

**POTTERIES EXAMINER**  
**1871 to 1881**

**1      7 April 1871**

KIDSGROVE – WEDNESDAY

CHARGE AGAINST A BOATMAN **Frank Compton**, boatman, was summoned for wasting the water of the Trent and Mersey Canal. **Richard Glass**, an inspector of the canal, proved that by an improper use of the Harding's Wood lock the defendant wasted the water of the canal on the 13<sup>th</sup> ult. Defendant was fined 20s and costs.

**2      14 April 1871**

HANLEY BOROUGH – MONDAY **Samuel** and **John Tomkinson**, brothers and boatmen, were charged with assaulting Police-sergeant Derbyshire. The defendants and another brother, **James**, not in custody, had stabled their horses at the Lamb Inn for some days, and on Saturday night were going off with them without paying for their keep, when the landlord went for the police, and Sergeant Derbyshire went to the Lamb. On seeing him James mounted one of the horses and bolted off at full speed down Hope Street, and Derbyshire followed, overtaking him. A struggle ensued, and the other defendants coming up, the officer was attacked, knocked down, kicked while down, and stones were thrown at him. During the struggle Samuel took a large glass bottle, filled with oil, from his pocket, and was aiming a blow at the officer's head, when his arm was pushed aside and the blow averted, the officer's life being thereby probably saved. In the end James and John got away, but Samuel was captured and brought to the office. Superintendent Alexander then obtained a horse and followed John to Bradley Green, arresting him at his father's house. At first he denied having been to Hanley, but he afterwards admitted it. He resisted so violently that he had to be handcuffed in bed. A beerseller at Far Green named Cliff, who witnessed the assault, corroborated Derbyshire's account. It was he who, pushing aside the arm of Samuel, prevented him giving a murderous blow to Derbyshire. Cliff was complimented by the Bench on his conduct. The defendants were each fined 40s and costs. Mr E Tennant appeared for them.

**3      21 April 1871**

POLICE INTELLIGENCE, TUNSTALL

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **George Jenks**, boatman, Hazel Green, Cheshire, was charged with cruelly treating a horse. Police-constable Pritchard said that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April he saw the defendant in charge of a horse and boat on the canal. The horse was very emaciated and had two large wounds on its shoulders, and another large wound on the leg. Superintendent Baker said he had the horse taken to a Veterinary surgeon, who ordered it to be destroyed. The animal was in a wretched condition, and the sight of the wounds was most disgusting. Police-constable Twigg stated that the defendant had been in Knutsford gaol fourteen days for a similar offence to the present one. Defendant was committed to gaol for one month.

**4      21 April 1871**

LONGTON – WEDNESDAY

CLAIM FOR WAGES Henry Colsell and John Whalley, trading as Colsell, Whalley and Co, carriers, Stoke, were summoned under the Masters and Servants Act 1869 by **Charles Hicks**, for the non performance of a certain contract, and complainant claimed £8 0s 0d as compensation for the breach of contract. Mr Welch was for the complainant and Mr Davies for the defendants. Complainant said that he was engaged by the defendants to take and steer a boat from Stoke to Manchester and back again to Stoke, and from thence to London and back again to Stoke. On his return from Manchester he was dismissed, not being allowed to make the voyage to London. The question at issue was as to what the contract really was ; whether to Manchester and back, or to Manchester and back, and then to London and back, making what is called a round voyage. The defendants contended that they had the right to dismiss the captain of a boat whenever he was at

Stoke. Mr Balguy, after hearing the evidence, suggested that defendants should make the complainant some compensation, but as they declined to do this he made an order upon the defendants for the payment of £3, with 19s 6d costs.

**5 26 May 1871**

TUNSTALL

CANAL OFFENCE **Thomas Hudson**, a boatman in charge of a boat passing through the Harecastle Tunnel, Tunstall, was summoned at the instance of **Mr R Glass**, inspector to the Trent and Mersey Canal Company, for having a fire on board his boat whilst in the tunnel, contrary to the bye laws of the Canal Company. It was proved that the fire caused the emissions of great volumes of smoke, to the great annoyance of other boatmen. Hudson, who did not appear, was fined 20s and costs.

**6 24 June 1871**

TUNSTALL

STEALING EARTHENWARE **William Palin**, boatman, was charged with stealing earthenware from the Anderton Company's wharf at Longport, and Hannah Palin, his sister-in-law, was charged with receiving it. It was stated by the police that the husband of the female prisoner, who was concerned in the robbery, was at liberty, and a remand was asked for. Mr Balguy remanded prisoners for a week.

**7 1 July 1871**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

ALLEGED THEFT AT GNOSALL **Henry Willday** was charged with stealing, on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 1871 at Gnosall, seventy pounds weight of oats, beans and bran, the property of **William Bloor**. The prosecutor and prisoner were both boatmen. There being some difficulty in identifying the corn alleged to have been stolen, the jury found the prisoner not guilty.

**8 8 July 1871**

TUNSTALL

COAL STEALING **William Jervis**, a boatman in the employ of the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, was charged with stealing coal belonging to Robert Heath and Son. PC Pritchard said that on the 28<sup>th</sup> ult, there were two boats laden with coal opposite Messrs Heath's ironworks at Ravensdale. Defendant came by, and as he passed the coal boats, he leaned over the side and took two lumps of coal. Witness stopped defendant's horse, and asked for the coal, and the defendant put it in the canal. Defendant, for whom Mr Tennant appeared, elected to be tried by a jury, and was committed for trial. **William Colclough**, a boatman charged with a similar offence, admitted that he had done wrong, and expressing his sorrow, the Magistrates discharged him with a caution.

**9 22 July 1871**

STAFFORDSHIRE ADJOURNED SESSIONS

EARTHENWARE ROBBERY AT BURSLEM **William Palin**, 17, and **Thomas Palin**, 21, boatmen, were charged with stealing on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1871 at Burslem, a quantity of earthenware, the property of the Anderton Company. Mr Platt appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Smith defended Thomas Palin. William Palin pleaded guilty. On the day named, the prisoners were seen going away from one of the sheds of the company, where earthenware was stored, and the prisoner William Palin was at once apprehended and some jugs were found upon him. The other prisoner was carrying a bag, with which he walked towards the canal, where subsequently a bag containing a large quantity of crockeryware was found. Mr Smith contended that there was no evidence to show that his client had placed the bag there, and remarked on the fact that he had to attend to a horse, and the bag probably contained corn. Ultimately Thomas Palin was acquitted, and the other

prisoner sentenced to four months' imprisonment.

#### **10 12 August 1871**

**TUNSTALL LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH** A letter was read from the North Stafford Railway Company in which notice was given that from the great quantity of filth in the canal at Tunstall caused by the sewage of that town, the Company found it necessary to stop the navigation on the canal for the purpose of cleaning it out. When this was finished an account of expense would be sent to the Board for payment. It was stated by the Surveyor that though the Board had been paying £5 or £6 per week for cleansing the canal, the solid deposit from the sewage had never been removed, and the amount named had been paid merely for cleaning the mud from the walls.

#### **11 2 September 1871**

**STOKE** A letter was read from Mr Hudson of Trent Vale, calling the attention of the Board to the fact that two months ago it passed a resolution calling on the railway authorities to at once cleanse the Newcastle canal, but he stated that hitherto nothing of importance had been done, except that in July a boat was dredging with a scope a few days in the more difficult places for the boat to go through. Mr Hudson stated in his letter that at that time he met Dr Gooday, with whom he had some conversation on the subject of the cleansing of the canal and the resolution of the Board, when Dr Gooday said that that sort of talk was all bosh, and that it was only to satisfy the public until a panic turned up, such as cholera or a spread of smallpox ; and that when half the population had been killed, they would do something permanently. When they had cleansed the canal they would fill it again with Lyme Brook which brings all the sewage from Silverdale with it, which will cause the canal to be as offensive as ever in a month. The letter concluded by saying that if it were a work to be paid for out of the rates, it would be attended to promptly. It was resolved by the Board that the railway authorities be urged to proceed at once with the cleansing of the canal.

#### **12 30 September 1871**

**TUNSTALL – THURSDAY**

**KEEPING HORSES WITHOUT LICENSE** **Charles Clarke** and **John Baggaley**, boatmen, Tunnel mouth, Tunstall, were each summoned at the instance of Mr Meakin, supervisor of excise, Newcastle, for keeping a horse without a license. PC Pritchard proved that the defendants each had a horse in their possession, and Mr R White, Inland Revenue officer, proved that the defendants were not licensed to keep horses. They were each fined in the mitigated penalty of £5, and the magistrate recommended that the Board of Inland Revenue should further mitigate the penalty.

#### **13 21 October 1871**

**STAFFORDSHIRE GENERAL QUARTER SESSIONS**

**WHOLESALE ROBBERY OF COAL AT CANNOCK** **Michael McGough**, 37, **Joseph Wilson**, 41, labourers, were indicted for stealing, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1871 at Cannock, three tons weight of coal, the property of the Rugeley Colliery Company (Limited). The Hon Sir Evelyn Ashmore defended the prisoner McGough. Witnesses were called for the prosecution, and it was elicited that the prisoners had, on the day named, been navigating a boat on the canal, and met with another boat which was loaded with coal. They got into the boat and transmitted about two tons of coal to the boat which the prisoners were in possession of. It appeared that the prisoner McGough was somewhat led into the robbery, but he was ultimately found guilty. The prisoner Wilson pleaded guilty, and they were both sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

#### **14 25 November 1871**

**TUNSTALL – THURSDAY**

**VAGRANCY** **William Smith** and **John Bratton**, boatmen, were charged with stealing a horse rug at Harding's Wood, belonging to Mr W Nield, wholesale grocer, Tunstall. On the 21<sup>st</sup> inst the prosecutor left his horse and trap in the street in the care of a boy. During Mr Nield's absence the

prisoners came up, and while one of them held the boy the other made off with a rug which he had taken from the trap. The prisoners were sent to gaol for a month as vagrants.

**15 23 December 1871**

TUNSTALL

ALLEGED WARE ROBBERY **Charles Jacks**, boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of earthenware from the Anderton Company's wharf ; but there was no evidence to connect the prisoner with the robbery, and the case was dismissed.

**16 27 January 1872**

STOKE

EXPOSING A SICK CHILD **Edward Jones**, boatman, was charged with exposing his child in public while the child was suffering from smallpox, and his wife was charged with absconding with the child from the Chell Workhouse. It was stated that the defendant's wife and three children were taken to the workhouse, the child suffering from smallpox. Two of them died, and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst the woman left the workhouse with the blind child which was then suffering from smallpox. She took it to defendant's boat and they travelled along the canal with it. The magistrates said the boat was not a public conveyance and the case against the man was dismissed. The woman was also discharged after being cautioned by the magistrates.

**17 27 January 1872**

ALLEGED MURDER An inquest has been held on the body of Mary Ann Plater, who was alleged to have been murdered by another woman. It was shown that on the night of Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup>, **Mary Rudge**, the wife of a boatman, heard two women quarrelling on the towing-path of the Paddington Canal, in which one exclaimed, "I'll have my revenge". A splash and a cry were heard directly afterwards. **George Holford**, a boatman, went to the spot and found deceased in the water, and a woman named Bridget Riley standing opposite the spot. When Plater was taken from the water she was dead. Riley's account was that a man had thrown deceased in ; but there was no direct evidence on the subject, and the jury returned an open verdict of "Found drowned", and the matter remains in the hands of the police.

**18 3 February 1872**

HANLEY – MONDAY

DRINK AND VIOLENCE **Samuel Shelton** and **Daniel Simcock**, boatmen, were charged with being disorderly, refusing to leave the Roebuck Inn, Brownedge, and assaulting PC Bradshaw. The defendants were in the Roebuck on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst, and fought with a man from Leek. Bradshaw was sent for to turn them out, when they assaulted him. Each of the defendants was fined 10s and costs for refusing to leave the house, and 20s and costs for the assault.

**19 17 February 1872**

SCHOOL BOARD The School Board Officer reported that he had been engaged in the completion of his visit to Bucknall. He had also visited in Stoke during the same period 495 houses, with 626 children, and he came across a number of resident boatmen, respecting whom he would ask the Board's advice, as he found their children accompanied them on their journeys, even when of school age.

**20 24 February 1872**

TUNSTALL

BAD STEERING **Robert Simpson**, boatman, was charged with allowing his boat to strike against the lower lock gate on the canal at Harding's Wood. **Mr R Glass**, Canal Inspector, proved the case, and defendant was fined 20s and costs. The offence was committed on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst.

**21 16 March 1872**

TUNSTALL

CORONER'S INQUEST On Monday last an inquest was held at the Bridge Inn on the body of a man named **Henry Young**, who it appears worked in conjunction with another man named **William Wild**, they being boatmen in the employ of Messrs Williamson. On Saturday morning the deceased, who lived in the boat cabin, rose about seven a m and breakfasted at nine and, although he had been suffering from asthma for some time, yet appeared as usual when his mate (Wild) left him to go to the town for provisions. About 10.30 he was seen vomiting blood, by a woman in the next boat. A doctor was sent for, but in about half an hour he died. After hearing the evidence in substance as above, the jury returned a verdict of "Died by the visitation of God". The deceased was 60 years of age.

**22 23 March 1872**

BURSLEM – TUESDAY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Henry Moseley**, boatman, was fined 10s and costs for cruelty to a horse. On the 12<sup>th</sup> inst the defendant had charge of a boat on the canal at Longport. He beat the horse, which was drawing the boat, with a halter, and because it did not go fast enough for him he kicked it in the belly, actually knocking it into the canal.

**23 23 March 1872**

HANLEY

STEALING COAL **Edward Worthington**, a boatman, was charged with stealing 212 lbs of coal, the property of Earl Granville. The prisoner's boat was in the Etruria Basin, and near was a truck loaded with coal. The prisoner was seen going to the truck and taking the coal thence to his boat. The prisoner was sent to prison for 21 days.

**24 1 June 1872**

HANLEY George Tomkinson, farmer, John Frost, collier, and **Job Lancaster**, boatman, were charged with being drunk and riotous at Townend, near Bucknall. They were very drunk, and fighting. Lancaster, who was stated to be the worst of the three, was fined 20s and costs, and each of the other defendants 10s and costs.

**25 8 June 1872**

NEWCASTLE

BOARD OF HEALTH A letter was read from Mr Dodds, engineer to the North Staffordshire Railway Company, complaining that sewage was flowing from the borough sewers into the company's Limekiln Canal, and that he had been compelled in consequence to send a mud boat to the canal, the cost of which would be charged to the Corporation.

**26 13 July 1872**

TUNSTALL **Thomas Ratcliffe**, boatman, was charged with stealing coal, the property of Messrs Robert Heath and Son. As he was passing in his boat two boats laden with coal on the canal, the prisoner took a lump of coal from each of them and put it in his own boat. Caught in the act by PC Pritchard, he said he had taken the coal to boil his kettle for supper. He was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment.

**27 20 July 1872**

TUNSTALL

A BOY DROWNED A coroner's inquest was held on Monday at the Bridge Inn. The subject of enquiry was relative to a boy named **John Wenlock**, who it appears usually lived in a boat which on this occasion lay at the side of the canal. On Friday the little fellow went out of the boat to play and accidentally fell in the canal. Some time elapsed before he was missed and several hours after

being sought his body was found in the canal. The verdict of the jury was "Found drowned". The deceased was six years of age.

### **28 20 July 1872**

**NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY COMPANY v TUNSTALL BOARD OF HEALTH** This case came again before the Master of the Rolls on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr Bristowe, for the railway company, said he assumed that the defendants had done all that they could in the time, but the works were not yet completed, and a considerable part of the sewage matter was still flowing into the canal. Mr Southgate, for the defendants, said the sewage did not go into the canal. Mr Bristowe said a large portion practically flowed into a large basin which adjoined the canal, and then out of the basin it flowed into the canal. He also complained that the defendants were diverting one of the feeders of the canal, from which they filled four locks a day. Lord Romilly said he did not want to go into that now. Mr Southgate stated that Mr Elliot and he inspected the sewer lately, and found that the extraordinary and exceptional storm which visited the district on Sunday had caused such a body of water that the recently constructed portion of the outfall sewer at the point where it was connected with the more ancient sewer was blown up, but such accident did not divert the course of the sewage, and it still wholly flowed along the outfall sewer and did not either directly or indirectly flow into the plaintiffs' canal. The work was being thoroughly repaired and no doubt would be completed in a fortnight. The case was then directed to stand over until the 26<sup>th</sup> instant.

