

ATHERSTONE NUNEATON AND WARWICKSHIRE TIMES 1879 to 1891

1 1 March 1879

OFFCHURCH

ACCIDENTALLY DROWNED On Thursday afternoon last week, an accident occurred at Offchurch, near Leamington, by which a boatman named **George Wilkins** lost his life. It appears that Wilkins and a boy were taking the boat along the canal. Upon arriving at Offchurch it was necessary to take the boats through two locks, and the deceased attended to the working of these locks while the boy led the horse. The first lock was passed in safety, and the deceased shouted to the boy that all was all right, and told him to go on. The boy did as he was ordered, and having proceeded for a short distance, as deceased did not overtake him, he turned round to look for him. Deceased was nowhere to be seen, and the boy returned to the house at the locks and enquired if he had stayed behind. The people at the house knew nothing of him, and a search was immediately made, which led to the discovery of his body.

2 19 April 1879

THE CANAL BOATS ACT Mr George Smith writes to the Times :- "This Act has been in operation fifteen months, and except a few little alterations in three of their own boats, the Paddington registration authority has, it would seem, done next to nothing towards registering the many hundreds of boats and barges within their district. The boats are not painted and ventilated, the education of the poor children is neglected, and the overcrowding in the cabins of both sexes and of all ages continues, notwithstanding the passing of this Act to remedy the state of things, It was stated to me a day or two since that one boat owner renting one of the wharves in the parish of Paddington had told his boatman to build defiance to the law, and to "go on with his work till he told him different". The winking at this kind of procedure is producing no good results. Boats are to be seen, some of which are registered at Birmingham, working between London and Birmingham, and upon which are large families of children of school age and, I am sorry to say, these are allowed to pass muster on their way to such places as Birmingham, Warwick, Leamington, and Tring. A friend writes me to say that a similar state of affairs exists at Liverpool. Canal boat owners and registration authorities cannot now plead the severity of the weather as an excuse for their indifference to the cries of the children and lack of loyalty in carrying out this Act".

3 17 May 1879

WARWICKSHIRE ASSIZES

ATTEMPTED UNNATURAL OFFENCE **Richard Thomas** (65), boatman, was found guilty of having attempted to commit an unnatural offence at Birdingbury on the 9th of April, and was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour.

4 26 July 1879

ATHERSTONE PETTY SESSIONS **William Wilday**, boatman, was charged with allowing two of his asses to stray at Polesworth on the 16th inst. Defendant had previously been warned by Police Sergeant Hawkes, but he was let off with paying the costs.

5 9 August 1879

WARWICKSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

A CANDID CONFESSION **William Harkell** (50), boatman, pleaded guilty to stealing three fowls and a duck, value 10s, the property of Mr Edward Colley of Aston, near Birmingham. The Clerk of Arraigns : And you are further charged with having been previously convicted. Prisoner : Yes, sir, twice. (Laughter). Sentence deferred.

6 30 August 1879

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

SERIOUS ASSAULT CASE Thomas Combes, labourer, was charged with having unlawfully assaulted Samuel Barlow at Bedworth on the 17th inst. Mr Wilks appeared for the prosecutor, and Mr Homer defended the prisoner. **Samuel Barlow**, Bulkington Lane, Bedworth, boatman, said the prisoner came to his house between 11 and 12 o'clock on the previous Saturday night. After some conversation had taken place, prisoner left the house. He stood outside, challenged witness to fight, and broke five panes of glass. Witness fetched Sergeant Poultney, and returned with him. The prisoner had then gone away, but witness heard his voice. They went and found the prisoner in a boat on the canal, and when witness pointed him out to Poultney, he pushed him into the canal, and he was compelled to swim to the side. In company with the sergeant, witness went away home, and prisoner followed them, and struck witness, and took up a knife from the table in the house. Poultney then took him into custody and put the handcuffs on him. Prisoner said he would go with Poultney if he had his hat and jacket, and witness went and fetched them. When he returned the prisoner was on the floor, and Poultney was standing over him. With the assistance of witness and a man named Wood, the prisoner was taken to the lock up. The prisoner had had some beer, and was half mad. In answer to Mr Homer, witness said he fetched the policeman because prisoner had smashed the windows. The police sergeant and he went to the boat and found the prisoner on the bed. He (witness) was sober. The sergeant asked prisoner to come and see the damage he had done, and pay for it. Prisoner came out of the cabin, and knocked him into the canal. Prisoner followed him (witness) home, and there struck him and picked the knife up, this led to him being handcuffed. Police-sergeant Poultney, stationed at Bedworth, said he went with the last witness, on Sunday morning, to his house. The windows which had been broken by the prisoner were pointed out. They went to the boat and asked prisoner his name, and he said he had no name. He came out of the cabin, used bad language, and knocked Barlow into the water. Afterwards, at Barlow's house, prisoner struck at him with a knife, and he threw him down and took him into custody. The Bench reserved their decision until the next case was heard, in which the same prisoner was charged with assaulting Police-sergeant Poultney. The same evidence was given, Barlow adding that Poultney, on prisoner striking at Barlow, took hold of the prisoner, pushed him down to a bench and put the handcuffs on. Police-sergeant Poultney spoke to his seeing the prisoner assaulting Barlow in his own house, and to his taking prisoner into custody, and putting on the handcuffs. He sent Barlow to the boat to fetch the prisoner's coat and cap. The prisoner then became violent, bit at the handcuffs and the officer's hands, and kicked him in several parts of his person. Once he (the officer) fell on the grate, and prisoner had a running kick, and inflicted a severe blow in his stomach. Barlow came in, and another man named Wood, who assisted to take prisoner to the station. In consequence of these kicks he suffered great pains, and was confined in bed for three days. He was suffering still, and was under the care of Dr Orton. Mrs Barlow was next called, and corroborated the testimony of her husband and Police-sergeant Poultney, adding that prisoner said to the sergeant, "Kill me, or I'll kill you", and kicked at him high and low. He had heavy nailed boots on. The officer did not strike the prisoner with a stick, or at all. Dr E Orton stated that he had been called in to see Sergeant Poultney. He found him suffering very severely. There were a number of bruises. The kicks in the bowels were the most dangerous. He had feared the most serious consequences. There had been cases where such bruises had terminated fatally. The Bench determined to adjudicate, and Mr Homer addressed their worships on behalf of the prisoner, endeavouring to prove that he was so drunk so as not to know what he did. The Bench decided to convict in both cases, and for the assault on the police officer they sentenced the prisoner to six months' imprisonment with hard labour, and for the common assault on Barlow to seven days' additional imprisonment.

7 29 November 1879

NUNEATON

A BARGE BOY DROWNED On Wednesday afternoon the district coroner, Mr T Dewes, held an enquiry at the Kings Head Inn, Grendon, as to the death of a lad named **Samuel Wheatcroft**.

Deceased was thirteen years of age, and in the employ of a boatman named **John Barton**. At ten o'clock on Monday morning last, deceased and Barton started from Bedworth in a boat for Amington Colliery. They were delayed three hours at Hartshill, and did not arrive at the locks at Merevale till 6.22 p.m. It was deceased's duty to manage the windlass, and when the boat arrived at the locks, Barton could not see anything of him. On looking round he saw the windlass laid on the balance pole, about a yard from the locks. He also noticed deceased's hat in the water, and raised an alarm. Assistance was obtained, and the lad's body was afterwards found in the water. Dr Hales of Atherstone was sent for, and did his best to restore animation, but without success. The medical gentleman found an abrasion over the right eye, but that was doubtless produced by coming in contact with the wall of the lock. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned".

8 20 December 1879

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CROSS SUMMONSES DISMISSED **James Wildsmith**, boatman, was summoned by James Sefton, boat builder, for having assaulted him on the 29th November. There was a cross summons charging Sefton with assaulting Wildsmith at the same time. Mr Homer appeared for Wildsmith, and Mr Wilks for Sefton. Sefton stated that on the 29th November he and Wildsmith, together with another man named Worthington, left the Fox Inn, Foleshill, together. When they had gone some distance Wildsmith accused Sefton of taking a cart from the house of a woman named North, and upon Sefton denying it, Wildsmith took off his coat and struck him a violent blow in the face, knocked him down, jumped upon him, and hit him several times. Sefton got up from the ground, struck Wildsmith in self defence, and prepared to fight. Worthington then went between them and parted them, and Wildsmith ran away, leaving his coat behind him. John Worthington, collier, corroborated this testimony. Wildsmith's evidence was to the effect that when they left the Fox Inn, Sefton proposed that they should take Hannah North's cart and break it up. Wildsmith refused to have anything to do with it, and Sefton then accused him of tale bearing. This Wildsmith denied, and Sefton abused him, and took off his coat to fight. Wildsmith also took off his coat, and they fought, and in the third round Sefton kicked him in the eye while he was on the ground. After that Wildsmith would not have anything more to do with Sefton, who would not allow him to take up his coat, and he went away and left it on the ground. Agnes Golby said she saw the two men fighting. Sefton was punching Wildsmith. She heard Wildsmith say, "I won't fight again, you have kicked me", and as soon as he could get away he ran up the lane. Mrs Wildsmith also gave evidence on behalf of her son. The Bench dismissed both summonses, each defendant to pay his own costs.

9 7 February 1880

KENILWORTH DIVISIONAL SESSIONS

CASE DISMISSED **George Eyres**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a wooden post and three rails at Offchurch, the property of the Countess of Aylesford, on the 31st ult. Mr A E Overell appeared for the defendant, who pleaded guilty. It appeared that on the day named a number of boats were frozen up at Offchurch, and the wood in question was taken by the defendant to make fires. Mr Overell pleaded that defendant had, in consequence of the severe weather, been out of work and had not the means to purchase wood with. He was sorry for what had occurred. The Bench dismissed the case on payment of the costs, 15s.

10 26 June 1880

LEAMINGTON BOROUGH POLICE

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **William Hook**, boatman, Brierley Hill, was charged with cruelly ill treating a horse, by working it whilst in an unfit state on the 18th inst. Defendant pleaded not guilty. Police-constable Baum stated that from information received he went and saw the defendant's horse, which was in a very bad state. He asked the man in charge whose horse it was, and told him he should not work it in that state. When witness went afterwards, in company with Mr David

Jones, the boy in the boat said, "We were going to wait until dark, and then go on". Mr David Jones, the officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, spoke to having gone to see the horse on the canal side, in company with Police-constable Baum. Defendant had then taken the tackle off the horse, and the horse lay in the ditch. Defendant admitted that he had worked the horse down from London. The Bench inflicted a fine of 40s and costs, 9s 6d, or in default a month's hard labour. The money was paid.

