

SHREWSBURY CHRONICLE
1850 to 1869

1 26 April 1850

NEWPORT A fine little boy about 9 years of age, son of a boatman named **Taylor**, was found in a lock of the Shropshire Union Canal, near this town, on the evening of Wednesday last. An inquest was held on the body on the following day, when it appeared that the child had been missing since nine o'clock in the morning, but as there was no evidence to show how the deceased got into the water, the jury, under the direction of the coroner, returned a verdict of "Found drowned".

2 25 October 1850

MONTGOMERYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

Benjamin Morgan aged 30, boatman of Newtown, was found guilty of stealing a watch, value £3, belonging to Samuel Breese. The prisoner stole the watch from prosecutor in a public house in Newtown, and on the police making enquiry into the robbery, he absconded, and was taken by Mr Hodgson, the superintendent of Newtown, in Nottingham. Sentence, six months' imprisonment.

John Morris aged 14 of Welshpool, pleaded guilty to stealing a watch. The prisoner had permission to ride in a canal boat, and carry a wheelbarrow from Burgeddin to Welshpool, and in the course of that voyage contrived to steal the watch in question out of the cabin, belonging to **John Jones**, the boatman. He also pleaded guilty to having been convicted at the last quarter sessions at Newtown of stealing money from a shop in Welshpool. Mr George Riches, the superintendent of Welshpool Borough Police, was called by the Court and, in answer, stated that he had had him several times in custody. He was sentenced to be transported for seven years.

3 9 May 1851

THE CHARGE OF MURDERING A WIFE TWENTY YEARS AGO

COMMITTAL OF THE PRISONER In our last two papers, the above case was briefly noticed. It will be remembered that the accused, Thomas Threlfall, has of late kept a beer shop at the Old Woods Station, near Baschurch in this county, where he was apprehended by a police officer from Ormskirk, whither he was conveyed for examination before the magistrates. We copy the following from Gore's Advertiser (Liverpool paper) of yesterday.

THE ALLEGED MURDER BY THOMAS THRELFALL This case, which had been adjourned from Tuesday week, came again before the magistrates on Friday at Ormskirk. The evidence went to show that Threlfall formerly resided at Scarth Hill, a village near Ormskirk. He joined the Liverpool police force in February 1836. Previously to becoming a police officer, it is said he was an assistant on a small farm held by his parents. He had been married to the deceased woman, Elizabeth Threlfall, with whose murder he is charged, some six or eight years before entering the police force. He and his wife lived apart, she having entered into the service of Mr Thomas Woolfall, landlord of the Black Bull Inn in Warbreack Moor. Notwithstanding this severance from his wife, Threlfall was in the frequent habit of calling to see her at Mr Woolfall's, and they often walked out together. On the night of the 14th of October 1832, he visited at the house, and he and his wife took a walk. On the following day she was found drowned in the Leeds and Liverpool Canal near to Halsall Hill, about three miles and a half from Ormskirk. An inquest was held upon the body, and Threlfall himself was the principal evidence on the occasion. He then deposed that he had not seen his wife for upwards of a month previously ; and, strange to say, this statement went uncontradicted and a verdict of "Found drowned" was returned. Before leaving the police force, Threlfall again got married, and he has by his second wife two children, as well as a son by his deceased wife. About a fortnight ago, **Richard Shaw**, formerly a boatman on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, made certain statements, while on his death bed, to the effect that the prisoner had murdered his wife ; that he had, in effect, seen him throw her into the canal. The magistrates deeming the evidence sufficient to warrant a committal on the charge of murder, ordered the

prisoner to Kirkdale gaol to await his trial at the next assizes. The only reason as an incentive to the committal of so grave a crime is a valueless rumour that the deceased woman was in the habit of receiving, on account of a female friend, periodical payments of money, and that the object of gaining possession of one of these deposits had impelled Threlfall to commit the offence ; but such a reason is scarcely worthy of consideration.

4 20 June 1851

SHOCKING MURDER AT WOLVERHAMPTON On Monday evening between eight and nine o'clock, James Sones, a young man, a native of Woodbridge in the county of Suffolk, was taken to the police station in Wolverhampton, charged with having cut the throat of Catherine Morris, a young woman, native of Montgomeryshire, with whom he had lived for more than four years. On being told the charge against him, he replied, "I did it". It appears that the unfortunate woman was sitting in the Bear public house, Lichfield Street, on Monday evening, when the prisoner called her out, and on her going to the back door he seized her by the head, and cut her throat with a knife in a most shocking manner, inflicting a wound from one side of her neck to the other. He then threw the knife away and ran off, but was followed and secured.

The unfortunate woman was taken to the Black Horse, where she was immediately attended by Mr Gatis, surgeon, and Mr Chamberlaine, assistant to Mr Dehane. In less than ten minutes, Mr Cooper arrived, and soon afterwards Mr Edwards. These medical gentlemen continued in attendance on the poor woman until after midnight, Mr Gatis and Mr Cooper remaining with her all night, and under their directions and superintendence the patient was removed about five o'clock on the following morning to the South Staffordshire General Hospital.

On Monday night, Colonel Hogg, chief constable, thought it his duty, from a communication made to him by Mr Edwards and the other medical gentlemen, to call a magistrate to take the woman's declaration. John Neve Esq soon after arrived, and in the presence of the prisoner, who had been sent for, the woman made the following statement :-

Catherine Morris, on her oath saith, James Sones is the man that did it, I mean he cut my throat, my God, he is the man I have just seen. I am sensible. I believe myself to be in a dying state, and the Lord have mercy on my soul, and the Lord have mercy on the prisoner.

Taken before me this ninth day of June 1851.

John Neve

Witnesses : James Gatis, T Hogg

10.30pm

The unfortunate woman, after kissing the prisoner, and taken leave of him, said in an earnest tone of voice, "Jim, I hope you'll die as well as me ; Lord receive my soul". The prisoner continued in a state of great agitation during Monday night.

On Tuesday afternoon, Sones was brought before the magistrates at the Town Hall, when Col Hogg, chief constable, stated that on the prisoner being charged at the station with cutting the throat of Catherine Morris, he said, "I did it, and I would cut my own throat too". At a later period of the night, he showed him the knife. He believed that the woman would not recover ; the wound extended from ear to ear, and was also a deep one.

The prisoner, on the application of Mr H Underhill, who appeared for the prosecution, was remanded for a week. He seemed to be suffering great anguish of mind.

The victim lived till Thursday morning, when she died about eleven o'clock.

On Friday the prisoner was brought up before the Mayor (Joseph Walker Esq) and W Warner jun Esq. The accused is about thirty years of age, a labourer or navigator, looking for his class, tall, and there is nothing at all repulsive in his appearance or demeanour.

The first witness called was **John Lawson**, who stated that he was a boatman, and lived in a house in a yard at the back of the Brown Bear, Lichfield Street. The prisoner (James Sones) and the deceased (Catherine Morris) lodged at the same house, as well as three other women. The landlord

was Matthew Whitehouse. Deceased, as well as two other women in the house, was in the habit of sleeping with men who came in. Had known the prisoner about eight days. On the Saturday before the occurrence he heard the prisoner and deceased talking together. Deceased told him several times she did not wish to have anything more to do with him, but also added she would not see him want a meal of victuals as long as he was in town. They were at variance with each other, but the prisoner told her "if she did not mind her P's and Q's she'd make a public show in Wolverhampton before he went out of it". They did not live together as man and wife. On Monday night witness was in the kitchen at the Brown Bear, when the deceased, who was called "Welsh Kit", was sitting alongside him. It was about half past seven o'clock in the evening. The prisoner came in and asked deceased for his things. She took off a handkerchief she was wearing and placed it on the table, saying, "Here's your handkerchief. Now go into the house, and Salley will give you the remainder of the things belonging to you". The prisoner replied, "No I shall not go ; you come and go along with me". Deceased then got up and went with him ; the prisoner had his hand in his right jacket pocket, and made a bit of a jingle. They left the kitchen together, and went into the back yard which leads into Berry Street. Witness followed in about half a minute, and saw the prisoner with his right arm round deceased's neck, and thought he was going to kiss her ; his hand was on her forehead, and he pressed her backwards ; he then drew his left hand sharply across her neck ; deceased cried out, one scream, she partly fell and then recovered herself, and ran after the prisoner. The prisoner walked out at the bottom of the yard into Berry Street. Witness went across the street to him, and collared him. Witness said, "You've done the job now, haven't you, James?". He replied, "Yes, I have". Witness said, "She's dead", when the prisoner remarked, "And I don't mind how soon I'm dead". Witness took him to the police station ; he came willingly and made no resistance. Witness came back to the spot and searched for the knife. Found the one produced (a large clasp blade) in the ash hole. It was on the left of the spot where the prisoner stood ; the knife was open ; saw the prisoner eating his dinner with the knife on Sunday last ; the prisoner was then at work at the canal. Saw the deceased at the Black Horse about an hour after the occurrence ; she had a wound to her throat. Never heard the prisoner say he was jealous. Prisoner was sober at the time, and seemed quiet. The deceased was about three parts muddled. The prisoner was asked if he wished to ask any questions, and faintly answered in the negative.

Joseph Smith said he was a cabinet locksmith, living in Berry Street, and knew the deceased. Prisoner was a stranger to him. Saw the prisoner and deceased at Berry Street about a quarter past five o'clock on Monday afternoon. The prisoner was asking her for something, and the deceased said, "You know where they are, fetch them yourself", when he replied, "If you don't fetch them, I'll be the death of you". He also said, "You're carrying on a nice game, ain't you ; if you don't mind what you're doing, I'll be the death of you". They went down the street, and witness said to the deceased, "Mind what you're doing of". She replied, "Oh, he's only joking". Witness was passing along Berry Street again at about half past seven the same evening, and saw the deceased tumble out of the entry, bleeding. Saw the prisoner walk across the street, and the first witness lay hold of him. Witness assisted to convey the woman to the Black Horse.

The prisoner said that he must be mistaken, as he did not leave his work till half past five o'clock.

William Carter was standing by the end of the entry at the time of the occurrence, and heard the deceased cry out, "Seize that man, he's cut my throat". Witness also assisted to convey the prisoner to the police station.

Colonel Hogg stated that, on charging the prisoner with having cut the throat of a woman in Berry Street, he said, "I did it ; and I'd like to cut my own throat too". Col Hogg produced the deposition of the deceased, which was read, and which he stated was made in the presence and hearing of the prisoner, and whilst the deceased was quite sensible. Soon after, the deceased requested the prisoner to kiss her, which he did, and cried bitterly. Showed the prisoner the knife found, which he acknowledged to belong to him. Prisoner entreated several times to be allowed to see the dead body, and witness accompanied him to the Hospital, with an escort, last night. The prisoner kissed the poor woman, and turned away.

Mr Gatis, surgeon, said he was accidentally passing the Black Horse, and attended the deceased.

She had an incised wound from beneath the right ear, across the throat, to the left side of the windpipe, which was slightly cut. The wound was 7 ½ inches long and about half an inch deep ; the bleeding was profuse. Saw the woman alive between nine and ten o'clock yesterday morning ; she was then insensible and in a dying state. She died about eleven o'clock, and witness had not the slightest doubt the wound on her throat was the cause of death.

The prisoner, who stated that he had nothing to say, was then committed to the Assizes on the charge of wilful murder.

5 23 July 1852

BRIDGNORTH

ASSAULTS On Friday week, a special petty sessions was held in this town for disposing of a great number of charges against persons who were taken into custody during the election on the previous day.

Benjamin Yates, a rough looking waterman, was fined £2 and 14s costs for assaulting Police-constable Alder of Ironbridge.

6 22 October 1852

John Preece, 19, waterman, and **John Rogers**, 17, brickmaker, for stealing, on the 2nd September at the parish of Astley Abbotts, 64 pounds weight of lead and a brass cock, the property of T C Whitmore Esq. Preece, being a bad character, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour, and Rogers to six weeks' imprisonment with hard labour.

7 12 November 1852

WELSHPOOL

SINGULAR AND MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT About half past six o'clock on the evening of Saturday the 30th ult, a man, while incautiously walking near the lock of the canal at Welshpool, it being then full of water, fell in and, exhausted with struggling, was on the point of drowning, when a boatman named **Thomas Evans**, hearing his cries, threw himself with his face on the ground at the lock side, and succeeding in catching his hair, at the peril of his own life, dragged him out. Two young men, Evan Roberts and John Roberts, in the employment of Mr Edward Davies junior of the Holly Bank, hearing the noise, then arrived, and it is supposed that, unable to see distinctly from having left the stable in which they were employed, one of them walked into the lock at one side, and the other, having looked at the man just rescued, walked in at the same moment on the other side. Thomas Evans made an attempt to catch him also, but only caught his hat. He sunk at once, and neither of them ever rose to the surface again alive. A number of persons having by this time arrived, every exertion was made to get them out, but at least a quarter of an hour elapsed before Evan Roberts's body was recovered, and half an hour before that of his brother. Doctor Harrison promptly arrived on hearing of the accident, and under his direction the bodies were conveyed to the houses adjacent, and galvanism, artificial respiration, friction, &c was instantly resorted to, and continued unceasingly for an hour and a half for the purpose of restoring animation, but in vain – the vital spark was extinct. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on R D Harrison Esq and Mr Leonard Lloyd for the great, though unhappily, unavailing assistance they rendered on the occasion.

8 3 December 1852

THE ROBBERY FROM THE SHREWSBURY AND BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY **William Wood**, boatman, and his two assistants, **Joseph Nixon** and **Edward Coley**, were brought up at the Police Office, Wolverhampton, on the 25th ult, on a remand charged with stealing two boxes of almonds, a box of raisins, and other property, from the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway. Mr Thomas Walker conducted the prosecution and Mr T M Whitehouse defended. Evidence was given tracing the goods from the warehouse of Messrs Storer, fruit merchants, Liverpool, to the goods department of the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway, Wolverhampton, where they arrived on the evening of the 15th instant on a truck with other goods, carried by Messrs Shipton and Co, and were consigned

to Mr Cole of Stourbridge. The truck was placed in a shed, and about seven o'clock the next morning David Marsden, a servant in their employ, proceeded to unload the truck, and found by the invoice that two boxes of almonds and a box of raisins was missing. He mentioned the loss, and a fellow workman told him that the prisoner Wood had informed him he had found a box of almonds in the canal. Sergeant Bennet deposed that he had received information of the robbery on the morning of the 16th by the prisoner Wood coming to the station and stating that he had found a box of almonds and portions of another box floating in the canal ; he said he had left them in his boat at Crowley's wharf, whither Sergeant Bennet proceeded, and received from the prisoner a box of almonds with the lid off, and three pieces of another box ; the officer remarked that the box and almonds were perfectly dry, and as a few hours only elapsed since he said he found them in the canal, they could not possibly have been in water, to which the prisoner only replied by saying that he had no more ; from subsequent information he obtained a warrant and searched Wood's house, and found portions of an almond box in the cellar ; as the prisoner had gone to Stourbridge he followed him there, and found the ends of one almond box in his boat, and a quantity of almonds in a teapot. He then charged Wood with stealing the property named, and as the other two prisoners were also with the boat, apprehended them with Wood. Thomas Hall, carpenter, deposed to the pieces of wood produced, and which had been given up by the prisoner Wood, and had been found in his house and boat, forming a complete almond box, and said the box and the pieces of wood had not been immersed in water, and declared that the box of almonds would sink and not float in water. Mr Whitehouse contended that his client Wood found the articles in the water, that there was no evidence against the other two prisoners, and called a witness who said he saw them floating near a lock, and on endeavouring to get them they rushed further down the canal. Mr Neve said he did not believe the witness called, as a box of almonds could not possibly have floated. Wood was committed, and Nixon and Coley bound over to answer the charge of the sessions if called upon.

9 1 July 1853

SHREWSBURY QUARTER SESSIONS

LILLESBALL – STEALING COAL Mary Booker, 17, and Ann Powell, 18, were charged with stealing, on the 7th of March at the parish of Lilleshall, 92 lbs weight of coal, the property of John Horton and others. Mr Corbett prosecuted, and the prisoners were undefended. It appeared that on the day in question the prisoners went to a stack of coal near the canal at Lilleshall, where they were observed by one Thomas Doody to fill two bags with coal. A boatman named **George Podmore** came up at the time, and took the bags from the prisoners and emptied them, and then went down to another lock. The prisoners walked off in contrary directions, but subsequently returned and again filled their bags at the same stack and decamped. They were pursued by William Trevors and overtaken in a field on the Newport road. He took the bags from them, and on weighing their contents, found that one contained 35 lbs and the other 57 lbs of coal. The prisoners were found guilty, and they were each sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

10 9 December 1853

OAKEN GATES

FALLING OF A BRIDGE On Tuesday morning about seven o'clock, a part of the Shropshire Canal Company's tunnel under the road leading from Oaken Gates to Pain's Lane fell in with a tremendous crash. A number of boats were being passed under at the time it fell (two of which were buried in the ruins) by a man named **Blakemore**, who is a boatman on the canal, and his son. Had he happened to have gone under with his boats to haul them through, as is usual, instead of hauling them through with the horse, as was the case on this occasion, he would have had a narrow escape with his life. The traffic on the road was suspended for a few hours, but a number of the Company's men were immediately sent to the spot and a temporary road was made. The gas pipes were broken and fell with the ruins, but the escape of gas was not to much extent, as a messenger was dispatched to the gas works, not more than a quarter of a mile distant, where the gas was taken off and the pipes were plugged up immediately. The inhabitants of Pain's Lane were obliged to revert to their

candles for a few days in consequence. The traffic on the canal was suspended for a few days only, as a great number of men were employed in getting up the bridge again. The accident was caused by some mining operations that were going on near the spot.

11 6 January 1854

BRIDGNORTH QUARTER SESSIONS

FOWL STEALING **Thomas Jones**, a young fellow, a waterman going with Mr Doughty's vessels on the river Severn, was charged with stealing a couple of fowls, the property of William Carver, joiner of Dawley Green. It appeared that prosecutor had been at Eardington on the evening of the 9th of November last, and there had a present made him of the fowls in question, which he put safe and locked up in the back part of his dog trap. On arriving at the George and Dragon (Mr Doughty's) beer shop, he left his horse and trap at the door and went into the kitchen to drink, where he remained a considerable time, during which it was proved in evidence that the prisoner Jones had come out of the house and, picking the lock of the trap, had stolen the fowls therefrom, traces of blood and feathers being found below the wall adjoining the yard. The prosecution was conducted by Mr Roberts, and the prisoner was ably defended by Mr Best. Mr William Brown of the Britannia public house proved that prisoner had offered to sell him a couple of fowls that evening about half past eight, which he declined to purchase, thinking they had been improperly come by. The Recorder summed up at much length to the jury, going through the whole evidence, when a verdict of guilty was returned and the prisoner was sentenced to three calendar months' imprisonment and hard labour in Shrewsbury gaol.

12 24 March 1854

SHREWSBURY QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING MONEY FROM THE PERSON Samuel Tisdale, 20, labourer, Frankwell, was indicted for stealing 5s from the person of John Wood on the 5th of February at the Crow Inn, Frankwell. Mr Corbett prosecuted, and Mr Bayley defended the prisoner. After Mr Bayley had addressed the jury, he called the prisoner's father, **Richard Tisdale**, waterman, who said the prisoner gave him, on the Saturday night before the charge of robbery, half a crown, one shilling and threepence. Prisoner had been working for Mr Millington. On the Sunday afternoon, the prisoner was "bothering him to let him have some of that money". He gave it him, with the admonition, "Don't you bother me with your money again". In the cross-examination of the prisoner's father by Mr Corbett, great merriment was excited by some of the queer answers he gave respecting his domestic affairs, and the birth and parentage of the prisoner. Witness supposed his son "wanted some beer" when he bothered about his money. Eliza Millington was called for the prisoner, but she did not appear, although the court waited for some time for her. Mr Corbett then replied upon the evidence for the prisoner. Eliza Millington having by this time arrived, she was examined. She said she was the wife of James Millington, labourer, and about 8 on the Saturday evening she paid Samuel Tisdale 3s 6d in a half crown and a shilling. It was for bringing timber down the river. Prisoner had been at work for her husband, who did any sort of work he could get. The timber, which was purchased from Mr Powys of Berwick, was at the present time near the Welsh Bridge. The learned judge having summed up, the jury remained so long in deliberation that another jury was on the point of being called, when the jury brought in a verdict of guilty. He pleaded guilty to a previous conviction for felony, and was now sentenced to be imprisoned for twelve months.

