the back of the head on the right side there was a slight cut, with extensive bruising. There was also a slight cut on the right ear, and both eyes were blackened. The left side of the face was bruised. These cuts might have been caused with a poker, with the exception of one over the left eye, which might possibly have been caused by the other end. Mr Baker : That was the worst? Dr Latham : Yes. Clerk : Were any of the wounds dangerous? There is a possibility of erysipelas. Clerk : But no other danger? No. The cuts might have been caused by a fall, with the exception of one, but it would have required great violence. There were marks on the man's throat, but there were no distinct finger marks.

Prisoner said the complainant knew the woman's name. She was an Irish woman.

Complainant : No, I don't.

Prisoner was then committed to the Quarter Sessions.

## **59 17 April 1891**

### **SANDBACH**

**ASSAULT ON A BOATMAN** At the Sandbach Police Court on Wednesday, **Richard Bunn**, boatman, was charged with assaulting **Thomas Bloor**, another boatman, of Kidsgrove, at Moston on the 14<sup>th</sup> March. Mr A E Stringer appeared for the complainant. Bloor said he and the defendant had a dispute about the right to use a lock, and defendant shoved him down and struck him twice whilst down, causing wounds which bled very much. His wife came up, and defendant also pushed her about. Defendant admitted striking complainant. Fined £1, to include costs.

## **60 19 June 1891**

**WASTING CANAL WATER** At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, **Fred Burston**, canal boatman, was summoned for wasting water at Church Lawton on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr W Hambleton, police-inspector for the canal company, prosecuted, and evidence was given by the lock-keeper. A fine of £1 and costs was imposed.

A similar charge was preferred against another boatman named **Fred Bunn**, and a like penalty was inflicted.

## **61 3 July 1891**

### **CHESHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS**

**THEFT OF A ROPE AT ALTRINCHAM** **Joseph Taylor**, 47, boatman, and **Edward Cooke**, 28, boatman, were indicted for having at Altrincham on the 21<sup>st</sup> March stolen 60 lb weight of rope, the property of the Rochdale Canal Company. Mr E H Lloyd prosecuted, and evidence was given by

Edwin Etock that he purchased the rope from Cooke, the other prisoner standing by the door at the time. **Inspector Nicholls**, traffic inspector for the canal company, identified the rope as their property. Mr Lance Bentley, on behalf of Taylor, contended there was nothing to connect him with Cooke, and he had no knowledge that the affair was anything but a bona fide one. The Jury found both prisoners guilty. The Chairman said there was a difference in degree between the two. He discharged Taylor in his own recognisances to come up for judgement when called upon ; Cooke was sentenced to two months with hard labour.

## **62 31 July 1891**

### MIDDLEWICH

**A WIFE'S MAINTENANCE** At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, **Henry Potts**, boatman, was charged with neglecting to maintain his wife at Middlewich. Complainant said there were arrears due to her amounting to £1 10s. Defendant said he was unable to pay anything. He had been in the Union hospital at Arclid three months. He and his wife had had some words, and she then left him. He had a horse and boat, but he sold these. He received £50 for the boat and £3 10s for the horse, and he paid a lot of this to his master for former debts. He afterwards fell ill, and not having any money he went into the workhouse. His wife had a grown up family, and they were more able to keep her than he was. The Chairman (Mr G H Baker) said the court could not make any (..... ...) the defendant had no means.

## **63 30 October 1891**

### DROWNING FATALITY AT REDDISH

**THE BOATMAN CENSURED** Mr F Price, Lancashire District Coroner, held an inquest on Monday afternoon at the Golden Eagle Inn, Sandy Lane, on the body of Henry Poole, aged seven years, the illegitimate son of Eliza Poole of 50 Coronation Street, North Reddish, who was drowned on Saturday afternoon in the canal. Sarah Wood said that the deceased lived with her. About 12 o'clock on Saturday, deceased went out to play, and in half an hour's time a little boy came and told her that he had fallen into the canal. She immediately went to White Hill Lane, and found the child lying dead on the canal bank near Nixon's Bridge. The body was afterwards brought to witness's house. Levi Smith, aged 13 years, who lived at 130 Hesketh Street, was cautioned by the coroner before he administered the oath. The lad said on Saturday afternoon he was playing with the deceased and several other boys on an empty canal boat. The bargeman attached a horse to the boat, and it was drawn from Rivett's wharf to Nixon's Bridge. The deceased was standing on the edge of the boat, and intended to jump off at the bridge, but when the boat arrived at this point, it struck against some stones, and this jerk threw the deceased into the water. They called the boatman to stop, and he pulled up the horse but the boat went on for the length of the line. Witness ran to the bow of the boat, but as there was no rope he could not render him any assistance. The boatman sent a boy for a hook, and whilst the lad was away, a gipsy dived into the canal and brought the body out. The boy had been in the water about five minutes, and was not quite dead when taken out. Some people who were on the bank lifted the lad up by the heels to let the water drop out. The Coroner remarked that they must have known nothing about it, as it was the worst treatment they could adopt. As the jury were of opinion that the conduct of the boatman, **J Brierley**, was worthy of censure, he was called in by the coroner, who said : How is it that you allow these boys to play about your boats? Brierley : We told them five or six times to get off, but they would not do so. A Juror : Why did you not make some effort to get the lad out? Witness : When I came back to the boat, he was gone down. The Coroner : How do you know? Witness : I do know. The Coroner : That is a woman's answer. A Juror : Did you not make the remark that you would not wet yourself? Witness : No. Another juror, who expressed his feelings pretty strongly on the subject, said : It is a great pity that we can't try you for manslaughter. I do not know how to express my feelings when I think that a man like you, a human being, can see a poor little thing lying there, and would not turn back. The Coroner here interposed, and said the man did turn back. Continuing, the juror said it made his blood boil to think that there were such beings in this country.