### **29 20 July 1872**

#### **MOXLEY**

**THE TRAGIC OCCURRENCE THROUGH STONE THROWING** On Monday afternoon, a distressing fatality, arising out of the too common practice of stone throwing, took place at Moxley. It seems that about three o'clock, **Joseph Tomlinson**, aged 17, of no fixed residence, was with his father and a younger brother conducting a boat along the canal near to the Waterloo Furnaces, Moxley, when they passed a youth named Henry Tooth, aged 17, of Darlington Street, King's Hill, who was bathing in the canal. Tooth – whether on provocation or as a piece of wanton mischief does not appear – threw something at the younger Tomlinson, a lad six or seven years of age, and the elder brother, in retaliation, picked up a brick and hurled it at Tooth, upon the top of whose head it alighted with crushing effect. The poor lad immediately sank down, and some of those who had witnessed the dreadful occurrence exerted themselves for his recovery, hoping against hope that life still remained. On the body being brought to the surface, however, by a man named William Brown, it was found that death had taken place, the head of the deceased being dreadfully injured; and accordingly Tomlinson was given into the custody of Police-constable Howell who had meanwhile been fetched to the spot, and was conveyed to Wednesbury Police station. On being charged he said, "The boy in the water threw a piece of cinder at my little brother, and I turned back and threw a piece of stone at him". The prisoner was brought up at the Wednesbury Police Court on Tuesday, before J Marshall, H Williams and A Elwell Esqs. Superintendent Holland applied for a remand, and in doing so, stated the facts detailed above. The prisoner was remanded until Friday next. On Thursday evening, Mr E Hooper, district coroner, held an inquest at the George Inn, Moxley. Mr Sheldon watched the proceedings on behalf of the accused youth, Jos Tomlinson, who was present in custody. The jury returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against Joseph Tomlinson, who was committed for trial on the Coroner's warrant.

### **30 27 July 1872**

#### **STAFFORDSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES**

**MANSLAUGHTER AT WEDNESBURY** **Joseph Tomlinson** (17), boatman, was indicted for killing and slaying Henry Tooth on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst in the parish of Wednesbury. Mr Fulford appeared for the prosecution and Mr Young defended. Joseph Lawton, Darlaston, said on the 15<sup>th</sup> July he was on the canal side near Wednesbury. He saw two boats passing. Prisoner was in charge of the last one. Whilst looking on, he saw a little boy crying in the last boat. Prisoner said some boys had

hit his brother on the head. He then saw prisoner turn round and take up a piece of brick and throw it at deceased's head. Witness said to prisoner, "You have killed that boy", and he made no answer. There were boys bathing at the time in the canal. After taking some further evidence, the counsel for the defence said he could not, in the face of the evidence, continue to defend, as the act of the prisoner was an unlawful one, and he should therefore withdraw the plea of not guilty. His Lordship, in sentencing the prisoner to six months' imprisonment with hard labour, remarked that the act of the prisoner was most unjustifiable and shameful.

### **31 31 August 1872**

**SAD ACCIDENT TO A BOATMAN** On Thursday, an inquest was held at the Etruria Inn, before Mr Booth, on the body of **William Foster** of Wolverhampton, boatman, who had accidentally fallen into the canal near Etruria, in the presence of his daughter, and was drowned. Deceased was 60 years of age. A verdict was returned, in accordance with the evidence, of "Accidental death".

### **32 5 October 1872**

**STOKE Richard Lewis**, boatman, was charged with stealing a horse, value £15, the property of his employers, the Traders' Carrying Company. Mr Ackrill appeared for the prosecution. Prisoner was remanded until Monday.

### **33 12 October 1872**

**MURDEROUS OUTRAGE** An attack of a murderous nature, which will probably prove fatal, has been perpetrated in Constitution Hill, Birmingham. A man named Henry Mason (24), axle filer, residing in the town, called at the house of William Flowers at the back of 31 Constitution Hill. There were several women and men in the house, and Mason was induced to remain. A quantity of ale was consumed during the evening, and the company became rather hilarious. About eleven o'clock several neighbours came in, and by invitation they also joined in drinking. A discussion then commenced, which subsequently led to an altercation. Mason took a prominent part in the disturbance, and grew somewhat excited. The altercation was, however, brought to a speedy conclusion, for Mason was suddenly tripped up, and while he was on the ground the lights were extinguished, and a number of men in the company made a murderous attack on him. One of them drew a pocket knife and stabbed Mason four times on the head, while the others brutally kicked and punched him on the face and body. Mason would no doubt have been much more seriously injured had it not been for the interference of Flowers, who fetched in Police-constable Price. Upon the appearance of the constable, Mason's cowardly assailants immediately made their exit from the house. Mason was raised in a semi insensible state. His face was covered with contusions and cuts, both his eyes being blackened and filled up. He was also suffering from severe incised scalp wounds. Two of his assailants, named **John Higgins**, boatman, and John Hunt, jeweller's stamper, residing in Aston Road, were shortly afterwards apprehended by Price at the house of the former which is situated in the same yard as that of Flowers. Mason with some difficulty accompanied them to Kenion Street Police Station, and after signing the charge sheet, he was conveyed to the General Hospital, where his wounds, which are very serious, were dressed, and he was admitted as an in-patient.

Hunt and Higgins were brought before the Magistrates, at the police office, and remanded for a week.

### **34 12 October 1872**

**HANLEY**

**HORSE STEALING Richard Lewis**, boatman in the employ of the North Staffordshire Traders' Company, was charged on remand with stealing a horse, the property of his employers. He was again remanded, after some further evidence had been given.

### **35 19 October 1872**

#### STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

**IRON ROBBERY AT TUNSTALL Philip Jordan**, on bail, boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of iron, the property of Hugh W Williamson and others. Mr Bosanquet appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Young defended the prisoner. The learned counsel for the prosecution said that Messrs Williamson were ironmasters, carrying on business at the Goldendale Ironworks. The prisoner was a boatman, and worked a barge, and on two occasions before the day named in the indictment he had been employed by Mr Williamson to deliver iron. On the 16<sup>th</sup> September he was sent to Mr Perry of Bilston with a boat load, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> he returned and was again loaded with a delivery of iron for a firm at Smethwick. On the 27<sup>th</sup> he returned from this trip, and was a third time commissioned to deliver iron. It happened, however, that one of the men employed to load boats for the prosecutor was in want of a tool, and in the absence of the prisoner went to the enclosure at the fore part of the boat, where such things were usually kept, and there he found a quantity of pig iron. The man gave information, and the police were sent for. When the iron was discovered two of the prisoner's boys were on the boat, and witnessed what took place. By the time the police officer arrived the prisoner had returned, and having apparently been made acquainted with what had transpired, he brought the iron on to the deck, and said it was overweight for the previous load. He also brought a lot out of the cabin, making in all above 5 cwt ; and as the two boat loads delivered by the prisoner were of different sorts, it would be shown that the iron now found corresponded with both lots. Evidence was found in support of the statement of counsel, and notwithstanding a very able defence, the prisoner was found guilty and sentenced to four months' imprisonment.

### **36 November 23 1872**

**NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY COMPANY v TUNSTALL LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH** This case came on before the Master of the Rolls in the Court of Chancery on Monday. Mr Fox Bristowe, QC, said just before the long vacation, in accordance with the order of the Court, the defendants had finished the construction of certain works. The effect of these was to carry the whole of the sewage of which they (the plaintiffs) complained under their canal by means of a culvert, and thence passing into a certain little brook or watercourse called the Fowles Brook. This was the state in which matters now were. The plaintiffs would be quite satisfied if an undertaking were given by the defendants that matters should remain in the position in which they now stood. As far as the plaintiffs were concerned they were satisfied but, unfortunately for the defendants, by carrying the culvert under the canal they had run directly into the Fowles Brook, thence sending their sewage into the Trent. In consequence of this the Duke of Sutherland filed a bill against them, and they now had to fight him for alleged injury to his rights in the river Trent. The plaintiffs were affected by this only in the event of the Duke being successful in restraining them from allowing their sewage to go into its present channel, and obliging them to divert their stream back into the canal. The Master of the Rolls said any consideration of that sort was premature. Mr Bristowe said there were now two or three questions to be decided. In the first place, by carrying away the water from the little stream under the canal the plaintiffs were deprived of the water which was formerly brought by it. This stream, which they called a feeder, and his friends simply a watercourse, was one of the sources of supply for the canal. The evidence upon that point was this. It was clear from it that the particular point the water came in was the summit pound, or highest point of that particular district of the canal. From the report of their engineer it appeared that at the time when water was most wanted, namely in the dry weather, this stream had yielded 4 ½ locks per day ; that is, it would allow four boats to pass from the summit pound to the other end. The deprivation of that was a tangible and substantial injury to the plaintiffs, and his Lordship had thought so by giving damages against the defendants. He submitted that the defendants ought to pay the costs of the suit. Mr Fellowes also addressed the Court on the same side. Mr Southgate QC, for the defendants, said that with regard to damages for dredging there would be no difficulty. The case was adjourned until the following day when, after Messrs Everett and Bristowe had

addressed the court, the Master of the Rolls said he thought the railway company were quite wrong in asking for specific performance of the agreement ; that, in fact, it was a mistake, and that the strict order would have been to dismiss that part of the bill with costs, and make the order on the rest of the bill ; and on the rest of the bill he thought the plaintiffs were right. But, knowing many inconveniences arose from dismissing one part of the bill, and giving costs as relating to one part, and the trouble of working that out before the taxing master was greater than the advantage obtained by anyone, he took the shorter course. He thought the Local Board was quite wrong in resisting the purification of the water, or rather the injunction to prevent the fouling of the water ; and they ought not to have gone into it all. They were quite wrong on that point, and all the evidence on that point they must pay. He would not make any distinction between the evidence as to the fouling of the water and the feeding of the canal. They must pay all the costs of the evidence, and no other costs in the suit. No decree, but an undertaking on their part. He did not think that they wanted any further order than the one he had made, that the Court directed the stay of all the proceedings. There would be liberty to apply. Mr Bristowe : Then the decision will be to pay costs in so far as it relates to the evidence. The Master of the Rolls : No ; of all the evidence in the suit ; no other costs. Mr Bristowe : The evidence has been considerably increased since the date of the first order. The Master of the Rolls : It carries costs up to this time. The case then terminated.

### **37 14 December 1872**

#### **BURSLEM**

**CHARGE OF STEALING COAL** **William Clutton**, boatman, Middlewich, was charged with stealing 41 lbs of coal belonging to Mr Robert Heath. John Pritchard, an additional constable in the employ of Mr Heath, stated that on the previous night he was watching some boats laden with coal, near the Ravensdale Ironworks. The defendant, who was in another boat, leaned over and took several lumps of coal as he was passing the coal boats. He followed the defendant and took him into custody, and on weighing the coal, found that there were 41 lbs. Defendant said he was very sorry he had been caught. Mr Balguy committed the defendant to prison for 21 days.

### **38 14 December 1872**

#### **TUNSTALL – THURSDAY**

**A POLICY THAT WILL NOT PAY** **William Hodson** and **Charles Jacks**, boatmen, were charged with impeding the traffic on the North Staffordshire Railway Company's canal at Harding's Wood. It was stated that on the 12<sup>th</sup> ult, the defendants each had a boat at Harding's Wood lock. Defendants were racing, and jammed their boats together at the mouth of the lock. They refused to move their boats, and the canal was obstructed 40 minutes. The defendants did not appear, and a fine of 10s with 18s costs was imposed upon each.

### **39 8 February 1873**

#### **HANLEY**

**ALLEGED THEFT OF A COAT** **Herbert Harrison**, boatman, was charged with stealing a coat, the property of George Prosser, a railway porter. The prosecutor and others were playing dominoes at the Bird in Hand beerhouse, Etruria Vale, on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> ult, and a dispute was followed by a fight. Prosecutor took off his coat and put it down in the passage. The landlord, thinking the floor an improper place, put it on a truss of hay. The truss of hay was carried away by the prisoner, to whom it belonged, and with it the coat. When the fight was over, and the prosecutor went to look for his coat, it was gone, and it was found by the police in the prisoner's boat with the hay. Mr Tennant appeared for the prisoner, and the Bench, holding that there was a doubt whether the prisoner stole the coat or took it away unknowingly, discharged him.

**40 22 February 1873**

TUNSTALL

DRINK AND VIOLENCE **James Kershaw**, a boatman, was charged with being drunk and assaulting his wife and child, the latter seven months old. The assault, which was of a brutal character, took place at Longport, on Wednesday night. The wife did not appear. The defendant was sent to gaol for a month with hard labour.

**Moses Hollinshead**, a boatman, was ordered to pay £5 penalty for keeping a horse without a licence.

**41 5 April 1873**

KIDSGROVE – THURSDAY

STUPIDITY WON'T PAY **Charles Scragg** and **John Scragg**, boatmen, were charged with refusing to leave the Harecastle Hotel, Kidsgrove, and with assaulting PC Murray. Defendants were requested to leave the hotel by the landlady in consequence of their disorderly conduct, and they refused to do so. The police were then sent for, and on the arrival of Murray, he ejected the defendants at the request of the landlady. The defendants struck him as he was removing them from the house. For refusing to leave the defendants were each fined 10s and costs ; and for the assault 20s and costs.

**42 10 May 1873**

FENTON – FRIDAY

SERIOUS CASE Thomas Woolley, a youth, pleaded guilty to a charge of stealing a quantity of wearing apparel from a boat on the canal at Stoke, belonging to **John Deakin**. He was remanded for enquiries to be made about him.

**43 24 May 1873**

HANLEY - MONDAY

OBSTRUCTION OF THE CANAL **Charles Doughty** and **William Clewes**, boatmen, were summoned by **Mr Glass**, Inspector of the Trent and Mersey Canal, on a charge of wilfully obstructing the navigation of the canal. Each of the defendants was fined 29s and costs.

**44 5 July 1873**

STAFFORDSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

ROBBERY FROM A BOAT **Edward Griffiths** (46), boatman, **John Davis** (36), boatman, were indicted for stealing, on the 11<sup>th</sup> April at Tettenhall, a pair of reins and other articles, the property of John Davis (*sic*). Mr Fisher prosecuted. The jury acquitted the prisoner Davis. Griffiths, who was found guilty, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

**45 19 July 1873**

BURSLEM – TUESDAY

THE PERILS OF PRISON BARS **Isaac Smith** and **William Nixon**, two neglected looking boys, sons of boatmen, were charged with stealing a jacket and cap belonging to a boy named Grocott. The prosecutor was playing prison bars at Chatterley on Monday night, and put his jacket and cap over a hedge, from which they were taken. The boats where the boys lived were searched, and the cap was found in Nixon's boat, and the jacket, after a search, was found in the canal near Smith's boat. The defendant Smith said he had thrown it in. Smith's grandfather, with whom he lived, in his effort to show that himself and his wife had nothing to do with the theft, said the boy's grandmother gave him a good thrashing to make him tell the truth when she heard of the affair, and after volunteering to be surety for the boy, assured the Bench that “his grandmother nearly fetched all the blood out of him last night, sir”. The boys were required to find sureties.

**46 26 July 1873**

STAFFORDSHIRE ADJOURNED SESSIONS

IRON ROBBERY AT BILSTON **Edward Turner** (22), boatman, and **Samuel Hillman** (26), boatman, both pleaded guilty to a charge of stealing a quantity of pig iron at Bilston, the property of William Molyneux and others, and were sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Another indictment, charging them with stealing a quantity of iron, the property of the Midland Railway Company, was preferred, and to this also they pleaded guilty, and were further sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

**47 16 August 1873**

TUNSTALL **Francis Evans**, boatman, was ordered to pay fines and costs amounting to £1 16s for being drunk and refusing to leave the Copeland Arms Hotel, Stoke, when requested to do so by the landlord, Mr John Steele.

**48 16 August 1873**

HANLEY

ALLEGED HORSE STEALING Meredith Jones was brought up, charged with stealing a horse belonging to **George Webb**, boatman, Etruria. The horse was turned into a field on Saturday afternoon till Monday morning, but early on Sunday morning it was taken away. The prisoner was met by a policeman (Proffitt) leading the horse towards Newcastle, and in reply to the officer's question, he said he was taking it to his master's. Having some doubt of the truth of this story, Proffitt detained both man and horse, and early the next day Webb, who had missed the horse from the field, and had given information of his loss to the police, identified the horse as his own. The prisoner was committed for trial.

**49 6 September 1873**

LONGTON – WEDNESDAY

REMANDED CASE **William Seymour** and **James Baddeley**, boatmen, were charged with having stolen a barrel of ale belonging to William Dugald, beer seller, Wharf Street, Stoke. It was stated that the prisoners had been drinking at prosecutor's house, and that shortly after they left prosecutor went out to his back premises and found the prisoners rolling a barrel of ale from his yard along the canal side towards their boat. The prisoners were remanded until Friday.

**50 13 September 1873**

POLICE COURT

REMANDED CASE **Thomas Jones**, boatman, was charged with stealing wearing apparel from a fellow boatman named **Francis Dawson**. Prosecutor said that his boat was lying at Etruria Wharf on Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning he awoke and was surprised to find the prisoner in the cabin. Knowing the man, he did not turn him out, but went to sleep again. When he awoke again prisoner was gone, and the wearing apparel had disappeared with him. He was remanded.

DISORDERLY BOATMAN **James Kershaw**, boatman, was charged with being disorderly, and refusing to leave the Wharf Tavern, Stoke, when requested to do so. Defendant was in the house on Wednesday night, and, taking up a glass, he bit a large piece out of it. He was requested to leave the house, but refused to do so. He was fined 10s and costs.

ALLEGED THEFT **James Baddeley**, **Henry Seymour** and **William Seymour**, boatmen, were charged on remand with stealing a hogshead of ale belonging to Mr Myatt, beer seller, Stoke. They were further remanded for a week.