13 14 July 1854

WELLINGTON

INQUESTS BEFORE R D NEWILL ESQ At the Board Room, Union Workhouse, Wellington, on Thursday last, on the body of **Thomas Mansell**, aged 50 years, a boatman on the Lilleshall Company's Canal. James Mancell (sic) of Pain's Lane, labourer, said that on Friday night last about nine o'clock, he saw the deceased lying on his face in a ditch, alive, but unable to utter more than

“Lord have mercy on my soul”. There was a deep cut on his forehead. He was removed, and on the Saturday night told witness that he had been at the Fox, but could not tell what brought him in the way in which he was found. Witness saw him sober about four o'clock on Friday, and knew him to be a sober steady man. Witness thought he must have taken a short cut from the Fox and, after crossing two fields, have fallen over the fence by the wharf, from whence he was unable to raise himself.

14 4 August 1854

SHROPSHIRE ASSIZES

GARDEN ROBBING NEAR BRIDGNORTH **George Jones**, 23, waterman, was convicted of stealing from a garden near Bridgnorth, on the 18th of July, a quantity of onions, value 1s, the property of John Manne, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour. Mr Scotland prosecuted.

15 27 October 1854

MONTGOMERYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS **Thomas Meredith**, 16, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing on the 19th of August at Guilsfield, 50 lbs weight of clover, the property of David Davies, and was sentenced to be imprisoned for 14 days.

16 27 April 1855

POLICE PROCEEDINGS On the 9th instant, **Charles Pryce**, a boatman, was charged before E M Stephens Esq with the infliction of a malicious injury on the property of Mr David Morgan, Canal Basin, by breaking the gate of a field in his occupation and turning his asses in to graze. The charge having been proved, the defendant was fined in the sum of 14s 6d, including expenses, or 14 days' imprisonment. The money was paid.

17 22 June 1855

NEWTOWN John Lloyd, a young man, was brought up upon charge of stealing from the person of **William Speakman**, a boatman, a purse containing 14s 6d, whilst he was asleep in his boat. The prosecutor not being present, the prisoner was remanded for a week in order that the prosecutor might appear. Upon the 15th, the prosecutor having arrived, the prisoner was released from the remand and again brought up upon the charge, when he was committed to take his trial at the ensuing quarter sessions.

18 13 July 1855

MONTGOMERYSHIRE SESSIONS

A CANDIDATE FOR TRANSPORTATION John Lloyd, 24, was indicted for stealing at Llanllwchiarn on the 8th June, 14s, the property of **John Speakman**. Mr Woosnam prosecuted. The prosecutor is a boatman, and plies between Ellesmere Port and Newtown. At two o'clock on the day in question, he saw the prisoner at the Welshpool lock, and the latter travelled in the boat to Newtown. On reaching the latter place at night, prosecutor laid down in the cabin, and the prisoner also slept in the same apartment. When the prosecutor retired to rest, he had 14s 6d in silver in his pocket, in a purse. He awoke about three o'clock in the morning, and found he had been robbed and the prisoner had fled. He gave information to the police, and on the 11th the prisoner was apprehended by police officer Williams. The prisoner denied the robbery, but said that he picked up the purse containing the money from off the cabin floor. He vowed he had no money on his person, but on his being searched a crown piece was found upon him. He told the policeman “he hoped to God they would send him across the seas this time”. When before the magistrates, he pleaded guilty to the charge. The prisoner was convicted, and having pleaded guilty to a former conviction, he was sentenced to four years penal servitude.

19 11 April 1856

ELLESMERE

MAGISTRATES' MEETING, SATURDAY LAST **William Jacks**, a boatman, was charged with damaging the lock gate at Aston on the Shropshire Union Canal, by running his boat against the said lock. Paid 6s costs.

20 2 May 1856

BANKRUPTS

From the Gazette of Friday April 25th.

John Styles, Putney, waterman.

21 27 June 1856

WHITCHURCH

HORSE STEALING On Monday, a person giving the name of **George Jones**, boatman of Wolverhampton, was detained here upon suspicion of horse stealing. It appears that early in the morning Jones called upon a person in the town called Richard Parry, a dealer in horses, telling him he had a horse for sale, &c. Parry accompanied him to see the horse, for which the prisoner asked £16 – Parry first offering £9, and ultimately bought the mare for £10, believing at the time the mare to be worth £20. He felt it necessary to ask some questions relative to “Jones” and how long he had had the mare, and where he had brought her from. The prisoner not giving satisfactory answers at once, aroused suspicions in Parry's mind that the mare was not honestly come by, and consequently he had him arrested on suspicion. He was taken before Captain Poole, and remanded ; in the meanwhile PC Layton sent information with a description of the animal to every police station within a circle of some miles. And through which on Tuesday morning, the owner, Mr John Lloyd of Tymaen, near Chirk, came and identified the mare as being his property, upon which the prisoner was taken again before Captain Poole and fully committed to take his trial. There is something very remarkable that four horses were in the field, three of which were worth from £40 to £50 each, and that this, the one of least worth, should be selected.

22 18 July 1856

COALPORT Most, or at least many, of the readers of the Chronicle who have visited this locality have no doubt paid some attention to the fine display of engineering skill and mechanical ability of the Coalport incline plane. By means of this incline, whose face is about three hundred yards long with a rise of one yard in three, the extensive traffic of the various coal and iron works in the vicinity, including Madeley Wood, Stirchley &c, and extending as far as the Old Park and Lilleshall on the Shropshire Canal, have been conveyed from the upper canal to the lower canal, which is about twenty feet above the summer surface of the Severn. To effect this transit, a powerful steam engine has been erected at the top of the incline. Connected with the engine is a strong revolving barrel, around which formerly two powerful cables were alternatively coiled. The weight of the descending boat which, with the carriage, weighs between seven and eight tons, uncoils the one and by the same movement coils the other cable, thereby drawing up the incline an empty boat on a similar carriage. Several years since, the use of the cable, which was so frequently subject to derangement, was dispensed with, and a strong iron chain was substituted in lieu thereof. The chain has been found to answer much better than the cable. On Monday, however, even the strength of the iron chain was overtaxed, arising chiefly from the fact that due allowance was not made for nor sufficient precaution taken against the results of a continuous wear and tear. Early in the forenoon the descending carriage, with its loaded boat, broke loose nearly at the top of the incline, and dashed down towards the Severn with a fearfully increasing velocity. At this time a young lad named **Blakeway** was standing on the carriage, and though he held on for some distance during the fearful descent, he managed most providentially to jump off in time before he reached the canal bridge at the bottom of the incline, even while the ponderous rails on which the carriage slid down were torn up and scattered with terrific force. The boat and carriage on reaching the surface of the lower

canal, bounded from the water, making a clean leap over the bank of the canal adjacent to the Severn, into the river to the distance of thirty yards, and projecting a portion of contents into the passage boat, then in the act of crossing the river. The cabin on the boat's deck was demolished, and the boatman, **Mr E Goodwin**, was covered with dust and some slight injuries only, we are happy to say, were inflicted on him. The canal boat with its remaining contents floated down the river a short distance, and sank. It will be in the recollection perhaps of some of our readers that at this same place the passage boat on the 23rd of October 1799 was upset, and a fearful loss of life was the consequence. The night was dark and foggy, and they were returning home from their work at the Coalport manufactory to their home at Broseley. If we mistake not, twenty seven human beings perished that dreary night.

23 18 July 1856

MONTGOMERYSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

UNLAWFULLY WOUNDING AT LLANWCHAIARN **John Watkin**, boatman, was indicted for maliciously cutting and wounding, on the 19th of April, Edward Breeze at Llanwchaiarn. The prisoner had been previously convicted for stabbing.

Mr Morgan Lloyd was counsel for the prosecution ; the prisoner was not defended.

Prosecutor is a labourer, and in April last worked at the Aberbechan Lime Works, near Newtown. When returning home about six o'clock on Saturday evening, the 19th of April, he turned into the Churchhouse public house to get half a pint of ale, and he saw the prisoner there, as well as a blind man and two or three other persons. When the latter had left, prosecutor heard the prisoner challenging the blind man to fight. Prosecutor remonstrated with him, and the prisoner wanted to fight him ; the challenge having been repeated several times, prosecutor was about to fight with the prisoner, when his (the prosecutor's) sister interfered to prevent them. They afterwards commenced fighting. During the scuffle prosecutor called out, "You have stabbed me", whereupon the prisoner swore at the prosecutor, and said, "Stabbed thee, have I? I have not stabbed thee yet, but I will stab thee now". Blood was then seen on prosecutor's clothes, and he complained of being weak. On the same night the prosecutor went to Mr Hall's surgery, where he was attended to and his wounds dressed by Mr Richard Mason, assistant to Mr Hall. Ten or eleven small punctured wounds were on his back, and a punctured and incised wound on the left arm. All the wounds were made by a sharp instrument, being clean cut. They could not have been produced by a person falling on the floor. There were corresponding marks in the shirt and jacket, and considerable force must evidently have been used. The prisoner, after the fight, absconded, and although search was made for him he could not be found. He subsequently delivered himself up to Inspector Danily.

Upon being asked for his defence, the prisoner said, "I am guilty of defending myself, but I had no knife. I did it because Breeze kicked my teeth out ; here are two of 'em, and the other two I can't find. I had no knife".

The learned Judge summed up, going carefully through the evidence, and the jury after considerable deliberation returned a verdict of guilty of the minor offence of unlawfully wounding.

In passing sentence, his lordship said he could not but agree with, under the circumstances, the verdict the jury had found. The crime of stabbing was unfortunately upon the increase. It was always a very grave offence, in any form, and was a disgrace to the country. The prisoner's life had been full of misconduct for many years past ; he had been several times in gaol ; and had been convicted of wounding the turnkey at Montgomery Gaol, and inflicting grievous bodily harm. In 1856 he was found guilty of housebreaking and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. The sentence he should pass for the present would be eighteen months' imprisonment.

Some manifestations of approbation were expressed by the audience, but speedily repressed by the officers of the court.

24 18 July 1856

WELLINGTON COUNTY COURT, FRIDAY

JOSEPH BROWN JUN OF COALPORT BANK v **WILLIAM STEVENTON**, BOATMAN OF THE TRENCH Claim for £5 16s 6d on breach of warranty on a horse. Mr T Smallwood for plaintiff and Mr B H Smallwood for defendant. From the evidence adduced, the plaintiff purchased the horse on the 31st of May from William Mansell of Hadley, who acted as agent for defendant ; the horse was warranted sound, but was found to be glandiced, and returned on the 2nd of June. This was proved by four witnesses. Verdict for plaintiff, with advocate's fees, expenses of witnesses and the usual court expenses.

25 1 August 1856

MARKET DRAYTON At the monthly Special Sessions on Saturday last, the magistrates present were Thomas Twemlow and Henry Justice Esqs.

Thomas Barratt, a keeper of locks on the canal, preferred a charge against a boatman named **John Merchant**, for wasting water. Merchant did not appear. Barratt proved that Merchant was navigating a boat through the Adderley locks on the canal on the 12th June last, and when at the first lock he wasted water by drawing the cloughs of the lower gates of the lock before the upper gates were closed. A penalty of £1 was imposed with costs, and in default of payment, distress and imprisonment for one calendar month.

26 11 December 1857

SHIFFNAL MONTHLY PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

NEGLECTING TO GIVE NOTICE A lad named **Edward Sebrey** of Hadley was summoned by **Mr John Hewitt**, canal agent of Priors Lee, for leaving his employ without notice on the 16th of November. Mr Hewitt complained that he had been frequently served out by lads leaving without giving the required notice, and wished an example to be made of the defendant, who had been engaged as a boat lad at 10d a day, but on being offered a shilling a day by someone else, left without giving the usual fortnight's notice. This was confirmed by **John Blakemore**, boatman. The bench were of opinion that the lad was too young, only 13, to be made an example of, more especially as he appeared to have acted under his father's advice, and was discharged on paying 8s 4d costs. Allowed a fortnight to pay. In default to be committed for seven days.

27 11 December 1857

ELLESMERE MONTHLY SESSIONS, MONDAY

SERIOUS AND BRUTAL ASSAULT AT WELSH FRANKTON, NEAR ELLESMERE John Meredith, John Vaughan, **Samuel Pugh** and Edward Morris were severally charged with having committed a violent and brutal assault upon **John Ford**, a boatman, with intent &c, on the night of Saturday last. It appeared from the evidence of police officer Bowen that he had been called up about two o'clock on Sunday by **James Swain**, also a boatman, who requested him to proceed at once to Frankton locks, as there was a man nearly murdered there. On his arrival he found Ford in a shocking condition, and from information he then received, he apprehended the prisoners and brought them to Ellesmere. John Ford deposed that he was a boatman in the employ of Mr Goolden of Welshpool, and that on Saturday evening last he was stopping with his boat at Frankton locks. He had been in the company of the prisoners at the Lock Tavern on the evening in question. He was not drunk ; he went about nine o'clock, and lay down on the bed in his cabin, which he fastened up. About 11 o'clock he was awoken by the prisoner Pugh breaking into the cabin. He pulled him off the bed by his hair, and dragged him out to the other prisoners ; and he (Pugh) held him for the others to kick and beat him, which they did in the most savage and unmerciful manner. As soon as he possibly could he got from them, and escaped by means of jumping into the canal, and got across to the other side. The prisoners crossed over the canal at the Locks to search for him, but fortunately did not succeed in finding him. He lay out for some time for fear of falling into their hands again. He was obliged to have medical assistance. Edwin Roberts and John Jones corroborated the above

evidence in every particular. James Swain also confirmed Ford's statement, and said that in consequence of hearing the cries of murder he jumped up out of his own boat and proceeded to the spot, he identified some of the prisoners. He got kicked and bruised himself by the prisoners. Thomas Mousley Esq, surgeon, proved that Ford had been brutally assaulted, and had received considerable injury. The magistrates decided in sending the prisoners for trial at the next sessions for the county.

28 8 January 1858

BODILY HARM Samuel Pugh (39), boatman, Edward Morris (23), labourer, John Meredith (24), labourer and John Vaughan (21), sawyer, were all charged with assaulting John Ford on the night of the 5th of December, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm. Mr Owen prosecuted, and Mr Corbett defended Pugh and Vaughan.

John Ford, the prosecutor, was also a boatman on the Ellesmere Canal. On the 5th of December, he and Samuel Pugh were drinking together at Welsh Frankton. He left the public house and went to lie down in the cabin of the boat. Having shut the door and fallen asleep, he was aroused by the door being forced open. Samuel Pugh struck him on the head with a poker ; he dragged him out and held him while several others kicked him. He was so hard put to it that he jumped into the canal, and swam to the opposite shore ; and he had not worked a day since. In answer to Mr Corbett, he admitted that Pugh and him had had a blow apiece on the night in question ; but he was not drunk, nor had he been fighting a fortnight before. Pugh said when he came into the boat that he had killed many a better man in the Crimea, and he would kill him (the prosecutor).

A lad named Roberts, who slept with prosecutor on this night, saw Pugh come in and draw John Ford out by the hair of his head. Morris came in next and helped to draw him out ; Vaughan also helped, and Meredith got on the top of the boat and began kicking. After threatening to kill Ford, they said they would throw him into the canal.

A witness named Jones saw Pugh and Morris go towards the cabin. Morris struck the cabin door with a trimmer and broke it open ; just after Ford made his escape.

Another witness heard murder cried, and when he went to see what was the matter, saw the four prisoners, who said they had been fighting with Ford, and threatened to kill him and any other boatman they could catch.

Mr Thomas Mousley, surgeon, practising at Ellesmere, attended Ford the next morning. He had several wounds on the face, head and chest ; he was much exhausted from loss of blood, and was unable to go to his work.

Mr Corbett, for Pugh, asked the jury to find him guilty of the common assault – as to Vaughan, it may well be doubted whether he actually did strike the prosecutor – certainly he was not taking an active part in the assault upon Ford.

Several witnesses were called who spoke to the peaceable character which the defendant Pugh and Vaughan usually bore. Two witnesses also spoke in praise of Meredith as a peaceable man. The prisoners were all found guilty of the more serious charge ; and they were sentenced, Pugh to six months' and the other three to three months' hard labour each.

29 5 March 1858

NEWTOWN – CHARGE OF HOUSEBREAKING Edward Griffiths (27), boatman, was indicted for breaking and entering at Llanllwchiarn on the 6th of February, the counting house of John Dickin, and stealing therefrom certain monies and one hundred piece of paper ; but the grand jury ignored the bill.

30 2 July 1858

SHROPSHIRE SESSIONS

OSWESTRY – STEALING BOOTS &c William Morgan (29), boatman, was charged with stealing, on the 8th January 1857, a pair of boots and 4s, at the parish of Oswestry, the property of **James Roberts**. Mr Bayley prosecuted. Prosecutor is a boatman, and prisoner had solicited and

obtained permission to ride with him in his boat, at Willow Moor near Whitchurch on the 6th of January 1857. They continued together until the morning of the 8th of the same month, when prisoner decamped, taking with him the boots in question and 4s. He was apprehended on the 10th of last May at Chester Castle, where he had been serving a term of imprisonment for another offence. The boots he had then on his feet were sworn to by prosecutor and by Mr Speakman, a bootmaker, by whom they were made. The jury found him guilty ; and a previous conviction at the Shropshire Sessions in June 1852 was proved against him. Sentence : Three years' penal servitude.

31 16 July 1858

MONTGOMERYSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

THE CHARGE OF CONCEALMENT OF BIRTH AT WELSHPOOL Catherine James, a respectably dressed young woman, was placed in the dock, charged with unlawfully concealing the birth of her child at Guilsfield on the 29th of June.

Mr McIntyre prosecuted ; the prisoner was defended by Mr Morgan Lloyd.

Mr McIntyre having briefly stated the case to the jury, called

Jonas Green, a boatman, who said : I am employed on the canal. On the 30th of June, when a little below Pool Quay, my father called out to me, and I observed something in the water, which turned out to be the naked body of a female child, dead. There is a lock between the Cabin lock and the Pool Quay lock.

Cross-examined : There is a good deal of traffic on the canal. Families sometimes live in the boats ; men and women are generally in the same boat. It was about three miles from the town.

PS Strefford, who is stationed at Welshpool, went, on the evening of the 10th of June, to Gallows Bank, and received from Green the body of a newly born female child – dead. I gave it to Mr Barrett, surgeon, who made an examination of it. I apprehended the prisoner on the 13th of July, on suspicion of having concealed the birth of her child. She denied having had a child. The house where she lived is about 300 yards from the place where the body was found. I examined the premises. The privy is over a sluice, which goes to the canal. I searched the bed and other parts of the premises, where I found certain appearances. (These were described).

Mr T B Barrett, surgeon, Welshpool, said : On the 1st of July, I made a *post mortem* examination of the body of a female child. I found a bruise on the left side of the forehead and the scalp considerably swollen. The side bone and back bone of the head were broken, and there was an effusion of blood on the brain. I examined the lungs and chest, and from the appearance presented, I felt certain that the child had breathed. I examined the prisoner and, in my opinion, she had been recently delivered of a child – most probably within a week. In my judgement the child had been born within a week ; when I saw it, it had been dead I should think about three days.

In cross-examination, Mr Barrett admitted that fatal injuries might have been received by a fall, and the fractures on the head may have been caused by the body floating about in the canal.