11 24 July 1880

RUGBY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A DONKEY **James Bates** of Bedworth, boatman, was summoned for cruelly overworking a donkey while in an unfit state. Defendant did not appear, but Sergeant Webb said he called on him (Sergeant Webb) on Saturday, and asked him if the case could be adjourned, as he was on a journey to Banbury with a cargo, and should be back on Saturday. The Bench granted the adjournment.

12 24 July 1880

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

FELONY William Smith, a boy, was charged with having stolen a watch and chain, value 30s, the property of **William Grantham**, on the 9th inst at Foleshill. The prosecutor is a boatman, and the prisoner travelled with him from Banbury to Hawkesbury Stop. His watch was then safe in the cabin, but later in the same day, while at Hartshill, the prisoner left the boat and the watch was found to have been stolen. Subsequently, at Bedworth, the lad attempted to pawn the watch at Mr Cleverley's shop, but Mr Cleverley, being suspicious, sent for the police, and gave the lad into the custody of Police-constable Russell, to whom he admitted that he stole the watch from the boat cabin. The chain was found upon him by Police-sergeant Poultney. The prisoner pleaded guilty and elected the summary jurisdiction of the Bench. His previous character was very bad, and the Bench sentenced him to be imprisoned for 14 days, and then to be detained in a reformatory for five years.

13 18 June 1881

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, COUNTY HALL COVENTRY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Joseph Moore**, Foleshill, boatman, was summoned for having been drunk and disorderly on the Foleshill Road at 11 o'clock on the night of the 3rd inst. He pleaded not guilty, but after hearing the evidence, the Bench considered the charge proved, and fined the defendant 5s and costs, 12s 6d.

14 17 December 1881

COVENTRY CITY POLICE, SATURDAY

ASSAULT **George Wilesmith**, boatman, Grange Lane, Foleshill, was summoned by his brother, **Daniel Wilesmith**, boatman, for having assaulted him on the 2nd inst. The charge was proved, and the Bench fined the defendant 5s and costs 16s 6d.

15 1 July 1882

LEAMINGTON BOROUGH POLICE

ILLEGALLY EMPLOYING A SCHOOL BOY **William Bromwich**, boatman, 5 Sanders Street, Emscote, was summoned by Mr Joyce, the school attendance officer, for having unlawfully employed a lad named **Joseph Powell**, be being under 14 years of age, and not having obtained the required certificate under the Education Act. Mr J W Hassall appeared to prosecute on behalf of Mr Blaker, the clerk to the school board, who had an important engagement in London. The defendant did not appear, but the service of the summons having been proved by Detective Sergeant Baum, the case was heard *ex parte*. Mr Joyce, the school attendance officer, proved that Powell was under 14 years of age, had not obtained the requisite certificate to entitle him to be employed, and was absent for a whole week when he was taken away by the defendant. He had only made 99 out of a

possible 208 possible attendances. The Bench fined the defendant a guinea, including costs, and on another summons, against Powell's father for not sending his son regularly to school, an order was made for the lad to attend Court Street School regularly in future.

16 15 July 1882

POLICE INTELLIGENCE **Joseph Jeffcoate**, boatman, Nuneaton, was charged with allowing two donkeys to stray on the highway at Tuttle Hill on the 30th ult. Defendant was ordered to pay costs amounting to 7s.

17 26 August 1882

COVENTRY CITY POLICE

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **Charles Scanlan**, no settled abode, boatman, was charged by Police-constable Raven with having been drunk and disorderly in Broomfield Place, Spon End, on the 19th inst. The prisoner pleaded guilty. Raven described the prisoner's conduct, and Charles John Booth of Broomfield Place stated that the prisoner married his daughter (Martha), and on Saturday he went to his place and made a disturbance. The prisoner was fined 2s 6d and expenses 9s 6d ; or in default fourteen days' imprisonment.

18 18 November 1882

WARWICKSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

HIGHWAY ROBBERY WITH VIOLENCE **Martin Keegan** (24), boatman, was indicted for having assaulted Edward Darly at Warwick on the 3rd of August last, and stolen from him £8 13s and a silk handkerchief. Mr Soden prosecuted. The prosecutor resides with his parents in Coleshill Street, Birmingham. On the day in question he left home with £9 in his pocket, for the purpose of paying for his passage to America, but on the way to the emigration office he met with two of the Army Reserve men who were about to proceed to Warwick. He afterwards accompanied them to the station, and finally both he and the prisoner proceeded with them to Warwick. There they visited one or two public houses, and in the end the prisoner enticed the prosecutor on to the canal side, under the pretence that he was taking him to lodgings, and there assaulted and robbed him, and pitched him into the canal. The jury found him guilty. Sentence deferred.

19 25 November 1882

ATHERSTONE PETTY SESSIONS **John Hemsley**, boatman, was charged with being drunk at Polesworth on the 13th inst. Police-constable Hemming proved the case. Fined 6s, and costs 12s 6d.

20 6 January 1883

PETTY SESSIONS Joseph Starkey, a lad, was remanded on a charge of stealing four brasses from the harness of a horse, the property of **Joseph Hanson**, boatman of Warwick.

21 13 January 1883

COVENTRY CITY POLICE, THURSDAY

ASSAULT ON A WIFE **Charles Scanlan**, boatman, Coventry, was summoned by his wife, Martha Scanlan (nee Booth), for having assaulted her on the 25th December. The defendant pleaded guilty. The complainant, who gave her evidence with great hesitancy, stated that her husband struck and kicked her in the face, and threatened to throw her over the side of the boat. The Bench, who characterised the assault as a dastardly one, ordered the defendant to enter into his own bond in £10, and to find two sureties in £5 each, to keep the peace for three months.

22 10 February 1883

COVENTRY CITY POLICE, SATURDAY

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE Henry Cooke, watchmaker, Upper Well Street, was charged with having

attempted to commit suicide by jumping into the canal on the 2nd inst. **Henry Hiorns**, Leicester Street, boatman, stated that the defendant came on to the towing path and plunged straight into the water. Witness and his son got him out of the water with a boat hook, and laid him on the top of the cabin of the boat, and when he recovered a little he attempted to slide over the side into the water again. Witness held him, and he was shortly afterwards removed to the canal side, where he again attempted to get into the water. He was given into the custody of Police-sergeant Ross, who removed him to the police station. The Bench remanded the prisoner for a week.

23 3 March 1883

WARWICK COUNTY POLICE, SATURDAY

TOUCHING UP A DONKEY WITH A WINDLASS **Edward Grantham**, a boatman residing at Banbury, was charged with having, on the 9th ult, cruelly treated a donkey at Budbrooke. William Shelswell, a farmer, said that on the day in question he was at Oakley Bridge, and noticed the defendant working a boat through the locks. It was being drawn by a donkey. As the boat was coming into the lock, witness saw the defendant strike the donkey over the back two or three times with a windlass. The donkey appeared to be in a good state of flesh, but witness added "defendant certainly struck it with an unlawful weapon". He had a whip in one hand and the windlass in the other. Mr Robins : He was using the donkey very badly, was he? Witness : Yes, sir, he was striking the donkey unlawfully. When I complained to the defendant of his treatment, he said, "You would strike your horse if it would not work". Henry Hume, an old man, said he was with the last witness, and saw the defendant strike the donkey three blows on the rump with the windlass. Witness exclaimed to the last witness that it was brutal. He heard the defendant say that he had hit the donkey because it had kicked. Defendant denied the charge, but admitted that he touched the donkey up with the windlass two or three times. It was kicking, and that was the reason he "touched it with the windlass". Superintendent Moth said he had received an excellent character of the defendant. Major Mason said it was a very proper case for the police to bring forward, but as the defendant had received such an excellent character, he would be let off on payment of 19s expenses. Mr Robins : You must try the other way next time.

24 7 April 1883

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

OBSTRUCTING THE FOOTPATH Henry Morton, labourer, Coventry, William Cook, dyer, Coventry, Frank Cockerell, labourer, Foleshill, Frank Hackett, miner, Longford, Ebenezer Grimley, miner, Longford, Henry R Wale, labourer, Longford, and **William Rayson**, boatman, Longford, were summoned by Police-constable Claridge for having obstructed the footpath on the Foleshill Road on the 23rd ult. The constable stated that he watched the defendants standing on the foot road for ten minutes flying pigeons. When he went up towards them, they walked on. He had received continual complaints about the nuisance caused by these men standing about, pigeon flying, during the last three months. The Superintendent of Police stated that this practice was the subject of many complaints ; and the Bench ordered the defendants to pay the costs, 6s each, warning them that if they offended again they would be fined.

25 28 April 1883

WARWICKSHIRE SPRING ASSIZES

BURGLARY **Thomas Andrews** (20), boatman, and Reynolds Witney (19), were charged with having at Birmingham burglariously entered the premises of Joseph Barrett, and stolen therefrom a quantity of cigars. Mr Pye prosecuted. Both prisoners were found guilty, and were sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour.

26 12 May 1883

WARWICK COUNTY POLICE, SATURDAY

ONE BRUTE IN CHARGE OF ANOTHER **John Fletcher**, boatman, West Bromwich, was

summoned for cruelty to a mule at Budbrook on the previous Sunday week. Police-constable Lines stated that, shortly before five o'clock on the afternoon of the day named, when on duty near the Stank House, Budbrook, he saw the defendant bringing his boat out of the lock. It was being drawn by a mule, and defendant was walking with it along the towing-path. After proceeding about thirty yards beyond the lock, defendant struck the mule six or seven times with an iron windlass, and subsequently treated it in a similarly cruel way, this time striking it on the ribs. Witness examined the animal, which was not in a very "grand" condition, but could not see any wounds upon it. There were, however, the marks where he had struck it. When he told defendant he ought to have known better than beat the mule as he had, he replied that he "never carried anything else to beat it besides the windlass". Witness had received complaints respecting the beating of canal horses by boatmen in the neighbourhood of Budbrook. The boat which defendant had on this occasion belonged to a Mr Whitehouse of West Bromwich, from whom he had hired it. Lord Leigh told defendant he had been guilty of a most cruel act, and said he could not conceive how any man could have behaved in such a way towards a poor dumb brute. He would have to pay, including costs, the sum of £1 1s 8d, and his lordship hoped that this would be a warning to him in the future. He deserved to be most severely punished, and ought to be ashamed of himself. Both defendant and his wife denied that the mule was struck with the windlass, as stated by the policeman, but the Bench expressed themselves perfectly satisfied of the truth of the constable's statement. The money was paid after some grumbling on the part of the defendant as to "the injustice which he had suffered".