STEALING A DUCK Edward Wainwright, a boy, was charged with stealing a duck belonging to Mrs Bradbury of the Long Butts Farm, near Stockton Brook ; and **Charles Osborne** and **Caroline**

**Osborne** were charged with receiving the duck, knowing it to have been stolen. The charge against Osborne and his wife, who stand in the relation of brother and sister to Wainwright, was dismissed, as it appeared they turned the duck out when they found it in their boat, Osborne being a boatman. Wainwright was ordered to receive six strokes with a birch rod.

### **51 18 October 1873**

HANLEY

**SAVAGE ATTACK** An elderly boatman, with anything but a murderous countenance, was charged with unlawfully wounding Charles Yoxall, son of a builder, at Stoke. The only evidence was that of William Ratcliffe, collector of tolls at the Stoke gate, who said he heard screams proceeding from the prisoner's boat on the canal near the bridge. He went to the boat and saw the prisoner with a piece of iron in his hand. A crowd had gathered on the bank, and the prisoner, coming from his boat, ordered the people away. Yoxall, who was in the crowd, called him a coward, when the prisoner rushed at him and gave him three blows on the back of the head with the iron. Yoxall was knocked down senseless, and was carried home. A certificate from Mr Holtom, surgeon, stated that he was seriously injured and unable to appear, and the prisoner was remanded.

### **52 18 October 1873**

**FELONY AT STOKE ON TRENT** **James Baddeley** (24), **William Seymour** (39) and **Henry Seymour** (22), boatmen, were charged with stealing, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1873 at Stoke-upon-Trent, a barrel of ale, the property of William Myatt. Mr Young prosecuted, Mr Corser appearing for Henry Seymour. Prisoners were "caught in the act". The jury found them guilty. The learned Chairman sentenced William Seymour to seven years' penal servitude, Henry Seymour to four months, and Baddeley to 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour.

### **53 25 October 1873**

FENTON, FRIDAY

**CHARGE OF WOUNDING** **William Clewes**, boatman, Stoke, was charged on remand with unlawfully wounding Thomas Yoxall, the son of a builder, at Stoke. Mr R A Stevenson appeared for the defence. A certificate from Mr Holtom, surgeon, was handed into the court, to show that the prosecutor was still unable to attend the court, being only able to leave his bed for a very short time in the middle of the day. Prisoner was again remanded for a week, and bail was refused.

### **54 1 November 1873**

**LIFE ON THE CANALS** Mr Plimsoll has touched the heart of England by his pleadings on behalf of the man whose life is spent on the ocean waves. Mr George Smith of Coalville, again striving to make himself the spokesman of the children, as in his "Cry from the Brickyard Children of England", has sent a letter to the papers appealing for legislative enquiry, legislative supervision and legislative redress, on behalf of the boatmen and their children.

Mr Smith has hit another blot in our social system for the floating population of our canals have had as little care bestowed upon them in regard to moral and intellectual training as if they were a parish(*sic ?pariah*) race. We have no doubt but that Mr Smith's estimate that there are 100,000 boatmen in active employment in this country, and a population depending on them of 400,000 more, is a fairly accurate approximation, and our readers will agree with him that it is no small matter for us to have in our midst a population so large as this that is almost totally neglected, educationally. Moving about from place to place in the "slow barge", they have no settled home, but pass their lives in "cabins", not much too large for dog kennels, which serve as kitchen, parlour and bedroom. We well remember many years ago having our attention called to the condition of these gypsies of our canal system, by a young man who had become interested in their welfare by observing their habits, and that they neither attended chapels or churches themselves, nor as a rule sent their children to school. Actuated by an earnest desire to see more of the life in their cabin homes, and to carry an influence for good there, he commenced to visit the boatmen on the Sunday

evenings, when their barges lay thickly side by side on a certain large wharf in North Staffordshire. We went with him on one occasion. He told us that the same barges were seldom there one Sunday that he had visited the week before. On this occasion, in the first boat that we applied for admittance, we were told that a little girl lay dangerously ill by the mother, the father having just run for the doctor. There were several other children in the cabin, and it appeared to us that such a small crib was not the best place in which the battle against disease and death could be fought, or in which infection could be prevented. We went into the next boat, and as the young man was known we received a rough welcome. An old boatman, with a short black pipe in his mouth and a face wrinkled by age and browned through long exposure, asked us to sit down, but that operation was not easily performed, as there were four other persons in the cabin beside ourselves. A stalwart looking fellow lay in a kind of recess at the far end of the cabin. There was, besides the "old woman", as she was familiarly called, and who looked as though she thought her territory was being invaded, a young lad. Having accommodated ourselves as best we could, my companion began to talk familiarly with them about their ways of life, and after a while read of "that true light which lighteth every man".

The scene was deeply interesting. The old man puffed quietly at his pipe, looking earnestly out of two eyes that were surrounded by a border of wrinkles. The old woman became interested, and the two young men were deeply absorbed in the thrilling words of quiet eloquence which were read and spoken. We have always been interested in boatmen since, and have believed that much might be done to make them a happier and a more intelligent portion of the community than they are. We thoroughly agree with Mr Smith that on the face of it, it seems monstrous that with the Factory and Workshop Act of 1871 passed and in activity, it should be possible to have woman and children herding together and employed as in these boats, so that the Education Act should be inoperative in relation to these boatmen's children.

That we should have a population so large among which only 2 per cent of the adult males are able to read and write is a reproach to our civilisation in this day of educational agitation. The attendance of every healthy child of school age in Great Britain ought to be made compulsory, and we hope that Mr Smith's appeal will at least insure those ameliorating and developing laws which have been passed for the benefit of the children of our land being brought to bear upon the floating population of our great canal system.

## 55 22 November 1873

HANLEY, MONDAY

**COAL STEALING** **George Harrison**, boatman, was charged with stealing coal from a boat at Tunstall, and having a good character and having been locked up 24 hours, he was merely ordered to pay costs (15s 6d) and find a surety.

**STEALING A DINNER** William Fryer, who had no fixed occupation, and John Chadwick, collier, were charged with stealing five pounds of beef and some potatoes belonging to **William Turton**, a boatman, at Newcastle on Sunday. Turton said he bought the beef on Saturday night, and placing it in a dish, had it baked for consumption on Sunday. He placed the cooked food in a cupboard in his boat, and during his absence it was stolen. Going to another boat, he came upon the prisoners eating his dinner. He asked them what they were doing, and they replied, "Nothing", continuing their feast. When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they handed what was left to a "pal" of prosecutor's, and he took it back to his boat. When apprehended, the prisoners said they had eaten the meat, and had had a good bellyful. The prisoners said in defence that they were told by a man named **Morris**, who was a fellow boatman of the prosecutor, to go to the boat and help themselves to the meat, but Morris denied this. Fryer, who had been previously convicted, was sent to prison for three months. Chadwick, who received a good character, and had the credit of being led astray by Fryer, was ordered to pay costs (15s 6d) and find a surety to come up for judgement when called upon.

**56 29 November 1873**

HANLEY, MONDAY

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE** A boatman named **Frederick Mitchell** was charged with cruelly ill treating a horse. PS Woodhouse deposed to seeing the defendant in charge of a boat laden with sand at Stoke. Observing that there seemed to be something the matter with the horse, he and PC Oakdon, who was with him, stopped it, and examined it. There was a broad leather band tightly fastened round the shoulders, and this band was adhering to large open sores on the shoulders. While drawing the band away the horse stamped with pain. The animal was also in a very poor condition. The defendant said neither the horse nor himself was fit to work, and he was hurrying home to Newcastle, to give up work and sell his horse. He was fined 10s and costs.

**57 3 January 1874**

HANLEY – MONDAY

**ALLEGED BEERHOUSE ASSAULT** **Joseph Mountford** and **George Tomkinson**, boatmen ; John Witton and Charles Nicklin, colliery, were charged on remand with having assaulted Samuel Bennett, puddler, Milton, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm. Mr Richardson, barrister, instructed by Mr A Stevenson, appeared for the defence. Prosecutor stated that on the night of the 20<sup>th</sup> December, he called at the New Inn at Milton, where he had two pints of ale, and remained an hour and a half. A man named Steele was drinking there, and a quarrel, followed by a fight, took place between them. The prisoner Tomkinson came into the room during the altercation, and gave prosecutor a blow on the head. He then left the house, and Tomkinson and Mountford assaulted him in the road. Prosecutor's sister-in-law interfered, and was threatened by Mountford for so doing. Prosecutor got home as soon as he could but, missing some money from his pocket, returned to the public house. All four prisoners were there. He told them he had lost his money, and Tomkinson knocked him out of the house. The prisoners followed him into the road, where he was struck and kicked by each one of them. While on the ground Witton took hold of his hair, and Tomkinson kicked him on the neck and he became insensible. When he recovered he found that Mr Oldham was attending him, and he was confined to his bed until Christmas Day. Mr S Oldham, surgeon, deposed to having had his attention called to the prosecutor by his assistant at Ford Green, who had been attending to his injuries. He found the prosecutor badly bruised about the head, face, neck, left side and right knee, the injuries being apparently the result of kicks. He did not consider the man seriously injured. Witness admitted to Mr Richardson that the injuries were not so severe as he should have expected to find, had the prosecutor been assaulted as he described. He would be able to resume his work in a week. Dennis Perry and Joseph Wilshall spoke, the former to seeing Witton and Nicklin take running kicks at Bennett, and the latter to seeing Tomkinson kick him on the neck. Other witnesses having been called to corroborate, the magistrates intimated their intention of committing the prisoners to Stafford to be tried by a jury. Mr Richardson said in that case he should reserve his defence, and he applied that the prisoners might be admitted to bail. The application however was refused.

**58 10 January 1874**

CROWN COURT

**WOUNDING AT MILTON** John Whitton (30), miner, Charles Nicklin (19), miner, **Joseph Mountford** (31), boatman and **George Tomkinson** (22), boatman, were indicted for unlawfully wounding and inflicting grievous bodily harm upon Samuel Bennett, on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 1873 at Milton. Mr Bosanquet prosecuted ; Mr J R Rose defending the accused. Prosecutor was at the New Inn on the night in question in company with the prisoners. After remaining a little time he left the house, and shortly afterwards missed thirteen or fourteen shillings. On returning to the public house and making his statement with regard to the money he had lost, prisoners at once made a violent attack upon him. Tomkinson knocked him down, and the three others “came at him with a running kick”. The medical evidence went to show that prosecutor had received injuries about the head, face and knee, which were in all probability produced by kicks and blows. For the defence, it was

alleged that the prosecutor had been the aggressor, and witnesses were called with this end in view. The jury acquitted Mountford ; and the others being found guilty of a common assault, were sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

**59 24 January 1874**

STOKE

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **John Johnson**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse, by working it while in an unfit state. Defendant admitted there was a wound on the animal's shoulder, and said it was made the previous night by the horse knocking itself in the stable. He was ordered to pay 25s costs.

**60 21 February 1874**

TUNSTALL, THURSDAY

COAL STEALING A boatman named **Clegg**, in the employ of the Bridgwater Trustees, was charged with stealing coal, the property of Mr Robert Heath, at Ravensdale. PC Pritchard stated the facts. Prisoner said that he had not a bit of fire in the cabin, and took the little piece of coal in passing. It was the first time that he had offended, and would never do so again. He was ordered to pay the costs, and find a surety of £10 for six months.

**61 14 March 1874**

CROWN COURT, TUESDAY

ROBBERY OF COAL AT WESTON-UPON-TRENT **Richard Bradnock** (55), boatman on bail, **William Tovey** (21), boatman, and **Joseph Fenton**, on bail, were indicted for having, on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1874 at Weston-upon-Trent, stolen three hundredweight of coal, the property of the Earl of Shrewsbury. Mr A Bosanquet conducted the prosecution ; Mr J Underhill the defence for Fenton ; the other prisoners were undefended. It was urged that the coal consisted of "leavings", which Mrs Fenton had taken (in the absence of her husband) in good faith, and entirely without felonious intention. The jury however did not take this view, for they returned a verdict of guilty, and the Chairman sentenced Bradnock and Fenton to six months' imprisonment, and Tovey to two months.

**62 14 March 1874**

HANLEY – MONDAY

THE BENEFIT OF A DOUBT William Myatt, keeper of the Wharf Tavern, Stoke, charged two boatmen named **Green** and **Sadler** with having stolen a duck. Myatt's story was that he had five ducks, all of which had been stolen, the last disappearing on Sunday evening. The missing duck was found by Police-constable Critchlow in the cabin of Sadler's boat, and Sadler accounted for its possession by stating that he had taken it out of the water to save it from drowning. The prosecutor said the duck could not swim. Mr Tennant appeared for the prisoners. The case was discharged.

**63 18 April 1874**

HANLEY, MONDAY

CRUELTY **William Wood**, boatman, Tunstall, was charged on the information of Inspector Scoborio, with working a horse totally unfit for work. Defendant was fined 20s.

**64 2 May 1874**

HANLEY, THURSDAY

THEFT **John Weaver**, boatman, was charged with having stolen a silver watch of the value of 26s, the property of Samuel Roberts, an engine tender, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. Prisoner was committed to gaol for three months with hard labour.

**65 9 May 1874**

HANLEY, MONDAY

LARCENY **John Powell**, boatman, was charged with having stolen a couple of small ale glasses, value fourpence, the property of George Eastwood of the Navigation beer house, Etruria, on Friday. Prosecutor said he understood Powell had a good character, and he would not press the case. Having been in custody since Friday, he was discharged on payment of costs.

**66 16 May 1874**

HANLEY, THURSDAY

ROBBERY OF CLOGS **Thomas Bowen**, boatman, was charged with stealing a pair of clogs and a waistcoat, the property of **Herbert Harrison**, another boatman, The prisoner pleaded guilty to the charge of stealing and was sent to gaol for two months with hard labour.

**67 16 May 1874**

HANLEY, MONDAY

A VIOLENT SET **Samuel Tomkinson**, boatman, Thomas Wilshaw and John Brindley, colliers, were charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct at Bagnall on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. The defendants were bound over in their own recognisances of £10 each.

**68 13 June 1874**

OUR FLOATING POPULATION Mr George Smith FSA of Coalville, whose advocacy of the claims of the Brickyard children resulted in the Act for their protection, writes to the papers to call attention to the miserable condition of the boatmen's families. He urges that the Government shall include the children of our floating population in the coming Factory Bill. He then estimates that something like 100,000 people live in boats on the rivers and canals, and neither School Boards nor sanitary inspectors look after their children. He describes a cabin in one of the 200 boats at Moira, in which cabin there were only 202 feet of space, yet it was the sole abode, dwelling room, and sleeping room of a man, his wife, and six children, of whom the eldest was a girl of 16, the next a girl of 14, the other three being younger. Two of them slept, at night, on the one table in the room, two under the bed and two in a cupboard over it. Mr Smith describes this state of demoralising and unwholesome crowding as the normal condition of the population who make these canal boats their home, and asks that Government should order an inquiry to be made about them, or the application to them of the laws which shall insure their health, decency and education.

**69 20 June 1874**

FENTON, FRIDAY

THEFT ON THE WATER Thomas Wooley of Etruria, collier, was charged with stealing 10s, the monies of **David Smith**, a boatman. Prosecutor said he was working a boat the previous evening ; prisoner joined him, and steered the boat for a short distance. He went into the cabin and prisoner came in after, and while he was asleep searched his pockets, which awoke him. Prisoner then put his hand into the cupboard of the boat and took therefrom half a sovereign. Prosecutor stopped him outside and called in an officer. Prisoner was remanded to Stafford for a week.

**70 27 June 1874**

STOKE

CHARGE OF THEFT Thomas Wooley, a labourer, was charged with stealing a sovereign, the money of **David Smith**, a bargeman. It appeared that the prisoner was temporarily hired by prosecutor, and that while prosecutor was asleep in the boat prisoner stole a sovereign from him. Prisoner being unable to appear, the case was remanded until Wednesday next.

**71 4 July 1874**

LONGTON, WEDNESDAY

CRUEL TREATMENT **Edward Nixon**, boatman, was charged with cruelly ill treating a horse by working it upon the canal side at Stoke on Monday evening. Inspector Scorborio said he found the animal in a very bad condition. It was completely exhausted, and staggered like a drunken man, being very old, miserably poor and unfit for anything but to be knocked on the head. Prisoner, who said he would consent to the animal being destroyed, was fined £1 and costs, in all £2 16s 6d.

**72 4 July 1874**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

STEALING IRON AT SEDGLEY John Horton, 23, miner, and **Thomas Turner**, 21, boatman, were indicted for stealing, on the 14<sup>th</sup> June, a quantity of iron from the Lanesfield Ironworks, Sedgley. Mr Kynnersley prosecuted and Mr Underhill appeared for the prisoner Turner. The prisoners were acquitted. They were further indicted for stealing sixteen bottles of porter, the property of Henry Hyde of Bilston, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June. The jury found the prisoners guilty on this indictment. The learned Chairman sentenced Horton to seven years' penal servitude, remarking that he had been convicted no less than seven times since 1867. Turner was sent to gaol for six months.

**73 18 July 1874**

HOUSE OF COMMONS – THURSDAY

THE EDUCATION OF BOATMEN'S CHILDREN In reply to Mr Macdonald, Mr Cross said that by the last Census the floating population was 29,500 persons, of whom 10,576 were actually on board boats in different parts of the country. It was found most difficult to deal with the children of this class ; but the London School Board and others were trying to do so ; and it would be desirable to wait for the results of their efforts before resorting to a Royal Commission.