The Judge thought there was (*in*)sufficient evidence to show that there had been that secretly burying or disposing of the body which the Act of Parliament required to procure a conviction.

Mr McIntyre put a few further questions to Mr Barrett, and the Judge then stopped the case.

32 6 August 1858

ELLESMERE

INFRINGEMENT OF THE BYE LAWS OF THE SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL At the Petty Sessions on Monday, before Sir J R Kynaston Bart and C K Mainwaring Esq, **Mr John Young**, canal inspector of Ellesmere, appeared in support of an information laid against Mr Jones of Bostock's Hall, Whixall, for an infringement of the bye laws of the Shropshire Union Canals. Fined, with costs, 15s 8d. Mr Young also appeared in support of another summons against a boatman named **Woolley**, for mooring his boat in an improper place on the canals. At the intercession of Mr Young, the fine was but a nominal one (it being his first offence), but the costs had to be borne by the defendant, which amounted to 5s 4d.

33 20 August 1858

BRIDGNORTH

ASSAULT WITH A POKER At the Borough Magistrates' Clerk's Office on Tuesday, before T Deighton, mayor, **George Brown**, waterman, was charged with wilfully breaking, with a poker, a clock, wardrobe and sundry other articles of furniture to the value of 30s, on the evening of the 16th inst, the property of Jane Oddy, defendant's sister, residing in the Cartway, while under the influence of liquor. Defendant was apprehended by Chief-constable Cole very shortly afterwards, and who, on his appearance, began to menace a poker before him, but very soon submitted to go calmly. When defendant was called upon by the mayor for his defence as to his outrageous conduct, he expressed his sorrow for the occurrence. Defendant was ordered to pay the amount of damage and 12s costs, making a total of 42s ; in default of payment, committed to two months' hard labour in the House of Correction at Shrewsbury. Defendant chose the latter alternative.

34 27 August 1858

FRIGHTFUL RAILWAY ACCIDENT AND GREAT LOSS OF LIFE The most serious accident that has ever occurred on a railway in the Midland districts took place on Monday night on the Oxfordshire and Worcester Railway between Round Oak and Brettle Lane Stations, a few miles beyond Dudley ; by it 11 persons were instantaneously killed, and another died a few hours afterwards ; several others were so severely injured that their recovery is despaired of ; others are maimed for life ; and a great number were more or less injured.

On Monday there was a very cheap special excursion train from Wolverhampton to Worcester at 9.15, calling at all stations, for the express purpose of conveying the teachers and children of the various schools. The extraordinary low rate of charges naturally attracted a large number of passengers, and by the time the train arrived at its destination it had been augmented to 45 carriages, computed to contain nearly 2000 passengers. The return train was announced to leave Worcester at 6.15 pm. Those having charge of the arrangements determined to divide the train, and instead of having one monster train propelled by two engines, to have two trains, each drawn by one engine. Accordingly about twenty five minutes past six, the first train left Worcester station. It consisted of 29 carriages closely packed with passengers, and was followed in a quarter of an hour by the second train, consisting of 16 carriages. Each train called at all stations, and all went well with the first until its arrival at Round Oak, which took place about 8.05 where, either just before the train arrived at the station, which is situated on a steep incline, or when it was put in motion to leave the station, 12 or 13 of the last carriages became detached from the former part of the train by the breaking of the couplings of two of the carriages, and rolled back down the incline towards Brettle Lane with ever increasing velocity. The guard, who occupied the van at the extremity of the train, applied his brake with all the force of which it was capable, but its power was insufficient to check the retrograde movement of the carriages, which soon attained a very high rate of speed. From Stourbridge to the Dudley tunnel it is an almost unbroken ascent, and thus when these carriages with their doomed occupants parted company with the others, they proceeded backwards on the down line, acquiring at every yard an increasing and, at length, a fearful velocity. Supposing the line to be clear between Brierley Hill and the next station, Brettle Lane, a mile and a quarter apart, it was almost impossible to telegraph there before the train, or at least the detached part, could arrive. The officials at Brierley Hill could not avert the accident, nor those at Brettle Lane, supposing a train had left the latter place, which unfortunately was the case. On arrival at Bug Hole, a little more than half way to Brettle Lane, they dashed into the second excursion train which, as before stated, was dispatched from Worcester only fifteen minutes after the first, and being a lighter train, naturally gained upon it during the journey. The driver of the second train perceived the carriages running back upon his train down the incline, and had nearly succeeded in bringing his train to a stand at the time of the collision, thus considerably mitigating the severity of the crash ; but as it was, the consequences were fearful. The guard's van and the carriage next to it were split into matchwood, and the second carriages escaped little better. The guard jumped out just before the collision occurred and escaped without injury, but the effect on the passengers crowded in the two

shattered carriages was dreadful. The scene that ensued it is impossible to describe, fragments of the crushed and broken carriages, mutilated human forms, some still in death, some writhing in their last agonies, others fearfully but not fatally hurt, shrieking in terror, were commingled in a general melee, hardly distinguishable amid the darkness and dust occasioned by the collision. The piercing screams of the excursionists, the groans of the dying and the cries of the living racked with fearful agonies, this too with the loud crash which accompanied the meeting of the two trains, summoned people quickly to the spot. The telegraph too soon made it known at the various stations, and officials were on the spot as soon as possible, who helped to rescue the sufferers and move the debris of the carriages. The terrified passengers who escaped without serious injury ran hither and thither in bewilderment, and for a time none knew what to do. A few of the more self possessed, however, speedily bestirred themselves to render all possible assistance to the unfortunate sufferers and remove them from the wreck that bestrewed the line ; and messengers were dispatched for medical and other aid. It was soon apparent that the loss of life was lamentably great. Eleven lifeless forms were discovered amongst the rubbish, in addition to many frightfully mangled and disfigured, and as speedily as possible the latter were conveyed on stretchers, furnished by the shivered coaches, to the various hotels in the neighbourhood, and the next duty to attend to was the removal of the dead in like manner. Many of those who were slightly wounded proceeded onwards by the train, and it is probable that a complete list of the casualties resulting from this terrible affair will never be obtained. The mangled and mutilated bodies of the survivors were attended by medical men who were summoned to the spot. Among these were Mr Carden and Mr Everet of Worcester ; Mr Johnson of Dudley ; and Mr Walker of Brierley Hill. Such as had received but trivial injuries proceeded to their respective homes the same evening, carrying the news of the accident to those who had friends among the excursionists. When someone who sought missing friends discovered them either among the dead or injured, it was painful to see their grief and mourning. Out of a party consisting of three – father, mother and son – the son, apparently about 18 or 19, was found dead ; the mother was dead, and the father, who had both legs frightfully mangled, died the following morning. Mr Carden of Worcester, who attended him the same evening, advised amputation on signs of his rallying a little as the only means of saving his life. The operation was performed by Dr Walter of Brierley Hill on Tuesday morning, but the unfortunate man did not survive it. He leaves a family of eight children who, through this great bereavement, are become destitute, as their friends are but poor people, who seem to feel very acutely this unforeseen and lamentable loss of life. The bodies of some of the dead are fearfully mangled, and their identification, except by their dress, will in some cases be difficult. The features of one poor woman, whose body lies, with four others, at the Swan Inn, Moor Lane, are wholly indistinguishable, her head being crushed into a fearful mass. The legs of a man lying at the same place are fearfully crushed, and his head and face shockingly contused. This gentleman has been expensively dressed, and even in death has the air of a person who has been accustomed to move in a superior society. Most of the others appear to have belonged to the working classes. We may mention that the particular spot at which the collision occurred is a short distance beyond the junction of the Kingswinford branch of railway, in course of formation with the main line, and that the line was cleared for traffic by twelve o'clock, but little damage being done to the permanent way. The vicinity of the collision was visited by hundreds of persons during Tuesday, who with that morbid feeling which induces people to crowd to spots where occurrences similar to this occur, flocked there from all parts. The following is a list of killed and injured :-

KILLED

Joseph Pitt, scrap merchant of Princes' End

William Moor, puddler of Princes' End

Frederick Thomas of Dudley

B Skelding, huckster of Princes' End. Died under an operation.

Skelding, wife of the above

Skelding, son of the above

Francis Mills, furnace man of Princes' End

Williams, boatman of Worcester

Richard Moor of Tipton. Killed by a splinter running into his heart.

The body of a woman far advanced in pregnancy lies at the Swan Inn, Moor Lane, not claimed. The head of this unfortunate person is in such a battered condition that it will be impossible to recognise her, except by her dress.

At the Cock Inn, Moor Lane, lie the bodies of a man and woman, unclaimed on Tuesday.

WOUNDED

The following list comprises the injured who have not been removed from the neighbourhood ;-

William Harley, tailor, Dudley. Injury not ascertained.

Richard Warsall of Princes' End. Injury to the head.

Joseph Webb, Bradley Lane, near Coseley Church. Broken leg and toe amputated.

William Kendrick, Princes' End. Broken leg.

Sarah Ann Whitmore. Slightly injured.

Ader Smith, forgerman of Coseley. Arm broken and back badly hurt.

Miss Bevan and Mrs Wycherley, sisters. Badly injured.

Henry James, forgerman of Coseley. Back badly hurt.

Samuel Starkey, Dudley. Badly bruised, back supposed to be broken.

Lydia Canser of Princes' End. Seriously hurt about the head.

Mary Lones of Princes' End. Collar bone broken and chest badly bruised.

Edward Jones of Dudley Port. Leg fractured.

Elizabeth Hyde. Body much bruised.

Thomas Brett of Daisy Bank. Collar bone fractured, in a dangerous state.

Charles Turner, blacksmith, Daisy Bank. Side cut open and lungs protruding ; cannot survive.

Ann Fisher of Princes' End. Bruised about chest, and arm injured.

It is a fact of serious import that, when the train was going towards Worcester in the morning, the coupling chain broke upon two several occasions – on one of which, if the train had not been descending an incline instead of ascending it, a similar accident to that which happened at night would have occurred in the morning, for when the first breakage happened there was a train behind on the same rails, and within a few hundred yards of the part of the train that became detached.

The *Birmingham Daily Post* of yesterday says - "This lamentable occurrence is still the absorbing topic of interest throughout the district. Up to a late hour last night no further death had taken place, although it was currently rumoured on Tuesday evening that three more of the persons injured were dead, thus increasing the number of fatal casualties to fifteen. The rumour obtained currency in the columns of a contemporary yesterday, but we are extremely happy to say it was without foundation. All the injured persons were alive last night ; most of them were progressing favourably, and fatal consequences are not now apprehended in more than two additional cases. It is now clearly established that the train had not arrived at Round Oak station on its return from Worcester when it separated ; and that the coaches which divided were properly attached with shackle and side chains. There is therefore no blame attributable to any of the subordinate officials of the company on that score ; but important questions will no doubt arise as to the sufficiency of those fastenings ; and the strain to which they ought to be submitted on such an incline as that from Brettle Lane to Round Oak, and the amount of brake power requisite for the safe working of a line of railway where the gradient is 1 in 75".

In yesterday's *Times* are the following remarks : "It is a matter for serious reflection and future investigation that when the train which comprised the whole 45 carriages together was making for Worcester in the morning, drawn with great difficulty by two engines, a coupling chain of one or other of the carriages broke twice. On one of these occasions an accident would have happened similar to that which unhappily occurred at night on the return journey, if it had not fortunately happened that, instead of an incline being ascended as was the case at night, an incline was being descended ; for when the chain broke another train was following on the same line of rails only 200

or 300 yards behind. Singularly enough the first breakage in the morning took place at one or other of the stations between which there happened the calamity of the night. In regard to the precautions that had been used to connect the carriages together before the first breakage we cannot report definitely ; but in relation to the second breakage, we write upon the authority of the Rev E C Perry, the chaplain to Messrs Bagnall, ironmasters at Capponfields, near Bilston, in saying that the two carriages at which the separation took place were connected only by the centre coupling, the two side chains not having been used. Mr Perry was in one of the two carriages at which this disjoining happened and, upon getting out to investigate the cause of it, directed the attention of the workmen to that fact. This rev gentleman had with him Mrs Perry and 200 scholars belonging to Messrs Bagnall's schools. From the above stated facts it is evident that this excursion train broke in two during its to and fro journey together three times, and that the third breakage led to the killing or wounding of about seventy persons. And we have it from Mr Adcock, the secretary of the line, that it was because he conceived forty five carriages too many for one train and had heard of one of the morning breakages, that in the evening he gave orders for the train to be divided. Twenty nine carriages, however, seemed to be too great a load for one of the engines. One would seem to have lugged the twenty nine to Stourbridge, where a second was coupled to the first. To these, however, the labour was so great – in other words the train was so heavy – that in climbing the ascent between Brettel Lane and Round Oak streaks of light were produced from the contact between the engine's wheels and the rails upon which they were grinding”.

The first surgeon on the spot was Mr Wall, assistant to Mr Norris of Brierley Hill. The name of this young man deserves to be placed on prominent record. Arriving at the spot about five minutes after the accident, he saw the shocking magnitude of the work that lay before him. Without ceremony, the fine young fellow threw off his coat and worked, unaided by anyone else of his profession, for more than half an hour. The other principal persons who were there speak in terms of the highest admiration of the skill and self possession of Mr Wall during this dreadful half hour. The wounded were removed principally in chairs, and the dead upon stretchers that were ready to hand in the timber which in too many instances had been the instruments of torture and of death to the poor creatures for whom it was now used as the hospital bier. Superintending the removal of these, and attending to them subsequently, with the removing also of those injured persons who were taken to their houses, the surgeons and the Rev E C Perry remained upon the spot till 2 o'clock on Tuesday morning. Some of the residents, however, remained up with the injured all night, still engaged in this work of charity, or in assisting with the identification of the dead. Prominent among these were Mr John Bent and Mr Beckley, both of Brierley Hill.

During the whole of Monday night and early on Tuesday morning the roads leading to Brierley Hill from the mining districts were alive with people, all seeking relatives or friends who had escaped with only slight injuries and the children were distributed in the surrounding villages and towns, as much animation was observed in the streets as though it were midday, and every vehicle and person coming from the place of the disaster had to submit to questions upon the safety of those who were supposed to be injured. All day long on Tuesday strangers thronged the houses in which were the wounded and the dead. These houses became so many hospitals ; clubrooms, bars, parlours, kitchens, dormitories and maltrooms were extemporised into dead houses or infirmary wards. In one small inn five dead bodies were lying, and yet more persons in various stages of suffering from as many kinds of injuries. One old man, bed ridden from internal injuries, lay unconscious of the fact that in a neighbouring house his wife was a mutilated corpse. In as many different houses there lay father, mother and son, all dead, and mangled as though some hellish fury had been trying to deprive them of all human shape, while he kept, in slaying the mother, another child from soon being born into the world. In another place there lay a youth of 18, who had worked for one employer since childhood, and a few nights before presented himself as a scholar for tuition in the night school which his benevolent employers had opened ; on Monday he was the standard bearer of the school, and while the rest were merry and gleesome, stood and spoke with a subdued tone and demeanour amounting almost to sadness, and as though he had a prescience of all the suffering that awaited him. As this young man lay to all appearance dying, it was a sound most attuned to the

time and place that proceeded from the lips of the chaplain before spoken of, as he directed the upturned gaze of the pain wracked lad to Him of "countenance more marred than any man".

When it is known that by the time the detached carriages arrived upon the advancing train the steam of that train was entirely shut off and the train had begun almost to retrograde, it will occasion almost surprise that the injuries should have been of so horrible a nature. It is a fact, however, that so fearful was the velocity at which the carriages ran back that the brake the guard applied before he jumped off was, through the friction, burning with a flame that lit up the line. The concussion was so great that the engine of the advancing train was disabled ; and the heavy axletree and wheels of one of the trucks became bent as though they had been so much lead. Previously to the collision the engine driver, stoker and guard of the advancing train had all jumped off. The shock was scarcely perceived by the passengers in that train, and those in the carriages that were destroyed were so unconscious of their awful position that bodily anguish and death seized them while they joked each other that they were "having extra riding for their money, and were being taken back to sleep in Worcester".

THE INQUEST was opened on Wednesday morning at the Whimsey Inn, Brierley Hill, before Mr T M Phillips, coroner, and a jury of which the Rev J Bailey, a Baptist minister, was foreman.

As soon as the jury were sworn they proceeded to view the bodies, the Coroner adjourning the enquiry to the Bell Hotel, Brierley Hill, where, in course of an hour, it was resumed in a more spacious and convenient room than could be obtained at the Whimsey. The names of the deceased on whom the inquest was held are Francis Mills, a furnaceman at the Bloomfield Iron Works ; Joseph Baker of Prince's End, iron worker, thirty five years of age, single ; Edward Matthews of Coseley, puddler ; Benjamin Skeldon of Prince's End, baker and provision dealer, Harriet, his wife, and John, his son, a young man of seventeen ; Mrs Hildrick, wife of Mr Hildrick, sawyer of Park Lane, Tipton ; Mrs Harley, wife of William Harley, tailor, Dudley ; Henry Weston, labourer, Prince's End, aged thirty three, single ; Richard Moore, aged thirty, Prince's End ; **Henry Marshall** aged thirty six, boatman, Worcester ; and Benjamin Pitt, hay and straw dealer. Mr King of the firm of Collis, Bernard and King of Stourbridge attended to watch the proceedings on behalf of the Company. Mr Adcock, the secretary, Mr Sherriff, the general manager, and Mr Wilson, the engineer of the company, with Mr Dudley Parsons, manager of the Stour Valley line, were also present. Mr Burbury of Brierley Hill attended on behalf of the friends of two of the deceased, Henry Marshall and Francis Mills ; and Mr Round, solicitor of Tipton, for the friends of the Skeldon family, and the family of the late Mr Edward Matthews.

The principal evidence was the subjoined :

William Skeldon said : I am a boiler plate roller, and live at Brierley Hill. I went by this train to Worcester about 20 minutes to ten. The guard was in his brake van. I got into his van, and went all the way to Worcester with him. About half an hour after we started the guard asked if anybody had a light and tobacco. I found tobacco and matches, and another young man lighted a lamp. He began to smoke, and set my brother, John Skeldon (deceased, aged 17) on to work the brake. He told my brother and another young man when we were coming to a station to apply the brake. He said, "Do something for your bread, if you have your cheese for nothing". He appeared sober. The conversation took place between Dudley and Stourbridge. My brother, with the help of others, worked the brake to Worcester. During most of that time the guard was smoking. I think it was after we passed Dudley that a coupling chain broke, somewhere by Brettel Lane. We felt something check, which threw me forward. At Brettel Lane station a guard (the same one), having got out, returned and asked for a chain, saying there was one broken. Not long after the first chain broke, another check happened, and at the next station the guard got out, and coming back told us that another coupling chain had broken, but after taking it to the top of the train brought it back, saying he could do without it. Nothing of consequence took place after that. We arrived in Worcester at 12.25. There were about 45 carriages at one time, and one engine at first, but afterwards we had two engines. They say there were more than 2,000 in the train. That is my opinion. They were so numerous that they were obliged to stand up. That is the reason why I got into the guard's van.

When I got to Worcester I did not hear any reason assigned for the shocks. The first train back left Worcester at half past six, and the next in a quarter of an hour afterwards. When the collision happened I was thrown violently forward, had my tongue and face cut, two black eyes, and became insensible for a time. When I got out I went up the line to the engine driver, and asked him what was the matter. The driver said, "What the devil do you want here? Go back to your carriage ; there is nothing serious the matter". The funnel and huffers of the engine were knocked off the engine, which was at a standstill. Witness after that sought for his father, and with difficulty found him among the debris with his legs injured. He succeeded in having his father taken care of, and then searched for his brother and mother, but could not find them. He then went to Prince's End, where he heard they were dead. The train, although advertised for schoolchildren, was opened to the public.