27 16 June 1883

NUNEATON

POLICE INTELLIGENCE Charles Smith and Frederick W Eales, youths, were charged with breaking into a boat belonging to **Richard Taylor**, a boatman living at Longford, and stealing clothing to the value of 5s. The prosecutor stated that on the 10th his boat was at Nuneaton, loading. He left it safely locked up on Saturday night, the 9th inst, but was subsequently sent for, and then found that the cabin had been entered, and various articles of clothing were lying on the floor. Charles Mayer, Tuttle Hill, manager of Mr Judkin's stone quarry, said he had occasion to go to his office on the day in question, and saw the prisoners go to the boat. Smith tried twice to open the cabin with some keys, but could not, and Eales then forced the lock with a piece of iron. They went inside, and after they had been there a few minutes, witness closed the door, shutting them in, and sent for a constable. Before he closed the door, he saw them on their knees in the cabin, getting at a cupboard. Police-constable Venables deposed to finding Mr Mayer at the door of the cabin of the boat. He entered and saw the clothing produced, on the floor, and the prisoners in the place. Smith had the padlock in his hand. The prisoners, who had nothing to say, were committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

28 30 June 1883 At the Rugby Petty Sessions on Tuesday, **Thomas Lapworth**, a boatman living at Trusses Bridge near Coventry, was fined 20s and costs 14s 6d for working a donkey on the canal bank in the parish of Brownsover, near Rugby, while in an unfit state.

29 30 June 1883

WARWICK BOROUGH POLICE, MONDAY

SUNDAY TRADING AT EMSCOTE Mrs Charlotte Timms, landlady of the Britannia Inn, Emscote, was summoned for keeping open her house during prohibited hours on the morning of Sunday the 17th inst. From the evidence adduced, it appeared that Police-sergeant Webb and Police-constable Ravenhall watched the defendant's premises for some two hours, and during that time saw six men enter the premises by the back way leading from Wharf Street. One of the men was a boatman living in Wharf Street ; another man named Powell resided in the same locality ; and a third came from Leamington. Police-sergeant Webb said he distinctly saw Mrs Timms bring a pint mug to one of the men, who thereupon put his hand in his pocket and handed something to the defendant. When spoken to by the officers, she said that all the men were travellers, and that two of

them told her that they came from Shuckburgh, and two others stated that they came from Stratford, whilst three more said they had travelled from Southam. The defendant informed the Bench that she supplied the men with drink under the belief that they were *bona fide* travellers, with the exception of Powell, who had been doing some housework for her, and she gave him the beer for his lunch without receiving any money whatever. The man Powell was called, and corroborated Mrs Timms's statement respecting himself, but admitted that he told the police he had a beer score and expected this would be charged against him. Inspector Hall said the defendant was fined several years ago for supplying drink during prohibited hours. The Magistrates inflicted a fine of £2 including costs, but did not endorse the licence. Defendant said she would never again serve even *bona fide* travellers on a Sunday.

30 30 June 1883

HENLEY IN ARDEN

PETTY SESSIONS Thomas Court the younger, boatman of Stratford on Avon, was summoned for attempting to take fish from the canal at Wootten Wawen on the 18th June. Mr Warden, Stratford, appeared to prosecute on behalf of Captain Haydock, who has the right of fishing in that part of the canal. Defendant pleaded guilty, and said he had destroyed the net. Fined 2s 6d and costs 13s 6d.

31 14 July 1883

LEAMINGTON BOROUGH POLICE, MONDAY

A SUBJECT FOR DESTRUCTION Charles Court, a boatman belonging to Stratford on Avon, was charged with working a horse belonging to him whilst in an unfit state. Defendant pleaded guilty. From the evidence it seems that on Saturday night a boat was being hauled along the Warwick and Leamington Canal by the horse. Mr Jones, Inspector of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, saw the animal, and observing its lameness and emaciated state, ordered an examination to be made. The veterinary surgeon, Mr Osborn Hill, said the horse was totally unfit to be worked, and scarcely able to carry its own carcass. On defendant promising to have the animal destroyed, the Magistrates dismissed the case on payment of costs, 20s 6d.

32 21 July 1883

RUGBY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE Richard Shackleton, boatman of Stoke on Trent, was charged at the Petty Sessions on Tuesday with cruelty to a horse. Police-constable Lines proved the case, and defendant was fined £2.

33 1 September 1883

LEAMINGTON BOROUGH POLICE, WEDNESDAY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE Charles Hollis, boatman, Mount Pleasant, Brierly Hill, was charged with cruelly ill treating a horse by working it whilst in an unfit state. Mr Jones, Inspector for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said he received information about a week ago that defendant had been in Leamington with a horse which was not in a fit state to be worked. Witness watched for his return, and stopped the horse. On examination he found the horse had large sores on the side of each shoulder. Except for this, the horse was in good condition for work. The Mayor : What do you intend to do with the horse? Defendant : Turn him out, sir. The Mayor : On your promising the Bench that you won't work the horse until it is in a fit state, we shall let you off by paying £1 1s, including costs.

34 1 September 1883

PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY Edward Wright was charged with stealing a watch and a chain from a boat at Stockton on the 10th inst, the property of **Thomas Powell**, a boatman. Defendant was proved to have pawned the watch and chain in London. Prosecutor identified it as his watch, but

requested the Bench to deal as leniently as they could with the prisoner, and two witnesses speaking well as to his previous character, they, after reprimanding him, fined him 1s and costs, £3 2s, the costs being heavy owing to journey to London and witness from there.

35 13 October 1883

SOUTHAM

PETTY SESSIONS **Thomas Parker**, Banbury, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse, by working the same while in an unfit state at Lower Shuckburgh on the 26th ult. Defendant pleaded guilty, and was fined 1s and £2 8s costs, which was paid.

36 27 October 1883

KENILWORTH DIVISIONAL SESSIONS

SCHOOL BOARD CASES **William Hodson**, boatman, Longford, was summoned for not having sent his son, John Henry, to school, and this case was adjourned for a month, to give the defendant the opportunity of sending the child to school.

37 24 November 1883

SOUTHAM PETTY SESSIONS **Joseph Bird**, a youth employed in working a boat on the canal, was charged with stealing a powder flask, a short belt, a razor and a comb from a boat lying at Napton, the property of **John Arnold**, a boatman. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and from his statement was deserted by his friends. The Bench ordered him to be detained until arrangements could be made for sending him to a reformatory.

38 24 November 1883

ALLEGED THEFT OF HORSES At the Petty Sessions on Tuesday, **David Allen**, boatman, Kettlebrook, Tamworth, and William Dipper alias Draper of Birmingham, were charged with stealing a black cob, the property of Mr George Taylor, publican of Hillmorton, on the 8th instant. The animal was missed from a field, and the prisoners were seen driving it towards Coventry. At Nuneaton they were arrested on suspicion, but having purchased a set of canal harness, and telling a plausible story, they were allowed to depart. Dipper (*sic*) was arrested at Kettlebrook and Draper in Birmingham, where it was alleged they had disposed of the horse. Both defendants were committed for trial.

39 19 January 1884

SUPPOSED SUICIDE OF A LEAMINGTON GIRL

THE CORONER'S INQUEST On Monday night last, an inquest was opened at the George Inn, High Street, by Mr W S Poole, Coroner for Central Warwickshire, respecting the death of Louisa Hornsby (14) who, it is supposed, committed suicide on New Year's Day. The parents of the deceased were represented by Mr J Boddington, solicitor, Warwick. Mr Richard Hornsby of 2 Court Street, father of the deceased, said his daughter was in service with Mrs Hawkes of Plymouth Place. On Sunday the 30th December, she called at her home, and stayed all night. The next morning she returned to her service. The next he heard of her was on Wednesday the 2nd inst, when Mrs Hawkes called and asked if he could tell her what had become of Louisa. He asked Mrs Hawkes how it was that the child had left, and she replied that she had missed some things, and had found them in her box. The impression on his mind was that she charged the deceased with theft. In reply to the Coroner, witness said he believed that the child was threatened with the police. The Coroner : Has she ever told you so? Witness : No ; she has never told me so, but she said they complained of her picking things. The Coroner : In other words she was accused of what we call in the Catechism "picking and stealing". Witness : I don't know that. Coroner : You don't know the Catechism perhaps? Witness : No, sir. The things she was charged with stealing were a handkerchief, some paper and some lace. The lace was afterwards found upon the floor. Mrs Hawkes here stated that the deceased dropped one piece upon the floor in her presence. Witness