**74 3 October 1874**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

SHAMEFUL ILL TREATMENT OF A HORSE **James Taylor**, boatman, was charged with cruelly ill treating a horse belonging to the Bridgwater Navigation Company. **Samuel Salt**, tunnel keeper in the employ of the North Staffordshire Railway Company, said that on the 14<sup>th</sup> ult he saw defendant take the animal into the shed where the horses are kept, and afterwards was attracted to the shed by noises the horse was making. He there saw defendant beating the animal with a large piece of wood called a “swingle tree”. Defendant struck the horse a number of times about the body, and on the head. Witness did not notice any marks on the horse, but defendant beat the animal severely. The swingle tree was produced, and appeared to be a thick heavy wooden bar, with iron hooks at each end. Another witness, in the employ of the Bridgwater Navigation Company, said he had been instructed to examine the horse, and to give evidence in court, so that defendant might be made an example of. He had found some hair knocked off the horse, but it was possible to kill a horse without any outward marks of violence being observable. A horse belonging to the company had to be killed recently through the cruelty of one of the company's servants. Defendant admitted beating the horse, but said the animal had “asked for it”. It had kicked him. The previous witness said that this was not probable, as the horse was anything but a vicious one. The magistrates severely reprimanded the defendant, remarking that he had rendered himself liable to a penalty of £5. He would, however, in this case, be fined £1 and costs, or in default be sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment. He had better, the magistrates added, inform his acquaintances that if another such a case was brought before them, the fine of £1 would be doubled.

**75 10 October 1874**

THE GUNPOWDER EXPLOSION AT LONDON At the adjourned inquest, held on Wednesday, on the victims of the explosion at Regent's Canal, it appeared from the evidence of **Mr Hall**, captain of the barge *Limehouse*, that except in the case of Government powder there are no regulations as to

precautions in carrying explosive materials ; no prohibition against smoking, carrying matches, or having iron nails in boots. Mr Hughes, traffic manager of the Grand Junction Canal Company, deposed that there was petroleum, benzoline as well as powder on board the *Tilbury*. Mr Meadows White, counsel for the Regent's Canal Company, submitted that under the Act of Parliament they were compelled to take every boat that paid the tolls, it being a common highway. **Francis Clark**, the steerer of the steam tug, stated that he heard shouts to stop, and some said the boat was on fire. On looking back he saw a blue flame. He had, however, time to stop for a second, and go on before the explosion took place. The inquest was adjourned until Monday.

## 76 24 October 1874

### HANLEY – MONDAY

THE EFFECTS OF DRINK **John Hill**, boatman, was charged with assaulting his wife on Saturday last. From the evidence of prosecutrix it appeared that on the day named prisoner and herself were in charge of a boat at Oak Hill, that prisoner was very drunk, and without any provocation whatever turned on her and struck her on the head with a tiller which he drew from the rudder of the boat. The blow was a severe one, and cut open the side of her head. George Hill, son of prisoner, was called and corroborated prosecutrix. Sergeant Woodhouse gave evidence as to the apprehension of prisoner, who was very violent, and had to be removed to the police office in a cart. Mr Richardson, who appeared for prisoner, did not deny the assault, but pleaded in mitigation the previous good character of the prisoner as a husband and parent. The Deputy Stipendiary said that were the case sent to Stafford prisoner would receive a long sentence of imprisonment ; as it was, he would be sent to gaol four months with hard labour.

## 77 7 November 1874

OUR FLOATING POPULATION The following letter appeared in the *Times* of Monday last :-

Sir – With your permission I am desirous of setting myself right (or at least endeavouring to do so) with respect to the number of persons and their families comprised in the phrase “our floating population”. The extreme difficulty of correctly ascertaining such numbers has caused inquiry to be made by several persons as to how many are really employed as “boaters” throughout the kingdom, as well as the probable numbers of their children. Some of the daily papers fix the number of men, women and children at 10,509. Mr Cross, the Home Secretary, when questioned in the House of Commons by Mr Macdonald MP, as to the number and condition of our floating population, is stated to have said “that there were 29,500 persons living in this way, and of that number 10,576 were actually on board the boats the night the Census was taken”, and he further said that although their condition was most deplorable, he could not see his way to recommend the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the subject, as the London School Board had the matter in hand.

Now I do not expect Mr Cross to have such a strong feeling upon this subject as I myself have, for I am practically acquainted with it in all its bearings. The Home Secretary can, at least, have but a superficial knowledge of the question when he said the condition of these people was “most deplorable”. “Deplorable!” I should think so, for when we find that a whole family has to live, cook, wash and sleep in a compartment compared with which many a pigsty is larger and more healthy, what can be much worse? And in such holes as these mothers give birth and rear large families. I will not attempt to describe the filthiness of many of these places, lest I should be thought to exaggerate.

I have previously given the numbers of our floating population as about 100,000 all told, and I arrive at the total in this way – there are some 4,800 miles of rivers and canals in England, and this, taking as an average four boats to a mile, with a man, wife and three children to each boat or barge, would give 96,000. I have walked scores of miles along the banks of canals and, so far as my experience goes, I believe I am within the mark when I give four boats per mile. I do not dispute that many boats or barges are worked by men without families, but I also know that some of them are worked by the heads of two families, and thus the average is maintained. Besides, large numbers of the boaters have more than three children each.

Putting, however, two children to each vessel, we have something approaching 40,000. Of their neglected condition I have previously written and spoken, and I will not occupy your space with harrowing details. I am glad to find that the Home Secretary is alive to the fact, and I do sincerely trust that the next Session of Parliament will not pass without something being done, either by Government or by some independent member, to endeavour to amend the condition of so many thousands of poor, uncared for and ignorant children as those of the boaters undoubtedly are.

George Smith

Dial House, Coalville, October 31.

### **78 5 December 1874**

KIDSGROVE

**FALLING INTO THE CANAL** On Friday a sad and indeed fatal accident occurred to **Joseph Rowley**, a boatman in the employ of the Thurlwood Company. By some means the deceased was pushing a boat off with a boatshaft, and fell head foremost into the water. Before deceased could be got out life was extinct. At the inquest on Saturday, a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

### **79 19 December 1874**

HANLEY – MONDAY

**SHOCKING AFFAIR AT TUNSTALL** **James Turner**, boatman, was charged with having unlawfully wounded George and Sarah Turner ; and **Richard Turner**, boatman, was brought up charged with having assaulted George and Sarah Turner, with intent to do them grievous bodily harm. Mr Tennant was for the defence. Superintendent Baker stated that the circumstances out of which the charges arose occurred on Friday night at the Bridge Inn, Tunstall ; and all the parties concerned were relations. It appeared that the injured man, George Turner, was on Friday night acting as occasional waiter at the Bridge Inn. The prisoners were in the house making a disturbance and were ejected, George Turner rendering assistance. Shortly after, he left the house and found the prisoners outside fighting. He interfered to stop the battle, and some threats were used towards him. He went on towards his own house, which was close by. Shortly afterwards George Turner's wife came out of the shop of James Turner, the elder prisoner, which was near. There seemed to be a disturbance going on there, and she called out, "Go in, George, or they will murder you". Almost immediately she was struck down by one of the prisoners. Hearing the cry of his wife, George Turner turned round, and he was at once struck down with what he believed to be a bar of iron, but which they had not been able to find. Turner's skull was fractured, and he and his wife were now lying seriously and dangerously ill, and were under the care of a surgeon. There was a wound upon George Turner's head which corresponded externally with the fracture of the skull. Under these circumstances he must ask for a remand. Mr Tennant asked that bail might be allowed. Mr Baker said that he believed the serious injuries were inflicted by James, the elder prisoner, and should strongly oppose bail for him. Bail was allowed for Richard Turner, and the case was remanded.

### **80 8 January 1876**

**THE BOATMAN'S APPEAL** The canal boatman we mean. Mr George Smith of Coalville has been to him a friend and a brother. With hand, heart and purse, he has toiled and travelled, Sundays and week days, for their every good and welfare. This week he has issued from the press a pamphlet on the condition of our neglected navigation fellow citizens. The work is written with a pen of fire, from a loving, pitying, yearning soul, all ablaze with ardent desire to do good to the bodies and souls of "the boaties". Its style is both clear and vivid. It is the book of the year. There has nothing, this Christmas season, been published like unto it, for varied interest, touching pathos, and fervid eloquence. The arrangement of the work is most systematic, natural and appropriate. The articles extracted on the canal boat question, from various daily and weekly journals are highly apropos and telling. For graphic and exciting word painting we scarcely know of a better written little work. The marvel of all is that it is true. Alas! Mournfully, dreadfully, deplorably true. 'Tis a romance of actual real life. It can be purchased at our office. It is printed on excellent paper, in

large beautiful type, and is fit to be placed in the hands of any lady or gentleman of the loftiest rank and station. The Queen, we understand, will have an elegantly bound copy presented to her, and so will the Right Hon R A Cross, our excellent and praiseworthy Home Secretary. We hope that this noble book – the heart work of a genuine philanthropist – will stir up our statesmen this coming Parliamentary session to devise means whereby our banished ones may be brought home. Success to George Smith. God bless him. May the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands, and may he live to behold his self denying and heroic labours crowned with abundant success.

**81 8 January 1876**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

FELONY CASES **Elijah Clewlow** (40), boatman, was tried and found guilty of stealing, on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1875 at Kidsgrove, the sum of 12s and a purse, and was sentenced to six months' hard labour.

**82 15 January 1876**

NEWCASTLE – TUESDAY

SERIOUS ASSAULT **John Beardmore**, boatman, was charged with having assaulted John Randalls and Harriet Arrowsmith. On Saturday night Randalls and Miss Arrowsmith were at Stubbs' Gate, when defendant, who was tipsy, met them. He was offensive in his behaviour, and when Randalls expostulated with him, he struck him, and knocked him down. When he got up, the two struggled together ; and Miss Arrowsmith, on trying to part them, was struck by Beardmore, and knocked to the ground. The Mayor said that but for this being defendant's first appearance before them, they should have committed him to gaol. He was fined 40s and costs ; in default, a month's imprisonment.

**83 15 January 1876**

FENTON – FRIDAY

A BOATMAN'S CASE **Richard Veale**, boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse ; and his wife, **Martha Veale**, was also charged with having cruelly treated the animal by working it while in an unfit state, on the 31<sup>st</sup> August. Inspector Harper proved the case. He was fined 20s and costs, and the summons against the woman was dismissed.

**84 11 March 1876**

OUR CANAL POPULATION Well done, George Smith! True as a needle to the Pole. Straight as an arrow to the target. Regular as the ebb and flow of the never resting tide. Yes, unerring as the stars in their courses, or the moon in her changes, is thy work of love and labour on behalf of the neglected children of our canal boat population. In our correspondence column we insert with pleasure a letter from our philanthropic friend, in reply to and in refutation of some cold blooded strictures on his sacred mission in the *Standard*. Byron somewhere speaks of those little minded and icy hearted scribbling critics who seek to damn your literary efforts and social labours with faint praise. Such is the cynical and sardonical method adopted by this London daily. It is as pragmatism and lackadaisical about the question of human suffering, crime and degradation, as if it were writing about rotting timber, decaying machinery, or spoiled and worm eaten garden produce. Had it existed and flourished in the days of the immortal Howard, we could fancy it feebly criticising his laborious correspondence regarding the filthy, fever breeding and death dealing qualities of the jails he visited, and the prisoner cells he inspected. The self sacrificing and devoted energies of a Fry, a Clarkson, and a John Ashworth, could we opine, meet with but scant sympathy and meagre encouragement from hireling scribes of this kidney. But there! Friend Smith can afford, with his accustomed meekness of mind and gentleness of spirit, to treat such chilly Chesterfields and heartless Horace Walpoles with the contempt they merit, and the indifference which their callous and frosty natures deserves. Go on! Thou hero in the holy war of noble chivalry on behalf of the children of the neglected and outcast poor. Angels look on thee with

fervid approbation of thy Christlike work, and He who came to seek and to save that which was lost, will still sustain thee in thine unabated efforts and zealous aims, to unbind the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free. Heaven's choicest benisons descend on thee and thine, until the day of the saints' immortal and celestial coronation.

Since writing the above, we understand a movement is on foot among the working classes and others at Coalville to present Mr George Smith with a purse to help him on in his uphill work to improve the condition of the women and children living and working on the inland canals. We wish the movement our heartiest success, and hope it will be taken up in the spirit it deserves among all classes through the length and breadth of the land. The sacrifices he has had to make, in more ways than one, in the Brickyard and Canal Children's Movement are only known to a few of his friends. If they were more generally known, we have no hesitation in saying that the purse would be a large one. Anyone feeling disposed in the district to contribute to the meritorious testimonial can send their donations to the editor of this paper.

**85 25 March 1876**

BURSLEM – TUESDAY

**ALLEGED THEFT OF IRON** A boatman named **Thomas Fallows** was charged on suspicion with stealing three pieces of unfinished iron, value 6s, the property of some person unknown. Thomas Knight, blacksmith, stated that on Monday morning prisoner came to Mr Yoxall's shop (Stoke) and asked him to cut a piece of unfinished iron, which appeared as though it had been in water. Mrs Smith, the wife of a marine store dealer, said prisoner brought the pieces of iron produced to her husband's stores the previous day, and said he had found them in the canal. Mr Ashmail, on behalf of the prisoner, submitted that there was no case of theft. Prisoner was remanded on bail.

**86 22 April 1876**

**STOKE-UPON-TRENT TOWN COUNCIL** The Sanitary Inspector reported that proceedings had been taken against Mr Shufflebottom for depositing nightsoil so as to be a nuisance at Hartshill. He had inspected the Newcastle canal, and found a considerable nuisance after the passage of a boat, added to which the carcasses of cats, dogs and even pigs were not infrequently seen floating in the water.

**87 22 April 1876**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

**DRUNKENNESS** **George Fletcher, Peter Littlemore** and **William Jones**, three boatmen, were charged with being drunk and riotous in Wall Street, Stoke, on Wednesday night. They were each fined 10s and costs.

**88 29 April 1876**

HANLEY – THURSDAY

**A CURIOUS COUCH** For sleeping on a lime kiln in the Bucknall Road on Wednesday night, **George Lovatt**, a boatman, was brought up, charged with vagrancy, and was required to pay 1s and mitigated costs.

**89 13 May 1876**

**CANAL BOAT CHILDREN** Dealing with the question of "Our Canal Population", attention to whose future condition has been called so prominently by Mr George Smith of Coalville, Mr Baker, the Factory Inspector, in his painfully interesting report, after quoting extensively from Mr Smith's writings &c, remarks :- "The question of these canal boatmen – their want of domestic comforts, and of religious and educational needs, for themselves and children – cannot be allowed to fester upon the social life of the country like an assumed irremovable disease, but it must be, somehow or other, extirpated even though the treatment be sharp. I am aware that it has been said, supposing their women and children be compelled to live on land, the social comforts of their families would

not be increased for, in the separation that would necessarily take place during protracted voyages, husband and wife might be liable to great immoralities, even greater than any that may affect them now. But this argument, though it may appear to have some weight in it at first, is answered, I think, by pointing to the married seamen and soldiers living when away from home ; and to the thousands of contract artisans who leave London and other large towns for weeks together, to complete works which could not be attempted by any system of return tickets or cheap trips, however well contrived. Possibly the mode of administering a compulsory enactment like that which I have attempted to describe might be looked upon with some fear of additional centralisation or of accumulating other civil offices to those which the State now possess. But no! It would need but a certificate to every bargee, at starting on a voyage, testifying to the non-employment on board of female children, young women, or of boys under 14 years of age, to bear the counter signature of examination by here and there a lock-keeper on the canal. This certificate to be provided by order of the canal company, under a heavy penalty for false signatures or testimony. Or by the extra provision of an officer, or two or three at most, well acquainted with the subject, who might traverse the canals, stop at the locks to examine certificates, and let the boats pass on. In all Acts of Parliament of such sort, the difficulties which belong to their execution arise at first. After a while they disappear, either by the perfectness with which they have been carried out, or by emendations suggested by use. Of all evils in a country like ours, those of impure associations – such as women's work on barges and pit banks – and neglected education in thickly populated localities where wages are so high that women's labour can be put in competition with men's and be submitted to – have shown themselves to be very great, and the three I have described have been waiting for the strong hand to rectify them for many a long day. I hope it has come at last. I think I can vouch that the country will rejoice to recognise an authority which has not only the power, but the courage to exercise it, and will second every effort to aid it in its endeavours”.

The Factory and Workshops Acts Commissioners, in their report, make the following recommendation :- “Nothing short of prohibition of the residence of children of school age in boats will be sufficient to secure schooling for the offspring of the parents who at present reside permanently, or a great part of the year, in barges. We recommend that the residences in canal boats of female young persons and of children above the age of three years should be forbidden”.

The remarkable statements and recommendations contained in these weighty State Papers just issued thoroughly back up every statement made by George Smith, in his “Our Canal Population”, articles, letters, &c, calls us with a mighty voice of many thunders and solemn warning for what George Smith truly says – for “legislative interference, legislative protection, and legislative redress”.