Francis Etheridge, a collier : I was going to my house near Brierley Hill when I saw several railway carriages coming towards me down the line from Round Oak station. I did not see the engines with them. I was standing on the bridge and watched them until I heard the alarm. I saw one coming from towards Stourbridge at the same time. The crash was so loud that it nearly took away my hearing. It was 200 or 300 yards from the bridge. There was one man there with a lamp, and he lighted a fire by the side of the rails. There were loud shrieks, and when I got down there were seven dead bodies under the wheels of the last three carriages of the detached train – the three that came up against the engine that was coming from Stourbridge. Some persons helped me to get their bodies out, and the others that were killed, and also the wounded. I don't know that I saw the guard, but there was a man in a short jacket and a band round his hat assisting to get the bodies out. I did not ascertain the cause of this train breaking away.

Adonizebek Gordon, night watchman, heard the whistle and saw the collision.

The Rev E C Perry deposed : I am a clergyman, and live in Coppensfield in the parish of Sedgley. On Monday morning last I left the Bilston station at 9.30 a.m. I was in a second class carriage, I think. I had a party of nearly 200, including adults, teachers and friends. I should think that there were 50 carriages in the train, principally second and third class. There were two engines in front. I saw one or two guards, and heard no complaints of want of engine power. I perceived in the morning no shock or check till we got to Brettel Lane station, where about one third of the train became detached ; the front of the train went. I could not understand the check that we had experienced, and looked out, and saw some men going after the detached part with bulks of wood similar to those that are put under carriage wheels to stop them. I then saw a man connect the disjoined portions. We felt several shocks afterwards, one in particular. Then I and Mrs Perry were in the first carriage of the detached part. I got out and ran by the side of the detached carriages till the two parts became again united. The union was effected simply by the centre chain being hooked on. It seemed to me that the coupling of this chain to the preceding carriage had been neglected. I saw some chain or chains broken, but can't say that they were the side coupling chains. If the centre chain had been connected with the preceding carriage it must have broken, and could not have been hooked on afterwards. I infer that, from the ease with which these two separate couplings took place, that the centre chain was not hooked on. After we had again started, I said to the guard, "I don't know whether these engine drivers are playing tricks with us, or are drunk, but certainly, from the extraordinary jerks that they are giving us, I should think that they were drunk". We started from Worcester in the evening two trains. The first part had 29 carriages, and had a second engine put to it at about Kidderminster. I came in the first train. We felt a severe shock near to Brettel Lane, and were afterwards pushed back about half a mile to a platform, where by a servant of the company we were told that there was an accident, and that some persons had been injured. There was then a general rush made to the scene of disaster. I got out and saw injured and dead persons being carried away. I should estimate that then in the whole train there were about 1540 persons. I expected that the passengers would be exclusively Sunday School scholars or their teachers, but instead of that the general public were admitted.

John Phillips, station master at Round Oak : When anything happens to a train coming down from Brettel Lane to Round Oak, it is the duty of the guard to report it to me. I received no report nor

application for coupling or side chains on Monday. When I heard of the accident I was on the platform at Dudley. I had left my station in charge of Mr Bolton, my head clerk. It was nine o'clock when I heard of it, and I assisted those who were brought to Dudley injured. It is not unusual for persons to travel in the guard's van, but sometimes in case of excursion trains, passengers will force themselves in. I am aware there is an order against persons travelling in the guard's van on ordinary occasions.

This witness produced the coupling chains and links that had belonged to the carriage that formed the connexion between the two parts of the first train. The coupling chain was broken through, a hook of one of the side chains was broken through, and the other chain was torn out of the buffer plank, the nut not holding.

Here, at 6 o'clock, the inquest was adjourned for a week.

35 17 September 1858

THE SEVERN VALLEY The river and the rail. Will the Severn retain its share of traffic? Obstructions to navigation. Cases which have contributed to the decline of the Shropshire trade. Extracts from Acts of Parliament for Improving the Navigation of the Severn.

The project of a railway along the valley of the Severn affords an illustration of changes wrought by the quickest impulse of the times. Events little dreamed of in the philosophy of our forefathers, content with the jog trot pace of the middle ages, revolutionise the world. Time and tide 'twas said wait for no man. No man now thinks of waiting the imperial will of time and tide. Everything goes with the times if it is to go at all, otherwise it stagnates, is swallowed up and lost. Competition, quickness and despatch, are the order of the day. Movements that led to fortune when mail coaches travelled rugged roads, bringing news from London once a week, would lead a man to the union workhouse if adhered to at the present. Modes of transit, like those of business and those of locomotion, are undergoing a change. The all conquering agent, of which Darwin in the true national spirit of poetry and prophecy remarked,

“Soon shall thy arm, unconquer'd steam afar
Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car”,

for some time applied to ocean navigation, is now extensively introduced upon rivers and canals, and steam tug companies for the purpose are being formed. Below Stourport, where capital and skill have corrected the inequalities of the channel, steamers ply unimpeded, bringing up fleets of barges and sea going vessels, where horses and men were formerly employed for the purpose. The first steam tug intended to ply upon the unimproved portion of the river is now being fitted with her engine. Soon, it is believed, the same wonderful agent, steam, is to enter the lists as a more formidable rival of the river itself. In that race the river has advantages which forbid the supposition that its present traffic will, as has been said, be absorbed by its rival. It now costs the Coalbrookdale Company but sixpence to remove, by means of the river, one of their polished register grates from their warehouse on the river at Coalbrookdale to the one they have at Gloucester. Heavier goods are taken from there, and Coalport, at 2s 6d, and from that to 5s per ton. The expense of navigating the Severn with a sufficiency of water is less than upon any other river, and so small that the probability is the river will still retain its share of heavy traffic ; similar means of transit having done so notwithstanding competing lines of rails running by their side. We have in Great Britain and Ireland four thousand miles of navigable river and canal, upon which fifty millions of money has been expended, and along which a large portion of the heavy traffic of the kingdom now flows. It has been found that rival railway enterprise, in more than one instance, has given a stimulus to water conveyance highly beneficial to the shareholders. The Shropshire Canal has indeed just succumbed to the rail which is to supply its place as feeder to the Severn, after flourishing for seventy years and paying handsome profits, but its death has been brought about mainly by damage done by mining operations disturbing its bed. The Ellesmere canal that scarcely paid a dividend became a profitable concern after the railway was constructed, and now, like the Leeds and Liverpool, the Staffordshire and Worcester, the Birmingham and others, successfully compete with rival railways. The Birmingham, of which Philip Williams Esq, high sheriff of

Staffordshire and chairman of the ironmasters' quarterly meetings, is an influential shareholder, has just resolved upon raising £100,000 in new shares, for a tunnel for the better accommodation of the coal and iron trade. Had means been taken to improve the channel of the Severn, there is little doubt but that this noble river, navigable for 180 miles, may have been in much more flourishing condition than at present.

Like the opposing interests for and against improvements in the channel of the Severn, between which the battle of locks and weirs has been fought, two opposing forces have been striving for mastery in the tideway of the channel, one contending for an estuary, the other for a delta. Draining a district six thousand square miles in extent, having a fall of two hundred and twenty feet in its descent from its source in the Plynymnion mountains (1,500 feet above the sea line) to its tideway in the Bristol Channel, and being fed by boisterous brooks and precipitous streams that cut their way through shales and clays and sand rocks, it is not surprising that the Severn should bring down a vast amount of silt to raise its bed, which it has done year by year. To correct these irregularities along a portion of the river, improvements, as projected by Sir William Cubitt some years since, have been completed at a very considerable outlay and after an expenditure of £70,000 before the sanction of Parliament could be obtained. Above Stourport, where these improvements terminate, the weir is still in a state of nature. Except some peddling attempts by means of earth, loose stones or sinking some dilapidated boats along the side, nothing has been done to improve the channel. The scouring action of the stream constantly undermines the banks. These give way after every flood, and come down to choke the river or to change the channel, and every newly formed shoal sends the stream at right angles to its bed to make fresh attempts upon its banks. Fords, that served our painted ancestors to make incursions beyond their boundaries, bends almost amounting to circles, around which they paddled their canoes, impede navigation still. Attempts to overcome these natural obstacles to its navigation were made as early as 1784. It was proposed by a Mr Jessop to render the river navigable for vessels drawing four feet at all seasons of the year from Worcester to Coalbrookdale. He proposed to obtain a sufficient depth for that purpose, at all seasons of the year, by the erection of 13 or 14 weirs between those places ; and he also recommended that the depth should be obtained below Dinglis by dredging and connecting the natural channel of the river. The Stafford and Worcester Canal Company, joined by the iron manufacturers of Shropshire, applied in the year 1786 to Parliament for powers to carry out Mr Jessop's recommendations, so far as they related to the portion of the river described in the title of the bill as from Meadow Wharf, Coalbrookdale, to the deep water at Dinglis, below the city of Worcester. The bill was lost owing to the strong feeling of objection on the part of the public to the erection of locks and weirs, and also owing to the dislike of the carriers to pay toll at all seasons of the year. As it is, there are often three, four and five months in the year when barges cannot navigate the river with a freight equal to defray the expenses of working them ; indeed, instances have occurred in which only two months of the twelve the river could be advantageously worked. Within the past nine months, vessels capable of carrying 50 or 60 tons got fast in the shoals with 15. Besides the additional wear and tear under such circumstances, more strength is required to work the vessel, and it takes treble the time to convey 15 tons at low water as four times that weight at other times. Consequent upon the long drought, there are at present 4,000 tons of coal, chiefly of a superior kind, that fetch the highest prices in the Gloucester market, accumulated on the wharf at Coalport. As an instance of loss occasioned by delay, a respectable lead merchant a short time ago, before a committee of the House of Commons, stated that he had a parcel of lead sent on the 8th of September 1854 from Gloucester which did not reach its destination until December 10th. A delay of three months and two days having been occasioned by want of water to bring it up. He had lost 30s by deficiency of weight from having it left exposed upon the banks, and a further loss of 30s per ton from a fall in the market which had taken place during that time. The superiority of the Broseley brick and tile clay for building purposes is well known, but these trades languish for want of means of regular transit for their goods. Mr F Smith, architect and builder, said Shrewsbury was cut off from the superior brick and tile that may be obtained at Broseley ; what few did come being brought by land carriage at an enormous cost. Speaking of Baltic timber, which formerly found its

way up to Shrewsbury from Gloucester or Bristol, Mr Smith said they had abandoned it altogether, from the time and expense required. The Severn carriers of Shropshire, we regret to say, have contributed to the decline of their traffic by malpractices that are notorious. There are noble exceptions ; some honest hearted fellows among the owners and the men. The true waterman is primitive in his habits, a waiter upon Providence, who will stand for months looking into the stream, patiently waiting for a “fresh” to carry him down. You may tell him by his appearance. He has a broad back, legs which a flunky may be jealous of – swelled like skittle pins at the calves, he is a hard drinker, a heavy swearer, given to gasconade and good living. Formerly he claimed an insertion in his agreement that between Gloucester he should not be compelled to eat salmon soup oftener than three times a week ; it being the custom till within a short period for the owner to provision his company or crew during the voyage to Worcester, Gloucester or Bristol and back. To hear him talk, the difficulties of a voyage to the East Indies is nothing to those of captaining a barge to the mouth of the Avon or the Wye. He is clever in playing tricks with his freight. He often gets game, and frequently dines off fowl that, somehow or other, find their way on board as he lies at anchor for the night. Besides being a tolerable shot, he is clever in staving a cask, taking out its head, and in replacing a hoop. He is decidedly clever ; he will abstract buckets full of cider, perry, porter, wine or spirits, and the cask shall be full as before ; he will take out bricks of soap, leaving the box apparently full, pounds of sugar from a tierce and it shall weigh as heavy as before. The coal owner getting his cargo at Coalport has an allowance of 7 ½ cwt per boat load – five tons of coal – yet complaints are continually made at Stourport, Worcester and Gloucester of short weight, and tricks to deceive by false tickets of weight, &c, &c, are constantly made and have often been exposed.

The following extracts from the Severn Navigation Acts may be of local interest. The preamble of that passed on the 13th of May 1842 sets forth the impediments to navigation as existing between the entrance lock of the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, in the eastern branch of the said river at Gloucester, to Gladder or Whitehouse Brook in the county of Worcester, between which points improvements have been effected. The list of commissioners included the names of the town clerk and one of the town council of the borough of Wenlock ; and the following clauses relative to the Shropshire trade were embodied in the bill :- “And whereas, vessels belonging to and usually trading from any place situate more than two miles above Gladder or Whitehouse Brook aforesaid will not, in navigating that portion of the said river by this act intended to be improved, derive any benefit from such improvement, and it is therefore reasonable that such vessels should be exempted from the tolls hereby authorised to be imposed. Be it therefore enacted that all boats coming from any place more than two miles above Gladder or Whitehouse Brook shall pass upon the said river between the limits or places aforesaid, and upon or along the said cuts or canals with any goods and cargo whatsoever, without paying to the commissioners any tolls for the same, provided no goods or cargo of any description be delivered or unladen at any place between the places or places aforesaid, or at any place within two miles of the said brook. Provided always, and be it enacted, that if at any time hereafter the navigation of the river Severn shall be improved to Bewdley, or to any place which is two miles above Gladder or Whitehouse Brook, in the direction of Bewdley, then the exemption from tolls contained in the preceding clause shall cease. Provided, nevertheless, that nothing herein contained shall render liable to toll the cargoes of any boats proceeding from or returning to any place being two miles or upwards above the terminus of such future improvement ; provided such boats do not in descending the said river take in, or in ascending the same put out, any goods or cargo whatsoever in their passage or within two miles of the limits of the improvement by this act intended to be effected, or any such extension thereof.” A second act was obtained in the session of 1844 for the purpose of enabling the commissioners to borrow, in addition to the sum of £150,000 specified in the former bill, the further sum of £30,000 on mortgage ; and a third bill received the royal assent on the 27th of July 1848, for the purpose of altering and extending some of the provisions of the two former.

36 1 October 1858

MARKET DRAYTON The monthly special sessions were held on Saturday last.

John Moss, a boatman, was fined 20s and 19s 4d costs for wasting the water of the canal at Adderley locks. Defendant did not appear, and a commitment accordingly issued for one calendar month's imprisonment in default of payment.

37 8 October 1858

IRONBRIDGE

ASSAULTING THE POLICE **Richard Merrick** and William Hughes, waterman and brickmaker, were charged before the Mayor and Mr Anstice by PC Bereton with having assaulted him whilst in the execution of his duty at the Madeley Wood wake. It appeared the defendants were returning home from the wake when a row took place on the Benthall side of the bridge, and a crowd assembled. The complainant interfered and was very roughly handled by some persons in the mob. The defendant Merrick then assaulted him, striking him over the face with a brick end ; and complainant then called upon the other defendant, Hughes, to assist him, but instead of doing so, Hughes took the part of Merrick and struck complainant. Merrick was at last secured, and Hughes was apprehended on a warrant next day. A number of witnesses were examined, and it appeared that the assault had been committed. The defendants were fined £1 each and costs.

38 5 November 1858

ELLESMERE

PETTY SESSIONS, TOWN HALL **Joseph Hassall**, a boatman, was charged with having stolen a brass ornament, value 1s 9d, from the bridle of a horse, the property of C K Mainwaring Esq of Oteley Park. William Williams, waggoner to Mr Mainwaring, stated that he had put up his horses in the stable of the Canal Tavern, whilst his timber carriage was being loaded with deal balk at Ellesmere wharf, and that on the journey homeward he missed the ornament in question. The prisoner having been seen in the stable, suspicion rested upon him, and he was apprehended by police officer Thomas with the stolen brass in his possession. Prisoner admitted his guilt, and having elected that he should be dealt with summarily, was sentenced to 21 days' imprisonment with hard labour.

39 18 February 1859

NEWTOWN

CORONER'S INQUEST On Thursday, and by adjournment on Saturday the 12th inst, an inquest was held before Dr Slyman, coroner, and a highly respectable jury, upon the body of Henry Roderick Rees, about nine years of age, who was found in the canal the previous day. From the evidence given at the inquest, it appears that the little boy resided with his parents at the Black Park, and that **John Davies**, a boatman in the employ of Thomas Rees, coal and salt merchant of Newtown (and grandfather to the boy), went to his parents, and by the use of his employer's name, which he was not entitled to use, obtained the services of the boy to drive his donkeys up to Newtown, where he arrived ; and upon the boat being discharged it was sent off again, the grandfather accompanying it for some distance to be sure that it would be taken right on. It seems that shortly after Rees left for home the boat was moored to the side of the canal, and the boatman went to the Church House to drink, and continued on the "fuddle" there and at other places for about three days, the boy having been left by him in the boat. Upon being questioned as to where the boy was, he could tell nothing about him, merely stating that he thought he was gone home. Upon this a more anxious enquiry was set up, and resulted in the discovery of the body in the canal near to the place where the boat had been moored. The opinion was that the little boy, having been left in the boat for a night without food or anything else, in endeavouring to get out, fell in and was drowned. Upon the first enquiry, after evidence had been adduced of the finding of the body, the inquest was adjourned in order that a *post mortem* examination of the body should be made by Mr Hall, surgeon. On Saturday, the evidence of Mr Hall was heard, which tended to show that death

resulted from drowning. The organs in every respect were a perfect model of health, but the internal viscera was devoid of food. After a careful summing up by the coroner, the jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against John Davies, the boatman, upon the ground of wilful negligence ; and he was accordingly committed for trial.

40 8 April 1859

WELSH FRANKTON

FIRE On Wednesday morning about three o'clock, a fire was discovered in the stable of the Lock Tavern, Welsh Frankton, in the occupation of Mr William Edwards. From an investigation of the circumstances connected with its origin, we learn that three men had been drinking in the house for some time, and got the worse for liquor. Mr Edwards allowed them to lie down in the stable, which they did about nine o'clock. Soon after two the next morning, the men called up the landlord and asked for some more beer and some red herrings out of the shop, which he supplied them through a window. They then asked for a bit of candle, saying they were going into a boat. Shortly afterwards, the landlord, suspecting they had returned to the stable, got up again, and finding there was a light in the stable, he immediately went down. He then found the men busy discussing the merits of the beer and herrings, with the lighted candle stuck against the wall. He carefully (as he says) removed the straw from underneath the candle, and bade them take care of it. Soon afterwards, a boatman named **Jacks** discovered that the building was in flames, and he, in company with another man, hastened to the spot. Had it not been for their timely arrival, the three men, who had fallen asleep, would have perished in the flames, and a horse and two donkeys that were in the stable must have been destroyed. As it was the horse was badly burnt about the head. The building was all burnt. It is supposed that the candle must have fallen down, and that the flame must have ignited some loose straw, in spite of Mr Edwards's care in removing it.

41 22 April 1859

COALPORT

PROVIDENT ESCAPE Shortly after ten o'clock on Monday morning the following occurrence took place, involving the perilous escape of two men. The incline by which the upper branch of the Shropshire Canal at Coalport is connected with the lower is about three hundred yards long, with a rise of 100 feet. It consists of two lines of strong railway. The loaded boats from the upper canal are placed upon a carriage, drawn up out of the canal by a powerful steam engine, and by means of a strong iron chain coiled on a large drum regulated by a powerful break, are permitted to descend to the lower canal. The descending carriage, with the drum in motion, draws up on its carriage an empty boat. On this occasion, the ponderous iron chain attached to the descending boat, containing five tons of iron pigs, snapped at about 70 yards from the top of the incline. The carriage with its burden descended with fearful and increasing velocity until it reached the canal. Here two empty boats were shattered to pieces, and the loaded boat dashed over the canal bank about twelve feet wide into the Severn. Immediately under lay the new passage boat. In this were G Goodwin, the ferryman, and J Matthews, an old man verging on 80 years. They were in the cabin, and they heard the noise ; but before they could adopt means for their safety the boat bounded over the canal bank, and landed on the deck of the passage boat lengthways, carrying away the mast, smashing the deck, and driving in the front of the cabin, where the men were standing. Some of the splinters inflicted a wound on the face of Goodwin. It was indeed a providential escape. In connection with this accident should be added that as the boatman was ascending the incline in the empty boat, and on making the discovery that a "runner" had occurred, he sprang out and actually, though not intentionally, crossed the path of the rapidly descending boat. Another moment and he would have been crushed to atoms, but he also escaped. The new ferry boat cost £90, to which must be added the value of three canal boats and the damage done to the incline and chain, so that probably the damage will approach £200. Our correspondent suggests that, as this is not the first instance that a "runner" has perilled the boat and its living freight, that the landing place should be removed a couple or three boats' length lower down the river, by which means the loss of a new boat, as in this

instance, might be avoided, and valuable lives not risked needlessly.