A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned. When leaving the room, the Coroner told Mr Wright, the indignant juror, that when he required a man to censure anybody he would send for him, as he could do it much better than he (the Coroner) could.

#### **64 6 November 1891**

**CRUELTY CASE** At the Middlewich Police Court on Wednesday, **Thomas Clutton**, boatman, was fined 1s and costs for ill-treating a boat horse on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. Inspector Dewty said the animal was only fit for the knacker's yard. Defendant said he had had the horse destroyed.

#### **65 4 December 1891**

**CRUELTY TO DUCKS** At the Sandbach Police Court on Wednesday, **George Carter**, boatman of Hatton, was charged with ill-treating two ducks at Sandbach on the 19<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Wilson, chief inspector of the RSPCA in Cheshire, said he saw the defendant carrying the ducks by their legs, their heads hanging down. Defendant left the ducks in a cart. Their necks were swollen and the "eyes starting out". Fined 5s.

#### **66 19 February 1892**

##### **SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST A CHESHIRE CONSTABLE**

**HEARING AT SANDBACH YESTERDAY** Yesterday at the Sandbach Police Court, before Mr F H R Wilbraham (in the chair), Mr G B Baker and Mr J H Armitstead, John Potts, constable, was in custody on the charge of stealing one cheese weighing 23 lbs, valued at 18s 5d, from a warehouse at Rode Heath, on the 27<sup>th</sup> January ; and 20 plates, valued at 7s, about October, the property of Arthur Bailey ; also with stealing 71 ¼ lbs of copper wire, valued at £5, from a storehouse at Betchton, between the 27<sup>th</sup> December 1891 and the 9<sup>th</sup> February, the property of the National Telephone Company ; and also with stealing two safety rubber tyres, valued at 15s, and one bicycle lamp, valued at 12s, between the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1891 and the 9<sup>th</sup> February, from a workshop at Betchton, the property of John Cooke. Great interest was taken in the case, and there was a large attendance in court. Prisoner had been in the force for ten years, and had been stationed in the Alsager and Sandbach districts for some considerable time back. He was therefore well known, and the fact that such a serious charge had been made against him created the utmost surprise in all parts of the locality. The Chief Constable, Lieutenant Colonel Hamersley and Superintendent Plant were present in court.

PC Johnson was the first witness called. He deposed that on the 30<sup>th</sup> January he received information of a cheese having been lost from a warehouse belonging to Mr Bailey, grocer. He went to his shop and asked if it was true. After leaving Mr Bailey's on the 9<sup>th</sup> February, witness met Sergeant Higgins and Constable Potts (the prisoner), and witness was asked where he had been, and he told them that he had been to Mr Bailey's about the missing cheese. Sergeant Higgins with witness and Potts then went to Mr Bailey's, and they had some conversation with Mr Bailey. Witness did not take any part in that conversation until he noticed Potts trying to confound Mr Bailey as to the dates. He was trying to puzzle him. Mr Paine : Let us hear what he did say. Witness : Potts asked him the date the cheese was missing, and Mr Bailey gave the 27<sup>th</sup> January. Mr Bailey said he was not sure at first about the date. Witness afterwards jumped up and said he was satisfied that the cheese was stolen, and that was all he wanted to know. Witness then left the house, and Sergeant Higgins and Potts followed. When they got into the road, witness said to prisoner, "I charge you with stealing that cheese. If you are an honest man, you will not object to me searching your house". Potts replied, "You will have to get a warrant before you search my house". Witness said, "Your house is a police station, and I shall search it without". Witness asked Sergeant Higgins to accompany him, and witness went towards the house of Potts. Witness waited till Potts came up. Potts went to the kitchen and said to his wife, "Johnson has come to search the house for that cheese". In a few minutes, Mrs Potts went upstairs, and witness followed, but Mrs Potts shut the bedroom door in his face. Potts shouted upstairs, "Johnson, you go in that room if you dare. Missus has gone to bed". Witness replied, "She is not. I can see her through the nick of

the door sitting on the side of the bed". Proceeding, witness said : I called Potts up to enter the room first. Mrs Potts then called out, "I have not gone to bed ; I have not got off my clothes". Potts afterwards came up and entered the room first, and I and Sergeant Higgins followed. I asked the way up to the attic, and Potts got upon a box at the bottom of a stepladder which leads up to the attic. I told him to get off the box, and after he had done so, I opened the box and found a portion of a cheese. I asked the prisoner where he got that from, and he replied, "Wright and Watson, Tunstall". I then further searched the house, and in the attic I found other things. I afterwards went to Mr Bailey and brought him across to prisoner's house and showed him the cheese, which he identified without any hesitation. He gave me a sample of the cheese. Clerk : Did you apprehend the prisoner? Witness : Yes ; next morning, on the 10<sup>th</sup> February, and charged him with the theft of the cheese. He replied, "I did not".

Cross-examined by Mr Paine : Now is it not a fact that a constable is provided with a book where he has to enter anything that may come up whilst on his beat. Witness : He should. And the omission to enter in his book would render him liable to be reprimanded and fined. He was liable to be reprimanded and perhaps fined. How long have you been in the force? Eleven years. You are familiar with the discipline and regulations of the Cheshire Police? I should be.

Mr Baker (justice) said he did not see what Mr Paine was driving at. Mr Paine said this part would probably form a most important feature.

Arthur Bailey, grocer, was called. He deposed : On the 28<sup>th</sup> January I missed a cheese from my warehouse near the canal side. On the 9<sup>th</sup> February I was in the prisoner's house, and my attention was called to a cheese, and I was asked if that was the one which I had lost. The Clerk : Is that the cheese you have lost? I believe it is part of it. How do you identify it? By the make and the taste of it. Anything else? The peculiar way the mice eat my brother's cheese, and by answering to the weight of the cheese that I had lost.