## **90     1 July 1876**

**CHILD MURDER AT ASTON** At the Aston Petty Sessions on Wednesday, before Messrs J D Goodman, A Hill and T Ryland, John Ball of Pritchett Street, Birmingham, was charged on remand with wilfully killing his infant son, James Ball, seven months old, by drowning him in the Tame Valley Canal near Bromford on the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst. The evidence adduced by six witnesses before the coroner was repeated. During the taking of the depositions prisoner appeared to be greatly agitated ; and when one of the witnesses spoke of his admission of the murder he was seized with hysteria, and fell down in the dock. A most pathetic scene ensued, the prisoner's relatives in court crying bitterly, and many of the spectators also shed tears. The only additional evidence was that of Inspector Hinde, who stated that when in his custody prisoner said, “I have had a lot of trouble lately ; but I can't think what made me do this. I will tell you what ; there were four of us that used to sleep in one bed – a lodger, my wife, the child, and myself. I used to get up in the morning and get their breakfasts, and leave them in bed together”. Prisoner, in answer to the charge, expressed his wish to say a few words, and he occupied about an hour making a statement, of which the following is a summary :- Alfred Smith lodged with them about six months, and then went up to train with the militia. During the three months he remained in training, the prisoner's wife sent him several letters, and when he returned, she consented to allow him again to lodge with them,

remarking that "there's nowhere to sleep except with my husband, child and myself". Smith agreed to sleep with them. On Tuesday morning prisoner got up and lighted the fire, leaving his wife and the lodger in bed. He subsequently had some angry words with his wife for lying in bed so long and for not properly washing the deceased, and after breakfast he went out, telling her he was going to look for work. She told him that "he could go and never come back for all she cared for him". He walked that day to Wolverhampton in search of work, and returned home about ten minutes after eight in the evening. He found his wife out, and the neighbours told him she had been absent all day. She came in shortly afterwards and abused him, calling him idle. He told her she would not have him long, and she asked him where he was going to, but he made her no answer. The lodger then entered, half drunk, and shook hands with his (prisoner's) wife. He (prisoner) told him that he would go and make away with himself, and the lodger replied that he was a fool. About four o'clock on the following morning, he got up and again walked to Wolverhampton, to do some work which he had been promised, but when he arrived there he found the man drinking, and he then had to return to Birmingham without any work. On Thursday morning he had another altercation with his wife, and he then went out. Between Pritchett Street and Newtown Row, something came in his mind, but he didn't know what it was, and he felt a pain in his head. He returned home in about an hour, and he went in a passion to the pantry, and pulled down two pieces of rope which he put in his pocket. He then went into the street, where he was followed by his wife, who brought him the child wrapped in a shawl. He walked with it into the Aston Road, and said to himself, "What can I do? I am in a great big trouble ; I will make away with myself and the child". He went to Saltley Bridge, and placed the "poor child which was dozing in his arms" upon the canal side. A lot of men seeing him there, he took up the child and carried it to an arm of the canal at Bromford, where he procured a lot of bricks from out of a gateway. After kissing the child several times, he tied a rope attached to two bricks round the body, and threw it into the canal. He was then about to jump into the water himself, when two men passed over the bridge. He hid himself until they had passed, but a boatman, catching sight of him, asked him what made him look so wild, and kept a watch on him. In consequence of this, he (prisoner) left the place, and went to his sister's house in Slade Lane, from whence he went to the residence of his father, and made known what he had done. Afterwards when he had pointed out the spot where the child's body lay, he was about to throw himself into the canal, but his father checked him. Having made this statement, prisoner was formally committed to the Assizes on a charge of wilful murder.

## **91     8 July 1876**

**LIFE ON THE CANALS** A case of violence in the Preston Police Court on the 21<sup>st</sup> ult shows that Mr George Smith's (of Coalville) pictures of life on the canal boats have not been overdrawn, and that a very low state of civilisation prevails, the boaters and their women being little removed above the savages against whose customs we send corps of missionaries. Of course all boaters are not alike. There are numbers who have some regard for the common decencies of life. Among the toilers over the canals there are many God fearing men, who live sober and honest lives, and to the best of their power bring up their children in the way they should go, not in the barges, but in dwellings ashore. But the exemplary, after all, form but a small proportion of the people engaged in this inland navigation. The great bulk of the boaters and their "women" - they don't often call them wives - and their families pig together in the wretched holes called cabins, and spend in drink the money which might render present life more comfortable and future prospects much brighter. Men, women and even children drink to excess, use the most blasphemous and obscene language without the remotest idea that they thereby do wrong, and when they fight, which is often, it is after the manner of wild beasts who do not care how much they disfigure or hurt each other. The case heard at Preston gives some notion of the low morality of the women on the canals. According to the statements made in court, one boatwoman was seated on the canal bank with her baby, when another went up to her, and after some preliminary "words" took the baby from her and flung it down. Then she seized the mother by the hair, at which she tore like a tigress, and having thrown her on the ground kicked her in the most merciless fashion about the head, face and breast with her

iron mounted clogs. At length some men interfered, otherwise the infuriated creature might have kicked her victim to death. The assailant was taken before the magistrates, when to her fellow boatwomen she appeared in a heroic light, some of them saying the fight was a perfectly fair and challenged one, which should have taken place in a field, as there were bets on the result. The magistrates did not view the matter so pleasantly, and sent the victor to gaol for a month with hard labour. But this punishment is scarcely adequate to the offence, and is suggestive that these scimmages on the canal bank are mere everyday occurrences. The circumstances indicate that there is plenty of scope for missionary labours among boaters and their women, and experience in this neighbourhood has proved that if these people are approached with tact a great deal of good may be accomplished. The missionaries must be kindly and genial, and not censorious ; and by active sympathy with the boat population may obtain such influence as will enable them to lead the people out of their present evil courses and improve their social and moral status.

*Liverpool Daily Courier*

**92 15 July 1876**

**NISI PRIUS COURT**

**FURIOUS DRIVING** **Sherwin** v Shaw. An action to recover damages for negligence. Mr Powell QC and Mr C Smith were for the plaintiff, and Mr Young was for the defendant. The case for the plaintiff, who is a boatman, but on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of April was driving a horse and cart in Stoke-upon-Trent, was that while under the railway bridge at the bottom of Shelton Road, the defendant, who is a tripe seller at Hanley, drove along at a furious pace – the plaintiff said at the rate of sixteen or seventeen miles an hour, and on the wrong side of the road. One of the shafts of defendant's trap entered the breast of the plaintiff's horse and killed it. The plaintiff valued his horse at £20, and said he was thrown out of employ for five days through the accident. The defence was a direct contradiction of plaintiff's case, and there was a counter claim for damages to defendant's trap. The Jury found for the plaintiff, damages £14.

**93 22 July 1876**

**HANLEY – MONDAY**

**THE WORST MAN IN MILTON** **Herbert Harrison**, boatman, was charged with being drunk at Milton on Saturday ; also with assaulting PC Sheridan and A Foster. PC Sheridan stated that when he was on the way to Smallthorne with him, the prisoner threw one of his boots at him and hit him on the forehead, and then ran off. He again attempted to get away by jumping into a boat in the canal and, by procuring the assistance of Foster, witness was at length enabled to handcuff him. Foster was much kicked about the legs. He was fined 10s in each case and costs.

**A BOATMAN IN TROUBLE** **William Shaw**, boatman, was summoned for drawing up the side clough of the Sandyford Lock upon the navigation from the Trent to the Mersey, whilst the top gate was open, and thereby caused the waste of the water of the said navigation. **George Burton**, lock-keeper, proved the offence. Defendant did not appear, and a fine of 40s was imposed.

**94 29 July 1876**

**DROWNING A CHILD AT SMETHWICK** The adjourned inquest on the body of Minnie Cope, four months old, the daughter of Joseph Cope of George Street, West Smethwick, who was drowned a week ago in the old Birmingham canal by a married woman named Elizabeth Hobson, was held on Monday before Mr E Hooper, at the Burton Tavern, West Smethwick. Mrs Hobson, who is in the custody of the police, was present during the inquiry. Ellen Amphlett, waitress at a confectioner's shop, Spon Lane, stated that the prisoner came to the shop in the afternoon of Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> instant, carrying an infant, and purchased two buns and some cheesecakes. Thomas Handley, moulder, deposed that about five o'clock on the same day he saw the prisoner going along the canal side past the Summit Bridge at Smethwick, with a child in her arms. She afterwards got in a boat, where she remained about ten minutes, and then walked up the lane

leading to the Summit Bridge, where he lost sight of her. Thomas Henry Grant, aged eleven, stated that he saw the prisoner on the Roebuck Lane Bridge carrying a baby. She laid hold of the baby by the arm and suspended it over the bridge, but a man from below shouted, and she then went down the bank, put the child on the towing-path, and kicked it into the water. She did not try to get it out. Witness was frightened and went home, telling a companion what had occurred. **William Jolly**, boatman, Tipton, was passing with a boat near the place soon after the occurrence, when he saw the body lying in the water, and at once informed the police, who took it out, and it was identified by the parents. Police-constable Armstrong stated that the woman came to the police station at West Bromwich and gave herself in charge, admitting that she had drowned the child. Superintendent Woolaston said the prisoner told him who the parents of the child were, and what part of the canal she had thrown it in and, on enquiry, he found her statement was correct. Subsequently prisoner became very much excited, saying, "Why did I do it? Why did I do it? I don't know why I did it. I have been ill for the last twelve months, and have been under the doctor's hands". On another occasion, she said, "I ought to have pulled it out". The evidence of Mrs Cope, the mother of the child, which had been taken at the former inquest, was read over. The witness said that the prisoner had always appeared fond of the child ; that she had nursed it on the day in question, and had asked permission to take it a walk to buy some sweets, but did not return. The Coroner said the evidence tended to show that the child had been deprived of its life by Elizabeth Hobson, and it was for the jury to say whether it was a wilful act on her part, or to give her the benefit of any doubt, but they had nothing to do with the state of mind the prisoner was in at the time when she committed the act. After a short deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of Wilful Murder.

#### **95 5 August 1876**

**THE CHILD MURDER AT SMETHWICK** At the West Bromwich Police Court on Saturday, before Messrs I Kempson, J W Williams and H Wiggin, Elizabeth Hobson, married woman of George Street, West Smethwick, was charged on remand with the wilful murder of Minnie Cope, the infant daughter of Joseph Cope, also of George Street, West Smethwick. The same evidence was given as was adduced before the coroner, to the effect that on the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup> inst, prisoner took the child out for a walk and threw it into the canal, the act being witnessed by a lad named Grant, who had been watching her movements. Grant was frightened, and without giving an alarm ran home and told a companion. The woman immediately afterwards gave herself into the custody of the West Bromwich police, and in a very excited state cried, "Why did I do it? Why did I do it?" The body of the child was discovered in the water by a boatman named **Tolley**, soon after it was thrown in, but instead of fetching it out at once, he waited till the arrival of a policeman whom he sent for. The witness said the child was certainly dead at the time, for it was nearly five minutes before they could get the boat round to get at it. Mr Kempson remarked that it showed a want of proper feeling on the part of the man that he did not at once take the body out. The prisoner made no defence, and was committed to the next Stafford Assizes.

[Note : Name shown as Jolly in previous article]

#### **96 12 August 1876**

**HANLEY – MONDAY**

**DRINK'S DOINGS** **John Bratton**, boatman, was charged with being drunk near the Bridge Inn, Tunstall, on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. Defendant admitted that he was drunk, and was fined 5s and costs.

#### **97 26 August 1876**

**BURSLEM – TUESDAY**

**A BOATMAN'S ROW** Thomas Elsby and George Elsby were charged with assaulting **Jane Taylor**, the wife of a boatman, Longport, on the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. Complainant said that the defendants had beat her and kicked her, and knocked some of her teeth out. Mary Ann Forester said she saw the complainant struck by the defendants. Mary Ann Snaydon corroborated the statements of the last witness. Machin, another witness, saw George Elsby kick her, and the other defendant strike her

under the ribs. Witness said that he had had a glass or two of beer before he came into court. George Elsby gave him the sixpence in Newcastle Street to get the beer not to appear against him. Complainant's boy was called as a witness ; but as he did not know his age, and was so ignorant that he could not be sworn, he was withdrawn. The mother said that he had been to school, but she had had bad luck with her horses, else he would have gone longer. Margaret Ann Burnon said that she was told by the complainant the Thursday before the assault that her husband had beat her, and had kicked out one or two teeth. Witness saw complainant helpless drunk the day before the assault. The Bench considered that the complainant was not in a fit state when the assault occurred to be able to give reliable testimony, and the witnesses for the defence were straightforward, and the case would be dismissed.

## **98    21 October 1876**

THE INSPECTION OF CANAL BOATS    When the Bridgwater Canal was made in 1759, the Comford in 1773, Peak Forest in 1773, the Union Canal in 1793, and the Macclesfield in 1826, the whole of the labouring classes of this country were as nearly on a level as possible as regards wages, education and morality, and since that time those who took to boating have step by step to a certain extent – by the nature of their employment – been separating themselves from the rest of the labouring population and getting lower ; while those in towns have been drawing close together, and by means of education, a cheap free press, social intercourse, careful combination and the Bible, have become more enlightened, better educated, better workmen and better citizens, commanding more wages and getting more home comforts ; and it was this wide gulf between our town and canal population that has been before my eyes asleep and awake from a child, that induced me, with much nervousness and a trembling hand, to ventilate the subject through the London and country daily and weekly papers so far back as October 1873. The statements contained in those and other letters since, articles in the *Fortnightly Review*, *Argonaut*, *Church Congress Paper*, and my little work, “Our Canal Population”, and in other ways, every jot and tittle of which have been fully established before the Commissions, viz, “that there are 100,000 men, woman and children living, working and floating on our rivers and canals in a state of wretchedness, misery, immorality, cruelty and evil training that carries peril with it”. Not five percent of the men, women and children can read or write ; and I have it from the men themselves that nine out of ten are drunkards – they buy rum by pints and drink it like water. In the little village of Braunston, near to Rugby, there are ten public houses adjoining the canal in a distance of little over a mile, at which the boatmen, their wives and children, are to be seen at any time of the day. One boatman, who has worked between the Potteries, Birmingham and London during the past forty years, does not know of half a dozen boaters who are members of a Christian Church. He further says that two parts out of three of the men and women living as husbands and wives are unmarried. If my estimate of 100,000 be true, and I am led to believe it is under the mark, we have 22,400 men, 22,400 women and 72,000 children, which may be termed “our canal population” ; out of this number we have 13,000 men and 13,000 women living together in an unmarried state, and 40,000 illegitimate children living, floating and working in connection with canal boats.

A governor of one of our large gaols states that they are the worst class of criminals he has had to do with. Be it said in their favour, for honesty they will contrast favourably with many of our labouring population, especially when we take into account that their wages are less than many other occupations. During the whole of my enquiries and travels among them I have not found one that has spoken disrespectful of either the Bible, religion, or the Queen. Owing to our canals being narrower and the locks shorter than in any other country, it follows that the boats and cabins must of necessity be smaller ; many of the boats carrying not more than 25 tons. The cabin is scarcely the size of a gentleman's dog kennel, into which are stowed or huddled together man, woman, and six or seven children of both sexes, big and small, to live, sleep and die in. In Ireland and Scotland they are a long way ahead of us. The canals are wider, boats bigger, and the journeys longer ; and if the boaters could take their wives and children with them to profit it would be done, and what is the result? Why, they stay at home with their little ones, while the boater is on his journey ; and they

have a steadier, soberer and better educated class of boatman than we have in England. In Holland the boats are large enough to have cabins with two compartments, and yet we, in England, with our canals running through the centres of civilisation, such places as Paddington, Oxford, Worcester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the Potteries and so on to Liverpool, we have allowed eight men, women and children to sleep and die in these holes like so many pigs, in a place not big enough for a man and two boys during the last century, without endeavouring to bridge over the fearfully wide cataract that separates the boater and his family from the rest of the civilised world. Happily daylight has come, and the Royal Factory and Workshop Acts Commissioners, with such names as the Rt Hon Sir James Ferguson, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and Sir George Young among them, have taken hold of the subject in a thorough, business like way. Though they do not go as I would wish, "A piece of loaf is better than none". I advocate the entire prohibition of women and children living and working on canal boats. The work can be done cheaper without them. The men would become more sober and industrious if "the women and children were out of the way".

The evidence given before the Commission, and in Mr Baker's report, backs up this statement. The Royal Commission recommends that no child above the age of three, and no female under sixteen, should be allowed to reside in a canal boat. This will accomplish to a large extent, in the long run, what I am aiming at, viz, the education and protection of the women and children living and working on canal boats. The Education Act, as it now stands, will have a damaging effect upon the better class boatman, who have homes on land ; it has given the boatman an open door through which to pass to escape the compulsory clauses of the Education Act. All he has to do is give up his house, and live with his children in the cabin, and no power on earth can touch him, or compel him to educate his children.