continuing said the deceased's box was taken home and left untouched. He found his daughter's hat at a woman's house in Radford, named Florence. It was perfectly dry and did not appear ever to have been in the water. Deceased had been in the employ of Mrs Hawkes for about three months, but expressed her determination to leave on the first Monday of the new year. Her wages had been in arrears for about two months, and on pressing for some money, she received only 4s out of 8s. Mrs Hawkes interposed and said the arrears were only 5s or 6s. The last time he saw his daughter alive was on the 30th of December last. Mrs Hawkes was the next witness. She said her husband was property master at the Theatre Royal and lived at No 8 Plymouth Place. She occasionally let her rooms to professionals who might be performing at the Theatre. Sometimes she went to the Theatre, and on returning late, generally found the girl seated sleeping in the armchair, but witness was not cross with her on this occasion. Witness's sister visited her on Christmas Eve and gave her four pieces of lace. The following morning two pieces were gone. She asked the deceased several times if she knew anything about them, to which she replied that she did not. Finally, after the house had been searched all over, witness examined the deceased's box in her presence, and found the missing lace. She also found a pocket handkerchief which had been left behind by a lodger, whose name was upon it. After some time she confessed to the thefts. Witness then sent for the mother, and immediately after, the deceased left the house. She sent three times during the afternoon for the mother, who did not come, and it was her intention to have handed the girl over to her if she had stayed until the mother arrived. The girl appeared to her to have more fear of home than anything else, for the moment she was told that her mother would be sent for, she began to cry. The Coroner said there could be no doubt about the missing things having been found in the girl's box, and the foreman added that Mrs Hawkes pursued a very proper course in sending for the girl's parents, if she found these things in her box. The Foreman enquired if witness had used any threats to the girl, but Mrs Hawkes bluntly denied having used any undue harshness. Mrs Rachel Florence of Radford deposed that, as she was walking along the Lillington Road on New Year's Day, she met a young man named Lewis on the towing-path of the canal, who was carrying a hat. He asked her if she knew anyone who had lost a hat, and she took it home with her where it was claimed by the father of the deceased on Friday morning last. **Job Neale**, boatman, said he found the girl's body in the canal that day (Monday). He was in company with deceased's father and uncle. They had been engaged dragging since last Friday. The father, recalled, said he identified the body by the boots and stockings, and general appearance of it. He left it in charge of his brother-in-law, as he could not bear to see it dragged out. Detective Sergeant Baum said he was present at a conversation which took place between Mrs Collins and the father of the deceased. It related to the girl's disappearance. Mrs Collins said the girl was crying and fretting on the day she left, and was told not to do so, as she would hurt herself. This was the first of the conversation. Dr William Douglas said he had made a cursory examination of the body. There were no marks save that of the drag on one of the limbs. As far as he was able to see, the only cause of death was drowning. The Chief Constable had sent several times for Mrs Collins, whom the jury looked upon as an important witness but, as she did not appear, the inquest was adjourned until Tuesday night at 6.30. During the holding of the enquiry, a large concourse of people had assembled outside the Hotel, and in consequence of their boisterous behaviour, the Coroner asked the Chief Constable if he could offer any explanation of the matter. Mr Brabner said he was sorry to have to state that from some cause the people had been impressed with the idea that Mrs Hawkes had treated the deceased with cruelty and that the things which it was alleged were stolen were afterwards found in the house, whereas there was no evidence whatsoever that any cruelty had been practised on the girl by her mistress. He had been compelled in consequence of the mob to station constables at Mrs Hawkes's house, which was being pelted with stones and other missiles.

The enquiry was resumed the following (Tuesday) night. The Chief Constable stated, in answer to the Coroner, who asked if anything fresh had transpired, that the deceased's shoulder was found to be dislocated, and that Dr Douglass had made a *post mortem* examination of the body, the result which he was present to state. The evidence of Mrs Collins was then taken. She stated that she

lived at 52 Plymouth Place, and had known Mrs Hawkes for some months. Mrs Hawkes's baby was ill a few weeks ago, and witness went to the house to see it occasionally. She had several times seen the deceased go out and in the house, and she appeared to her to be a good worker and well behaved, and always spoke very respectfully to witness. Witness did not know there was anything wrong until the day the deceased left the house, and Mrs Hawkes was the first to inform her of the occurrence. She went into Mrs Hawkes's house between eleven and twelve o'clock, having been sent for to see the things which deceased had stolen. They were laid out on the kitchen table, and the girl was peeling potatoes in the back kitchen, where she would doubtless hear what was being said between witness and her mistress. After Mrs Hawkes had informed witness of the circumstances respecting the pilfering, witness remarked, "It is very sad, but girls will do these sort of things. I have had the same to contend with". Witness then went to deceased, who was crying bitterly, and said, "Louisa, never do this. As you are going through life never touch anything that does not belong to you, and don't sob and cry in that way, and Mrs Hawkes will no doubt forgive you". The girl replied, "I can't help it", meaning that she could not help crying. So far as witness knew, Mrs Hawkes had never treated her servant unkindly. There was one policeman present at the time referred to, but afterwards Detective Baum came to witness, and they had a short consultation about the girl's disappearance. A Juryman here enquired if witness ever knew the police to be sent for. Witness : Never. By Mr Boddington : Witness admitted that the child's father had asked her to attend the inquest on Monday night, but she replied that an engagement would prevent her from being present. Witness, continuing, said she had known other servants to leave Mrs Hawkes, and on the last occasion that one left it was because Mrs Hawkes could not afford to keep her, as business at the Theatre was then slack. When witness left Mrs Hawkes's house, she left deceased and her mistress in it. Shortly afterwards, Mrs Hawkes came in and informed her that Louisa was gone. This was no more than 10 or 15 minutes after witness left. By the Coroner : Mrs Hawkes always seemed most kind to her own children. Dr William Douglass was next examined, and added to his evidence that from something which had been told him, he made a *post mortem* examination, with the result that he had discovered several small wounds, one behind the right knee, which had evidently been inflicted after death, a small wound on the left shoulder towards the back, a slight bruise on the forehead, the skin had been removed as by scratching from behind the left ear, there was a wound measuring about an inch long also on the head, which, however, did not appear to have been inflicted with a sharp instrument, but was rather the effect of a blow. None of these wounds, in his opinion, had anything to do with the cause of death. The wound on the ear might have been caused prior to death. The head of the arm bone, next to the shoulder, had been separated from the shaft. From the nature of the injury it might have been caused after death, because there was no appearance of inflammation about the fracture or break. The injury might have been caused in the dragging operation. Dr Douglass here made a complaint that the mortuary in which he had to conduct his examination was very badly lighted, as he had to use two lamps in broad daylight and the place was also very small. By a Juryman : The wounds on the forehead might have been caused in the act of jumping into the water. Mrs Hornsby, the mother of the deceased, was then called, and in answer to the Coroner, whether she had any complaint to make against Mrs Hawkes or her treatment of the girl, said she had no complaint whatever to make. Her daughter had been with Mrs Hawkes for three months, and she often used to visit her. Her girl came home at noon, and spent the last Sunday of the year with her parents. The only remark ever made respecting wages was that she told Mrs Hawkes she thought 1s a week was very little for the amount of work she done. In summing up, the Coroner said that the state of the case was that some kind of accusation was made against the deceased by her mistress, which was no doubt true to a great extent, and her mistress threatened to send for her mother who, if she was the kind of woman she appeared to be, would have been very grieved to learn of her daughter's conduct. In these circumstances it was quite possible that she should resolve to do away with herself. There was however no evidence that the deceased had committed suicide, and therefore it was not for the jury to say so. From the moment she left her mistress's house no clue of her was known, and nobody knew where she went. Probably she went straight to the canal and, under the impulse of the disgrace of such a charge, threw herself

into the water. They must take the most charitable view of the case and consider that the suicide was not proved. Assuming then that such was the case, nothing remained, and she was only found in the canal, bearing some injuries which, according to the concise and clear evidence of the Doctor, might have been inflicted in the course of dragging. Referring now to another branch of the case, that was the rumours that Mrs Hawkes had been unkind, there was not a scintilla of evidence of its truth. All therefore they could do was to bring in a verdict to the effect that the deceased was found in the canal. The jury retired for about fifteen minutes and returned with a verdict that deceased was found in the canal on the 14th inst ; that no blame could be attached to Mrs Hawkes, and that she was last seen alive on the 1st inst.

There was again a very large crowd assembled outside the court, and their excitement was even greater than the previous night. On Monday night Mrs Hawkes had considerable difficulty in getting home and had to be accompanied by policemen.

40 16 February 1884

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, COUNTY HALL, COVENTRY, FRIDAY

ASSAULT **Alfred Goode**, boatman, Foleshill, was summoned by Uriah Clay, watchman at the Tramway Contractor's Works, Foleshill, for having assaulted him on the 31st ult. The defendant pleaded guilty, and expressed sorrow. The case was not pressed, and the Bench ordered the defendant to pay the costs. The defendant expressed his inability to do so, and the Bench thereupon fined him 1s and costs, which he could not pay, and he was committed for seven days in default.

41 19 April 1884

HENLEY IN ARDEN PETTY SESSIONS Charles Stockley and William Rawlins, both of Lapworth, who were remanded from the last Petty Sessions on a charge of stealing lias lime belonging to Messrs Greaves and Co of Stockton Works, in conjunction with **Thomas Monk**, a boatman employed by Messrs Greaves and Co, now appeared, Stockley and Rawlins being represented by Mr Fellows, solicitor, Birmingham. Monk was also defended. The evidence which was very lengthy was to the effect that about the 20th of January last, Monk was in charge of a boat containing lime, two sacks of which were removed from it at Kingswood and traced to the defendants Stockley and Rawlins, who sold it to a bricklayer named Pinner of Lapworth, for 3s. The defendants' contention was that Monk gave it to them. Monk was discharged, and Stockley and Rawlins were committed for trial at the next Quarter Sessions, bail being accepted.

42 24 May 1884

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, COUNTY HALL, COVENTRY, FRIDAY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Hodson**, boatman, Longford, was summoned for having been drunk and disorderly on the Foleshill Road on the 9th inst. The defendant's wife appeared for him, and pleaded guilty on his behalf. He was fined 5s and costs, 12s 6d.

43 28 June 1884

LEAMINGTON BOROUGH POLICE

ASSAULT **George Wildsmith**, boatman, Foleshill, was summoned by his sister-in-law, Mary Ann Wildsmith, for assaulting her on the 7th June. Mr Neale appeared for the defendant, who pleaded not guilty. After hearing the evidence, the Bench fined the defendant 2s 6d and expenses.

44 6 September 1884

SINGULAR CASE OF SUPERSTITION Mr T H Stanley held an inquest at Walsall on the body of Leah Brown (12), who was found drowned in the canal near Pratts Bridge on Wednesday evening. The evidence of the mother, Miriam Brown, wife of a puddler, was to the effect that the deceased left home on Sunday afternoon to attend a school at Ryecroft, her brother, aged 10, accompanying her. The little boy returned at about four o'clock, having left school earlier than his sister. The deceased had been anxious to go blackberrying all the week, and on Sunday, but was not

allowed to go to school or leave the house because witness had had “a dread” upon her, in consequence of having three nights in succession dreamed of baking bread. She had lost other children, and on each occasion had had similar dreams before the child died. She dreamed each night that she was kneading dough and baking bread, and that her oven was twelve or fourteen yards long. She had no suspicion of foul play, and had no reason to suppose that the child had intentionally drowned herself. **William Simcox**, boatman, having deposed to the finding of the body, the jury returned an open verdict.

45 25 April 1885

SOUTHAM PETTY SESSIONS Thomas Gardner, a boatman working for Messrs Fellows and Co, was charged with trespassing in search of game on the 20th ult, at Flecknoe, on the land of Richard Bolton. Mr Wood appeared on behalf of defendant, and pleaded not guilty. After hearing the evidence, the magistrate considered the charge of trespassing in search of game had not been proved, as it might have been a bird not coming within the description of game, and dismissed the case. Mr Wood appealed for defendant's costs of the day but these were not allowed, defendant having done wrong in committing the trespass and shooting on complainant's land.