Francis Hallam Bailey, farmer, deposed : I supplied this cheese to my brother on the 27<sup>th</sup> January. Superintendent Plant : Will you say how you can tell it? He said he could tell it by the quality, the salting and the flavour of it.

Cross-examined : He heard the noise in his brother's warehouse between six and seven on the 27<sup>th</sup>. It proceeded from above the stable. Mr Paine : Would there be anybody in at that time? I cannot say. What sort of a noise was it? Something rolling on the floor. I was in the stable. I did not go outside. I mentioned it to one of his men, and afterwards wrote to my brother about it. What time did your brother close his warehouse? I don't know. Mr Bailey was recalled, and said he usually closed his warehouse after his men had come in. They were in as a rule by six. When it is locked up, where do the keys go? The man locking up would bring the keys to him. I could not say when the keys were brought on the 27<sup>th</sup>. It was nearly 12 when I got home. The keys might have been in my possession at nine o'clock. I don't know. I went to my warehouse the next morning. The keys were behind the door in the stable. The carter would have to get the keys to open the door.

No other evidence was offered as to the cheese, and Mr Paine then addressed the court for the defence so far as this charge was concerned. The defence, he said, was that the cheese was found by the prisoner in the road. Prisoner entered the fact in his book. When people stole anything, it was not unusual for them to enter it in any way. Prisoner was in bed at home early on the night of the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Mr Paine called evidence.

Edwin Dale of Rode Heath said he was formerly a carter for Mr Bailey. On the 27<sup>th</sup> January he went to the prisoner's house to ring some pigs. He got there about 3.30 p m, and he saw Potts, who was in uniform. He had just come off his beat. Witness stayed till after five o'clock. On going in the house again, he found prisoner had gone to bed. Next day the prisoner called at his house, and said he had found something very round, and witness asked him what it was, but he did not say then. Witness asked Potts if anything had been lost, but he did not reply. He went off. On the 29<sup>th</sup> witness was working at Mr Bailey's, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> prisoner came to witness, and said he believed a cheese was missing. Witness said he did not know of it, and prisoner then said he had found a portion of a cheese on the Wednesday night. Witness did not know what time Mr Bailey locked up

his warehouse. It was Bowler's duty to close, because he had the keys. The warehouse was never closed at one particular time.

Witness was not cross-examined by the police.

Mrs Low was next called. She remembered going to the house of the prisoner on the 27<sup>th</sup> January. It was a little after 5 o'clock in the evening. She did not see prisoner because he was in bed. She heard Mrs Potts call upstairs to her husband, and she heard his voice. Witness remained in the house till ten o'clock, and during that time prisoner never left the house.

Sergeant Higgins of Alsager deposed : I know the prisoner's handwriting. The writing in the book produced is that of prisoner. The entry is :- "Found three parts of a cheese at 2 a m on the night of the 26<sup>th</sup> inside of some paling belonging to George Perkins, tied in some linen".

Superintendent Plant : Is that the book that he should have recorded the occurrence in? No, sir.

Superintendent Plant : There is a book supplied by the county where all such things should be entered. This book here is his own property. On the following day, did he make any report to you of the occurrence on his beat? No. Would it have been his duty to enter such on a printed form? Yes. Mr Paine : Do you carry two books? No. Has this report to be made verbally? No, in writing. Do you agree with PC Johnson that an officer is liable to be fined if he omits to report? Yes.

**James Atkins**, boatman of Rode Heath, gave evidence.

The Bench decided to commit the prisoner for trial on this charge.

The charge respecting the wire was then gone into.

PC Johnson deposed : On the 9<sup>th</sup> February I further searched the prisoner's house, and found in the attic two coils of copper wire, one large and one small gauge, now produced. I asked where he got this from, and he replied, "I have had it 5 or 6 years when I was stationed at Mow Cop. I got it to tie up some raspberry canes". On the 12<sup>th</sup> February I had the wire identified by Mr Ireland, foreman of a gang laying the telephone wires at Betchton, near Sandbach. I charged prisoner this morning with stealing the wire, and he replied, "Not guilty of the charge".

William Ireland, foreman, spoke to the wire being missed on the 13<sup>th</sup> February. The wire produced belonged to the company. The wire was stored at Mr Beech's farm, which was situated between Sandbach and Alsager. He knew it by the gauges. Mr Paine : Is there anything special about it? It is made specially for our company, and it is peculiar to a particular firm, but he could not say whether any other firms manufactured the same sort of wire. The whole of the wire in stock was weighed in December. The wire was kept in an outbuilding on the farm in question. Nobody had a right to go to the wire except himself or Mr Beech.

Edwin Harvey, wireman, corroborated.

Mr Paine then called evidence for the defence.

Francis Porter, collier, said he remembered the prisoner being at Mow Cop. He saw prisoner remove last September, and he noticed that Potts had some wire which resembled the large coil now in court. Potts then cut some off and gave this to witness. This was like the coil produced. He had never seen the smaller coil in his possession.

John Edwin Dale said he saw the large coil of wire in the coal hole of the prisoner's house at Rode Heath last summer. It was tied just in the same way as it was now. The smaller coil was similar to what he saw then.

The Bench decided to commit Potts.

Potts was then charged with the theft of tyres and plates.

PC Johnson deposed : I found the tyres in the prisoner's attic. I took them to the New Inn, Betchton, and John Cooke identified them there. On the 16<sup>th</sup> I went to open a cell at the prisoner's house, and there found the lamp (produced) on his bicycle. I took it to John Cooke, New Inn. I charged Potts with stealing the tyres this morning, and he replied, "Not guilty". I further charged him with stealing the lamp, and he answered, "Not guilty".

John Cooke of the New Inn said he could not swear to the tyres now produced, but he had missed a pair narrow to them. The lamp belonged to Mr Birch. He recognised it because the side glass was loose, and he repaired it. Cross-examined : He sold prisoner a machine and a lamp, but the lamp was not like the one produced.