During the whole time I have been advocating the cause of my young clients, I have travelled hundreds of miles, sent and received shoals of letters from canal proprietors, managers, boatmen and others and, except those who have no interest in canals, I have not met with a dozen objections to the plan roughly sketched out by me in dealing with these good hearted people. (See February number of the *Fortnightly Review* 1874, *Argonaut* September 1875, and "Our Canal Population" pages 48 and 83). I have received encouraging letters from all quarters, including the Queen down to the boatman. A boatman named **Wills**, of Northampton, wrote me to say that he had heard that "Our Canal Population" was full of lies, and he bought a copy to see for himself. After reading it, he said it was too true, and enclosed 2s 6d in stamps and wished me Good speed. It had, he said, completely turned him round. I mention these incidents to show that there is a general feeling through the country that something should be done, and now is the time to do it. The boatmen and their children have been left to themselves too long already. As one said to me, they might live and die like dogs, on pieces of old sacks, and in the stables with their horses, and the Government does not notice them. They have been supplying inmates for Workhouses and Hospitals long enough. They have neither the money to pay nor accommodation for the poor weakly sickly children in their cabins. We have a law that prevents our crowding in houses and in berths on ships, and yet we have had in our midst during the last century blacker and darker spots than the blackest in our towns, and the inspector has not had power to lift the latch, much less look into those "hell holes" of filth and disease, actually swarming with the most sickening and loathsome vermin, which might also at times be taken out of the cabins by shovelfuls, causing a stench unbearable for some distance.

A case occurred at Wirksworth, a week or two since, where a man, woman and eight children were living in two rooms – places compared with a boat cabin, but six times larger – and the nuisance was ordered by the authorities to be stopped ; but whoever heard of an inspector stepping in to prevent overcrowding in boats? The boaters seem to think, many of them, that they are under no law, everybody must stand out of their way, and let them do as they like.

In public houses, shops at the corner of the streets, and on the towing path, a clear course is made for them. An extensive farmer, whose land joins a large colliery, stated to me some time since that he has seen as many as 300 boats lying at the wharf adjoining his land on a Sunday, and some of the men and boat lads playing at all sorts of games, "pitch and toss", "leap frog", and others, and no minister visiting them. He said he could get on better with them by letting them have the run of his

land, to go where they liked. So far, then, as to a few illustrations of canal life, upon which I might enlarge, were time not an object.

I am anxiously waiting to see what the Home Secretary and the President of the Local Government Board are going to do with them, for I have their assurance that they are preparing a bill on the subject. What I want to see is the children educated, and the women good wives, happy homes for their husbands, and I do not care what plans are adopted, whether it be the Royal Commissioners' Plan, or Mr Baker's plan, or my plan. I am hoping it will come to the same in the end. No inspection could be carried out so effectively and cheaply as the inspection of canal boats. With the assistance of the lock tenters or boat gaugers, two inspectors will be sufficient ; and if they are stationed at proper places, they will be able to see the 20,000 boats on our 4,800 miles of rivers and canals twice a year, much easier than a Factory Inspector would visit 1,000 factories and workshops. I would station one at Birmingham, and give him the Black Country and all the canals south and east ; I would station one at Manchester, and give him all the canals north and west of Birmingham. And their duties should not be to look after the children only, but to inspect the boats and canals generally, and report where life and property are in danger. Not long since, near to Moira, a boatman was drowned while he was asleep in a leaky and worn out old boat. We have Government Inspectors for all sorts of things, from huge prisons and factories down to a tiny little oyster, and yet over our vast network of canals we have 20,000 boats ploughing up the decayed animal and vegetable matter at the bottom, and impregnating the air with its stenches, and scattering death and disease along their track without any Government supervision or control. The time has now come when overcrowding in boat cabins must be stopped, Sunday travelling – except in special cases – done away with, and the children educated. Anything short of this will not be satisfactory to the country.

In conclusion, so far as my experience goes, I think there will not be the opposition to the Act as was the case in the Brickfield Acts. In this case The Queen takes special interest in “Our Canal Population”, and we have the “heartly good wishes” of canal companies, directors, canal managers, boatmen, and their wives. To those – if there be any – who seek to annoy, obstruct, and delight in keeping this useful class of our labouring population in dense ignorance and misery, to reduce the women and children to worse than beasts, as they did with those employed in making bricks and tiles, we say, too late, too late.

George Smith

### **99 11 November 1876**

HANLEY – TUESDAY

A BOATMAN FINED **George Frost**, boatman, was charged, under statute, with leaving a drawbridge up over the Trent and Mersey Canal near Meakin's works, on the 20<sup>th</sup> October. PC Dennis proved the case. Defendant was fined 20s and costs.

### **100 2 December 1876**

STAFFORDSHIRE AND SHROPSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

SENTENCES **Samuel Jones** (20), boatman, who pleaded guilty to a charge of feloniously assaulting Mary Jane Parton on the 4<sup>th</sup> September last at Bentley, was sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

### **101 23 September 1876**

HANLEY – THURSDAY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Charles Finney**, boatman, Hassel Green, near Sandbach, was charged by Inspector Tully with cruelly working an old, poor, worn out horse. The Inspector said the horse was the most wretched looking one he had seen since he came to the district. It was nothing better than a bag of bones. Defendant, who had taken the animal back to Sandbach, fined £1.

### 102 16 December 1876

CRUELTY TO HORSES **Thomas Beach** was charged with cruelly ill treating a pony by working it while it was in an unfit state, and John Bennett, brick and tile manufacturer, Rode Heath, was charged with procuring it to be so ill treated. Additional Constable Woodcock, in the employ of the Chatterley Coal and Iron Company, said that on the 15<sup>th</sup> November he saw Beach bring an old pony out of a stable at the Chatterley end of the tunnel, and attach it to a boat on the canal. The boat was laden with sand. The pony was exceedingly lame, and could scarcely get along. Inspector Tully said that on the 21<sup>st</sup> November he went to Mr Bennett at Rode Heath and ascertained that the pony had been sold. **James Mosely** was charged with cruelly ill treating another pony belonging to Mr Bennett, by working it while in an unfit state. Woodcock saw this pony also on the 15<sup>th</sup> November. Inspector Tully and Mr Coe, veterinary surgeon, gave evidence, the former stating that Mr Bennett had refused to give information as to the whereabouts of the animals. Mr Greenwood said that Mr Bennett had aggravated the cases by refusing reasonable information. He would be fined 40s and costs in each case, and the other defendants would be fined 5s and costs. The total amount (£9 12s) was paid by Mr Bennett.

### 103 3 February 1877

#### KIDSGROVE

DROWNED On Tuesday, while the storm was raging at Runcorn, a man named **William Allcock**, a boatman from Harding's Wood, who was with a boat there, was blown into the water and drowned. The wife's father lives with them, and on Wednesday she was telling her father that she had been dreaming of being at Runcorn, and walking about the locks in a state of nudity, very much troubled in her mind, when a letter was put into her hand announcing the death of her husband. He has left six children.

### 104 3 March 1877

#### STAFFORDSHIRE ADJOURNED QUARTER SESSIONS

ALLEGED IRON STEALING AT BURSLEM **Job Bailey** (18), boatman ; **Samuel Harrison** (20), boatman ; **Samuel Bailey** (18), boatman ; and Patrick Quinn (58), marine store dealer, were charged with stealing 6 ¼ cwt of pig iron and 1 cwt of coal, the property of Mr Robert Heath, at Norton-in-the-Moors on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January. Mr C Smith appeared for the prosecution, and Mr J Rose and Mr Fisher defended the prisoners. After hearing the evidence for the prosecution, the Assistant Chairman advised the jury to return a verdict of not guilty, as there was not sufficient evidence of identification.

### 105 17 March 1877

SINGULAR CASE OF ASSAULT At the Salford Police Court on Monday, **Frank Rothwell**, a boatman upon the Bury and Bolton Canal, was brought before Sir J I Mantell on a charge of having assaulted his wife and caused her to swallow a pin. Between two and three o'clock the same morning he and his wife, while on board their boat near Oldfield Road, quarrelled in the cabin concerning a kitten which he had given away against the wishes of the prosecutrix. The latter was dressing herself, and was sitting up in bed holding a pin between her teeth, when her husband struck her upon the mouth, causing her to swallow the pin. According to the statements of the prisoner and his daughter, who was present during the quarrel, the prisoner only hit his wife with his stocking, but PS Harrison, who subsequently met the whole family going with Mrs Rothwell to the Salford Hospital, stated that the woman had told him that her husband struck her with his hand. Mr William Walker, house surgeon at the Salford Royal Hospital, informed the magistrate that he saw the prosecutrix at the institution between three and four o'clock that morning, and he was of opinion that there was great danger that the pin which she had swallowed might cause death by sticking into her internally. The prisoner was remanded for a week, but was admitted to bail, himself in £100, and two other persons in £50 each.

**106 31 March 1877**

OUR CANAL POPULATION Dr Hardwicke held an inquest on Tuesday at Providence Hall, Paddington, as to the death of **George Hambridge**, age 70, a bargeman, who was found dead in his barge early on Sunday morning. The widow said deceased, who had lived on the boat the greater part of his life, was suffering from a cold on arriving at the Paddington Basin, but it was not thought necessary to send for a doctor. After death had taken place, Mr Wise, from St Mary's Hospital, was called, who ordered the body to be removed to the mortuary of the institution, where a *post mortem* examination was made. He found the cause of death to be inflammation of the lungs, inducing failure of the heart's action, accelerated by the foul atmosphere in the boat cabin. Further inquiry showed that there were four adults living and sleeping on the boat, the cabin being only 9 ft long, 7 ft wide and 5 ft in height. Deceased paid 10s per week for the hire of the boat, which plied between Warwickshire and London with lime. The Coroner observed that it was satisfactory to know that there was a bill before Parliament in reference to our canal population. In this instance deceased had undoubtedly been stifled through want of fresh air, as absolutely there was not 150 cubic feet of space in the cabin. It was well known, moreover, that whole families were in the habit of living on these canal boats. On inquiry, it was found that neither deceased nor the other persons on the boat could either read or write. The jury agreed to a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

**107 31 March 1877**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY **William Roberts** and **Jos Wood**, boatmen, for being drunk at the Bridge Inn, Tunstall, had to pay 5s and costs – 14s 6d each.

**108 12 May 1877**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

DOGS-ODOGY **Joseph Wood**, boatman, canal side, Tunstall, and Charles Tomkinson, labourer, Butt Lane, were fined £1 5s each for keeping dogs without a license.

**109 4 August 1877**

SAD CASE OF DROWNING About noon on Friday week, a boy, four years old, the son of **John Beech**, boatman, met with his death under very painful circumstances. His parents' boat was moored at the Woodshutts Colliery basin, and the boy was playing with a short shaft. He must have fallen unperceived into the water, for it was several minutes before he was missed, when the father, looking round, asked where he was. Looking at the water, he saw the little fellow's hat and the shaft swimming on the top, and at once jumped in and found the body, which was got out, and medical assistance procured immediately, but life was extinct.

**110 15 September 1877**

BURSLEM – TUESDAY

ASSAULT **Daniel Proctor**, boatman, was charged with assaulting James Hunter, saddler, Stoke, and also with doing damage to some window panes. He was discharged on promising to pay the damage, and to find sureties of the peace.

**111 24 November 1877**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

A PENN'ORTH O' COAL **Joseph Leeson**, a boatman, was charged with stealing a pennyworth of coal at Ravensdale, the property of Messrs R Heath and Son. It seems the coal was taken as the boat was passing another, laden with the coal. Prisoner pleaded not guilty, but was sent to gaol for seven days.

**112 20 October 1877**

Referring to the Act providing for the registration and regulation of canal boats used as dwellings,

(the Chairman) said : Under this Act the owner of a canal boat might register his boat with the registration authority as a dwelling for such number of persons of the specified age and sex as might be allowed. If a boat were used in contravention of the statute, a penalty not exceeding 20s for each evasion would be incurred. The Local Government Board were to make regulations for registration, fixing the number of persons, age, and sex, promoting cleanliness, and providing for the habitable condition of canal boats. For the purposes of the education statutes, a child in a registered boat and his parent would be deemed to be resident in the place at which the boat was registered.

**113 15 December 1877**

LONGTON – WEDNESDAY

**DRUNK AND RIOTOUS BEHAVIOUR AT BURSLEM** **William Jones**, boatman, was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Newcastle Street, Burslem, on the previous evening, and **Thomas Beach**, blacksmith, was charged with interrupting the police in the execution of their duty. PC Collins stated that about eleven o'clock on the previous evening in Newcastle Street, Burslem, Jones was the worse for drink. Witness cautioned him more than once, and eventually took him into custody. On the way to the station prisoner became very violent, and struck and kicked the officer several times. Beach came up while Jones was being conveyed to the lock up, and said that Jones should not be taken. He however offered no violence, and having been locked up all night, the Bench took that fact into consideration, and discharged him. Jones was fined 10s and costs.

**114 29 December 1877**

HANLEY

**A MAN DROWNED** John Gotham, an old man aged seventy seven, met with his death last Monday evening by falling into the lock on the Trent and Mersey Canal, Etruria Vale. The old man is near sighted, and is supposed to have fallen into the lock while on his way to a neighbouring shop to purchase some tobacco. The deceased was found by a boatman named **David Cornwall** of Lord Street about 6.30 p m.

**115 5 January 1878**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

**SENTENCES** **William Durdes** (21), boatman, to nine months' imprisonment for unlawfully wounding Elizabeth Granedge at West Bromwich.

**116 12 January 1878**

**A CHILD DROWNED IN THE ETRURIA LOCKS** A little girl, aged eleven years, the daughter of **Benjamin Minshall**, who has charge of a boat on the canal, met her death yesterday morning by falling into the canal at Etruria Top Locks. It appears the deceased was sent for a ticket to the top locks, and on coming back it is conjectured she slipped off the footboard and fell into the canal. She was picked up by her father and subsequently conveyed to the Etruria Inn, where an inquest will be held on the body.

**117 19 January 1878**

DEATH BY DROWNING AT HANLEY

**INQUEST** An inquest was held at the Saracen's Head Hotel, Hanley, on Monday, respecting the death of **Mary Ann Minshall**, the little girl aged eleven years who was drowned in the Trent and Mersey Canal at Etruria on Friday week last.

**Benjamin Minshall**, the father of the deceased, who said he could not spell his own name, and that he lived nowhere except in the boat, stated that about six o'clock on the morning named, he sent his daughter to the lock office to procure a permit, in order that the boat might proceed. After waiting some time for her return he called her, but not receiving an answer he went to the ticket office. He understood that she had been and gone. On making a search he found her just under the bridge. She was dead, and seemed to have been crossing the lock.

Richard Lees, check clerk, gave evidence of the child being supplied with a permit. He also stated that the gas was lighted all night.  
A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

**118 16 March 1878**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY **John Swales**, 22, boatman, was indicted for stealing one pair of trousers and other articles, the property of Isaac Slater, at Baswich on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1877. Sentenced to seven years' penal servitude, having been previously convicted.

**119 27 April 1878**

HANLEY – MONDAY

PROPERLY PUNISHED **Benjamin Minshall** was charged with assaulting his wife, **Jemima Minshall**. The parties are boat people, and have only been married one month. On Thursday they were at Stoke with their boat, and they had a quarrel. The defendant kicked the wife on the nose and broke it. He also made her two black eyes. The wife asked that the magistrates would deal leniently with her husband. The man expressed his sorrow for what he had done, and said he had had a little beer. The magistrates considered that an outrageous assault had been committed, and sent the man to prison for three months, and also ordered him to be bound over to keep the peace for six months.

STEALING HORSE HAIR The man **Minshall**, who was charged last week with stealing a quantity of horse hair, the property of Messrs Williamson, Tunstall, now pleaded guilty, and was sent to prison for three months.

PARISH CASE **Alfred Averill** was charged with leaving his wife chargeable to the Stoke Union. Mr C Daniel, who prosecuted, said these proceedings were taken under the Vagrancy Act, and the prisoner was a boatman. He had deserted his wife, leaving her quite destitute. He had abused and beaten her to such an extent that she was unable to walk to the relieving officer's office. Mr Daniel said this was not the first occasion on which prisoner had deserted his wife, who was now in the workhouse and unable to appear. Evidence was given to substantiate Mr Daniel's statement. The husband said his wife was constantly in the habit of leaving him and taking his money with her. He was ordered to pay all the costs incurred, and to make an arrangement with Mr Daniel.

**120 11 May 1878**

HANLEY – MONDAY

NEGLECT OF A WIFE **Thomas Bolton**, boatman, for allowing his wife to become chargeable to the Wolstanton and Burslem Union, and incurring a debt of £2, was committed to Stafford for two months in default of paying the amount due to the Guardians of the Union named.