42 6 May 1859

BRIDGNORTH

DEATH UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES On Friday, an inquest was held before W D Batte Esq and a respectable jury, on the body of a man (name unknown) which had been found early that morning in a field on the east bank of the Severn, and conveyed to the Duke beer house, near the High Rock. After the jury had viewed the body, the following evidence was given :- **Francis Lowe**, waterman of Bridgnorth, deposed : I was going up the river Severn this morning about 8 o'clock, and saw the deceased lying naked on the bank of the river. We put the boat across, and a man named **Andrew Downes** turned him over and said that he was warm. His clothes were near him, part of them under him. The part of the river where he was found is called Town's Mill Ford. The water was there about five feet deep, and a man could not wade through on account of the current. There were marks on the bank of some person with nailed shoes having come up from the river. I do not think he swam across. I think he went into the river with his clothes off. Andrew Downes, waterman, corroborated the statement of the last witness. Chief-constable Cole deposed : At six o'clock this morning, Frederick Lowe called me up. I went with him to the third field above the Town's Mills, and found the deceased near to the river. He was entirely naked and getting cold, but not stiff, and lying on his left side with his hand under his face. I examined the body, and found no bruise on it. Beside the body, I found a black "Jim Crow", a navy's "slop" with the sleeves tied together as if it had been thrown across the shoulders, a plush waistcoat with fustian sleeves, a shirt, a pair of lace up boots, and 3d in copper. This afternoon I examined the field, and about twenty yards from where the body was found I discovered marks of shoes and broken sticks, as if someone had been attempting to get through the hedge in the dark. These marks continued to very near the place where the body lay. The clothes were all wet, with the exception of a little of the upper portion of the shirt and waistcoat. I should think he must have been drunk or mad. The inquest was adjourned for a week, to give an opportunity for making inquiries with a view to his identification.

43 20 May 1859

BRIDGNORTH

DEATH BY DROWNING An inquest was held on Tuesday evening at the Crown Inn, Eardington, on the body of **Alexander Wilcox**, waterman, aged 26. After the jury had viewed the body, the following evidence was given :-

Richard Oliver : I am a waterman, and live at Coalport. On the morning of the 16th inst, about 8 o'clock, the deceased, a man named Rhodes, and myself were unloading pig iron from a boat moored at the Eardington Forge. The deceased was working in the middle of the vessel. We carry one iron pig at a time each. Suddenly I heard deceased call for a rope, and turned round and saw him struggling in the river. I threw one, but he sank before he could reach it. I also attempted to catch hold of him with a boat hook, but could not. The boat was moored about 28 feet from the shore. The deceased fell from the off side of the vessel. I saw his head out of the water twice while he was struggling. He kept plunging away from the shore towards the middle of the river. It was between four and five feet deep where he fell in. The deceased was quite sober. He was a very sober and steady man. I have never seen him drunk. It was quite half an hour before we found the body. Mr Thursfield, surgeon, was in attendance shortly after the body was taken from the water. We tried every means to restore animation, but they were ineffectual.

Thomas Higgins : I am a labourer, and work at Eardington Forge. Yesterday morning I was on the wharf when the deceased was helping to unload pig iron. I happened to look towards the river and saw the feet of the deceased a few inches out of the water. I saw the nails of his boots, and immediately heard a man named Rhodes cry out that Alec was in the water. He fell from the far side of the vessel, I believe he fell head foremost. I saw Oliver and Rhodes trying to get the deceased out of the water. I saw the deceased taken out about half an hour afterwards ; he was quite

dead. He was a very sober and steady young man.

William Cooke : I am a forgerman, and live at Eardington. Yesterday morning between eight and nine o'clock, I assisted to recover the body of Alexander Wilcox from the river. The place where deceased was taken out was 40 yards below where he fell in. A person named Allender caught hold of him with a boat hook. It was nearly in the middle of the river and about twelve feet deep where we found him. I observed a bruise on the right temple as though an iron pig had hit him or he had fallen against some hard substance. He was quite dead when we took him out. He was in the water quite half an hour.

The coroner, A P Trow Esq, having addressed the jury, a verdict was returned "That the deceased accidentally fell out of the boat into the river and was drowned".

44 20 May 1859

MADELEY COUNTY COURT, SATURDAY

HOLLAND HARVEY AND JOHN BAGSHAW v **JOHN DOUGHTY** Mr Whitcombe stated that in this case plaintiffs sought to recover damages from defendant for injury done to a boat on the Severn. Holland Harvey said he was partner with John Bagshaw in a fishing boat, kept on the Broseley side of the river at Coalport. Saw the boat safe on the 6th of April last. It was safe in the morning ; at dinner time it was all to pieces. In consequence of what he heard, went to John Doughty, and told him his men had damaged the boat. He replied he had nothing to do with it ; he must go to his men. He afterwards said, wait till the men come up Severn. Told him who the men were. Saw one of the men, named Wild, who said it could not be remedied. Defendant refused to take to the boat, or to get it repaired. John Bagshaw gave similar evidence as to the damage done by defendant's barge. **Francis Yate**, waterman, saw plaintiffs' boat moored on the Broseley side. Saw defendant's barge going across to the same side from Coalport. There ought to have been a rope out from the barge for the purpose of riding her over. There was negligence on the part of the crew ; had proper means been used, the damage would not have been done. Heard the crash when the mischief was done. James Kough, boat builder, Coalport, spoke to the damage done to the boat. Judgement for plaintiffs. Both plaintiffs' expenses and two witnesses allowed.

45 17 June 1859

COALPORT

ANOTHER "RUNNER" AT THE INCLINE On Wednesday, another of those fearful "runners" of loaded boats down the steep incline plane, caused by the breakage of the chain, occurred, fortunately without loss of life, and with damage to property only. It is but a short time since we had occasion to report a similar occurrence, and to remark upon the narrow risk run by the boatman, whose ferry is moored directly opposite this steep incline, where passengers are also exposed at any hour of the day to certain death should the falling mass fall upon them. In the present instance, as in the former, the boat, with 5 tons of iron, bounded off the water of the canal high into the air and fell into the river, the iron pigs being thrown some distance further, where they smashed the landing place for passengers in splinters. The ferry fortunately happening to be on the other side. The link of the chain which broke had evidently been cracked through at the last runner, excepting about the thickness of a straw, and had been working in that condition without being observed ever since. The chain has been in use for fourteen or fifteen years ; and it was not the worn portion of the link, but the thicker part of the side, which gave way.

46 12 August 1859

NEWPORT PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

TAKING FISH **William Cressall**, boatman, was charged by Henry Parker, gamekeeper to Sir T F F Boughey, Bart, with the above offence, on the 24th March last. William Adderley, parish constable, proved the delivery of the summons. Henry Parker, on being sworn, stated that he was going down Shipley Lane at a quarter to seven in the morning, and saw defendant with an eel spear, trying to take fish in the canal. Sir T F F Boughey had the private right of fishing there. He went to

him and charged him with the offence, and he said he did not know he was doing wrong. On referring to the Act, it was found that defendant was liable to a fine not exceeding £5, or two months' hard labour. It was stated that defendant appeared at the last meeting to pay whatever he was called upon to pay. He was fined 10s and 9s 6d costs, or seven days' imprisonment.

47 12 August 1859

ELLESMERE MAGISTRATES' COURT, MONDAY

CASE OF FELONY **Edward Hamer**, a boatman, was charged with having stolen a key, the property of Mr John Butler, currier, of the value of 6d, on the evening of the 1st inst. The journeyman of Mr Butler proved having seen the prisoner at the lock of the leather house, but did not see him take the key. Police officer Moran proved apprehending prisoner in his boat ; he was a good deal the worse for liquor. The key produced he found in prisoner's trousers pocket. He denied the charge, and said he knew nothing about the key. In his defence, prisoner said he purchased the key of the witness Prince for 9d ; but this statement the magistrates did not believe, and he was sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment with hard labour.

48 19 August 1859

MARKET DRAYTON The bi monthly County Court was held on Saturday last, before Francis Russell Esq, deputy judge.

Bampfied Kettle v **John Moss** Veterinary surgeon's bill, £1 17s 3d. Defendant, a boatman living at Birmingham, did not appear. Amount ordered to be paid by 10s a month.

49 6 January 1860

MONTGOMERYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

CLEVER CAPTURE BY A POLICEMAN **Thomas Sayers** (37), boatman, William Anthony (20), labourer, and **James Macdonald** (24), boatman, were indicted for stealing at Welshpool on the 16th of December, one parcel of alpaca, and two pieces of Cobourg, the property of William Rogers, draper. Mr Meredith prosecuted. The first witness called was police-constable John Davies, who said he was in High Street on the 16th December last, and saw the three prisoners near Mr Rogers's shop. When he saw them run away down Park Lane, two of them – Macdonald and Sayers – having a bundle each. He apprehended the whole of the prisoners, and found three rolls of cobourg and alpaca in their possession. Mr Rogers identified the goods but said, in answer to the Chairman, that he did not miss the property, for he had no time to do so. The Chairman said it was scarcely possible to conceive a more complete case. The jury found the several prisoners guilty. There was a previous conviction put in against Macdonald, at Haverfordwest, by the name of **Patrick Duffy**, to which prisoner pleaded not guilty. David Baynon, turnkey, was called, and gave evidence to prove that Macdonald was the man who gave the name of Duffy at Haverfordwest on a charge of stealing boots, and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. The jury found Macdonald guilty of the charge that he had been previously convicted. Macdonald was sentenced to three years' penal servitude ; Anthony nine calendar months, with hard labour, and to be once whipped ; Sayers had less against him than the others, and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour, and to be once whipped. The whipping of the men seemed to give satisfaction, as the fellows were evidently hardened and saucy.

50 13 January 1860

BRIDGNORTH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

ASSAULTING A BAILIFF **Thomas Jones**, waterman, was charged by Mr Thomas Evans, county court bailiff, with assaulting him whilst in the execution of his duty. Complainant stated that on Saturday last he went to execute a warrant on defendant for a debt of 10s 10d. He saw him on the bridge, and told him what he wanted. He wished complainant to go home with him, but this he refused to do, expressing himself as being "too old for that". After some difficulty, he got him a little way up to Stoneway steps, when defendant refused to go any further and a scuffle ensued.

After some time complainant sent for Mr Cole, but before he arrived defendant consented to go with him. Defendant expressed himself very sorry for his behaviour, and hoped the magistrates would deal as lenient as possible with him. The Mayor said it was a serious offence to assault a county court officer, and from what he had heard of complainant he was sure he deserved better treatment. Had defendant struck the complainant they should have fined him very heavily but, as it was, they were determined to protect him in the execution of his duty, and should fine defendant 12s, including costs, in default fourteen days' hard labour. The Mayor, after complimenting Evans on the manner in which he had behaved in his new office, said that the recorder had remarked that in a short time he would be one of the best county court officers in the county.

51 1 February 1860

BRIDGNORTH

A WATERMAN DROWNED On Thursday evening an inquest was held at the Red Lion Inn, before the coroner, W D Batte Esq, to inquire into the circumstances relative to the death of a waterman named **Edward Edwards**, aged about 65. From the evidence, it appeared that the deceased had been drinking at a public house called the Coopers' Arms, where he stayed until about twelve o'clock at night on the 24th ult. He was rather the worse for liquor, and was accompanied home by some friends ; when he arrived home, he wished them good night and went into the house ; as he lived by himself, it could not be ascertained how long he stayed there, but a little before one o'clock the attention of some bargemen was attracted by cries for help ; they immediately got up, and found the deceased holding on by a sunken barge ; a boat was procured, and he was taken out of the water, and every means were resorted to to restore animation, but unfortunately they were of no avail. The opinion of the surgeon in attendance was that death was caused from exhaustion and cold, caused by the deceased being some time in the water, and a verdict to that effect was returned. The presumption is that the deceased, after staying in the house some little time, walked out, and the river being only three or four yards from his door, and owing to the darkness of the night, fell from the quay, there being nothing to prevent any person from doing so. It is a very dangerous place, especially to any person unacquainted with the locality, and some six years ago another bargeman was killed in a similar manner a short distance from the spot.

52 9 March 1860

NEWTOWN **John Swain**, a boatman, was brought up on Friday before William Lutener Esq, charged with having stolen four brass candlesticks and a copper saucepan from the King's Head Inn. It appeared that the defendant on Wednesday night went into the King's Head about twenty minutes past eleven, and had some ale ; and on the following morning Mrs Lewis missed the candlesticks. She immediately suspected Swain, gave information to the police, who went to his boat and found the missing articles. He was committed to the quarter sessions for trial.

53 16 March 1860

MONTGOMERYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING BRASS CANDLESTICKS **Edward Swain**, 23, boatman, was charged with stealing, on the 29th February, four brass candlesticks, the property of Edward Lewis of Newtown. He was also charged with having been previously convicted. Mr Woosnam prosecuted. Mrs Mary Ann Lewis, wife of Mr Edward Lewis of the King's Arms Inn, Newtown, deposed to the candlesticks being safe on the night named, and to seeing the prisoner come into the house about eleven o'clock. He remained about an hour, and had some refreshments. She missed the candlesticks next day, and gave information to the police. A saucepan was also missed. Abraham Breeze, police officer, proved apprehending the prisoner at the Waggon and Horses, Canal Basin. In the prisoner's boat he found three candlesticks and the saucepan, which were produced and identified. Upon being charged with the theft, the prisoner said he had bought them from a factory man, and afterwards from a potter. The fourth candlestick was found in the canal near the prisoner's boat. The prisoner was not defended, and he had nothing to say, and was found guilty. He also pleaded guilty to the

previous conviction. He was sentenced to six months' hard labour.

54 21 April 1860

WELLINGTON COUNTY COURT, YESTERDAY

S SMITH v HUGHES The plaintiff, a brewer of Madeley, claimed £38 7s 6d balance of account for ale and porter from the defendant, a boatman, and who formerly kept a beer shop at Oakengates. Defendant's wife appeared for her husband, stating that she never had any account, and pleaded her husband's inability to pay. Judgement for plaintiff, with advocate's fee and the usual costs. Plaintiff to see defendant and to make arrangements as to the amount of instalments he was to pay.

55 25 May 1860

OSWESTRY

STEALING FROM A BOAT William Moreton, alias Bill Gloucester, a labourer at the Moreton Hall Colliery near this town, was brought up on Monday last, before R H Kinchant Esq, charged by Police-constable Thomas Jones with stealing a counterpane, a pair of sheets, saucepan and frying pan, the property of **James Jones**, a boatman in the same employ. Prosecutor left the things in his boat on the Saturday night, and by five o'clock on Sunday morning they had been taken away. The complainant informed the police officer of his loss, and immediately repaired to the prisoner's house and found him at home, and from a conversation that took place they were induced to go to another house that prisoner had taken at the Wern, and there found the stolen property. Committed to take his trial at the next quarter sessions for the county, the prisoner's endeavours to "compromise" the felony by paying for the stolen property not having been accepted.

56 3 August 1860

SHROPSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

STEALING BACON AT NEWPORT **Edward Jenks** (30), boatman, was charged with stealing, on the 21st July 1860 at Little Ness, a quantity of bacon and a ham, value 30s, the property of John Hope.

Mr Chance prosecuted, and Mr Staveley Hill defended.

Mr Chance stated the case to the jury, and called,

John Hope, who said : I am a farmer living at Little Ness. There is a small granary on my premises, which I enter through a pigeon hole by means of a ladder. I did not keep it locked. I keep my bacon there. In July last, I had a ham, a flich, and a portion of a flich of bacon in the granary. I went into the granary and cut a piece off the ham. It was about the 18th of July. I went up again on the Monday following, and the ham and bacon were missing. I gave information to Police-constable Bowen, and described the bacon to him. Bowen brought me the bacon produced. I have no doubt the bacon produced is that which I had in my granary. The witness was cross-examined, but nothing further was elicited, excepting that witness did not know the weight of the bacon.

William Bowen said : On Friday the 24th July, I received information from Mr Hope respecting some bacon that had been stolen. I went to prisoner's house and asked him if he had any bacon. He said he had. I asked him to let me look at it, and he pulled it down from a shelf. I examined it, and told him I should take it, as it answered the description of some bacon that had been stolen from John Hope's. I took the bacon to Hope, and he identified it. I returned to prisoner's house and asked him if he had any more bacon. He said he had not. I told him I should search the house. I did so, and found two other pieces of bacon. I charged him with stealing it, and he said his wife had bought it. I asked his wife, and she said she bought the bacon about three weeks ago from a large bacon shop near to the station ; that she gave 5s for it ; and they had been "eating at it ever since". The prisoner's son told me his father brought two large pieces of bacon home a few nights ago. He said, I can't say whether it was Friday or Saturday". This was on Tuesday the 24th. Cross-examined: The boy is a "particularly sharp boy". [The boy was here called into court, and it was announced by his mother that he was only 5 years old]. I did not make threats to him till after he had made this statement. The reason I threatened him was because he showed me where his father

had sometimes put some bacon and potatoes. The threat to the boy was, that if he did not tell me where his father put the bacon, I should put the handcuffs on his father. This took place in the house ; the prisoner was in the yard about five yards off.

Emma Roderick, the prosecutor's daughter, stated that she always salted her father's bacon ; but there were none of her marks on the bacon produced by which she could recognise it.

His Lordship having inquired more than once of the learned counsel for the prosecution whether he desired to carry the case further, and receiving an answer each time to that effect, again put the question, when the learned counsel consented to leave the case in the hands of his Lordship who, in addressing the jury, could not help thinking that the evidence in the case was very weak, and that a clear case was not made out to them.

The jury at once returned a verdict of not guilty.

57 24 August 1860

BRIDGNORTH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

ASSAULT A charge of assault was preferred by Ann Preece, an elderly woman, against a waterman named **Edward Broadfield**, under the following circumstances :- On the 6th inst, defendant was in the Cartway drunk and creating a disturbance, and challenging a young fellow to fight. A daughter-in-law of complainant's went to him and asked him to be quiet, upon which he immediately struck her. Complainant then spoke to him, and without any provocation he struck her in the mouth, knocking out one of her teeth and loosening another. Defendant, it was stated, had since absconded and enlisted in the Marines. The Bench inflicted a penalty of 5s and 8s 6d costs, or in default 21 days' imprisonment.

58 4 January 1861

BRIDGNORTH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

ANTICIPATING CHRISTMAS **Francis Yates**, a waterman from Coalport, was charged with being drunk and incapable on Sunday morning, the 23rd ult. The defendant, who appeared even then rather hazy and oblivious, with a very indented flattened nasal organ, declined saying anything when Chief Constable Cole stated the facts of the case. Hearing a great noise in Underhill Street about one o'clock in the morning, he went there and found defendant gloriously drunk, extended at full length in the gutter before the Star public house, totally incapable of getting up, and shouting at the top of his voice for help and assistance. On Cole once more getting him on his legs, he found he had an apple in one hand and sevenpence halfpenny in the other, and he (the officer) had from his utter helplessness the greatest difficulty in bringing him to the lock up. Cole also stated that he held a warrant against defendant for non payment of a fine inflicted upon him for a similar offence in September last, and in default of paying was sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment ; but in consequence of making himself *non est inventus* he had not been able to drop upon him till the present occasion. The Mayor sentenced defendant, who pleaded for leniency, to a fine of 9s 6d including costs ; or, in default, to be committed to the House of Correction for seven days, in addition to the former sentence against him of 14 days. Mr Yates was then removed in custody, with feelings totally antagonistic to thoughts of a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

59 22 March 1861

SHROPSHIRE SPRING ASSIZES

STEALING IRON AT SHREWSBURY **Enoch Broadfield** (46), waterman, and Joseph Evans (30), labourer, were indicted for stealing 188 lbs of scrap iron, the property of the Madeley Wood Iron Company.