46 16 May 1885

KENILWORTH DIVISIONAL SESSIONS

HE ONLY WANTED A RABBIT William Leabrook, boatman, Fazeley Street, Birmingham, failed to answer a summons charging him with having trespassed in search of game at Offchurch, on the 7th inst. Police-constable Green deposed that defendant gave his correct name and address. When charged he said, “I cannot deny the charge, I only wanted to shoot a rabbit”. W Barrett deposed to seeing defendant, who had a gun in his hand, beating the hedge with a stick. Defendant laid down the gun to get at a rabbit hole, when witness went up and apprehended defendant, and took the gun. He took defendant to Police-constable Green's house, and he there gave his name and address. The constable kept the gun. The Bench inflicted a fine of £1 1s, or in default fourteen days' hard labour.

47 11 July 1885

NUNEATON PETTY SESSIONS

ROWDYISM AT ATTLEBOROUGH At the Petty Sessions on Thursday, **Thomas Lapworth**, boatman of Nuneaton, was charged with being drunk and assaulting Police-constable Evans on the 29th ult. Mr Bland prosecuted and Mr Marshall defended. The alleged assault took place on Wake Monday. According to Evans's statement, he was sent for to quell a disturbance which arose outside the Royal Oak Inn. Lapworth was standing on the causeway in a drunken state, and as he refused to move, witness pushed him off the pavement. Defendant then ran at him and struck him in the mouth. Witness closed with the defendant, and they both fell. The crowd closed round, and witness was kicked a good deal ; but he managed to maintain his hold upon the prisoner, and with assistance, conveyed him to the police station. The defence was that the constable was drunk, and not in a fit state to take a man into custody ; and it was further contended that it was the constable who caused the disturbance, so far as the prisoner was concerned. Several witnesses gave evidence in support of this view ; but the Bench convicted the defendant, sending him to prison for six weeks upon the two charges. Joseph Proctor was also charged with assaulting the constable at the same time and place. It was alleged that while the prisoner Lapworth was being conveyed to Nuneaton station, Proctor kicked the constable in the ribs. He was sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment.

48 August 22 1885

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

ALLEGED THEFT OF A WATCH Thomas Cope, miner, Exhall, was charged with stealing a silver watch from the dwelling house of **John Barlow**, boatman, Exhall, on or about the 6th July. It appeared that the watch was kept in an upstairs room in the prosecutor's house, and during the

temporary absence of Mrs Barlow the house was entered and the watch stolen. On or about the 6th July the prisoner was found dealing with the watch, and he gave it to an old woman named Judd to pledge. This she did for 5s 6d, and she gave the prisoner the money and the ticket. Prisoner subsequently sold the ticket to Mr Wiles, landlord of the Shoulder of Mutton Inn, Bedworth, for 4s. He redeemed the watch and made a present of it to his father. These facts came to the knowledge of the police, and the prisoner was apprehended by Police-constable Payne. Prisoner elected to be dealt with summarily, and pleaded not guilty. His defence was that on going to work one morning he picked the watch up, and having no money, pawned it. The Bench found the prisoner guilty, and he was sent to gaol for four weeks with hard labour.

49 12 September 1885

KENILWORTH DIVISIONAL SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A PONY **Charles Newey**, boatman, pleaded not guilty to cruelly ill treating a horse at Offchurch on the 7th inst. Mr David Jones, officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, deposed that on the day in question, from information he received, he went up the canal and watched defendant come into the lock at Offchurch. The pony had great difficulty in moving the boat, because it was overloaded and the animal very weak. Witness followed the defendant and found the pony very lame and two old sores on its neck caused by the collar. He told him the animal was not fit to work and that he would have him examined. Mr Jones produced a certificate from Mr Hills, stating that the pony was totally unfit for drawing, being very aged. In reply to the Bench, witness said that the boat load weighed about 33 tons. He had been three times previously convicted. George Chambers, labourer, Leamington, said the pony was only worked eleven or twelve hours a day. The Bench sent the defendant to gaol for one calendar month with hard labour, without the option of a fine.

50 9 January 1886

A BOY DROWNED At the Chetwynd Arms, Polesworth, Dr Iliffe held an inquest on Monday, touching the death of **William Bricknall** (4) of Braunstone, near Rugby, son of a boatman. When passing through Polesworth on Saturday, the child was put out to play on the canal bank by his mother. He fell into the water and was drowned. A verdict of "Accidentally drowned" was returned.

51 March 20 1886

THE FENNY COMPTON MURDER

ARREST AT DUDLEY Shortly before midnight on Friday, Police-sergeant Staines, acting under the direction of Chief Superintendent Burton of the Dudley Police Force, arrested **Samuel Mountford**, boatman, on a charge of assisting in "killing and slaying Police-constable Hine at Fenny Compton". In making the capture, the police authorities were acting upon information given to them by a woman to whom it is alleged Mountford had made a confession incriminating himself. Mountford had resided for some time in the neighbourhood of Buck Pool, between Dudley and Wordsley, and it was here that he was arrested ; but he occasionally went to Dudley and stopped in a lodging house in Birmingham Street. At this house he met Alice Corbett, the woman alluded to, and in conversation she avers that he said, "Goodbye, Alice ; I shan't be here much longer in this country. I shall have to do a scamper, for I am mixed up in that Warwickshire job – that policeman's murder – and there is one more in it, so it's sure to come out". Mountford then went off, and Mrs Corbett related to her husband what had happened. It was agreed to communicate with the police, and the arrest followed. At the police station the woman repeated in prisoner's presence the words said to have been used by him. He replied that he said he was going out of the country, or he should lose his job. The woman denied this, and repeated her story. Chief Superintendent Burton had Mountford locked up, and communicated with the Warwickshire police. The prisoner was brought before the Dudley Magistrates on Monday morning. He is 23 years of age, 5 ft 1 in high, dark complexioned, with black hair and grey eyes, and is a native of Kinver. He has a cut on each wrist,

and states that he received his injuries there by a fall. It is not thought that Mountford is connected with this murder, but he is to be kept in custody until his movements on the day of the murder are thoroughly known.

On Monday at the Dudley Police Court, Samuel Mountford (23), boatman, charged with complicity in the murder, was placed in the dock previous to the arrival of the Magistrates. He is an insignificant looking man, and began to whimper and cry, but recovered his self possession before the entrance of the Magistrates – the Mayor (Alderman Walker) and Alderman Wilkinson. After some ordinary business the prisoner was put forward, and Chief Superintendent Burton detailed the circumstances under which he was apprehended. The prisoner had been kept back that morning because he (Mr Burton) expected the Deputy Chief Constable of Warwickshire over to take charge of the man. In case he did not presently arrive, he should ask for a remand in custody until the police came. Alice Corbett was then sworn, and gave her evidence, and Mr Barradale advised that, under the whole of the circumstances, the magistrates had no jurisdiction. So far as Dudley Court was concerned, nothing further was done with the prisoner ; but Mr Mott, the Deputy Chief Constable of Warwickshire, had him detained in custody, whilst he privately examined several friends of Mountford, who had come to Dudley to hear him tried, and wished to prove an alibi. Later in the afternoon Mr Mott went on to Stourbridge to still further pursue his investigation, the prisoner remaining in custody at Dudley. At nine o'clock at night, Mr Thomas Reynolds, J P, attended the Dudley Police Station, and heard Deputy Chief Constable Mott speak of the enquiries he had made in respect of the man Mountford, These, the officer said, tended to show that the man had nothing whatever to do with the murder, and Mr Reynolds at once discharged the prisoner.

52 19 June 1886

ATHERSTONE PETTY SESSIONS John **Hemsley**, boatman, for keeping a dog without a license, was ordered to pay costs.

53 3 July 1886

ATHERSTONE PETTY SESSIONS **David Wiles**, canal boatman of Longford, was charged with wounding another boatman at Boon's Wharf near Nuneaton, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm, on the 28th June. Complainant, who lives at Coventry, said he was passing along the canal in his boat, when defendant, who was on the wharf, commenced to insult him, and challenged him to come off and fight. He went off the boat, and gave defendant a blow in the face with his open hand. Defendant then pulled off his belt, with which he struck witness several times. Witness closed with him, and tried to obtain possession of the belt. They fell down, but witness rose again and cut off the buckle from the belt, putting his knife in his pocket again. Defendant then drew a knife, and threatened to stab witness, running at him with a knife in his hand. Witness put up his arm, and defendant drew the knife across his wrist, inflicting the wound from which he was now suffering. As he could not stop the bleeding, and lost a large quantity of blood, he went to Dr Hammond at Nuneaton, nearly fainting from loss of blood before he arrived there. Defendant offered him money to say nothing about it. Arthur Wallis gave evidence in the same terms as that of the prosecutor, and was corroborated by a woman named Woodhouse. Police-constable Munroe proved the defendant's arrest at Longford, and added that the latter admitted the charge, but said the complainant began it. He found two knives upon the defendant, who said he “did it” with the light coloured handle knife. Dr William Hammond said complainant came to the surgery on the evening in question, bleeding profusely from a wound in the left wrist, clean cut and two inches long, and down to the bone. There was also a wound on the right temple, as well as some lumps and bruises. The wound on the temple was a distinct cut, and was about three quarters of an inch long. It might have been caused by a heavy blow from such a buckle as that produced. Defendant was committed for trial at the Assizes.

54 24 July 1886

SOUTHAM COUNTY COURT Thomas Neal, Birdingbury v **John Knight**, a boatman. Claim

£13 18s 10d. This being a long standing account for goods, the case was adjourned for production of fuller particulars.

55 31 July 1886

WARWICKSHIRE ASSIZES

UNLAWFUL WOUNDING AT NUNEATON **David Wiles** (18), boatman, was indicted for feloniously wounding **Harley Simcock**, a boatman, at Nuneaton on the 28th June. Mr Pye prosecuted and Mr Wilmot defended. Mr Pye stated that on the date named the parties met on the canal side near Nuneaton, and after some words with reference to a woman whom prisoner taxed prosecutor with having on his boat, they quarrelled and struggled together. In the course of the struggle prisoner, who was getting the worst of it, pulled out a knife, and was alleged to have cut prosecutor somewhat severely about the wrist. In cross-examination prosecutor admitted that he had a knife, which he pulled out of his pocket and opened shortly before he was wounded by the prisoner, but denied that he was cut with that weapon. He opened his own knife to cut a belt with which prisoner was striking him. For the defence Mr Wilmot suggested that the wound was inflicted in the course of the struggle and without malicious intention on the part of the prisoner. The jury found prisoner guilty of unlawfully wounding, and he was sent to gaol for three months.