**121 25 May 1878**

HANLEY – TUESDAY

HORSE STEALERS WELL CAUGHT Joseph Edwards and Edward Jukes were charged with stealing a horse of the value of £10, and a bridle of the value of 1s, the property of **Abel Jones**. The prosecutor is a boatman, and on Monday afternoon he came to Hanley. About three o'clock he put the horse and bridle in the stable at the Bridge Inn, Etruria. Witness went again to the stable about eight o'clock to give the horse its supper, and both horse and bridle were gone. Witness made inquiries in the neighbourhood and, about two o'clock PS Walley (Stoke) and a man named Highfield came to him, and from what they told him witness went to Stoke, and there found the horse and bridle in a stable in Liverpool Road. Witness knew the prisoner Edwards, who had worked with him. Mr Highfield, horse dealer, Stoke, said that on Monday afternoon the prisoners came to him and said they had got a horse to sell. They asked £9 for it. Witness said to the

prisoners, "It's no use asking £9 for a horse like that ; you would take £4 for it, wouldn't you?" Edwards said, "We will, if you'll pay for a half gallon of ale". Witness said he would have him, and he gave Edwards 1s and said, "Go and get a quart of ale while I fetch you the money. I have not got the money in my pocket". Witness had the money, but his intention was to go for the police. Prisoners went into the public house, and were to wait there until witness came back. He went to the police office and gave information. In about ten minutes he returned with PS's Woodhouse and Walley, and they took the two men into custody. PS Walley swore to arresting the prisoners. Jukes gave a false name and address. Jukes now made a statement to the effect that Edwards told him that he had paid £3 down for the horse to Abel Jones ; that Jones owed him 26s for wages ; that the horse cost £5, and he would pay Jones the balance. Edwards fetched the horse out, but he (Jukes) did not go near the animal. Both prisoners were then committed for trial.

### 122 1 June 1878

HANLEY – MONDAY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **James Bricknell**, a boatman working the boat "*Elizabeth*" from Oxford, was summoned for cruelly ill treating a horse by working it in an unfit state. Inspector Nicholls said that on the 9<sup>th</sup> ult he saw the defendant at Shelton driving a mare attached to a loaded boat. The animal was very lame, and the near fore fetlock was much overshot. The defendant, who said he had had the mare four years, and that it had always gone lame was ordered to pay £1 2s 6d costs.

### 123 6 July 1878

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

THEFT OF ALE AT LONGPORT **William Jervis** (43), boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of ale on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May at Longport, the property of John Smith. Mr Corser appeared for the prosecution and Mr Underhill for the defence. Prisoner was employed on prosecutor's premises removing manure, and in the yard was an ale store. Jervis went up to some barrels of ale, and took seven gallons from one and five from another. Prisoner was seen with a can in his hand containing beer which had been drawn from the barrels. The ale had been taken from the barrels by drawing the cork, and the ale was running away. Sent to gaol for one month.

### 124 13 July 1878

HANLEY – THURSDAY

CRUELTY **John Emmanuel Jones** was summoned for working a horse in an unfit state, and Abel Jones was summoned for causing it to be so worked. Inspector Nicholls of the RSPCA prosecuted. **Mr William Smith**, check clerk at Etruria Lock, said that on the 8<sup>th</sup> ult he saw a grey horse drawing an empty boat along the canal. He saw that it was lame. Inspector Nicholls said that he examined the horse. It was very lame on the near fore foot from an overshot fetlock joint. It was in poor condition, and drawing would cause it great pain. Mr Baddeley, MRCVS, spoke to examining the horse, which was in poor condition and suffering from lameness in the near fore fetlock. It was quite unfit to be worked. The defendant said that he had only had the horse a few hours. He called a witness, who said that the horse only walked on the towing-path, and was not attached to the boat. Defendant was fined 5s and costs.

### 125 20 July 1878

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

INDECENT ASSAULT A boy named **Peter Theobald**, son of a boatman from Lawton, Cheshire, was charged with indecently assaulting a girl named **Eliza Smith**, a boat girl, 13 years of age. Complainant said that her father was a boatman, and that she travelled with her brother-in-law, whose name was **William Newton**. On Tuesday night their boat was lying at the Burslem Wharf. About nine o'clock she left the boat to go and fetch some fresh water. On going along the towpath she passed prisoner, who asked her to give him a kiss. She refused, and he then pulled her through

a hedge and down the embankment on the other side, where he committed the offence. Complainant's sister Sophie Newton corroborated the evidence which she gave. Mr Hollinshead, who appeared for the defence, pleaded guilty to an aggravated assault. The Bench said that these charges were very serious, and he must treat them as such. He did not think that he would be doing his duty to the public if he did not commit prisoner to gaol for six months.

### **126 27 July 1878**

FENTON – FRIDAY

SAVAGE ASSAULT **William Good**, boatman, and his wife **Elizabeth Good** were charged with assaulting an old man named **Francis Clarke**, a boatman. It appeared from the evidence defendants had knocked complainant down and kicked him about the face in a most brutal manner, near the Shelton Locks. Prisoners afterwards followed him to the Bothen Bridge, where complainant was twice pitched into the canal. Defendants' son took part in the proceedings, and a warrant was issued for his apprehension. The Stipendiary said he would remand the defendants in custody, as he thought he should be obliged to send them for trial.

### **127 27 July 1878**

BURSLEM – TUESDAY

ALLEGED THEFT OF FAT John Hackney was charged with stealing on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 40 lbs of fat belonging to James Cliffe, butcher, Burslem. Prisoner was committed to trial at the Sessions. A further charge was then made against the prisoner for stealing a sack bag, the property of **Thomas Clarke**, boatman, value 1s 6d. After the evidence was given, prisoner was committed to trial on the second charge.

### **128 10 August 1878**

OUR CANAL POPULATION A very interesting article appears in the "*Sunday at Home*" for August, on "Our Canal Population, and what is being done for them", by Mr George Smith, FSA, Coalville. Speaking on the estimated number of canal and river population, Mr Smith says :- "The Home Secretary stated, in July 1877, that there were in 1871 about 29,500 persons employed on canals and rivers, and of that number 10,576 were actually on board the boats on the night the census was taken. The Duke of Richmond and Gordon stated in the House of Lords, on August 8 1877, that it was impossible to ascertain the exact numbers, but the inland "floating population" was variously estimated from 29,000 to 80,000. It will thus be seen that no satisfactory data have been found for stating the correct number of men, women and children to be included under the general head of "our canal population". The Canal Boats Act, which came into operation on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1878, will place the means within our reach of arriving at more accurate statistics, as all the boats, barges and flats will have to be registered, marked and numbered. Meanwhile I give the number roundly at 100,000. As far back as 1873, in my little work entitled "Our Canal Population", I stated that there was an average of four boats per mile on 4,800 miles of rivers and canals. This would make the number of boats 19,200, and supposing there to be a man, woman and three children with each boat, this would make the total of 96,000. I find on close examination the number to be under the mark, and I arrived at it in the following manner. In the year 1835, before the Great Western Railway was opened, there were conveyed by the Grand Junction Canal, 136 miles long, 756,894 tons of goods of all kinds. In the year 1836, the year the railway was opened, there were 1,039,833 tons of goods conveyed by the canal. In 1847, the total amount of tonnage conveyed was 1,163,466 tons. Thus it will be seen that there was an average of 11,284 tons conveyed over the Grand Junction yearly ; and if the same ratio only has gone on since 1847, the goods conveyed by the Grand Junction will not be under 1,500,000, though I am assured by one who knows that there will be nearly 2,000,000, but supposing there to be only 1,500,000 tons conveyed by this canal, it will take 1,500 boats to carry this tonnage, if they make 40 journeys a year of 25 tons on each boat, on an average. I am told, however, that they will not average more than 30 journeys per year. Thus it will be seen at a rough calculation, there will not be less than 10

boats per mile on the Grand Junction Canal ; but taking this estimate at half this amount on the canals and rivers in England, there will not be less than 23,000 men, 22,000 women, and 72,000 children engaged in boating. In this estimate I am confirmed by a letter sent to one of the officials to the general manager, which letter the manager kindly sent on to me, wherein it is stated that there are over 1,000 boats on their canal between London and Birmingham, something over 100 miles. On the canal between Sheffield and Hull there will be more than five boats per mile, on the Chesterfield and Worksop Canal there will be not more than two boats per mile, on the Moira and Coventry Canal there will be over four boats per mile, between Leicester and Derby three boats per mile, while on many of the canals in Lancashire, Cheshire and Staffordshire, there will be over 12 boats per mile, so taking all these things together it may fairly be assumed : That I am speaking considerably below the mark when I state that there will be over four boats per mile on the navigable rivers and canals of this country. The results given by the census on this point are not to be relied upon. The boats were, and always are, moving about from place to place, perhaps in a dozen different parishes during the day the census was taken, and it would be with the greatest difficulty, in fact it would be impossible for the number to be taken at all. The returns would, I fear, in nine cases out of ten, be “pitched into the cut”, for the simple reasons, first the boatmen not being able to read and write, secondly the boats would be, in many instances, 29 miles away from the officers who gave out the forms on the next day, the time appointed for giving them up ; and I should think, when the numbers are taken, it will be seen that not a third of the population has been reckoned in the census returns for 1871. These details I need not make apology for giving, as they may be useful for guidance in any plans for the social, moral and religious benefit of this large and hitherto much neglected class of our population. At the lowest estimate, I take the number at 100,000. This is exclusive, of course, of the sea going and coasting boats which are sometimes upon our inland waters.

### **129 31 August 1878**

#### HANLEY – MONDAY

**CRUELTY TO A HORSE AT MILTON** **Francis Horton**, a bargeman, was charged with cruelly ill treating a horse by working it when in an unsound condition, at Milton on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst ; and William Bowers, the owner of the horse, was charged with allowing it to be so worked. Mr Walker defended in both cases. Inspector Nicholls of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals stated that on the day named he observed Horton driving a grey gelding attached to a barge. It was very lame, and walked on its “toes”. The defendant admitted that the animal was lame. Next day the Inspector met the defendant Bowers, who said he was aware the horse had been examined by him, but maintained that it was in very fair condition. In cross-examination, the Inspector said the horse had the appearance of having been kindly used and little worked. Bowers was fined 20s and costs, and Horton 16s and costs.

### **130 21 September 1878**

#### KIDSGROVE

**CRUELTY TO ANIMALS** At the Kidsgrove Police Court on Thursday, **George Bunn**, a boatman, was summoned for cruelty to a horse at Harding's Wood, by working it whilst in an unfit state. PC Cooper proved seeing defendant driving a horse which appeared to him to be unfit for work, and upon examination he found it was suffering from wounds on the shoulder, was very lame, and totally unfit for work. Defendant was fined £1 and costs.

### **131 19 October 1878**

#### STAFFORDSHIRE MICHAELMAS QUARTER SESSIONS

**A ROW AMONGST BOATMEN** **William Goode** (45), boatman ; **William Goode** (18), boatman ; and **Ellen Goode**, labourer (wife of the first prisoner) were indicted for maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm on **Francis Clark**, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July at Boothen. All the parties were on the Trent and Mersey Canal at Boothen Lock. The prisoners ill treated prosecutor, and then threw him

into the canal twice. The elder prisoner was fined £5 and the costs of the prosecution, and the younger prisoner was ordered to be imprisoned one day. The female was discharged.

**132 26 October 1878**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

**BOATMAN FINED** **George Bosson**, boatman, was summoned at the instance of **Mr Glass**, for not having a steersman and a man in charge of the horse attached to his boat on the Trent and Mersey Canal on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. The boat was near the Harecastle Tunnel, and it was explained that there was no danger of meeting a boat there ; yet the negligence was attended with danger. The driver, it appeared, had left the horse to go into the cabin and get a cup of coffee. The Stipendiary said it was the first case of the kind which had been brought before him. He directed that the defendant should pay a fine of 20s and costs.

**133 28 December 1878**

**OUR CANAL BOATMEN** Mr George Smith of Coalville writes :- While the deserving poor in our large towns and cities are receiving some of “the good things of this world” which the kind, liberal hearted and Christlike amongst us have for disposal, I do sincerely hope that in the midst of the thousands of jovial festivities taking place at this interesting season of the year in the cottage homes, mansions and palaces of “Old England”, the wives and children of canal boatmen living in the floating huts on our silent highways will not be overlooked by those who have the disposition and ability to show the deeds of Canon Kingsley's “Practical Christianity” to suffering humanity. The condition of our boaters is uncommonly severe this winter, the trade bad, canals frozen, causing many of them to be away from their friends, and the Canal Boats Act coming into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January renders their case worthy of the attention of clergymen, ministers, benefactors and others all over the country, as a visit to our canal wharfs and basins will reveal.

**134 18 January 1879**

**ASSAULT UPON A LOCK-KEEPER** On Wednesday at the Old Hill Police Court, before Messrs W Bassano and B Hingley, **James Hadley** and **William Hutt**, boatmen, were charged with assaulting **James Sadler**, a lock-keeper in the service of the Birmingham Canal Company. Mr Godley, from the office of Messrs Wragge, Evans and Co, Birmingham, presented on behalf of the company. On the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup> ult the two defendants were taking a boat along the canal at Rowley. On arriving at the “Stop” kept by the complainant it was their duty to supply the latter with the number of their boat in order that he might book it. They, however, gave him a wrong number twice, and upon following them the defendants assaulted him violently. They also turned out his pockets in order to extract money to which they said they were entitled. The defendants pleaded guilty. A penalty of 20s and costs was imposed in each case, or in default 28 days' hard labour.

**135 25 January 1879**

**THE POTTING TRADE AND THE FROST** The clay which is used in the potting manufactories of the Staffordshire Potteries is mainly obtained from Cornwall and Devonshire. Only a small proportion is sent by rail, all the rest comes by canal from Runcorn, via Middlewich. On the Cheshire side there is now a complete blocking of the canal through the severe frost, and some of the manufactories of the Potteries are inconvenienced in consequence of not being able to get clay. There are now no fewer than nine boat loads of clay consigned to the Potteries which are frost-bound in the canal near Middlewich. The severity of the weather also affects the working at the manufacturers. On the Trent and Mersey Canal the traffic is generally much impeded, and many of the boat people are suffering privations from which they can only be freed by a break up of the frost.

**136 22 February 1879**

THE CANAL BOATS ACT Mr George Smith of Coalville near Leicester writes to the editor of the *Times* :- “A few days since, at the Worcester Wharf, Birmingham, I counted nearly 40 canal boats, not one of which had been registered and inspected as the law directs. A number of the boatmen grouped around me and warmly expressed their desire to have their boats done at once, if they knew how to proceed, while they were “tied up”. Last Saturday I was at Oakthorpe and Measham and counted over 70 boats, not one of which bore the registration marks and a number. I am told a similar state of things exists at Worcester. At Stoke-upon-Trent 40 only out of 400 boats have been registered, and the officer appointed has been prohibited going beyond the borough more than a mile ; thus, with the exception of Stoke, boats plying between Rugeley and Runcorn are left as they were before the passing of the Act. This state of things exists, more or less, all over the country, in the face of an Act which has been in operation more than a year”.

**137 5 April 1879**

KIDSGROVE

THE POLICE COURT At Thursday's Police Court before H C Greenwood Esq, **Thomas Sumner**, a boatman, was summoned for keeping a dog without a license. Defendant said he had no means of paying for a license, as trade had been so bad. He was very poor. Mr Greenwood : You must know that you have to pay, and if you can afford to keep a dog, you ought to be able to pay for a license. You will be fined 10s and costs. The money (19s 6d) was paid.

**138 12 April 1879**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

PUBLIC HOUSE ROBBERY Samuel Lovatt (41), miner, was charged with stealing a quantity of groceries, the property of **John Minsher**, at Tunstall on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November. Mr Wilme prosecuted. The prosecutor, a boatman, went into a public house at Tunstall on the day named, with a bundle of groceries, which the prisoner walked away with. He was found guilty, and having been previously convicted, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment with hard labour, and to police supervision for three years.

**139 3 May 1879**

TUNSTALL

ALLEGED BURGLARY At the Burslem Police Court on Tuesday, **John Vickerstaff**, an old man, a boatman, was brought up charged on suspicion with having committed a burglary at Tunstall on the 26<sup>th</sup> April. Prisoner was remanded for further evidence.

**140 10 May 1879**

STAFFORDSHIRE SPRING ASSIZES

MALICIOUSLY KILLING TWO MARES **Henry Theobald** (25), boatman, was indicted for having feloniously and maliciously killed a mare, the property of John Jones, and a mare, the property of Joseph Ralph, at Alrewas on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April. Mr Bowen prosecuted. The case was one of disgusting cruelty. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and a previous conviction was recorded against him. His Lordship said the prisoner had been convicted of about as barbarous and cruel an act as he had ever heard, and he only wished that, in addition to the punishment he was going to inflict, he had power to order the prisoner to be flogged, for he as richly deserved it as a man ever did. He would be sentenced to ten years' penal servitude.

**141 7 June 1879**

HANLEY COUNTY POLICE – MONDAY

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS **Thomas Knight**, a boatman, was fined 20s and costs for working a horse whilst in an unfit condition. Inspector Nicholls proved the case.

**142 7 June 1879**

HANLEY – WEDNESDAY

**VIOLENT FELLOWS** **Moses** and **George Bond**, boatmen, were charged with being drunk and disorderly, and refusing to quit the Bricklayers' Arms beerhouse, kept by Joseph Latimer, and with assaulting Police-constable Weston when ejecting them. In consequence of the injuries they had received by their violence, Moses Bond was fined 10s and costs, and George 5s and costs.

**143 14 June 1879**

BURSLEM BOROUGH POLICE – TUESDAY

**A BOATMAN AND HIS HORSE** **Lionel Cope**, a boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse, by working it whilst in an unfit state. Police-constable Upton, stationed at Longport, said he saw defendant driving a grey mare attached to a boat. On the animal's off shoulder there was a wound about three inches long which was discharging blood and matter, the straw of the old collar pressing into the wound. On the other shoulder there was also a wound. The horse was very old, and both knees were quite stiff. Inspector Nicholls said he saw the mare on the 26<sup>th</sup> May and found the wounds described, and the animal aged and very weak indeed. Defendant was fined 5s and costs.