Mr Matthews for the prosecution ; Mr Best for the prisoners.

The men had been employed in navigating a barge on the Severn, and had taken the iron from the Company's wharf, near Coalport, and sold it in Shrewsbury.

They were found guilty of receiving the iron knowing it to be stolen, and were sentenced to four months' imprisonment.

60 26 April 1861

ELLESMERE PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY **Richard Hayward**, a boatman of Tetchill, and **Elizabeth Hayward**, his wife, were charged with stealing a quantity of mangold wurzel, the property of Mr William Sheraton of the Broome Farm. The prisoners were apprehended by Police Officer Timmis, who met them between two and three o'clock in the morning of Monday week with the stolen property in their possession. In consequence of a remand the hearing of the case did not come on until Monday, when the male prisoner was convicted and sentenced to seven weeks' imprisonment with hard labour. His wife was discharged.

61 2 August 1861

BRIDGNORTH ADJOURNED SPECIAL SESSIONS

BREAKING OUT OF THE BOROUGH GAOL **Thomas Jones**, waterman, was brought up on remand charged with the above offence on the 8th of July, where he was imprisoned on a charge of felony. Chief Constable Cole stated that he was keeper of the gaol, and at half past two, on going to inspect the cells, he found the prisoner had escaped therefrom. He had removed a pair of heavy wooden bedsteads to a corner of the gaol yard and had reared them upright against the wall ; on the top of these he had placed a wooden bench, the top of which was surmounted by a bucket, by which means he raised himself to the summit of the gaol walls, and there being some loose bricks at the top, he displaced them and succeeded in dropping himself into a garden below, and from thence made his escape and got clear off. He was not recaptured till Sunday the 28th. Helen Cole, wife of the last witness and living at the lock up, remembered prisoner being brought there by Police-constable Instone, and being locked up by him on the 9th of July about half past twelve in the day. About two o'clock she heard a great noise, and on going to ascertain the cause, saw Jones at the top of the wall, when she ran round to an adjoining garden, where she saw him jump down from the wall and run off. She made an alarm for someone to stop him, but no person being there he got clear off and ran in the direction of the Broseley Road. Prisoner, on being arraigned, at once pleaded guilty to the charge. He had nothing to say further than that he hoped they would deal leniently with him ; he was sorry for what he had done. The Bench told Jones the offence was one of that serious nature that had made him liable to four years' penal servitude – breaking out of gaol when under a charge of felony. He was now under sentence of twenty one days' imprisonment in Shrewsbury Gaol, and at the expiration of that time he must find two sureties in £10 each, and himself in £20, to surrender himself for trial at the next assizes when called upon to answer the charge. He was then handcuffed and removed to his old quarters. In consequence of this escape, the gaol walls all round are now risen six feet in strong brickwork from their highest elevation.

62 8 November 1861

ELLESMERE PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

DEFRAUDING THE CANAL PROPRIETORS **Richard Hayward**, boatman, was charged with having conveyed goods by his boat a further distance along the canal than his declaration specified. Mr Randles, solicitor, appeared for the defence, and pleaded that the defendant had acted under the instructions of his employer, Mr S Gittins. The Act of Parliament in reference to the canal rendered it necessary for the magistrates to impose a fine of £8 and £1 1s costs.

63 30 May 1862

IRONBRIDGE PETTY SESSIONS

GOOD NEIGHBOURS LLOYD v **EVANS** Mr Hazelhurst appeared for Lloyd. In this case, a door that had been placed as an entrance into a garden to which both parties had access was knocked down by Mr Lloyd, and Evans, irritated by the noise occasioned thereby, ran out of his dwelling and used some very strong threats towards Mrs Lloyd. She said he put her in great fear and dread, and swore that she was in danger of him doing her some bodily harm. In answer to a question from the bench as to whether she supposed that, were Evans to meet her away from home, she would feel the dread of which she had spoken, she rather fenced the question. Evans, who is a

waterman, spun a yard in his defence as long as the towing line of a barge, that exercised not a little the patience of the bench. He was ordered to pay 6s 8d expenses, and to keep a bridle on his tongue in future.

64 8 August 1862

LLANDYSILIO PETTY SESSIONS SATURDAY

DAMAGING A CANAL WHARF Robert Baker charged **John Evans**, a boatman, with throwing stones into the canal, contrary to the company's bye laws. Hugh Rowlands deposed : On the 5th of June, I saw him throwing stones into the canal. I saw him doing so three or four times at the time in question. They were road stones from Pool Rock. His boat stood out about two yards from the wharf. The proper way to unload stones on a wharf is with planks. This man had no planks. I saw him throwing the stones into the canal. **Thomas Tomkies** deposed : I am one of the bankwalkers on the canal. On the 5th of June, I saw David Evans, son of the defendant, throwing stones into the canal. He could have unloaded without them in if they had used planks, which is the proper method. Mr Baker said he did not wish to press the charge, but he was duty bound to bring the case forward, in order to stop the offence being repeated. Fined 1s and 15s costs.

65 8 August 1862

BRIDGNORTH COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY

STEALING FAGGOTS A charge was brought forward by Police-constable Alder against **Benjamin Jones**, a waterman in the employ of **Mr Henry Lloyd**, bargeowner of Jackfield, that he did, on the 14th day of June last, steal and carry away on board a barge coming up the river Severn, six bundles of faggots, value 6d, from off a stack in the Long Cover Wood at Dudmaston, the property of John Charles Lloyd Esq. For the defence, Jones produced evidence that he had paid for the faggots before he took them to James Massie of Hampton's Load ferry boat, and that person, although he had not given the money over to Joseph Howells, the woodranger of the Dudmaston estate, satisfied the Bench that he was authorised to dispose of such faggots on behalf of the said woodranger. The case was then dismissed, and the attendant expenses were saddled upon the county.

66 12 September 1862

LLANDYSILIO PETTY SESSIONS

LIFTING DONKEYS OUT OF THE POUND James Rogers, John Rogers, Edward Williams, **Henry Owens** and Joseph Tudor were summoned by Police-constable Breeze at the instance of William Lewis, surveyor of highways in the township of Rhysnant, for the above offence of "Pound breach". They pleaded not guilty. William Lewis deposed : I am a farmer's son, living with my parents at Brynmawr. I found the donkeys on the highway on the 18th of August. About half past eleven on the following night, I saw the four men present and James Rogers, who is not present, heave them out of the pound. I swear that a party of them went in the pound and lifted them out to the other party who remained outside to receive them. The Bench : How do you know that these are the men? Mr Lewis : I cannot say which of the men went into the pound, yet I am sure these are the men. I never lost sight of them. I cannot swear to Tudor. There were five when I saw them consulting, but I can only swear to four. I can positively swear that three of these men were there. Police-constable Breeze deposed : When I served the summonses, Tudor admitted that he was guilty. Williams, who seemed rather the worse for liquor, suddenly broke out in the following language, "I am willing to pay anything that is put upon me", whilst his colleagues in trouble strongly protested their innocence. Fined £1 5s each. Allowed one month to make the payment.

DAMAGING A BAKEHOUSE **Henry Owen**, boatman, was charged by Hugh Rowlands with doing damage to a bakehouse to the value of 15s. Hugh Rowlands deposed : I heard a great row about our house that night. I looked out and saw his mother. I thought they were taking the asses into Morgan's field. I sat in the window naked about two hours looking out. When the boy came

back, he began pulling the slates and spars off our bakehouse. Jane Harries deposed : I am servant to Robert Rogers. I had been down the road. Mr Rogers told me to go and get supper. I saw Henry served with the summons. I remember I noticed one morning that the roof was drawn off the complainant's oven. It was a fortnight last Tuesday night, and a woman baked in it the next day. I went down to the defendant's boat afterwards. I wanted to see his mother and he, turning to the defendant, was in bed. It was not half past ten then. I saw the roof off the oven, and I saw Henry in bed, and I came here to see what would become of my master. I don't think Henry got up after I saw him. I was only there two or three minutes. Rowlands said that is the man that threw it down. Police-constable Breeze said : I found the oven just as he said. I should say it was quite possible to put it right again in a day. After consultation, the Bench ordered Owen to pay damages, including costs, 14s, or in default 14 days' imprisonment. The mother of Owen promised payment in a month. The ungrateful son declaring he would never repay her.

67 20 February 1863

SANDBACH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

OBSTRUCTING THE NAVIGATION **John Kennedy**, a boatman, was charged at the instance of Richard Glass with obstructing the navigation of the Trent and Mersey Canal on the 31st of January last, by running down his boat near to the locks. Fined £1, including costs. The defendant said he would keep his boat in the place he had brought it so long as he chose.

A TROUBLESOME BOATMAN **James Machin**, a boatman, was fined £1, including costs, for having been found knocking at the door of the Laughton Hotel, Mr Massey's, on Sunday night.

68 1 May 1863

OSWESTRY, PETTY SESSIONS FOR THE HUNDRED

ILLEGAL FISHING WITH A NIGHT LINE **John Griffiths**, boatman, was charged with fishing for pike in Moreton Pool in the parish of Oswestry on lands belonging to the Right Hon the Earl of Bradford, occupied by Mr Bridgeman. The defendant pleaded in extenuation that there were no notices up, but Mr Croxton informed him that there were notices up ; when he shifted his tactics, and said he could not read. Fine and costs 9s, or in default one month's imprisonment in the House of Correction.

69 3 July 1863

MONTGOMERYSHIRE MIDSUMMER QUARTER SESSIONS

LARCENY AT BERRIEW **Thomas Peel**, 17, boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing, at Berriew on the 16th April 1863, one cast iron wheel, the property of Richard Williams. Sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

70 10 July 1863

BERRIEW PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY

MALICIOUSLY CUTTING A BOAT LINE William Bromley, a native of Tipton, Staffordshire, and Thomas Haynes, who did not appear, were summoned by **Thomas Jones**, a boatman, for maliciously cutting a boat line belonging to his boat. The complainant briefly stated his case, and the boy, who came into court crying like a baby, admitted the offence. Mr Jones, after commenting on the wanton and flagrant character of the offence, sentenced the defendant to pay a fine of 5s and the price of the line, with costs ; in default to be imprisoned for fourteen days with hard labour. Defendant, not having the money to pay, was committed.

71 10 July 1863

WELSHPOOL BOROUGH SESSIONS, TUESDAY

EVADING TOLL **John Evans** of the Wern, boatman, was charged by Evan Evans, toll gate keeper, Buttington, with taking his horse along the towing path of the canal to evade the toll on the

22nd of June. As the defendant did not appear, the case was adjourned.

72 24 July 1863

BRIDGNORTH

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING On Friday last, as a boy named Instone was bathing in the Severn near the Quay, the current overpowered him and carried him down the river. He was just sinking as he was borne through one of the arches of the bridge, when a man named **Francis Lowe**, a waterman, caught sight of him, bravely plunged into the stream and succeeded, only just in time, in rescuing the boy from a watery grave.

73 7 August 1863

WELSHPOOL PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

A BIT OF A MISTAKE **George Morris**, a boatman from Rednal, was charged by Police-sergeant Strefford with being drunk on the 18th July. Strefford said he was very drunk and troublesome, and struck two or three people who came near him. He was said to be a tidy man in a general way, and his master gave him a good character. When asked what he had to say to the charge, he said he could not tell how it was, but he supposed it was a bit of a mistake this time. Fine and costs 6s, or in default seven days' imprisonment in the House of Correction.

EVADING TOLL **John Evans** the younger, boatman of the Wern, was charged with unlawfully and illegally evading the payment of toll on a saddle horse on the 24th June at the Buttington toll gate. Defendant did not appear, and proof of service of summons was given. Edward Evans said : I keep Buttington gate as collector of tolls. On the 24th of June, defendant came up the road on horseback, and turned on the towing-path of the canal. I went after him with my pony, and kept him in sight till he came to town, up to the Severn Road. I charged him with evading the toll, and he refused to give me his name. In reply to Mr Howell, complainant said defendant came from the direction of Ardleen towards town, to the Severn Road. He had a saddle on the horse. Fined 21s, or in default seven days' imprisonment.

74 23 October 1863

HOUSEBREAKING **John Williams**, boatman, was convicted of breaking into the dwelling house of James Hughes, on the 10th day of September 1862, at Cheswardine, and stealing a pair of boots, value 12s, the property of the said James Hughes ; also on the 11th day of October 1862 at the said parish, did break into the dwelling house of Henry Lea, and steal six knives and forks, a pair of boots, and 6s, the property of the said Henry Lea. He was sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

75 24 April 1864

LOCAL AND DISTRICT BANKRUPTS **Joseph Shaw**, Castle Northwich, Cheshire, waterman.

76 3 June 1864

ELLESMERE MAGISTRATES' COURT

STEALING A DONKEY On Saturday, before Captain Cust, **Richard Hammonds** of St Martin's Moor, a boatman, was charged by Peter Bailey of Whixall, a besom maker, with stealing a donkey of the value of 15s. It appeared from the prosecutor's statement that there had previously been an exchange of donkeys between himself and the prisoner, but the donkey in question had never been exchanged with the consent of prosecutor. Having given a long and rambling story, the prosecutor determined to forego his case, which the magistrates consented to on the ground that the expenses should be paid by the prisoner, who had been apprehended on a warrant by Sergeant Thomas. The costs amounted to 8s 6d.

77 8 July 1864

BERRIEW PETTY SESSIONS

ASSAULT **Thomas Davies**, a boatman, was charged with assaulting **David Roberts**, another boatman, at the house of Mr Andrews, publican of the Revel. The defendant admitted that he struck the complainant because the latter had charged him with stealing his meat. Owing to being charged with felony, he lost his temper. Police-constable Roberts intimated it was not the first time that he had been charged with such offences. The complainant denied that he had charged the defendant with stealing. Mr J R Jones warned the defendant to be more guarded in future. Fined 10s, including costs, a week being allowed to pay. The defendant asked the magistrates to grant him a summons against complainant for scandal or libel. Mr Jones told the defendant that he must go to the superior courts if he wished to bring a civil action. In the course of the evidence in this case, Police-constable Roberts informed the Bench that many quarrels took place at Andrews's public house, and that fights were of frequent occurrence there on club nights. Mr Jones remarked that it was a matter of regret that a respectable person like Andrews should not be more careful of the mode in which he conducted his house. He feared that the police would be compelled to summon him unless he was more circumspect.

BREAKING A POUND **John Jeffreys**, a boatman, who had a wooden leg, was charged on the information of Mr Lay, surveyor, with having on the 16th of June broken open a pound, and released two donkeys that had been legally impounded, being found trespassing on the high road. The defendant admitted the offence, alleging in extenuation that the donkeys were nearly "clemming". He took pity upon them, and released them. He was now sorry for what he had done. The bench remarked that it was an unfortunate thing for defendant that they could not dispose of him as by fining him. The law made it incumbent upon them to commit him to prison. It was stated that defendant was a very respectable boatman, which was certainly to his credit, as that class of persons were generally quite the contrary. If the complainant pressed the case, the bench must do their duty and commit him. Mr Lay said he felt it to be his duty, as a public officer, to press the case, as the pound had been broken open on several recent occasions. He had ordered his men to find out the parties, and they had in this case done so. He must therefore support his men. The prisoner was committed for seven days, without hard labour.

78 7 October 1864

WELSHPOOL

THE CHILD MURDER CASE The adjourned inquiry into the above case was heard on Tuesday last before J H Williams Esq, mayor, E T D Harrison, ex mayor, and Alderman Bowen. Mr Meredith, town clerk, prosecuted, and Mr E M Jones appeared on behalf of the prisoner, Elizabeth Pryce, who stood charged with the murder of her infant child, Ann Pryce, by pushing it into the canal on Friday the 23rd of September. The depositions of Elizabeth Pryce, mother of the prisoner, and wife of John Pryce, whitesmith, Welshpool were taken, who proved that her daughter was delivered of a child on the 16th of May, and saw it last alive on Friday the 23rd of September. She heard her daughter go out that evening, and saw the body of the child at the inquest next morning. She never heard her threaten to do away with herself, but did not think she was quite right. At three o'clock on Thursday morning she shook the child, when witness remonstrated with her and said she would send for the police if she persisted in it. She then threatened to drown herself, and looked very wild about the eyes. She saw her daughter brought home senseless in a cart. The body of the child found was her daughter's. She was writing a letter on Friday, and gave it to a boy to post. Usually her daughter was very kind to the child. The depositions of Edward Hughes, who took the child to the gas works were also read. Sergeant Strefford said he produced two letters signed "Lizzie", the one dated Welshpool, September 23rd, the day the child was drowned, and another dated the 24th, addressed to "Mr W Gill, with Mr Armstrong, Hope Street, Crewe, Cheshire" upon the envelope, which he also produced. The letters were sent to him by Inspector Wood of Crewe. Mary Griffiths deposed to seeing the child in the water at the canal near the Gas Works. **David**

Lewis, boatman, Newtown, said a man called to him when he was on the towing-path of the canal on the 23rd ult, and told him a woman was in the water. The man and witness got her out with a boat hook. The child's hat produced was found about 20 yards from the spot, wrapped up in a shawl. He also found the body of the child. When the prisoner recovered a little, she said, "Oh, my child, my child". William Gill said he lived at Crewe, and was a "shunter" in the employ of the London and North Western Railway Company. He knew the prisoner, Elizabeth Pryce, when he lived at Welshpool, before he went to Crewe. He received several letters from her while at Crewe. The two letters produced by Sergeant Strefford he received. The envelope produced he also received. They are in the handwriting of Elizabeth Pryce, the prisoner. The address on the envelope is correct as to where he lived. He knew the writing to be that of Lizzie Pryce. The letters were handed to the magistrates to read, and Mr E M Jones wished to know whether they were to be read up in court. The Town Clerk said it was not absolutely necessary, except to the jury at her trial. Mr Harrison said if Mr Jones wished they should be read. Mr Jones thought it would perhaps be better. The Town Clerk then read the following letters :-

Welshpool, September 23rd 1864

My dear William – I received your kind letter, and was glad to hear from you. That I think, dear William, I now answer it far more depressed in spirits than when I last wrote to you. I got turned out on Thursday without a friend, food or money. Mother carried my box downstairs and put it out of doors. As you may think, in the position I was, that I did not know what to do, so I made up my mind to go to the Archdeacon, and tell him all. Well I went, and I told him all from first to last, and he is going to get me a situation ; but I cannot expect one to turn out in a minute, so I shall have to wait a time. I did not like to ask him for any help, so that I made up my mind to go back home, and to tell them when I had a place I would go to it. I did so, but they did all that they could to prevent me ; but I stopped last night, and since Wednesday tea time up to two o'clock today I had not broken my fast ; but Mr Bridgewater made me have dinner off him ; and as long as I am at home I am to eat of his bread. You can judge what is here for me when mother took all bread &c up into her own bedroom, so that I may have none of it ; and only this morning they sat eating their breakfast with eggs, when a beggar had come to the door. He could have a piece of bread and butter given to him whilst I sat half starved for want of food ; and last night Ned went down to Shrewsbury to fetch Jim to settle matters about me, so that he will come up tonight, and I will wait to see the result. Do not be vexed for me ; I will write to you on Monday or Tuesday to let you know how I get on and where I shall be, for I shall be gone before then somewhere. Do not write till you hear from me again. Believe me to be your most miserable Lizzie, with undying love. Goodbye.