56 18 September 1886

A CHILD DROWNED IN THE CANAL

A WARNING TO PARENTS An inquest was held at the Hop Pole Inn, Coventry, on Monday afternoon, before Dr C W Iliffe, Coroner, as to the death of Mary Theresa Compton, the daughter of Harry Compton, carpenter, of Chantry Place. The evidence showed that on Saturday morning at about half past nine o'clock Mrs Compton sent her children out for a walk, telling them to go up the Stoney Stanton Road. There were four children, the oldest being eight years and the youngest eighteen months. The deceased was six years of age, and another child named Yardley, also six, went with them. The children went up the Stoney Street Road, through Howard Street, up Harnall Lane, and on to the Old Foleshill Road. There they sat on the grass for some time, and then they went and looked through the railings at the canal, and saw some boys walking along a plank from the towing-path to some boats. At one o'clock, as they had not returned home, Mr Compton went and searched for them on the Stoney Stanton Road, but could not find them ; and at two o'clock they all returned but the deceased. On being questioned, the eldest girl said they left the deceased at the top of Harnall Lane, and she was sent to fetch her ; but in consequence of the different stories which the children told, the mother herself afterwards went to look for the deceased at the canal. She failed to find her, and went again, and then a third time ; and a little boy named Gough told her that he had seen the deceased walking along the plank. Meanwhile the son of **Joseph Compton**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Robbins and Powers, had found a child's hat in the water, and later in the afternoon Compton heard the deceased's mother telling another woman of the child's disappearance. He went to the stop keeper and procured a rake, with which he commenced to drag the canal, and at the first "throw" he drew the body to the surface. The body lay at the side of the canal in 3 feet 9 inches of water, and Compton was of opinion that deceased fell in from the towing-path. Life had been extinct for some hours. In reply to the Coroner, Mrs Compton said she was in the habit of sending the children out alone, but she always told them to keep on the Stoney Stanton Road and not go further. The Coroner asked her whether she thought it was right to do this, the children being of such tender years. Mrs Compton said she thought they would be safe on the Stoney Stanton Road, and they went there nearly every day after tea. The Coroner said it was a wonder that they had not got under the horses' feet and been killed, and added that so long as such practices were followed the frequency of accidents could be easily explained. There was a great responsibility resting on parents in allowing children of such tender years to have charge of other young children, and he hoped that this case would be a warning, not only to Mrs Compton but to others. Mrs Compton said she would never send her children out alone again. The Coroner, in summing up, spoke of the carelessness and omission of duty on the part of many parents with

regard to their children, which was the cause of many preventable accidents, and the jury, in returning a verdict of accidental death, concurred to the Coroner's observations, and expressed a hope to Mrs Compton that she would be more careful in future.

57 11 December 1886

LONGFORD

SUDDEN DEATH An inquest was held at the Saracen's Head on Saturday last, before Dr C W Iliffe, Coroner, as to the death of **Mary Elizabeth Simpson**, wife of **Thomas Simpson**, a boatman, who died on the previous Friday. The evidence showed that on the previous Thursday night the deceased retired to bed apparently as well as usual, having partaken of black pudding for supper. Arthur Simpson, the son of the deceased, found on waking in the morning that she had fallen out of bed, and he at once procured assistance. The deceased had laid on the floor for about half an hour. A neighbour named Lole stated that she was fetched about eight o'clock on Friday morning by the boy Simpson, who stated that his mother was dying. She went at once, and found deceased on the floor. She was alive, and in appearance much as usual, but breathed very hard. She died about twelve o'clock. Dr Masser stated that he was called to see the deceased. She was cold and insensible, could not swallow, and her pulse was feeble. She rallied for a short time and seemed as though she would recover, but she died about twelve o'clock. He thought the cause of death was congestion of the lungs, brought about by exposure to cold. The jury returned a verdict accordingly.

58 1 January 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY **John Knight**, boatman of Banbury, was summoned by Police-constable G Lee for having worked a pony while in an unfit condition at Anstey on the 13th inst. The defendant pleaded guilty. The constable stated that there was a running wound under the collar, and the Bench fined the defendant 5s and costs 18s 6d.

59 16 July 1887

SOUTHAM PETTY SESSIONS **Thomas Bowyer**, a boatman, was charged with firing off a gun within 50 feet of the centre of the highway at Stockton on the 19th ult. The police said the shooting with guns on Sunday had become a nuisance. Defendant was fined 2s 6d and 12s 6d costs.

60 31 December 1887

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A MULE **Samuel Cox**, boatman of Brinklow, was summoned by Police-constable Lea for having worked a mule while in an unfit condition, on the 17th inst. The defendant pleaded guilty, and the constable stated that there were several raw sores on the mule, and the animal was also lame. The defendant said he had no desire to be cruel, and he did not think the mule was so bad as it was. The Superintendent of Police said that nothing was known against the defendant, but there were frequent complaints of the great cruelty practised on the canal side. The Bench fined the defendant 5s and costs 12s 6d, and intimated that future cases would be severely dealt with.

61 9 June 1888

WARWICK BOROUGH POLICE

DRUNK AND FIGHTING **John Chambers**, Saltisford, boatman, and William Savage, Market Street, labourer, were charged with having been drunk and disorderly at Cape Road in the 2nd inst. Police-constable Durham said that about a quarter past five on the afternoon in question he was on duty in the Cape Road and saw the two defendants fighting. Their faces were covered with blood. As they were both drunk he took them into custody. The Bench fined defendants 10s and costs, with the alternative of seven days' imprisonment.

62 4 August 1888

DEATH BY DROWNING Dr C W Iliffe (Coroner) held an inquest at Hartshill on Wednesday evening touching the death of **Ellen Goode** (40), which resulted from her falling into the Coventry Canal on the previous night. The deceased lived with a Banbury boatman, and on Monday the boat arrived at Mr Alkin's wharf, Hartshill, for the purpose of being loaded with stone. In the evening the deceased accompanied the boatman into the village, and after purchasing some necessities they went to a public house, where they stayed until eleven o'clock, the deceased leaving first. When the man came back to the boat the woman was nowhere to be seen, but after searching her bonnet was found floating on the water. The man then obtained a hook shaft, and soon brought the body to the surface. He alleged that they were both sober on leaving the inn, and that they had not quarrelled. He had lived with deceased three years, and also previously for a period of two years. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

63 13 October 1888

HENLEY IN ARDEN PETTY SESSIONS F Hunt, gamekeeper to Mr G P Muntz, was charged by **Charles Newey**, boatman of Tanworth, with throwing at his dog and breaking its leg on September 1st. Defendant admitted throwing, but said he did not hit the dog, and was fined, with expenses, £2.

64 12 January 1889

CRUELTY TO A PONY At the Rugby Petty Sessions yesterday, **Thomas Rayson**, boatman, Bedworth, was charged with cruelly working a horse while in an unfit state, at Newbold on January 5th, and Thomas Simpson, publican, was charged with causing the same to be worked. Defendants pleaded guilty. Police-sergeant Moore stated that on the day named he saw the horse pulling two laden boats along the canal. The animal was suffering from several painful raw wounds. Rayson was in charge, but said Simpson knew of the wounds. The Bench retired to see the horse, and on returning into Court the Chairman said they had no doubt that the animal was perfectly unfit for work, and that it was a cruelty to cause it to be worked. The defendant Simpson was fined £1 and costs, and the defendant Rayson 5s.

65 23 February 1889

SOUTHAM PETTY SESSIONS, MONDAY **Henry Jordan**, Stockton, boatman, was summoned by Inspector Welch for cruelly ill treating a horse by working it while in an unfit state on the 6th inst at Stockton. The offence being of a light nature, the defendant was dismissed upon payment of the costs, 6s.

66 2 March 1889

HENLEY IN ARDEN

PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY **John Shepherd**, boatman of Wootton Wawen, was charged with working a horse while in an unfit condition on the 27th of January ; and **Charles Moore**, boatman of Birmingham, his employer, was summoned for allowing the same to be worked. Mr G W Ball, miller and coal dealer of Wootton Wawen, said that on the 27th of January Shepherd arrived at Wootton with a boat load of coal of about thirty tons. Witness was informed that the horse had a serious cut in one of its legs, and on inspecting the spot the following morning, he found a large wound, six inches long, three wide and three deep. Moore, being ill, did not appear, but was represented by his wife, and was ordered to pay a fine of £6 including costs. Paid. The case against Shepherd was dismissed.

67 13 April 1889

SOUTHAM PETTY SESSIONS **Henry Berry**, a canal boatman, described as of Southam, was brought up in custody charged by Inspector Welch with being drunk at Southam on Monday. Defendant pleaded guilty. Inspector Welch stated that he saw the defendant on the day in question, who was in a helpless state of drunkenness. Nothing previous being known against defendant, he

was discharged on payment of 6s 6d costs.

68 20 April 1889

WARWICK BOROUGH POLICE

SUNDAY BEGGING **George Brown**, who gave the comprehensive address of London, and described himself as a boatman, was charged with begging at Coton End on Sunday. The offence was proved by Inspector Hall and Police-constable Mason, who stated that defendant begged all along the way from Emscote. He was committed to gaol for 14 days with hard labour.

69 4 May 1889

A LEAMINGTON BARMAID FOUND DROWNED

THE INQUEST On Wednesday afternoon the body of Maud Bates, who had recently been employed as a barmaid at the Angel Hotel, Leamington, was found in the canal at Warwick, near to the Myton Road Bridge. The body caught in the fan of the screw of a steam barge, and the boatmen at once informed the police. The clothing was wound tightly round the screw of the barge, and had to be cut away before the body could be recovered. The body was then removed by the police to the Crown Hotel to await an inquest. The deceased girl was only 17 years of age.

The inquest on the body of deceased was held at the Crown Inn, Coventry Road, before Mr F R Moore, borough coroner, on Thursday afternoon. Sarah Ann Holt, wife of James Holt of Cowper Street, Summer Lane, Birmingham, said that deceased, Maud Bates, was her sister. The deceased was 17 years of age last August. The deceased left her house on the previous Thursday to come to Warwick. She had been staying with witness for a month. She had been barmaid at the Angel Hotel, Leamington, but had left her situation. The deceased told her that she had obtained a situation at the Portobello Inn, Emscote, and she was going there.