William Birch, solicitor's clerk, said the lamp belonged to him. He knew it by the side glass and the way it had been burnt inside.

No evidence was called on behalf of the prisoner, and he was then committed for trial. The magistrates decided to allow him out on bail, himself in £50 and two sureties of £20.

**67 24 June 1892**

**MIDDLEWICH**

**NO LICENCE Richard Tonks**, boatman, was, at Middlewich on Wednesday, fined 10s for keeping a dog without a licence. PC Maddocks proved the case.

**68 1 July 1892**

**SANDBACH**

**A FOOLISH BOATMAN Walter Appleton**, boatman, was at the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday charged with committing a breach of the peace at Church Lawton on May 28<sup>th</sup> last. Sergeant Higgins stated the case, and the defendant was bound over to keep the peace for six months, and was asked to pay the costs. This he did, and he was then allowed to depart in peace.

**69 8 July 1892**

**GIRL FOUND IN THE CANAL AT MACCLESFIELD**

**INQUEST** On Tuesday an inquest was held at Swiss Cottage, Upton, before Mr H C Yates JP, coroner, and a jury, of which Mr William Carr was foreman, on the body of Miss Hayes, who was found in the canal on Monday.

Samuel Hayes, the father, said that his daughter was 17 years of age. He last saw her alive on Sunday at 8.45 p m. He had then come home from chapel. She changed her clothes, and was returning to business at Mrs Townley's, Mill Street. She appeared low spirited. Witness asked why, and deceased said that one of the shop assistants had gone home ill, and it was thought she would die. Witness knew of no other cause for her depression of spirit. She was a very reserved girl.

John Mottershead, coal porter, said that about four o'clock on Monday morning he found the things on the towing-path near the Buxton Road Bridge. He saw no signs of the body in the canal. He met another boatman, and asked him to stir up the water. He did so, but without result.

Emily Bamford, Sunderland Street, a friend of the deceased, said that she went to Cumberland Street Chapel with her on Sunday night. She was with her every Sunday. It would be about 8.15 when they came out of the chapel, and then they walked home. Witness then returned with deceased, and she left witness near the Sunderland Street Wesleyan Chapel. It commenced to rain, and deceased said that witness had better not get wet. It would be about 9.25 p m, and witness left her at the bottom of the Wallgate. Deceased seemed a bit low spirited on Sunday, but witness, though she made several attempts, could not get anything out of her. PC Thomas Pointon said that about three o'clock that morning (Tuesday) he dragged the canal. About 4.40 a m he found the body of deceased near Euston Road Bridge, about 10 yards from the place where the clothes were found. Deceased wore a hat, jacket, black dress and white tie. She was in about three or four feet of water.

Mrs Townley, confectioner, Mill Street, stated that deceased had been apprenticed to her about 18 months. As usual, deceased left witness's shop between 8.30 and 9 p m. She did not appear to be low spirited when she left, nor had she done so all day. Witness had found deceased guilty of misdemeanours twice before, and how she did not know of the third offence until she had gone home. Deceased had previously understood that she should be dismissed. She had said once or twice that rather than be sent home she would drown herself. Albert Bradburn, a boy engaged by Mrs Townley, said that deceased told him that she would go and drown herself before she went home. She called witness to the top of the cellar steps, and then said that to him.

The Coroner, in summing up, said that this was one of the saddest cases he had ever known. The girl was only very young, but seemed to have done wrong. If she could have told anybody of her trouble, he thought it might have been that she would not have committed this rash act. The Jury considered their verdict, and decided to make a return "that deceased committed suicide whilst in a

state of unsound mind”.

### 70 20 January 1893

#### SENSATIONAL DEATH AT RUNCORN

PREFERRED DEATH TO THE POLICE COURT Yesterday afternoon about four o'clock, **James Kershaw**, a boatman of Runcorn, died under very extraordinary circumstances. A policeman served him with a summons for refusing to quit licensed premises last night. He expressed a determination not to answer it, and immediately afterwards he was found in the canal, but within a few seconds was rescued. He was suffering from shock to the system. Prompt measures to restore respiration were tried, but the man expired in a few minutes. The event caused a great sensation.

### 71 17 February 1893

#### EVIDENCE WANTED AT ALTRINCHAM

A MAGISTRATE'S PROTEST A man was brought before the Altrincham Magistrates on Monday charged on remand with stealing a grey mare, worth £15, the property of Richard Harrison, at Sale in June 1889. The police were without their most important witness, a boatman to whom the prisoner sold the mare for £4 10s. The officer who arrested the prisoner a few days ago as he left Preston gaol, repeated the evidence he previously gave, and on this, Inspector Macdonald applied for a further remand. Mr C Lister, who sat on the Bench, was understood to say that the police were not entitled to a remand. The course they were taking was contrary to all custom. Inspector Macdonald : The witness is a boatman, and we cannot get at him. We received word that he would be here. Mr Lister : It is not a right thing to keep the man in custody like this. The police ought to have the case ready or withdraw the charge. They have no right to keep the man. It was pointed out that the prisoner had admitted his guilt, and he was again remanded, Mr Lister, however, protesting. The witness arrived two hours later, and the prisoner was then committed for trial.

### 72 19 May 1893

A Blackburn spinner named Edward Rily, 36, met with a terrible death on Saturday night. He had helped a canal boatman named **Hopley** to carry a truss of hay to his boat, which stood on the aqueduct crossing the Lancashire and Yorkshire main line, and was recrossing the line when the Midland express from Manchester to Blackburn dashed round the curve and cut him to pieces.

### 73 23 June 1893

#### CRUELTY TO HORSES IN THE ALTRINCHAM DISTRICT

ONE MAN SENT TO PRISON At Altrincham on Monday, **William Nield** of Liverpool was summoned for cruelly ill-treating a mare at Dunham Massey on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult. Inspector Luckings of the RSPCA deposed that on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult he saw defendant working a horse on the canal side at Dunham Massey. The animal was going very lame on the off fore leg, and it could scarcely get along. It appeared to be suffering great pain. It was totally unfit for work. PC Astlelow corroborated. A fine of 10s, including costs, was imposed.