The following was the second letter referred to :-

Welshpool, September 24th 1864

My Dear William – Ere this I thought I should have been a corpse ; perhaps it is yet for the best that I was saved from an untimely end. Since Wednesday I have had my little one at home. I suppose anxiety of mind, and a broken heart, urged me to do what I did. Now that I am a little reconciled I know my state. Dear William, I do not know my own failings, nor do I remember what passed after dinner time on Friday. You know all I told you had happened at home ; but what took me, and how I went, I do not know ; but I was drawn from a watery grave with just a breath remaining, but the dear infant is no more. Would that I had gone with it! I should have been released from all, but my grief and trouble is not all past yet. Great care and skill have brought me back to what I am, and I am now at home ; but I suppose, dear William, I am to undergo an examination ; but do not be alarmed for me, for I am a most miserable being. I hope I shall pray for forgiveness, for I was near entering hell. Pray for me, dear, that God will forgive me ; and I hope you will forgive me too. I know not how I am writing to you, nor how I muster so much strength to do so, but let me be assured that you will forgive me by an early reply to my letter, if you deem me worthy of one. I feel exhausted, and will conclude with kindest love, yours most unhappily, Lizzie.

Write by return if you can. Goodbye. You shall have a paper.

John Davis, butcher, deposed to going along the Shrewsbury Road on the 23rd September with Mr Smith of Llanerchydol, and on looking up the canal saw something on the side of the water. When he proceeded up the towing-path he found Pryce, the whitesmith's daughter, in the canal. Witness then shouted to David Lewis, the boatman, to bring the boat hook, and they got her out. He did not see the child taken out, but ran to tell Sergeant Strefford. He identified the cap produced as the one he saw on the bank. Elizabeth Davies, wife of J Davies, sawyer, was at Mrs Pryce's house from between seven and eight o'clock that evening till six o'clock on Saturday morning, attending the prisoner. She said some few words during the night. She said to Miss Pugh – Mr E M Jones objected to witness stating what the poor girl had said in the state of suffering and anguish in which she was in, just rescued from death. It was cruel in the extreme. The magistrates agreed with Mr Jones, and the witness stated nothing of what she heard. Thomas Bridgewater, smith, said he resided at Welshpool on the 23rd of September, and lodged at Pryce's, the whitesmith's. He left there that night as regards sleeping. On the 22nd of September he had a conversation with Elizabeth Pryce between six and nine o'clock at night. On Thursday he asked how she had been getting on during the day. She said she had had no meat all day, and that her mother had either put it up or locked it up. She was either crying at the time or had been. Witness offered her some of his meat to eat. She did not eat any then in his presence, but he missed some of it afterwards. He saw her again at dinner time on Friday morning. She seemed in a low state, as if she had been put about. On the Thursday he should have stated that he asked her what had been the matter, and she said her mother had turned her boxes over the door, and then ordered her out. She said she had been at the Archdeacon's, and told him all about her transactions, as she did not know what to do. She said nothing about the child. He saw a woman bring some food to the door for the child. Prisoner answered the door herself, and fed the child. He saw her again at dinner time on Friday, and asked her how she was getting on, when she began to cry, but did not say anything. He told her not to put herself about as things would get better by and by, and asked her to have some meat. She refused at first, but after a little persuasion, took some. He left her eating, but he could not say whether it was before or after Mr and Mrs Pryce had their dinner. On the Thursday he was in a room above the one in which the prisoner, her mother and brother were in. He heard the mother abusing prisoner in bad language. Her brother, Edward Pryce, was cursing her. Her mother said she should not stop there, and she must go about her business. Her brother said he would fetch his brother from Shrewsbury, and see whether she should be turned out or not. She said she would go as soon as she could get a place. Her brother then said if he could not turn her out he would see for someone who could, and then he left the house. By the Mayor : Witness heard nothing about the child. Mrs Pryce, the mother, identified the hat of the child. The Town Clerk then read the charge preferred against her of murdering her child, when the Mayor cautioned her in the usual way, and asked her if she had anything to say, when she replied, "I have nothing to say now". The Mayor then said it was their painful duty to commit her to Montgomery gaol, to take her trial at the next assizes on the charge of "Wilful Murder". The poor girl excited the greatest commiseration in a crowded court, and particularly during the reading of the letters detailing her wrongs, and during the evidence of the kind hearted man Bridgewater.

THE ADJOURNED INQUEST The adjourned inquest was held on Tuesday at four o'clock in the afternoon at the Pheasant Inn, before R D Harrison Esq, to enquire into the cause of the death of Ann Pryce, daughter of Elizabeth Pryce. David Lewis, boatman, Sergeant Strefford and William Gill, whose evidence is given in the hearing before the magistrates, were examined. H M Lemon MD said he was summoned on the 23rd of last month, about six o'clock, to attend a child at the Gas Works that had been taken out of the canal. The body of the child he saw there was about four months old, and had recently been taken out of the water. It had been dead some time. He had made a *post mortem* examination ; but he discovered no external marks of violence on the body. The child had been well nourished, and there was no organic disease to account for death. The jury, after some consideration, returned a verdict of "Wilful Murder" against Elizabeth Pryce.

79 25 November 1864

WELSHPOOL POLICE COURT, MONDAY Before R D Pryce Esq. **Robert Alderidge**, a boatman, was brought up in custody of Police-constable A Breeze, charged with stealing a top coat. Roland Humphrys of Llanmynech, pig dealer, deposed that on the evening of the 18th inst he went into the Dolphin Inn, Llanmynech. He carried his coat on his arm, and placed it by his side on the screen. He went out and forgot it, and the next morning, on inquiring for it, was told by Ellen Thomas that she saw a boatman take one off the screen the previous night, saying it was his. Gave information then to Police-constable Breeze. Ellen Thomas, servant to Mr Robert Thomas of the Dolphin Inn, Llanmynech, corroborated the latter part of the above statement. Police-constable A Breeze said on the 19th inst he received information from prosecutor that he had lost a top coat, and from information received he went in pursuit of the prisoner, apprehended him near Ellesmere, and found the coat he produced, and which prisoner identified, in his boat. Prisoner was committed to take his trial at the next quarter sessions.

80 9 December 1864

NEWTOWN

ALLEGED ROBBERY The captain of one of the boats plying between Newtown and Ellesmere reported that his boat had been entered and between £5 and £6 stolen from his cabin on Sunday. He states that the person whom he suspects of having stolen the money is a fellow boatman, and that he arrived in Newtown on the same train with him, but that the man escaped before he could hand him over to the police. The story told by the captain is regarded with suspicion by the police, who imagine that he was not exactly sober when robbed.

81 16 December 1864

JACKFIELD NEAR BROSELEY

ACCIDENT ON THE RIVER On Saturday last a man named **Thomas Doughty**, captain of a barge belonging to **Henry Lloyd**, met with a serious accident, under the following circumstances :- It appears that the vessel left Coalport on Saturday morning for Stourport ; and that it got on ground a little distance below Bridgnorth. The men got the windlass to work to pull it off ; and whilst a great strain was on the rope the windlass started, and catching the leg of Doughty, knocked off the kneecap and otherwise injured him. He was taken to the Bridgnorth Infirmary.

A WOMAN MISSING A woman named **Jones**, the wife of a waterman, has, for upwards of a week, been missing, and is supposed to have been drowned in the Severn. She was drinking with her husband in a public house in Bridgnorth on Thursday night week, and left the worse for liquor to return home to Coalport, before her husband. It is supposed she fell off the quay and was drowned ; but the body has not yet been found.

82 3 February 1865

BRIDGNORTH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Corfield**, a waterman and coal dealer of Bridgnorth, was charged by Police Officer Joseph Howard with the above offence on Thursday evening the 26th of January. Defendant did not appear, and from the evidence of Howard, it appeared that in his (Howard's) absence, Corfield, who was very drunk, endeavoured to force his way into the house, and behaved in the most indecent manner to his wife, who held the door and resisted his attempt to go in. Chief Constable Cole deposed to other convictions against Corfield for drunkenness and exposure of his person, and the Mayor and Bench fined him £1, including costs.

83 10 February 1865

LLANDYSILIO PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY

CHARGE OF TRESPASSING IN SEARCH OF GAME Edward Griffiths of Trederwen was charged by Thomas Roberts, keeper to Captain Wingfield, with trespassing on certain lands, in the

occupation of John Morgan, in pursuit of game, and shooting a hare, on the 8th of January. Mr E M Jones defended. **David Jones**, boatman, Trederwen, said on the Sunday in question he was going through a field near a by road. He heard the report of a gun, and saw a man in the adjoining field running off with a hare or a rabbit. He should think it was from 70 to 100 yards off the spot on which he was standing. He could not say whether the man had a gun in his hand, but he did see either a hare or a rabbit in one hand. He did not know who the man was, and consequently could not identify the defendant. Cross-examined : Did not tell Thomas Roberts that he knew who the man was. John Morgan said he saw a person there shooting in the field in question, and saw him pick up the hare or rabbit, but could not swear that it was the defendant. The magistrates dismissed the case.

84 24 March 1865

ARSON AT WELLINGTON **John Hodgkiss** alias **Richard Tims** (19), boatman, was charged with setting fire to a stack of hay on the 11th of August 1864 at the parish of Wellington, the property of R Richards. Mr Motteram prosecuted.

Richard Williams deposed that he was a servant in the employment of the late R Richards. On the evening of the 11th August he saw the stack quite safe, and at two o'clock in the morning he saw it burning.

Elizabeth Tudor said she knew the rick of hay, and on the 11th of August she saw the prisoner getting over a gate into the field where the hay was.

Sergeant Christie said he was stationed at Wellington. He received word of the fire about half past eleven o'clock on the night of the 11th of August. He went to the churchyard at half past one o'clock ; found the prisoner there. Witness charged him with setting fire to the stack, and he said "what could he do?" It was very cold, and if he went to a farmer's house they would set the dogs at him. Witness asked prisoner had he any matches, and he said he had, but that he chucked them away when he saw the people going to the fire. He pointed out where he threw the matches, and witness went and found them where he indicated. Prisoner also stated that he had been in gaol for two years in Scotland for a similar offence.

The jury, after a short consultation, returned a verdict of guilty. Sentence ten years' penal servitude.

85 2 June 1865

OSWESTRY COUNTY COURT

HOPLIN v HAMMOND The plaintiff was a little boy, who claimed a balance of wages from defendant of £1 1s 6d for services rendered as a boat boy. Plaintiff's mother said she engaged with the defendant that her boy was to have 1s for the first three days, and 1s 6d a week after. He had only received 7s on account, and she claimed the balance. Defendant, who is a boatman, said he engaged the boy at 1s a week. Judgement for the plaintiff for the amount claimed.

86 29 September 1865

CHARGE OF WILFUL DAMAGE **Lewis Davies**, a boatman, Newtown, was charged with committing wilful damage to the canal locks at Belan on the 13th of August, by **Robert Baker**, inspector of the canal. Defendant did not appear. Police-constable Richard Williams proved the service of the summons. **John Thomas**, lock-keeper, said on the 19th September defendant came up to the lock with his boat when witness had emptied the lock. The defendant ran his boat wilfully against the lock gate, and might have caused £50 damage. As it happened no damage had been done. Chief Constable Baker said that he had seen Mr Baker that morning, and he did not wish to press for a penalty, but wished defendant to be cautioned. The magistrates fined him 1s and 9s costs; in default, one week's imprisonment.

87 5 January 1866

OSWESTRY

PETTY SESSIONS FOR THE HUNDRED

KEEP THE TILLER IN ITS PROPER PLACE **John Griffiths**, boatman, was charged by **John Jones**, lock-keeper at Aston, with assaulting him on the 3rd October. Witness said he was lock-keeper at Aston, and the defendant was there with his boat. He was throwing a lot of water out of the boat on to the towing-path, and he remonstrated with him, as it was injurious to the lock and path. Defendant then used some hard language to him, jumped over the lock to witness, and pushed the tiller of the boat against him, but did not strike him. He pushed his fist in witness's face, but did not touch his face. Mrs Jones, mother-in-law to prosecutor, corroborated the evidence, and said they only wanted protection. The Bench considered the assault proved, although defendant did not strike complainant. Colonel Lovett advised the defendant in future to "keep the tiller in its proper place" and fined him, including costs, £1, in default fourteen days' imprisonment.

88 13 April 1866

WELSHPOOL PETTY SESSIONS

ASSAULT **Thomas Davies**, boatman of Cefn-up-Pole in Berriew, was charged with assaulting his wife **Mary Davies** on the 30th March. He admitted the offence, and was bound over in the sum of £10 to appear when called upon, and to keep the peace for six months.

89 8 June 1866

WELSHPOOL PETTY SESSIONS

THE CATTLE PLAGUE PREVENTION **Mary Winter** and **Edward Holloway** were summoned for having unlawfully removed a calf. Mr Walter Hancock, who appeared for the defendants, said Mrs Winter's son had bought a fat calf of Holloway, and it was merely taken over the Severn and driven to a slaughter house in Welshpool. Holloway was no farmer, but a boatman living on the bank of the river, whose occupation consequently confined him to his house, which was situated in a sequestered place remote from town and village. He therefore respectfully submitted that the offence had been committed in utter ignorance. With respect to Mrs Winter, she knew nothing whatever of the matter. It was a transaction of her son's, and he (Mr H) regretted to add that the young man was now in his grave. He therefore could give no answer to the summons. This was, he conceived, a case which certainly called for the clemency of the bench ; and he believed that he should not make the appeal in vain. Mr J R Jones said that, after consultation, the magistrates were justified in giving effect to Mr Hancock's appeal, and they would only inflict a penalty of 1s under such peculiar circumstances.

90 22 June 1866

WELSHPOOL PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

STRAYING DONKEYS **Richard Middle**, boatman, Wrenfield, was charged by Police-constable Williams with allowing two donkeys to stray on the Severn roads at three o'clock in the morning of the 15th of June. Fined with costs 10s. The donkeys were found in a field of mowing grass.

91 12 October 1866

ELLESMERE

DEATH BY DROWNING On Friday evening an inquest was held at the Canal Tavern before Dr Roe, coroner for the town and liberties, on the body of John Jones, hairdresser of Oswestry, who it appears was found dead in the canal on the previous night. The following were the jury :- Messrs Michael Davison (foreman), William Lee, Francis Povey, W M Tilston, Edward Morris, J T Williams, John Walsh, Thomas Davies, Edward Davies, Francis Towler, Charles Rowlands and Richard Davenport. The following evidence was taken at the inquest :-

Henry Middle, labourer, Oswestry, said : I came here to the races yesterday. I saw the deceased on the course two or three times, and we were afterwards drinking at the Bull and Dog. We came out

about half past eleven o'clock, and started out of the town shortly after that time. There were three other persons with me when we left the town besides deceased. We went in the direction of the canal, and along the footpath of the canal. It was very dark. At the first brick bridge beyond the course I was about ten yards before the deceased, when I heard a splash in the water. We had then gone under the bridge. I shouted, "Barber's fell into the cut", and then ran back with the other men. I was first at the place, and saw a ripple on the water and heard a gurgling noise, but saw no more of the deceased till he was taken out of the water. I could see deceased's hat, and said, "There he is". I caught hold of Thomas Edwards's hand, and he jumped in at the hat, but it went away from him. We then stood, but could not hear anything of deceased. We came back near to the course, and we found some boatmen who were by and told them that a man was drowned, but they would not believe us at first. I and two other men then came to Ellesmere for the police to Sergeant Thomas's house, but he was not at home. I then came up the street and found another policeman who came with us to the place. When we got there, one boatman and the man we left with him were sitting down, and the boatman said, "We have found him". The policeman turned his light on the water, and the boatman had deceased by the side of the water, about seven yards, as near as I can guess, from the place where I heard the bubbling. We then lifted him out. He appeared quite dead, and we carried him back to Ellesmere. I was the worse for beer at the time. Deceased was always drunk. By a juryman : We had no quarrelling or words.

Edward Jones, living at Oswestry, said :- I was with deceased last night drinking at the Bull and Dog after leaving the course. I asked deceased if he knew where Henry Middle and Thomas Edwards were. He said he would take me to them. He then took me to Mr Jukes's, where I found the other men. We had some ale there, for which I paid. We went from there to the Bull and Dog, but they would not draw us anything to drink. It would be about half past eleven. We then went up the canal together, till we got to the first bridge. I and another man named Thomas Edwards were about twenty yards before the others when I heard a splash. I made the remark, "O, there is one of them in". We then ran back, and Thomas Edwards jumped into the canal, but we could see nothing but the man's hat. We helped Edwards out, and came towards Ellesmere. We had come about a quarter of a mile on the road when we saw two boats. I called the men out and told them that there was a man drowned. They asked me if I was making game of them, when I said, "More's the pity, it's too true". The other three men then went on to the town, and the boatman and myself went back to the place. When we got to the bridge I showed the boatman the place where I thought deceased got in, and he felt with a hook which he had, and lifted deceased to the top of the water. I wanted to draw deceased out, but he would not let me till the police officer came. It was twenty minutes after the time we missed him. The police officer then came up, and we brought him back to Ellesmere. I was drunk at the time, and so was deceased. The reason we went along the canal side was that we thought to meet with some outbuildings to lie down in and to escape the police. The jury then returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned while in a state of intoxication". The coroner also remarked that it was the second inquest he had attended in a fortnight, the death in each case being caused through drunkenness.

92 28 December 1866

WHITCHURCH

BOY DROWNED IN THE CANAL On Wednesday week, J A Walmsley Esq, coroner, held an inquest at Grindley Brook near Whitchurch on the body of a boy aged about 12 years. It appears that the deceased had formerly been in the habit of begging about the streets in Birmingham, and had no mother or father alive. Latterly he had been taken care of by a boatman on the canal and on Monday the 17th inst he was in the act of opening the gates at one of the locks at Grindley Brook, when he fell over into the lock and got under the boat, and was dead on being taken out. Verdict : "Accidentally drowned".

93 11 January 1867

MONTGOMERYSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING GEESE & C AT BUTTINGTON **John Watkin**, boatman, was found guilty of stealing, at Buttington on the 17th December 1866, four geese and one silver spoon, the property of Mr Thomas Vaughan, and was sentenced to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for six months ; and William Dyas, innkeeper, for receiving the same, knowing them to have been stolen, was ordered to be imprisoned for two months to hard labour.

94 1 March 1867

WELSHPOOL POLICE COURT On Monday, **Thomas Grice**, boatman of this town, a returned convict, was brought up at the Police Court before Thomas Jones Esq, ex mayor, charged by Police-sergeant Strefford with having broken into the dwelling house of Arthur Egerton at Hurlston Canal Locks, and stolen therefrom a coat. Police-sergeant Strefford applied for a remand to give time to make inquiries from the Cheshire Police, and the prisoner was remanded for three days. The same evening Mr Superintendent Saxton arrived in Welshpool, identified the prisoner, and he was given up to him.

95 5 July 1867

WHITCHURCH PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

DRUNK AND RIOTOUS **George Humphries**, a boatman of St Martin's Moors, Denbighshire, was brought up on Tuesday last, before PW Godsall Esq, and charged by Police-constable Lawley with being drunk and riotous on the previous evening. The officer said that about ten pm the previous evening, he found defendant on Yardington very drunk, and creating a disturbance. He (Police-constable Lawley) therefore took him to the lock up, but had a good deal of trouble in so doing. Defendant hit him in two or three places and struck him several times. Fined 2s 6d and costs 7s 6d.

96 12 July 1867

ACCIDENT On Wednesday night week, a most lamentable accident occurred to a boatman and his son as they were proceeding with their boat in the direction of Norbury Junction. It appears that the boy (about seven years of age) was steering, and when near to the Summerhouse, about half a mile beyond Newport, the lad lost his balance by some means and fell into the canal, at a point where there is about eight feet of water and a considerable quantity of weeds. The father immediately plunged in to rescue the lad, but his efforts were ineffectual, and before assistance could be rendered, both were drowned. It is supposed the man must have got entangled in the weeds, and that the current occasioned by the travelling boats must have drawn him under. An inquest was held on Friday before J Bidlake Esq, deputy coroner, at the Wharf Tavern, when the jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned". One painful incident connected with the accident is that the poor fellow's wife, with four children, were in another boat only two or three miles in advance of him. Messengers were dispatched to break the sad intelligence to her.