The Coroner : When she came home from the Angel, did she give you any reason why she had left, or make any complaint? - Witness : None whatever. She was very lively while she was at my house.

Can you give any reason why she was found in the canal? - No ; except that she had not been at the Portobello, and was distressed at not having obtained a situation.

Have you heard from her since she left? - We had a short letter from her on Saturday to say that she had arrived safely.

Did you notice where the letter was addressed from? - No, I did not.

Samuel West, 17 Lower Faseley Street, Birmingham, boatman, said that on Wednesday afternoon he was coming along the canal with a steam barge. Near to the Myton Road Bridge the boat was stopped by something getting into the screw of the boat. He put a hook down and pulled up a shoe. He then sent for the police at Leamington and Emscote, but did not do anything to get the body out of the water.

Amy Browne, manageress of the Angel Hotel, said the deceased was engaged as barmaid on the 8th of January last, and she remained until the 30th of March. A month's notice was given her on the 25th of March, and on the following Saturday deceased said she wanted to go out and telegraph her mother, and to leave. She left the hotel at five o'clock that evening. She saw the deceased about a week afterwards, when she called for her letters, which were given to her. They had no occasion to find fault with her while she was there, except that she was inexperienced.

A Juryman : What was her general conduct? - She was a very lively girl. She had never defied me until that day. She was a very willing, cheerful and hard working girl.

You had nothing against her character? - No.

The Coroner : You have never refused her admission to the hotel? - No, we have not seen her since she called for her letters.

The Foreman : You have not refused her a reference for the Portobello Inn? - I have never heard of her going to the Woolpack Hotel until now.

William Albert Lowe of 102 Regent Street said he was acquainted with the deceased. He had known her for three months. He did not keep company with her. He had walked out with her three

or four times. He was with her on Monday afternoon. He met her by the Great Western Station at half past three by appointment. He stood talking with her for half an hour. There was no unpleasantness between them. She told him she was going home to Birmingham by the 6.30 train from Leamington. She appeared the same as usual, and not at all distressed. He also saw deceased on Sunday night, and walked about with her for some time.

The Coroner : Do you know where she stayed on Sunday night? - I believe she stayed at Macdonalds in Regent Street on Sunday night.

By a Juryman : He did not know her before she went to the Angel. She did not say anything to him about going to a situation at the Portobello. He could not account for her having committed suicide. He did not think she had cause to go to business at all, as her parents were pretty well to do.

A Juryman : I should like to know why you met her by appointment at the station.

Witness : I received a telegram from her, sent from the Great Western Railway, Birmingham, asking me to meet her at 3.30.

Anthony de Longrais said he saw the deceased on Tuesday evening in Bath Street. He had known deceased by sight since she had been in Leamington.

Police-constable Mason said that about half past three on Wednesday afternoon, he was met on the Emscote Canal bridge by two boatmen, who told him they wanted his assistance as they had found a body in the canal. He went to the Myton Road Bridge, and there found the body fixed in the fan of the steam barge. The clothing was tightly wound round the fan. A man named Young got into the water and cut the clothing away from the fan. The body was then recovered. He should say the body had been in the water 24 hours. He searched the pockets, and found a purse containing 1s 5d, two pocket handkerchiefs, a pair of kid gloves, three pencils, a knife, and button hook.

Inspector Hall deposed that he assisted to get the body out of the water. He had the body put in a cart and brought it there. On Wednesday night Dr Rankin made a superficial examination of the body, and found no marks of violence.

At the request of the jury, the witness Lowe was recalled, and examined as to his relations with the deceased girl. In reply to questions he denied that he was engaged to her, or had promised her marriage. On Monday afternoon he endeavoured to persuade her to go home, as she appeared to wish to stay in Leamington a few days longer. He merely spoke to her for her own good. He had not said anything to her about her bothering him. He never heard anything against her character. He did not believe her to be in trouble. She never stayed with him at any time. He could not say why she telegraphed to him to meet her – except as a friend. She had never said anything to him about committing suicide.

In reply to a Juror, the Coroner said that Dr Rankin reported that the deceased was not pregnant.

The jury returned a verdict of “Found drowned”.

70 15 June 1889

ATHERSTONE PETTY SESSIONS **William Smalley**, boatman of Chilvers Coton, was sued by Joseph Siah Proctor of Tuttle Hall for the sum of 4s, for four days' wages. He was also charged with assaulting Proctor on the 3rd inst. The Bench ordered defendant to pay the amount claimed, with costs, and also the costs in the charge of assault.

71 13 July 1889

ATHERSTONE PETTY SESSIONS **John Hemsley**, boatman of Polesworth, was charged with committing a game trespass at Grendon on the 23rd June. William Riches, gamekeeper, stated the facts, and defendant said his wife was ill and he went out to get a rabbit for her. He was fined 10s with 19s 6d costs.

72 3 August 1889

WARWICKSHIRE ASSIZES

BURGLARY AT SOLIHULL **John Mountney** (29), boatman, was charged with breaking into the house of Mr Field, grocer of Solihull, and stealing various goods. Prisoner, who was a boatman,

committed the crime whilst under the influence of drink. He was sentenced to four months' hard labour.

73 10 August 1889

STOCKTON

CRUELTY TO A HORSE At Southam on Monday, **John Franks**, a boatman, was summoned by Police-constable Stockford for cruelly ill treating a horse at Stockton on the 24th July, by working it while one of its shoulders was wounded. Defendant pleaded not guilty. Police-constable Stockford proved the case to the satisfaction of the Bench, but it being of a light nature, the defendant was dismissed upon payment of 7s costs.

STEALING A BARROW WHEEL **Thomas Worley**, 64, Watery Lane, Birmingham, boatman, was brought up at Southam on Monday, and charged by William Barrett with stealing a barrow wheel of the value of 4s at Stockton on the 1st instant. Prosecutor William Barrett stated that he was manager at Mr Griffin's works at Stockton. On the evening of the 31st ult, he saw a wheelbarrow at the works, it was complete then, but he saw it again about five o'clock next morning, and the wheel had been wrenched out of it and taken away. He gave information to Police-constable Stockford about ten o'clock the same morning. He identified the wheel produced as his master's property. Police-constable Stockford stated that from information received he went along the canal side in pursuit of the prisoner, and found him at the Cally Limeworks. Two boys were in charge of the boat and the prisoner was at the works. As soon as prisoner saw witness, he came running to the boat and said, "What's the matter?" Police-constable Boulton was a short distance behind witness at the time. Witness started to go over the bridge there, and when he had got three or four steps up he heard a splash in the water. Witness said, "I am going to search for a wheel that was stolen from Mr Griffin's works last night". Police-constable Boulton said, "He has just thrown it into the canal". Prisoner, who heard the remark, made no observation. Police-constable Boulton dragged the canal and pulled the wheel (produced) out. Witness then charged prisoner with stealing it, and took him into custody. Prisoner having elected to be dealt with summarily, and the usual caution being read to him, he made the following statement :- "I found the wheel against the lock, and threw it into the boat". The Bench inflicted a fine of £2 including costs, upon payment of which amount, prisoner was liberated.

74 19 October 1889

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING Among the many visitors from Leamington attending the "mop" at Warwick on Saturday last was a middle aged man named William Sharp, who met with an adventure on his way home late at night. It appears that Police-constable Mason was on duty on the Emscote Road about half past one on Sunday morning, when his attention was drawn to a lot of water on the footpath. He walked on to the bridge spanning the canal, and then heard a voice shout, "Policeman, come here, there is someone in the canal". The officer at once proceeded to the spot, and then found a boatman getting a man – who proved to be Sharp – out of the water. He was in a stupid condition, and when asked by the officer how he got into the water, he could not explain, and asked where his jacket and waistcoat were. The towing-path was searched, and on the opposite side of the bridge, near the mill, the garments were found lying on a heap of stones, wet through. It was then ascertained that Sharp had fallen in the canal some time previously, and it was a marvel how he got out. After a short time the man said he would proceed along the canal to his home, and he was accompanied a short distance by Mason but, as he narrowly escaped falling into the water a third time, the officer very discreetly refused to allow him to proceed any further that way, and saw him on to the main road. Sharp reached home about nine o'clock in the morning, and has suffered ever since his foolish escapade.

75 2 November 1889

At the Rugby Petty Sessions last week, **James Chater**, boatman, Foleshill, was charged with

cruelly ill treating a mule by causing it to be worked on the canal at Brownsover whilst in an unfit state on October 18th ; and William Chater, his son, who did not appear, was summoned for working it whilst so unfit. Police-constable Hayes stated that the mule was suffering terribly from three large wounds on the shoulder. The elder defendant said that the mule had been in the stable a whole week to recover from some old sores, and when he used it for the first time on the day in question they were healed ; but just before the officer saw it, the animal had rubbed against a bridge and reopened the wounds. Previous convictions were proved, and a fine of £4 and 14s costs was imposed. The son was fined 10s and 13s 6d costs.

76 22 March 1890

WARWICKSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

HOUSEBREAKING AT SOLIHULL William Smith, 21, watchmaker, and **Joseph Footman**, 20, boatman, were indicted for breaking and entering the dwelling house of Edmund Field on the 15th May 1889, at Solihull, and stealing seven bottles of sweets and other articles. Mr Parfitt prosecuted. The prisoners were found guilty, and each sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

77 April 1890

LEAMINGTON BOROUGH POLICE

CRUELTY TO A MULE **Samuel Worrall**, boatman of Moor Lane, Brierley Hill, pleaded guilty to cruelly treating a mule by working it while in an unfit state. On Sunday afternoon Police-constable Rowe was on the canal bridge, and saw the mule pulling a boat which, it was stated, contained twenty five tons of iron. He went down to the canal side and spoke to the defendant, who commenced using bad language. The mule was in very poor condition, and was suffering from a bad wound in one of its shoulders. Defendant wished to drive the mule along, but the constable insisted upon stopping it, and brought it away. The mule, which was in a shocking state, had been brought up to the court for the inspection of the Magistrates. The Bench asked defendant if he was willing to have the mule destroyed, and upon his answering in the affirmative, he was fined one guinea.