Alfred Cross was summoned for causing an animal to be ill-treated, and Thomas Deakin was summoned for ill-treating the animal. An officer deposed to seeing Deakin in charge of a pony and cart in Dunham Road, Altrincham. There were four persons in the cart. The animal was going at a very slow pace, and Deakin was urging it on. He examined the pony, and found a wound rather larger than half a crown on the near shoulder. It seemed as though there had been a scab, and that it had been rubbed off. Under the saddle there was another wound, about three inches long and about an inch in width. About seven inches above, there was another wound rather larger than a shilling. Inspector Luckings and Superintendent Walker gave further evidence. The Chairman said they thought it one of the worst cases brought before them for a long time. Cross would be fined 40s and costs, and the boy, against whom the case would in all probability have been dismissed had not he himself shown a certain amount of cruelty, would be fined 5s, including costs.

**Thomas Gough**, a boatman of Runcorn, was summoned for a similar offence, committed at

Dunham Massey on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult. PC Astlelow deposed that the horse, which was drawing two narrow empty boats, was very lame on the off fore leg. On the “withers” there was another raw wound. The animal was in very poor condition. Inspector Luckings of the RSPCA said the horse had been hired by defendant from a man in Salford, who had not seen the horse since. He (witness) never did see such a poor animal. It was too weak to walk out of the stable, and they had to send for the “knacker” to slaughter the animal. The horse was simply skin and bone. The owner had been trying to find the defendant. The Chairman remarked that this was the worst case they had heard. The man had literally worked the horse to death. It must have been one long continued series of cruelty in treating the horse to have produced such a result. Prisoner would be sent to gaol for a month's imprisonment with hard labour. They did not think a fine an adequate punishment for such a case.

Joseph Henshaw, 25 Clifton Street, Salford, was also summoned for cruelly ill-treating a horse. Inspector Luckings of the RSPCA deposed to seeing defendant in charge of a brown horse and cart, with six persons seated in it, in Knutsford Road, Altrincham, on the 28<sup>th</sup> ult. Defendant was whipping the horse with a long whip. The animal was going very slowly, and appeared to be in very poor condition. On examining the near hind leg, he found three distinct cuts clean through the flesh about an inch long, and which were bleeding. Defendant gave a wrong address. PC Astlelow offered corroborative evidence. Defendant, who denied having used a whip, was fined 10s and the costs.

## **74      23 June 1893**

### **SHIP CANAL AFFAIRS**

**MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS** An extraordinary general meeting of the shareholders of the Manchester Ship Canal Company was held on Friday in the Gentleman's Concert Hall, Manchester, for the purpose of formally confirming the issue of new debenture stock to the amount of £2,000,000 to the Corporation. Lord Egerton of Tatton (chairman of the company) presided, and there were also present on the platform Mr J K Bythell, Sir E G Johnson KGB, Alderman W Bailey, Alderman B Robinson, Mr J Belisha and Mr Marshall Stephens. There was a small attendance.

The Chairman said that meeting had been summoned as a formal meeting to obtain the consent of the shareholders to the resolutions which he should have to propose. The main object, he might explain, was that, Parliament having given power to the Company to borrow from the Corporation the sum of £2,000,000, and also having given power to the Corporation to lend that sum of money at the rate of 4 ½ per cent, during the present session, it was necessary to obtain the consent of the shareholders to the resolutions. He did not think it necessary for him to say anything further at the time, as the meeting was only called for the special purpose of obtaining the consent of the shareholders to the raising and the borrowing of the money, which they were aware from previous communications had been rendered absolutely necessary to the completion of the undertaking. He therefore moved :- “That the directors of the company be and are hereby authorised, in pursuance of the Manchester Ship Canal (Additional Capital &c) Act, 1893, to borrow for and on behalf of the company on mortgage of the company's undertaking any sum or sums not exceeding in the aggregate £2,000,000, or such part or parts thereof as may be required, for the purposes of the above mentioned Act, and of the Manchester Ship Canal Act 1865, the Manchester Ship Canal (Alteration of Works) Act 1888, the Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers) Act 1890, the Manchester Ship Canal (Tidal Openings &c) 1890, and the Manchester Ship Canal Act 1893, at such rate of interest not exceeding 4 ½ % per annum, and at such times and upon such terms and conditions, and with such restrictions, and in such form as if issued to the Mayor, aldermen and citizens of the city of Manchester, are prescribed by the Manchester Ship Canal (Additional Capital &c) Act 1893, or the Manchester Corporation (Ship Canal) Act 1893, or in any Act or Acts recited therein respectively, and if not so issued as the directors think fit, and that all moneys borrowed under this resolution shall rank after the mortgages, granted or to be granted, and any debenture stock to be issued by the company in pursuance of the powers of the Manchester Ship Canal Act 1885, and of the powers of the Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers) Act 1890”.

Mr J K Bythell seconded the resolution, and it was unanimously carried.

The Chairman then moved, and Mr Bythell seconded, the following resolution, which was carried unanimously :- “That, without in any way limiting the discretion given to the directors by the previous resolution, they are hereby expressly empowered to bind the company to give to the holders of any terminable mortgages issued under the previous resolution the option exercisable at the date or dates when the same shall become payable of taking payment in perpetual mortgage debentures of the company bearing interest at a rate not exceeding 4 per cent per annum in lieu of cash, but reserving to the company power to give perpetual debenture stock bearing interest at a rate not exceeding 4 per cent per annum in lieu of perpetual mortgage debentures”.

Mr W E Lawson said he wished to know if it would be out of order to ask if the chairman would be prepared to give any account of the progress of the Ship Canal works – how the thing was going on. So far they had been simply going through a dumb show performance. If it was not out of order for some information to be given them as to how the canal was progressing, the shareholders would be very much obliged. (Hear, hear).