97 26 June 1868

WELSHPOOL

FATAL ACCIDENT On Friday last, an accident of a frightful nature happened to a young lad named **George Evans**, aged eight years, the son of **Benjamin Evans**, a boatman in the employ of the Canal Company, who resided at the canal basin, Newtown. The boy had been in the habit of regularly attending the national school at Llanllwchaiarn until last week, when he was allowed to go with his father, who is a cripple, to assist him in the management of his boat. In returning from Llynymynech, the lad was riding in a boat with a man named **George Griffith**, and while the boat was in one of the locks near Pool Quay, the boy accidentally fell into the canal. As he fell, he was seized by the hand by an old man, and while thus suspended he was crushed between the boat and the side of the lock, and was killed. An inquest was held on the body of the deceased at the Lion

Hotel, Welshpool, on Saturday, by E D Harrison Esq, coroner, when a verdict of accidental death was returned.

98 3 July 1868

CHARGE OF MALICIOUSLY WOUNDING AT ASTLEY ABBOTTS George Painter (26), labourer, was charged with maliciously wounding one John Davies on the 2nd day of May 1868 at the parish of Astley Abbots. Mr Parton prosecuted ; Mr Boughey defended. **John Davies**, the prosecutor, a bargeman, was in company with Corfield and another man on the 2nd May on the road from Bridgnorth. He did not know the prisoner until that day. The other men were 300 or 400 yards in advance when prisoner assaulted him. Prisoner called them fresh water sailors and said, "I'll box the compass with either one of you b----s". He kept "haggling", "snagging" and "gaggling" all the way. (Laughter). At length he struck prosecutor with some hard substance he had in his handkerchief, which cut his eye and knocked him down. When he came to himself, he found the prisoner with his hand in his pocket, and he took sixpence and a penny out of it. He gave the prisoner no provocation, and did not strike him, unless it was while they were struggling on the ground. The prisoner stamped twice on prosecutor's neck and said, "I'll kill you, you b----r". He also beat him with his fists while on the ground. He also kicked him across the temple, and made a wound two inches long, which was perceptible at the trial. He (prosecutor) crawled about the road until he was able to get up, when he went back to Bridgnorth and gave information to the police. Mr Boughey cross-examined the prosecutor, and elicited that he had had "betwixt two pints and a half of ale, and that he was betwixt sober and drunk", which provoked a good deal of laughter. **John Henley**, waterman of the river side, Bridgnorth, said he left that town with the prosecutor and Corfield, about ten o'clock on the morning of the day in question, and was going to Coalport. Prisoner said to them, "Well, mates, where are you bound?", and Henley told him they were going to Coalport. They continued along the road together, at a greater or less distance, for some time. The prisoner appeared to be in drink, and called the witness and his companions "fresh water sailors". The last time he saw prisoner and prosecutor he was at least 100 yards in advance of them. He heard no challenging and saw no fighting while he was with them. The prisoner was "staggering" about, and began to talk "rather rough". **William Corfield**, waterman, Bridgnorth, gave corroborative evidence. William Thursfield Esq, surgeon, Bridgnorth, said he was at the Infirmary on the 3rd of May, when the prosecutor was being examined. Mr Rainsford, the house surgeon, had sewn up the wound under the eye, which had cut through the cartilage of the lower lid. Prosecutor's lip was cut through on the lower side. There was also a contused wound on the right temple, and his face was very much bruised. A blunt instrument, like a stone, would cause some of the wounds, and the boot produced by the police officer at the Infirmary would have caused the others. The wound on the temple was such a one as the boot would produce. The cut lip and face could have been produced by either blows or kicks. The prosecutor appeared to be suffering a good deal from loss of blood and the shock to the system. There was no appearance of drink upon the prosecutor. Had erysipelas set in, his life would have been in great danger ; and he was kept in the Infirmary for five days to avoid erysipelas supervening. Superintendent Ivins of Bridgnorth deposed to the prosecutor coming to him at 12 o'clock on Monday. His face was covered with blood, and he sent a policeman with him to the Infirmary, as he appeared much injured. He could not say, from his appearance, whether he had had any drink or not. He apprehended prisoner, and took him before a magistrate. Prisoner told him that they had had a fight, and that prosecutor had got the worst of it. Prisoner appeared sorry for what had taken place. This was the case for the prosecution. Mr Boughey called Charles Hinton, timber faller, who was at Drunkenman's stile on the day of the assault. The prisoner, he said, first said, "Good morning", to which the others replied in similar terms. They got talking about how many ropes were in a ship, and numbers of similar things. Soon after that, prosecutor struck prisoner upon the mouth and made it bleed. They all then went along the road together for some time, but shortly Corbett (sic) and the other man got ahead of them. Witness, the prosecutor and prisoner then walked on for about a quarter of a mile after the other men had gone on, when the prisoner knocked Davies down. As soon as this took place the

witness left them to fight it out by themselves. In cross-examination by Mr Purton, it appeared that the last witness saw of the prosecutor and the prisoner they were both on the ground, the prisoner having knocked prosecutor down ; but how prisoner fell down himself he did not know. Mr Boughey addressed the jury for the prisoner, and Mr Purton followed for the prosecution. The Deputy Chairman went over the evidence very minutely to the jury, who found the prisoner guilty of a common assault. The Deputy Chairman, in passing sentence, said he had nothing to say to the decision the jury had arrived at in bringing a verdict of common assault ; but it was clear it was one accompanied by very aggravated circumstances. Sentenced to nine calendar months' imprisonment to hard labour.

99 10 July 1868

WELSHPOOL

ABUSING THE TOWN CLERK On Monday at the Town Clerk's office, before E T Harrison Esq (Mayor), a boatman named **Joseph Davies**, better known as "Joe of the Chaise", was charged by Sergeant Strefford with being drunk and riotous. Of late the Town Clerk has been much annoyed by donkeys congregating in front of his house ; and on the previous night, about 12 o'clock, he was proceeding to drive a number of them away when defendant, who was very drunk, attempted to stop him, and used very abusive language. Ordered to pay a fine of 5s and costs.

100 7 August 1868

BERRIEW PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY

AN OLD OFFENDER IN TROUBLE AGAIN A boatman named **John Watkins**, who is well known to the police at this and some other adjoining towns and villages, was charged with stealing a ham from the Nag's Head, belonging to the landlady, Mrs Rogers. Miss Rogers stated that her mother kept the Nag's Head at Berriew, and on the 28th ult, the prisoner came to their house about eight o'clock at night, and stayed until after ten o'clock. Prisoner, who was the last person in the house, was not seen to leave, but about eleven o'clock, when they went to lock up, they missed the ham which had been hanging in the tap room where the prisoner was sitting. While the family went to have their supper, prisoner was left alone in the room. The ham produced by Police-constable Sibbald she knew to be her mother's property by the cayenne pepper that was put upon it, and also by the piece of string that was tied round the end of it. Mary Jones, a servant in the employment of Mrs Rogers, corroborated the evidence given by the former witness. Police-constable Sibbald said that on the night of the 28th ult, he received information that a ham had been stolen from the Nag's Head. He went there and found the string which was tied round the ham when cut, and part of it was left behind on the hook. He took possession of the string, and from inquiries he made he ascertained that the prisoner was the last person in the house. Prisoner's boat lay in the canal near to the Nag's Head, and he went and searched it. Inside the cabin, and inside a kind of box, he found the ham, which he produced, covered over with ropes. He waited at the boat until about a quarter to three o'clock on Wednesday morning, when the prisoner came to it with a bag on his back. As soon as prisoner saw him, he threw the bag into the canal and ran away. He followed him, and overtaking him, he charged him with stealing the ham, to which prisoner replied that he knew nothing about it. He searched for the bag which prisoner had thrown into the canal, but he missed finding it. Prisoner was taken to the Nag's Head, where he was fastened up while he (witness) searched for the bag. The fly boat came up about six o'clock, and after it had passed, the bag came to the surface, and was taken out of the canal by a man who was going to his work. The bag contained eight fowls. In answer to the Bench, prisoner said he did not take the ham, and was not near the boat until the next morning. Somebody else must have placed it where it was found, as people were in the habit of going to the boat. Mr Jones considered that a *prima facie* case had been made out, and committed the prisoner to the Quarter Sessions. Mr Jones also said that there was another case against the prisoner for stealing the fowls which belonged to Mrs Williams, who was obliged to go to London. He (Mr Jones) would attend at Montgomery gaol on Friday, and would then enter into the charge.

101 14 August 1868

MONTGOMERY

CHARGE OF STEALING FOWLS At the gaol, before John Robinson Jones Esq, a boatman named **John Watkins** was charged on remand with stealing eight fowls, the property of Mr Thomas Williams of Trustlewellin. Mrs Williams said : On Friday the 31st ult, Police-constable Sibbald of Berriew called upon me to inquire if we had lost any fowls. He produced a bag which contained eight fowls, two of which I immediately recognised as being my husband's property. I knew one of them by its being spotted black and white, and also from having noticed the fowl some days previously, and having directed the coachman to kill it in a few days for the table. The other I knew from having been in the habit of feeding it. The wings now produced by Police-constable Sibbald are those of the two fowls I speak of. I believe the remaining six fowls to be my husband's property, but I cannot speak positively to them. Police-constable Sibbald, having repeated the evidence he had given on a former occasion and which appeared in our last week's issue, said, in addition : The bag which I saw prisoner throw into the canal was found by a witness named Edward Richards, who delivered it to me. It contained eight fowls. Amongst other places I took them to Mr Williams's, and there Mrs Williams recognised two of them as being her husband's property. The wings which I have produced I cut off the two fowls recognised by Mrs Williams in her presence, in order that she might identify them. Edward Richards said : I went to work about six o'clock on the morning of the 29th ult, and in the canal opposite the wharf, I saw something floating. I got it out, and found it was a bag containing eight fowls. In consequence of my having heard that Police-constable Sibbald was in search of the bag, I took it to him and gave it up to him. I live opposite to where prisoner's boat was lying, and during the night I heard a conversation between Police-constable Sibbald and the prisoner. I heard Sibbald ask the prisoner what he had thrown into the canal, and he replied that it was only his old slop. Sibbald then said it was something pretty heavy, as it had soon sank. In answer to the charge, prisoner said he had nothing to say. He was committed to the sessions.

102 26 February 1869

NEWTOWN POLICE INTELLIGENCE **Richard Evans** alias **Cloxon**, boatman, Arleen, was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment, in default of paying a fine of 5s and costs, for being drunk and incapable on Monday in Ladywell Street.

103 12 March 1869

BRIDGNORTH BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Thomas Colley**, a waterman, was charged with a similar offence (drunk and fighting in the public streets) on the night of the 27th February last. He did not appear. Fined 20s and 15s costs, or seven days' imprisonment.

104 9 April 1869

LLANDYSILIO PETTY SESSIONS, SATURDAY

CHARGE OF ROBBING A BOAT **William Roberts**, boatman of Llandysilio, was brought up in custody by Police-constable Breeze, charged with being concerned in a boat robbery at Wolverhampton about 9 months ago. Police-constable Breeze said some months ago **John Jones**, the owner of a canal boat at Arleen, who was in the habit of following his own boat, informed him that the prisoner had stolen a quantity of wearing apparel and a saucepan from his (Jones's) boat, while it was at Wolverhampton. The prisoner said : The boat was robbed at Wolverhampton, but I did not do it. Jones sold the saucepan himself. Police-constable Breeze asked for a remand until he could communicate with the police authorities at Wolverhampton, which was granted.

105 28 May 1869

OSWESTRY

POLICE COURT, SATURDAY **James Guttridge**, a boatman, was brought up before Edward

Wright Esq charged with stealing a tar sheet on the 30th April. Superintendent Gough said on the night in question a tar sheet was stolen from the Shropshire Union Canal Company at Cheswardine ; and the prisoner, who was seen near the spot that day, was arrested on suspicion of stealing it at Llandysilio by PC Breeze. Prisoner was remanded to Market Drayton.

106 28 May 1869

LLANGOLLEN PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY

ALLEGED ROBBERY BY A LODGER A man named John Evanson, employed in felling timber at Cwmallis, was brought up on remand, charged with committing a robbery at the shop of Mary Roberts, postmistress, at Vron Cyssyllite, on the 19th inst. Prosecutrix stated that on Monday week the foreman at Cwmallis asked her if she could do with some lodgers, and she agreed to take two. One of them came the same day, but prisoner, who was the other, did not come until Tuesday. Her sister lived with her, and there were no other persons in the house besides the lodgers. It was arranged that if either she or her sister were not downstairs when the lodgers wanted to go to their work in the morning, they should leave the house by going out at the back door. On Wednesday her sister went downstairs before she did, and she heard her call out, "In the name of goodness, the shop door's open!" She then went down herself, and she found that the money drawer and its contents were missing. She had left from 12s to 15s of copper, and from 15s to 20s worth of stamps in the drawer the night before. The stamps were in a pocket book. Prisoner was in the house when she went down and had lighted the fire. He said he went out to go to work, but came in again because it was wet, and he then noticed that the shop door was open. Cross-examined : One part of the house was let off, but the door communicating with that portion was nailed up. She did not hear prisoner get up that morning. To the best of her knowledge she locked the shop door on the previous night, but she could not say positively whether it was locked or not. Ann Roberts, sister of prosecutrix, said she heard prisoner walk about in the kitchen before she went downstairs, and when she got down he was sitting by the side of the fire. On going into the shop she found the door open and the money drawer gone. She afterwards saw the drawer in a slaughter house close by, but neither the money nor the stamps were in it. Police-constable Humphries deposed to receiving information of the robbery, and going to the house for the purpose of examining the doors and windows, upon which he said he found no marks of violence. He saw prisoner the same day, but as he did not know him, he let him go. He apprehended him on Thursday, and searched him, finding 6d in silver, and 1 ½ d in copper upon him. David Lloyd, a collier, gave evidence that he passed the house about five o'clock on Wednesday morning, and the shop door was closed then. **Hannah Roberts**, wife of a boatman, produced the pocket, and said she found it on Monday evening, "stuffed" in a wall by the side of a footpath leading through Mr Hodgson's grounds, at a distance of 200 or 300 yards from the house of prosecutrix. Mary Edwards, an elderly woman who objected to take an oath, made a declaration to the effect that she occupied the portion of the house let off, and that on Tuesday night she heard both of prosecutor's doors "done as usual". In cross-examination she admitted having no knowledge of the way in which the doors were "done". This concluded the evidence, and Mr Markey submitted that there was no case against his client, who, he said, had borne an irreproachable character for the last twenty years. There seemed to be considerable doubt whether the shop door was ever fastened, and the only evidence against the prisoner was that he lodged at the house and happened to be the first person who went down in the morning, which he himself frankly admitted. The magistrates came to the conclusion that the evidence was not sufficiently conclusive to warrant them in committing prisoner for trial, and they discharged him.

107 18 June 1869

WELSHPOOL

SUICIDE An inquest was held at the Grapes Inn, Welshpool, on the 10th inst, before R D Harrison, coroner, on the body of **Joseph Kinsey**, a boatman. It appeared from the evidence that deceased on the previous Tuesday complained that he was ill, and seemed to be very much depressed in spirits. A Mrs Middleton, the wife of **Richard Middleton**, boatman, the Wern, went with him to Mr Jones,

surgeon, who gave him some medicine, and said that he must not be left alone. Deceased then went to Middleton's boat, but got out shortly and went over a stile. As he did not return directly, Middleton went to look for him, and saw him crouching down with a knife in his hand, with which he had cut his throat. Middleton took the knife from him, when he put his hands in the wound he had made and tore at it with all his might. Mr Jones, surgeon, was sent for, but the unfortunate man was dead before that gentleman arrived. A verdict was returned to the effect that the deceased committed suicide whilst labouring under a temporary insanity.

108 20 August 1869

MARKET DRAYTON POLICE COURT **Joseph Hammond**, a boatman, was charged with stealing coal from the wharf at Cheswardine. The offence was clearly proved by Police-constable Williams and admitted by prisoner, who was charged under the Criminal Justices Act. It was shown that the prisoner was a bad character. Sent to prison for a month.

109 20 August 1869

WHITCHURCH PETTY SESSIONS, FRIDAY

THREATENING LANGUAGE Richard Davies, William Davies and Richard Brown were charged with having on the 3rd inst made use of threatening and abusive language to **Edward Hammonds** of Gobowen. Complainant said : I am a boatman residing at Gobowen, and am captain of the *Star* boat. On the 3rd inst I was with my boat at Grindley Brook between seven and eight o'clock. When I got there, I saw these three men at the bottom lock. I drew the lock up. As I was drawing the paddle one of them said, "You are the man that had my boy". I said I was not, and did not wish to have him. They then said, "You're the b----- that chucked him in the cut". I cannot swear which of them said this. Two of them jumped across the lock and tried to get at me. I ran out of their way. They swore they would drown me. I took to my heels, as I saw I should be killed. I then went to Cliffe's public house and asked Cliffe to come and assist me, but he declined doing so. When I told him what had taken place, he said the men were regular blackguards and had been trying to kick up a row at his place. I stayed there twenty minutes and then went to my boat again. As soon as these men saw me they were at me like dogs, so I took to my heels and went to Whitchurch. I had not known them before. They were neither drunk nor sober. **Thomas Jones**, a youth aged 11 years, said he went with the captain of the *Star* boat. He saw two of these men jumping the lock to his master, who was drawing the paddle at the time. His master, being in a dangerous position, got over a gate close by. They told him (Hammonds) they would kill him and put him in the lock if they could get hold of him. His master ran away. They then went off. Richard Davies denied having said or done anything. He was there, but did not interfere at all. William Davies said he did not use any threat to complainant. He did run after him half way across the lock, but he (Hammonds) ran away, and he did not see him after. Brown said he was not on the boat at all. For the defence, Elizabeth Caulcott and Hannah Speke gave evidence ; but their statements did not affect the case at all. The Chairman said it was evident the row had arisen from a mistake in the man ; but there could not be a doubt that threats had been used. The defendants were then bound over in the sum of £5 to keep the peace for 12 months, and to pay costs, 13s 4d each.

110 17 September 1869

OSWESTRY

THEFT **Edward Thomas**, boatman, Llangollen, was yesterday sentenced to be imprisoned for 14 days for stealing a waistcoat, the property of John Green. Thomas Davies, who was charged with being concerned with the theft, was discharged.

111 15 October 1869

OSWESTRY

THE "CROCODILE" AND THE "MORNING STAR" Yesterday week, Jane Jones alias "The Crocodile" and Mary Ann Jones alias "The Morning Star", two "unfortunates", Edward Rogers and

James Woodbine, boatman, Dudleston, were brought up at the Police Court before E H Crump Esq, charged with sleeping in an outbuilding near the Mile Oak on Wednesday night the 6th inst. Police-constable Haynes said he received information that there was a number of persons in the building from a man who was passing at the time, and heard them talking and also heard someone “strike a match”. On his going to the building he found the prisoners there, and two other men who made their escape. It also appeared in evidence that Rogers had on the Union clothes at the time, and was in the receipt of relief from the workhouse. They were sentenced to 21 days' imprisonment each to hard labour.

112 12 November 1869

MARKET DRAYTON

POLICE COURT **Henry Stokes**, boatman, was charged before Major Broughton at the instance of William Ellsmore, bailiff for Mrs Benbow of Litley, with stealing turnips. He told the magistrate that it was his first offence. Fined 2s and costs.

113 26 November 1869

MARKET DRAYTON

MAGISTRATES' COURT ROOM On Saturday, before Egerton Harding Esq and Major Broughton, **Henry Buckingham**, a boatman, was charged at the instance of the Canal Company with brutally treating a horse. Fined £2 10s, including costs, or one month's imprisonment. Committed.