78 14 June 1890

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

LIFE ON A CANAL BOAT **John Thompson**, boatman, Buckby, Northamptonshire, was summoned by W E Thomas, Inspector of Canal Boats, Foleshill, for an infringement of the Public Health Act at Wyken on May 29th. The defendant did not appear, and a letter from him was read explaining the circumstances. Mr Thomas said he visited a branch of the Oxford Canal at Wyken and found a canal boat named the "Sarah Ann" registered at Daventry No 64. The after cabin was used as a sleeping place for man and wife and a girl aged sixteen, the statutory age allowed being twelve years. The defendant had been previously cautioned in December last. He was ordered to pay costs 14s and comply with the statute.

79 23 August 1890

KENILWORTH DIVISIONAL SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A HORSE AND ASSAULTING AN OFFICER **Edward Wilkins**, boatman, Radford Semele, was charged with cruelly ill treating a horse by working it in an unfit state on the 14th inst, and also with assaulting Mr David Jones, officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, on the same date. Mr C T Baker prosecuted, and Mr Crowther Davies appeared for defendant, who pleaded guilty to both charges. Mr Baker stated that Mr Jones, hearing that defendant had purchased a horse from a Leamington cab proprietor, in respect to which he had already warned the cab proprietor, he saw defendant and spoke to him about the horse. The defendant replied that he was not going to work it. Later in the day he again saw the horse, and on his endeavouring to lead the animal away, the assault was committed. Mr Hills, veterinary surgeon,

said the horse was about 22 years of age, and must be in great pain when only walking about. On defendant undertaking to destroy the horse, the Bench imposed the nominal fine of 5s and costs 17s 6d, and in the second case, on the consent of Mr Baker, remitted the costs.

80 1 November 1890

SOUTHAM PETTY SESSIONS **Charles Hoare**, Lower Cherwell Street, Banbury, boatman, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Napton on the 1st ult. Defendant, who had since met with an accident, did not appear, and the case not being of a violent nature was dismissed on payment of 7s costs. The money was paid by a friend.

81 13 December 1890

SAD DROWNING FATALITY On Tuesday the Coroner (Dr C W Iliffe) held an inquest at the Jolly Collier, Sowe Waste, touching the death of David Read, watch finisher of 6 Waterloo Street, Coventry, whose body was found in the Oxford Canal on Monday morning last.

Thomas Read, son of the deceased, said his father's age was 47 last birthday. He (deceased) left home on Sunday afternoon last at about a quarter to three as well as usual. According to his own words he was going to his uncle Reuben's at Foleshill for a walk. Witness had ascertained since that he did not go there. To the best of his belief he met some friends on the road and, altering his mind, proceeded with his companions to the Jolly Collier public house.

William Eburne, a polisher by trade, living at 55 Gilbert Street, said he was at the Jolly Collier public house on Sunday last, and saw David Read. He was in the house talking to others, and when he last saw him he was perfectly sober. He left at 8 p m, proceeding along the road towards the iron bridge. That was the last time he saw deceased alive. In answer to a question by one of the jury, witness said he thought deceased knew his road perfectly well.

Alfred Simpson, a boatman living at Sowe Waste, said he saw the body of deceased on Monday morning at 8 a m floating on the water. He fetched assistance, and got the body out of the water. There were no signs of a struggle having taken place near where the body was found.

Police-constable Haughton, stationed at Sowe, said he heard of the finding of the body in the Oxford Canal at about 8.40 on Monday last. Having removed the body to the Jolly Collier public house, he found in the pockets of deceased 6s 6d in money, a pair of nippers, a small screwdriver and a pocket handkerchief. He then made an examination of the towing-path near the spot where the deceased was found, but there was no evidence of a struggle.

The Coroner, proceeding to sum up, said it was satisfactory to know that at the time the deceased left the public house he was sober, satisfactory to know that he came here and spent a rational afternoon without getting intoxicated, and the only thing unsatisfactory was how he got into the water.

The jury not agreeing as to whether the spot where the deceased was found was dangerous, with the Coroner's consent they went and examined it. On returning all agreed that at the spot where the Waste was bounded by the towing-path there ought to be something to prevent strangers from walking into the canal as it was dangerous at this point in the dark.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", and added a rider to the effect that the canal bounded by the Waste or common ground is dangerous, and the jury request the canal company to make good a fence that originally existed at this spot.

82 23 May 1891

WALSGRAVE ON SOWE **Arthur Oldham**, 10 years of age, the son of Joseph Oldham, boatman, Boxmoor, Herefordshire, was found drowned in the canal near Evan's Bridge, Sowe Common, on Friday. Deceased, who was working on his uncle's (**Alfred Simpson**) boat, is supposed to have fallen into the water whilst trying to step from Simpson's boat to another which was being towed alongside it. An inquest was held at the Boat Inn, Sowe, on Saturday, before Dr C W Iliffe, coroner, when the jury returned a verdict that deceased died from asphyxia caused by drowning.

83 12 September 1891

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CRUELTY TO A HORSE AT ANSTEY **John Hove**, boatman, Banbury, was summoned for working a horse while in an unfit condition. Police-constable Price said he was in Anstey last Sunday when he saw defendant's pony coming along the towing path towing an empty boat. It was very lame and in a poor condition. Under the collar was a raw wound three inches in length. A boy about 12 years of age was in charge of the pony and defendant was in the boat. The wound was not fresh, and must have been at least a week old. Superintendent Prosser said he had not seen a horse in worse condition than this was when brought to the station. The Chairman said it was a bad case, and he would be fined 10s and 4s 6d costs.

84 October 3 1891

LIFE ON A CANAL BOAT

TORTURING A LONGFORD BOY On Friday, at a special sitting of the Bicester Petty Sessions, **Henry Hodson**, twenty, a powerful looking young fellow, described as a boatman, of Longford, near Coventry, was charged with cruelly ill treating and beating John Brown, aged six years, by striking him, and also by throwing him into the canal on several occasions, between August 16th and September 1st. Mr Hope Kyd, barrister, appeared to prosecute on behalf of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ; and Mr F W R Lindsey, solicitor, defended.

Thomas Brown, aged thirteen, stated that his mother was a widow and lived at Longford. For about five weeks witness had been working for the prisoner on a canal boat running between Longford and Somerton. The prosecutor was witness's brother, and on August 16th Hodson said he would take the lad for a trip to Oxford if his mother would allow him to go. As it was holiday at the school their mother gave her consent, and they all left Longford early the following morning. The first day they went as far as Atherstone Quarries, where the boat was loaded with stone, and they then proceeded down the canal. Hodson made witness's brother drive the horse, and because he did not drive quick enough he beat him with a hand brush, and then ducked him in the canal. Witness said : "DON'T BEAT JACK, BEAT ME"

and Hodson then turned upon witness, and gave him a good thrashing. On the 20th ult, they were at Fazeley, and witness was sent on ahead to pay the canal tolls, and on his return to the boat his brother was crying bitterly. Witness asked him what was the matter, and he said that Hodson had been thrashing him. His hand was bleeding. A few days later they were at Somerton, and while there Hodson beat the boy very severely, striking him over the head and body with a whipstock, and blacking one of his eyes. The eye swelled very much, and Hodson wanted witness to cut the swelling with a pocket knife to reduce the swelling, but this witness refused to do. On Sunday August 25th, while still in the vicinity of Somerton, Hodson tied a rope round his brother's waist, and

THREW HIM INTO THE CANAL

The boy kept sinking under the water, but every time he did so Hodson pulled him up again with the rope. This treatment was continued for some time, and on being pulled out of the water the lad could hardly stand, so Hodson took him to a stable on the bank till he came round. The lad was a day or two in recovering from this treatment. They returned to Longford on September 1st, and the boy was again ill used because he lost a farthing which Hodson had given him. The prisoner beat him over the head and body with a handbrush, and bruised him very much. The lad was then put in a cabin, and stayed there all night till witness went home and told their mother, and she went down to the boat and took his brother away.

Dr Orton of Bedworth stated that about midday on Wednesday September 2nd, the boy was brought to his surgery and, at the request of the mother, he examined him. He found a contused wound on the back of the head, and there was also a wound on the side of the face. One eye was covered with contused wounds. The lad's shoulders, arms, legs, hips, ribs and almost the whole surface of the body was

COVERED WITH SEVERE BRUISES

There was a small wound at the bottom of the spine, and several wounds on the back of the left hand. Unusual and excessive violence must have been used to produce the bruises, which appeared to have been caused at different times, but within a week or ten days. Replying to Mr Lindsey, witness said he had known the prisoner some time, and had always found him an industrious, steady young man.

The mother of the lad said before she gave her consent for her son to go, Hodson promised to take care of him.

Mr Lindsey, for the defence, said that acting under his advice the prisoner would plead guilty to a common assault. The case had been worked up by a powerful society, and everything that could be brought against the prisoner had been put forward ; but he asked the Bench to believe that it was not so bad as it had been painted. The prisoner showed kindness of heart in inviting this lad to take a trip during his holidays and so let him see a bit of the country. The prisoner had to keep the boy out of his own pocket, and it was not believed that he would wilfully and maliciously injure him.

Mr Francis Standing, a coal merchant of Longford, stated that he had known the prisoner from childhood, and had always found him a quiet, inoffensive young man.

The magistrates retired, and on returning into court the Chairman said that taking into consideration the previous good character, and the fact that the prisoner had already been ten days in gaol, they had decided to treat him leniently. The sentence of the Court was that he would go to prison for 21 days.

85 24 October 1891

TAMWORTH COUNTY COURT

DISPUTE ABOUT A BOAT George Henry Dennis, boatman, Burton-on Trent, sought to recover £12 damages for the detention of a canal boat, and the return of the boat or the sum of £5, from **Frederick Sephton**, boatbuilder, Polesworth. Mr R Nevill for plaintiff, and Mr M G Atkins for defendant. The plaintiff agreed on April 11th to purchase a canal boat of defendant for £13, and paid a deposit of £5. He signed an agreement to pay the balance by instalments, or the boat to revert to the defendant. As plaintiff did not keep up his payments, defendant seized the boat. He alleged that the signature to the agreement put in by defendant was not in his handwriting. His Honour then asked plaintiff to write his name on a piece of paper, which he did, and his Honour said he had no hesitation in saying that both signatures were written by the same person. The Christian name in each was identical, being spelt "Gorge". His Honour gave a verdict for the defendant with costs, ordered the documents to be impounded, and told plaintiff he would be lucky indeed if he escaped prosecution for perjury.