The Chairman, in reply, said that was a formal meeting for a special purpose. Therefore he could not go into the question which had been raised. They would be more properly discussed at the half yearly meeting, which should be held some six weeks hence. He could only say that nothing had occurred since he last had the honour of addressing them which in any way tended to shake his belief that everything was going on as satisfactorily as possible. (Applause).

The proceedings then terminated.

#### **75 28 July 1893**

**Margaret Vickers**, wife of a canal boatman on the Lancashire Canal, poisoned herself on Monday with carbolic acid at Preston.

#### **76 4 August 1893**

##### **SHOCKING DISCOVERY AT DUNHAM MASSEY**

##### **BODY CUT IN TWO BY A STEAM TUG**

**THE INQUEST** An inquest was held on Tuesday afternoon at the Axe and Cleaver Inn, Dunham Massey, before Mr H C Yates, coroner for Cheshire, touching the death of a man unknown, whose remains were found in the Bridgewater Canal on Sunday, near to Dunham Town Bridge. The first witness called was a man named Senescall, a shoemaker of Dunham, who said that on Sunday morning he was with a man named Henry Glover sheltering under the canal bridge. He saw something in the water, and he went to see what it was. Glover poked his stick at it, and saw a human ear. They pulled part of the body of a man out. The face was gone, and an arm. The body was perfectly naked. He gave information to the police. He saw no clothes on the bank. PS Moss, stationed at Dunham, said that at 12.15 p m on Sunday, he received information from the last witness that part of a man had been seen in the Bridgewater Canal near Dunham Town Bridge. He proceeded thither, and found the trunk of a body, and lifted it out of the canal. He found the face was cut off, just leaving the two ears, and the right arm, also cut off at the wrist. They were clean cuts. He brought the remains to the Axe and Cleaver. He then went back to the canal and commenced to grapple. About 3.15 p m, he pulled part of a lung out of the canal. The grapple tore it, and he got hold of it and squeezed it, and blood came from the two sides, showing that it was quite fresh. The previous day (Monday) he received the right arm from William Jackson. The arm was floating on the canal side about 100 yards below the bridge. He again grappled on Monday afternoon, but could not find anything. The body had no clothes on, and they had no report of anyone missing. Mr Meadowcroft, one of the jurymen, said a lady had written from Manchester asking for a description of the body, but it was impossible, owing to the mutilation, to give any description. The Coroner : Can you form any opinion as to how long the body had been in the water? PS Moss : I think about a week or ten days, sir. The Coroner : And of course in that time it may have come a great distance? Witness : Oh yes, sir. Witness further expressed the opinion that the body was cut by the fan of the steam packet. In answer to the Coroner, he had no idea whether

the man was bathing or not. The Coroner said it was so extraordinary there were no clothes. The juryman said he thought the authorities somewhat to blame, for the people in the boat must have known where they cut the man in two. A juryman : Oh, no. The Coroner also thought that it was quite probable they would know nothing about the body being in the water. He had heard of the fan carrying bodies a great distance. The Coroner pointed out there was no further evidence. The man had not been identified, and it was no good going any further in the matter. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the body of a man unknown was found drowned in the Bridgewater Canal on Sunday.

A somewhat singular coincidence is the fact related by a villager that on Sunday morning, about two hours before the body was found, a boatman had asked if any body had been found in the canal in that neighbourhood recently. The man, somewhat surprised by the question, replied in the negative, whereupon the boatman proceeded to say that about eight or nine days ago he was making the journey to Runcorn, and near midnight, when passing Dunham Bridge, he saw a man walking down the road. He seemed to slip, and in trying to save himself fell into the water. The waterman was on the last of five tugs, and owing to the noise and the speed at which they were travelling, he was unable to raise any alarm. He could not say whether the man reached the bank or not, but the fact of his seeing a man fall into the water caused him to make the inquiry. The story is being told in Dunham Town. We cannot, of course, vouch for its accuracy, but give it for what it is worth.

### **77 22 September 1893**

**EXTRAORDINARY OUTBREAK OF SMALLPOX AT NANTWICH** An extraordinary outbreak of smallpox was reported at the Nantwich Local Board meeting on Friday. A canal boatman feeling ill presented himself to the medical officer who saw appearances of smallpox in the man's face, and ordered him to the workhouse. The master at that institution refused him admission, and the man was isolated on his own boat. The absence of an infectious hospital has become so pressing that the local authorities have jointly agreed to build one.

### **78 29 September 1893**

**ILL-TREATING A HORSE AT BROADHEATH** A boatman named **Joseph Jones** was charged at the Altrincham Petty Sessions with ill-treating a horse on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. Inspector Luckings prosecuted on behalf of the RSPCA, and the defendant pleaded not guilty. Inspector Luckings deposed that on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, about 12.30 a m, he was in the neighbourhood of Broadheath. On the canal side, he saw the defendant in charge of a grey horse attached to a flat boat, which the animal was drawing. It was in a very weak and emaciated condition, and was not at all fit for work. The defendant said the only thing that was the matter with the horse was that it had a "jack spavin" and it walked rather lame after the inspector had stopped to examine it. The defendant created some amusement in court by the way in which he cross-examined the inspector. He observed that the horse was worth £200 to him, and in the whole world he would never find his equal. Mr Harris (Magistrates' Clerk) interrupted the defendant with the query, "If the horse was worth £200, why did you sell it for 15s?", and as the defendant made no reply, there was a roar of laughter. The Bench decided that the charge of cruelly working a horse had been proved, but that in consideration of the fact that the defendant had immediately sold the animal, he would only be fined 5s.

### **79 15 December 1893**

#### **PUBLIC HOUSE ROW AT MACCLESFIELD**

**ASSAULTING A LANDLADY** At the Macclesfield Borough Police Court on Friday, before Colonel Stancastle &c, **Thomas Cotton**, boatman, Harecastle, was sued by Annie Knott, landlady of the Weavers' Arms, Bank Street, for an assault on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. Complainant, a married woman, said that there were four men in her house on Monday afternoon, and defendant came in and used abusive language and insulted the company. She ordered him out, but he retaliated by kicking her several times violently about the legs. In answer to defendant, she said she held her licensed house "with an iron hand" - laughter - and would not allow either defendant or anybody else to create a

disturbance there. Jno Connor said that he was in the complainant's house on Monday when the defendant came in and insulted the company. He saw him assault Mrs Knott. Defendant said he was insulted on going into the house. He denied the assault, and said that complainant promised to overlook it if he would pay for a glass of beer. Fined 10s and costs, in default 14 days.

## **80 6 April 1894**

### **QUARTER SESSIONS AT KNUTSFORD**

**ALLEGED ATTEMPTED SELF MURDER AT MIDDLEWICH : A WARNING TO PUBLICANS**  
**Sarah Bunn** (on bail) was indicted for having attempted to murder herself with a razor, at Newton near Middlewich, on the 7<sup>th</sup> March. Mrs Bunn, who was the wife of a boatman, said she was in drink when she did it, and could not recollect having made any such attempt as that with which she was charged. Medical testimony also pointed to the conclusion that at the time she was so utterly drunk as to be insensible of her actions, and that there was no intent on her part to commit suicide. The Chairman said the whole essence of the charge depended on that point, and as there was no evidence to show the intent but rather to disprove it, he should recommend the jury to return a verdict of not guilty. Mr A Latham, who appeared in prosecution, admitted that he himself had formerly thought there was no intent. The jury returned a verdict of "Not Guilty". The Chairman, addressing the woman's husband, instructed him to look better after his wife who, the doctor thought, had suicidal tendencies when in drink. And he also hoped that the publicity given to this case would be a warning to publicans to be careful in their supply of drink to such persons as the prisoner.

## **81 21 September 1894**

**ATTEMPTING TO THROW A WOMAN INTO THE CANAL** At Nantwich Police Court on Saturday, John Smith, an Irishman, was charged with an extraordinary assault on a female on the towing-path of the Shropshire Union Canal at Nantwich, and with being drunk. The evidence showed that on the previous night at half past nine, two young women named Mary Haywood and Annie Johnson were walking home to Audlem along the canal towing-path, when the prisoner came up from behind and seized Miss Haywood, declaring on oath that he would pitch her into the canal. The prisoner pulled her down and a desperate struggle ensued, Miss Johnson courageously assisting her companion to defeat the prisoner. With the help of Miss Johnson, the complainant crawled upon her hands and feet from the prisoner, only to be attacked more roughly, the prisoner placing his hand over her mouth and tearing her dress. In the meantime, the cries of both females were heard by a boatman, who hurried to the scene, armed with a boat hook with which he struck the prisoner, who immediately decamped. A search party was organised, and the prisoner was secured in about half an hour. The police stated that the prisoner had been a terror to the people of the neighbourhood of Audlem during the past few days, and many complaints had been made of his having threatened and frightened females. Evidence as to prisoner being drunk was given, and the magistrates, remarking that the prisoner might have pushed the woman into the canal, sent him to gaol for a month without the option of a fine.

## **82 11 February 1898**

**CHESHIRE BOATMAN KILLED** On Sunday morning as the boat *Ionic* was passing through Longfield Lock, Hassall Green, on her way from the Potteries to Runcorn, an accident happened resulting in the death of the captain, **Richard Howe**. It appears that the captain had opened the bottom gates and was walking over the gangway to rejoin the boat, when he slipped and fell heavily on the deck of the vessel and toppled over into the canal. The accident was witnessed by some men, and Howe was at once pulled out, but life was extinct. Howe was a young man aged about 25 years, and was only married shortly before Christmas.

The Cheshire coroner, Mr Bate, held an inquest into the circumstances on Wednesday, when a verdict of accidental death was returned.

### 83 25 March 1898

#### MIDDLEWICH PETTY SESSIONS

CANAL BOATMEN SUMMONED **Joseph Brookes**, canal boatman, was summoned for wasting the water on 12<sup>th</sup> March. The defendant pleaded guilty, and the Bench inflicted a fine of 10s.

**Robert Horsefield** was summoned for damaging a canal lock gate. On February 25<sup>th</sup> Herbert Base Jones, driver of the Invincible sludge pumping plant, said he saw the defendant's boat at King's Lock. The defendant tried to open the lock before the lock filled with water, and his boat, coming down before he could open the gate, struck the gate. The damage done would be about 8s. The defendant denied the offence, and said the lock was full when he tried to enter. The Bench dismissed the case.

HEAVY SENTENCE FOR A CRUEL FATHER **James Clowes** was charged with cruelty to five children between September 13<sup>th</sup> and March 12<sup>th</sup>. Mr Fletcher, solicitor of Northwich, prosecuting on behalf of the NSPCC, said the proceedings were taken under a recent Act. The defendant was a boatman in regular employment. The wife and family of the defendant, when they had not been boating with him, had been residing during the last two years at Booth Lane, Middlewich. The wife of the defendant was in indifferent health, and there were five children, the eldest 12 years and the youngest 2 years. The principal witness was the man's own wife, who had really been the cause of the matter being brought before the Bench. There was one pleasing feature in the case that notwithstanding the ill health of the woman and her extreme poverty, she had done her best for the children. **Annie Clowes**, wife of the defendant, said she had been married 14 years. She had five children living. Her husband was fairly sober at first, but he started ill-treating her 8 years ago. They lived at Rode Heath then, but came to Middlewich five years ago. During the last five years, he had neglected her through drink, and ill-treated her. She used to go with him on the boat, when he earned £2 14s per week, or about 30s after the expenses of working the boat were paid. From September last year to March this year, she had received little money, the last time she received any at all being six weeks ago, when he paid her 10s. The defendant had passed her house with the boat during the last six weeks, and when she asked him for money, he only smiled. About a month since, she went to King's Lock to fetch her boy George from her husband's boat. Her husband was then drunk. The last 10s she received from the defendant by post from Ellesmere Port, although her husband constantly passed her door. George Clowes said the defendant was his father. A few weeks ago he went boating with his father, and was taken ill with measles. He was ill a week with measles before his mother came for him. He helped to work the boat. Sarah Jane Bailey said she was a neighbour of Mrs Clowes. The children had been short of food, and she had assisted them. Sarah Smith, sister-in-law of the defendant, said the defendant was a drunken man. His children had been neglected and in want of food and clothing during the last few months. Inspector Owen of the NSPCC said his attention was called to the case in January. The house and the children were clean, but there was a want of food in the house. The three eldest children were badly nourished. The defendant, asked if he had anything to say, replied that he had not been allowed to go near the house for the last fortnight. If there had been any neglect, it had been through drink. The Chairman said the Bench felt that they must make an example of the defendant, and he would have to go to prison for two months with hard labour.

### 84 1 April 1898

THIRTY FIVE YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, before the Rev J H Armitstead, Mr E Harthan and Mr J B Hill, **Thomas Roscoe**, a canal boatman, was summoned by his wife for neglecting to maintain her. On the charge being read over, the defendant said : Her's mistaken altogether ; it's the other way about. **Caroline Roscoe** said she had been married to the defendant 35 years on June 11<sup>th</sup> next. A month ago he deserted her. She had seen him since, but he had not been home and had not sent her any money. The defendant : Didn't I come and find you flitting into another house unknown to me? The complainant said her husband had deserted her in the old house. The defendant : Haven't you been boating with me in the last

fortnight? The complainant admitted that she went to the Potteries with her husband, but said that he began to drink and threatened to murder her, and she said she had to walk about all night. The defendant alleged that his wife was boating with him and left him, consequently he had to engage a man to help him work the boat. She had deserted him, and having moved into another house, he had nowhere to go. The Bench dismissed the case.

**85 August 1898**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

WASTING CANAL WATER **Albert Ayres**, a boatman of Hardings Wood, was summoned for wasting the canal water at Lanton. **Frank Davies**, lock tender at Hardings Wood, proved that the defendant wasted the water in the lock. **Mr Phillips**, canal inspector, stated that the loss of water would be about 3000 gallons. The defendant had been previously cautioned. He had seen the defendant the previous day, and he had told him that he should not appear, as it would not pay him to lose a voyage by so doing. The Bench fined the defendant 10s and costs.

**86 9 December 1898**

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY

WASTING WATER **Joseph Jinks**, a boatman, who did not appear, was summoned for wasting water at Victoria Locks, Hardingswood, on the North Stafford Canal. **Mr Phillips**, who prosecuted, said the defendant had been previously convicted. Fined 10s and costs.

**87 30 December 1898**

SIX WEEKS' "HARD" FOR ASSAULT At the Sandbach Petty Sessions on Wednesday, **James Turner**, a canal boatman from Wolverhampton, was brought up in custody and charged with assaulting **Arthur Phillips**, a constable of the Trent and Mersey Navigation, on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> inst. Evidence was given by the prosecutor and the Lawton lock tender, a man named **Davies**, to the effect that the prosecutor remonstrated with the prisoner for wasting water, when the prisoner turned on him and assaulted him. The Bench sent the prisoner to gaol for six weeks, without the option of a fine.

**88 14 April 1899**

THE BOATMAN AND HIS WIFE At Sandbach Police Court on Saturday, **Thomas Roscoe**, a boatman living at Lawton, was brought up under a warrant and charged with arrears amounting to £1 19s 5d of a maintenance order granted towards the support of his wife. Mr E Harthan and Mr G Venables were the justices. **Caroline Roscoe**, the wife, said she obtained a maintenance order against her husband at Sandbach on March 1<sup>st</sup> for 4s per week. She had not received anything from him, and had had no letter from him. The prisoner said he was not now a boatman, but a legger on the canal. His occupation was to work the boats through the Harecastle Tunnel, which he did by lying on his back on the top of the boat, and pushing with his feet against the roof. The tunnel was a mile and three quarters long, and sometimes was full of smoke, and at such times he was unable to go through, as he was asthmatical. He had only earned 1s since the previous Sunday, and he paid 7d per week for lodgings. He got 1s 3d per journey for legging, but there were so many men after the work he could not get a job some days. Asked by Mr Bygott (magistrates' clerk) why he could not live with his wife, the prisoner said she had locked him out, and would not live with him. Mrs Roscoe, in answer to the Bench, said she had two daughters and a son, but she had to work for herself, she got nothing from them. **Thomas Taylor**, also a legger on the canal, gave evidence for the prisoner, who, he said, had been lodging with him for twelve months. He paid 7d per week, which was half the cost of a small place belonging to the Canal Company. Mr Bygott : Is it a hut? Witness : Yes. Mr Bygott : How much do you get by legging? Witness : I average 10s to 12s. Mr Bygott : Does the man get as much as you? Witness : No. I have a regular job legging the fly boats through. Mr Hartland : Is this man short of jobs sometimes? Witness : Yes ; many days he does not get a job ; it is not his own fault ; he does his best to get a job. The prisoner said he was boating

until his wife enticed his son away, and he then had to give up. Mr Venables : Why did your son leave you? Prisoner : Because I laid on him. I only hit him twice in my life, I laid on him with a strap twice when he (?sterned) the boat at Preston Brook. The magistrates consulted together for some time, and ultimately they decided to adjourn the case until the next petty sessions but one, in order to give the prisoner an opportunity of contributing something towards his wife's support.