**THEFT OF EARTHENWARE** **Richard and Emma Minshull**, a boatman and his wife, were charged with stealing a quantity of earthenware, the property of the Shropshire Union Canal Company, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June. **John Morris**, canal porter in the employ of the Shropshire Union Company at Tunstall, said at the company's wharf there they had a quantity of crates of ware, some of them being from Messrs Ellesmore's and some from Messrs Hammersley's. On Saturday last he saw the crates all safe, but on Monday morning found that two of them had been tampered with. One crate was unpacked, and according to an invoice given him by the manufacturer, the following articles were missing : two brush trays, dove colour, one green tray, two uncovered chambers brown, one soap bottom and drain, brown, two brush trays brown, three uncovered chambers, green. From the other crate a quantity of plates were missing. Three plates were now produced, and the ware from the first crate was also produced with the exception of 40 pieces. The nominal value of the missing ware was about 15s. Prisoner was a boatman in the Company's employ and his boat was at the Wharf on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> instant. William Thacker, a carman in the employ of the Company, said he received instructions to watch prisoners' boat, and at Stoke saw the female prisoner put two chambers and some small pieces of ware into the canal. He afterwards pointed out the spot to Police-constable O'Brien, who obtained the articles from the canal. Prisoners pleaded guilty. The female prisoner was discharged, the male prisoner was sent to gaol for three months with hard labour.

**144 5 July 1879**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

**EXTENSIVE THEFT OF FOWLS** **Thomas Clarke** (52), boatman, **Richard Clarke** (30), boatman, and **John Lakin** (53), boatman, were indicted for breaking and entering a building within the curtilage of the dwelling house of John Owen and Charles Smith on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1879 at Brownhills, and stealing therein twenty tame fowls. Mr Underhill prosecuted. The prisoner Lakin pleaded guilty. The other prisoners were found guilty. Lakin was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude ; a like sentence was passed on Richard Clarke ; Thomas Clarke was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, there being no previous conviction against him.

**PLEADED GUILTY** **John Twigg**, boatman, previously convicted, seven years' penal servitude for theft of a vest at Bentley.

**145 19 July 1879**

STAFFORDSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

**INDECENT ASSAULTS** **Reuben Shirley** (60), boatman, was found guilty of a felonious assault

upon a little girl nine years of age, named Harriet Hornby, at Tipton on May 23. He was sentenced to 15 years' penal servitude.

**146 16 August 1879** At the Hanley (County) Police Court on Monday morning, before Messrs H C Greenwood, E J Ridgway and T Ashworth, **Joseph Hollinshead**, boatman, **Moses Jenkins Hollinshead**, loader, and **William Smith**, boatman, were charged with feloniously wounding William Lockety. The prosecutor was stated by Superintendent Hall to be too ill to attend. John Price, a potter, said he was coming home on Saturday evening in company with a young man named William Lunt. He observed four men running near the Chatterly Oil Works. The three prisoners were three of the men he saw near the railway bridge. The oldest of the prisoners (Moses Jenkins Hollinshead) made an attempt to strike Lunt, when witness said, "Hold on ; we've nothing at all to do with it". Proceeding, witness called prisoner's attention to a man lying down, and remarked that there was a drunken man, when prisoner said, "He's none drunk ; he's one of the men we've collared and given "bell sauce" to". Witness then went down the bank and found Lockett lying on his face, and turning him over, by the aid of matches tried to recognise him. The injured man's mouth was full of blood, and he was seriously injured, and would in fact have choked if he had not been attended to. Witness left the injured man in the care of another person who came up. Witness noticed that prisoner Smith had a piece of chain in his hand. Superintendent Hall asked for a remand, which was granted.

**147 16 August 1879**

SAD DEATH ON A CANAL BOAT An occurrence of an unusually singular nature has taken place at Ince. It seems that a boatman named **Isaac Bamber** of Burscough Junction, whose boat was lying at 15 lock, Ince, had been to bury a brother, who had been drowned at Burnley sometime during the week. He returned home at ten o'clock and, in company with his wife, retired to rest in the cabin of his boat. Owing to some means or other, the lock below where deceased's boat was moored had been left open and, as the water in that part of the canal was running away, the boat turned partly over on its side. Deceased awakened about eleven o'clock and, finding water coming into the cabin, he with his wife immediately got on deck, but at once returned to fetch away his infant, which he thought had been left behind. A girl about twelve years of age had, however, unknown to the deceased, brought the child on deck, but it is supposed the deceased remained in the cabin searching for the child. Becoming alarmed in consequence of her husband not returning, the wife gave information to the police, and at half past eleven o'clock the same night Police-constable Lyons found deceased's body in the water which had accumulated in the cabin.

**148 9 August 1879**

BURSLEM POLICE – TUESDAY

JUVENILES IN THE HARECASTLE TUNNEL William Haynes (15) and Samuel Holmes (17) were charged with stealing a watch, the property of **William Pool**, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July. The prosecutor is a boatman living at Etruria Vale, and was travelling in his boat from Marston to Etruria on the afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup> of July. When near Lawton Church prosecutor met the boys, who asked him to let them get on the boat, as they were footsore, having walked from Runcorn. Prosecutor let them ride on the boat through the Harecastle Tunnel. When at Chatterley the boys were about leaving, and the prosecutor's mother missed the watch out of the cabin. Holmes had then left the boat, and Haynes was detained, and admitted that Holmes had taken the watch. The prisoner Holmes was afterwards apprehended at Derby Station by Detective Stiles for an offence under the Railway Act ; and he had the watch, as identified by the prosecutor, in his possession, and he said it was his father's. Police-constable O'Briel received the boy Holmes from the police at Derby on Monday, and when charged with the theft he said, "Yes". Haynes was discharged, and Holmes, who had been convicted, and had been five years in a reformatory, was sent to prison for six months.

**149 16 August 1879**

BURSLEM POLICE – WEDNESDAY

**THE CHATTERLEY OUTRAGE** **William Smith** senior, **Joseph Jenkinson Hollinshead**, **Thomas Redman** and **George Millard** were charged with having feloniously wounded William Lockett on Saturday night. Evidence was given to the effect that on Saturday night about 11 o'clock, a number of men went towards the boatmen and their wives. Stones were also thrown. The strangers were said to have challenged the boatmen to come out and fight. Hearing a row, two witnesses who happened to be on the road at the time went up and found a man knocked down. Redman was also seen to hit the man who was down, and upon witness remonstrating Redman went away. About 50 yards further on another man was found lying on the ground. The four prisoners were then on the off side of the road. Upon asking who had knocked the man down, they answered, "We". Two other men came up, one of whom was named Price, who said he had seen four or five men running towards the furnaces. The injured man was left in the care of a stranger, Price having first struck some matches, and found the man to be bleeding and insensible. Sarah Ann Callow, who resides near the canal, and was going home about that time, heard the row and went towards the bridge. Saw some strangers going towards Chesterton, and prisoners following them. Soon after there was fighting and running away, one being left on the ground and prisoners standing close by him, kicking him. Smith had a piece of chain in his right hand, but was only seen to strike with his left hand. Witness saw Mellard hit the man with a nose bucket. He swung it round. Did not see Mellard strike at all. Witness asked prisoners if they had not given him quite plenty, and the reply was that they would give it him for all. The man was left lying there. Prisoners were remanded. The younger Smith and W J Hollinshead have been discharged from custody.

**150 23 August 1879**

BURSLEM POLICE – TUESDAY

**CRUELTY TO ANIMALS** **Thomas Fellows**, a boatman, was charged with cruelty to a horse by working it whilst in an unfit condition on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. PC Dawson saw the animal with the boat gear upon it on the date named, and understood that it had worked 20 miles that day, although very lame. Mr Trigger, veterinary surgeon, said the horse was very lame indeed, suffering from a ringbone of long standing, and quite unfit for work. Defendant said he had sold the horse for 15s to a man named Smith at Stoke, in order that it might be killed. Defendant was fined £2 and costs, the fine to be mitigated to half the amount if defendant satisfied the Inspector of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that the horse had been destroyed.

**151 27 September 1879**

**STOKE TOWN COUNCIL** The report of the General Purposes Committee, which was read by the Town Clerk, contained a recommendation that proceedings be taken against Messrs Maron and Son for not having registered two boats belonging to them, as required by the Canal Boats Act.

Mr Howell, sanitary inspector, showed that during the month 32 nuisances had been abated, and 20 notices had been served for the abatement of other nuisances. He found sewage flowing into the canal on the 24<sup>th</sup> ult, causing a great nuisance. He asked for permission to take proceedings against the owners of two unregistered boats, which he described as being in a filthy state.

**152 27 September 1879**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

**A BOATIE IN BEER** **Benjamin Minshall**, a boatman, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly at Stoke, and assaulting John Wilshaw. There was a disturbance at a public house in Stoke on Wednesday evening. The prisoner took part in it, and assaulted the complainant with considerable violence. He was fined 10s and costs for each offence.

**153 18 October 1879**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY **Joseph Booth** (17), boatman ; **Benjamin Blakemore** (18), boatman, **Charles Williams** (22), boatman ; and Mary Williams (21) pleaded guilty to stealing on the 8<sup>th</sup> July at Longport a quantity of wearing apparel, the property of Francis Watkin, and were sentenced, Booth and Blakemore to twelve months' imprisonment each, Charles and Mary Williams to nine months' each, with hard labour. The two last prisoners also pleaded guilty to stealing on the 8<sup>th</sup> June a jacket and other articles, the property of George Dimmock, and were sentenced to four months imprisonment each.

**Edward Bowdler** (20), boatman, for the theft of a quantity of coal, the property of John Nock Bagnall and Sons, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment with hard labour.

ASSAULT BY BOATMEN **George Mellard** (33), boatman, **Thomas Redman** (38), boatman, **William Smith** (39), boatman, and **Jos Jenkinson Hollinshead** (20), boatman, were charged with unlawfully wounding William Lockett on the 9<sup>th</sup> August at Tunstall. Mr Darling prosecuted, and Mr J Underhill defended. The learned Assistant Chairman said that it would not benefit the prosecutor to send the prisoners to gaol, but he should order them to pay the sum of 10s to Lockett as compensation, and 10s towards the cost of the prosecution, prisoners to enter into their own recognisances to keep the peace for twelve months.

**154 27 December 1879**

HANLEY COUNTY POLICE – MONDAY

UNGRATEFUL RASCALS **John Machen** and **John Bickerstaff**, boatmen, were charged with stealing a purse containing 27s from the person of **Thomas Heaton**, boatman, Kent Green, Cheshire, on Saturday. The prosecutor said that he met the prisoners at Harding's Wood on Saturday night, and asked them to have something to drink. He took them into the Canal Tavern and ordered a gallon of ale. After paying two shillings for it, he was putting the purse containing 27s 2d into his pocket, when Machin snatched at it, and took it from him. Witness asked for it back again, but prisoner said he had not got it. Another man who was in the house, named Turner, subsequently took it off him again but, on examining it, prosecutor only found 2 1/2d in it. The wife of Turner deposed to seeing Machin take the purse. Machin said he never saw the purse till he saw it there, but, on being pressed, he said he would rather the case be settled at that Court, though he did not take the purse. Bickerstaff advised his fellow prisoner to plead guilty to the whole thing and have it settled. He himself pleaded guilty. Police-constable Cooper, Kidsgrove, deposed to having arrested the men, and stated that he only found 6s 8d on the person of Bickerstaff, whilst Machin had no money at all. The Bench said the case would be adjourned for a week. Ultimately both prisoners pleaded guilty, and were committed to gaol for three months with hard labour.

**155 1 May 1880**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Aaron Jinks**, a boatman in the employ of the Anderton Company, was summoned for cruelly ill treating a horse on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March. On the afternoon of that day the defendant was seen by a man named Samuel Salt beating the horse with a stick, on the canal side near the Harecastle Tunnel. He also kicked it, which caused the horse to fall on its knees. Witness considered it a very cruel act on the part of the defendant. Information was given to Inspector Shipley Reed by the Anderton Company, who had discharged the defendant for his cruelty. The defendant said the horse was one with a bad temper, and it kicked several times from Longport to Harecastle, so that he gave kick for kick. He was now fined 20s and costs.

**156 5 June 1880**

BURSLEM POLICE – TUESDAY

REMANDED **Herbert Harrison**, described as a boatman, was charged with vagrancy, having been found sleeping in a boat under suspicious circumstances the previous evening. Prisoner was remanded for inquiries to be made respecting him.

**157 3 July 1880**

STAFFORDSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS

PLEADED GUILTY **Edward Bowdler** (21), boatman, to stealing a mare, the property of James Ward, on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst at Wednesbury.

**158 24 July 1880**

STAFFORDSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

BURGLARY AT CHEADLE **Thomas Beardmore**, 25, boatman, and James Fowell, 21, miner, were indicted for burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling house and shop of Silas Jackson Coxon, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1880, and stealing therefrom one timepiece, one concertina, one muffler, two handkerchiefs and other articles, his property. Mr C J Darling prosecuted, and prisoners were undefended. It appeared that Mr Coxon was a hairdresser living in Chapel Street, Cheadle, and that on Whit Tuesday he left Cheadle with his family on a visit to Shropshire, and that on the following Friday, on returning, he found that the premises had been broken into, and the various articles mentioned stolen. Information was given to the police, and on Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, the whole of the property was recovered, except a pocket knife. The greater portion of missing articles were found at the residence of the prisoner Beardmore, where they were concealed. Another portion of the articles were found in the possession of the prisoner Fowell. The jury found both prisoners guilty ; and Beardmore, who acknowledged having been previously convicted at Leeds in 1878, was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour ; and Fowell to six months' imprisonment with hard labour.

**159 4 September 1880**

BURSLEM POLICE – TUESDAY

A PUBLICAN FINED Samuel Gregory, landlord of the Liverpool Arms, Newcastle Street, Burslem, was charged with selling beer by retail where he was not authorised to do so, namely at a house in Bag Street, on Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> August. Mr Ashmail prosecuted, and Mr Richardson appeared for the defendant. According to the evidence of Mary Jane Lowe, a married woman living in Bag Street, she went with a woman named Bloor to defendant's house on the day named, and he was asked to let them have some beer. They then went to Mrs Bloor's house, and in about five minutes defendant and his wife came, the former with a stone bottle and the latter with a tin bottle, made of a shape to fit round the body under the clothes. It was said these bottles held a gallon of beer less half a pint, and 1s 2d was paid each time the bottles were filled. Mr Gregory himself received the money, and she afterwards heard him say that he had received ten or eleven shillings from a boatman named **Cope**, who, with several others, were present drinking that day. A man named Ratcliffe was so drunk that he had to be assisted home. Cross-examined : The beer was fetched by Gregory to the order of Cope each time. Mr Richardson argued at great length that defendant would be justified in supplying beer in the manner described to the order of another person, a view which the Stipendiary, however, did not take of the case. A woman named Ellen Shore spoke to defendant going out from time to time to fetch some ten or eleven gallons of beer during the afternoon, and Sergeant Hughes gave particulars of the information received from one of the witnesses as to the Sunday drinking at Bloor's house. After considerable legal argument, defendant was fined £10 and costs. Mr Richardson gave notice of appeal, and defendant was required to enter into recognisances pending the arguing of the points.

**160 11 September 1880**

BURSLEM POLICE – TUESDAY

PRIVATE DRINKING Thomas Bloore, ovenman, Bag Street, Burslem, was charged with permitting Samuel Gregory, a publican, to sell beer upon his private premises. Chief Superintendent Hill said Gregory was fined £10 and costs last week for selling beer at the house of the present defendant, who was now summoned for allowing his house to be so used. Mary Jane Lowe said she was at the house of the defendant Bloore on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, and saw Gregory and his wife bring beer into the house eight or nine times, and Gregory said he brought a gallon all but half a pint each time. The beer was sold to a boatman named **Lionel Cope**, and it was drunk upon Bloore's premises. Gregory kept a beer house near Bloore's house, which at the time was closed, in consequence of its being Sunday, and he came and sold beer at Bloore's by gallons at a time. Defendant now said he did not understand that he was doing wrong or he would not have permitted an offence to have been committed. The magistrates said if defendant did not know the law he must have known it was wrong to allow drinking. He knew Gregory must not keep his house open at the time yet came to his help and permitted him to use his private premises for the purpose. The Chief Superintendent said numerous complaints had been made as to the amount of Sunday drinking in the neighbourhood, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that they could bring the charges home. Defendant was told that he had made himself liable to a fine of £50, but as he seemed to have done what he had somewhat in ignorance, a fine of 40s and costs only would be inflicted.

**161 2 October 1880**

KIDSGROVE – THURSDAY

REFUSING TO QUIT Two boatmen named **W Turner** and **J Poole** were summoned by Mr Colclough of Harding's Wood on a charge of refusing to quit licensed premises. Mr Sherratt prosecuted, and called the landlord, who spoke of defendants quarrelling, and to requesting them to withdraw. They refused to do so. They were each fined 2s 6d and costs 11s 6d.

**162 13 November 1880**

HANLEY COUNTY – MONDAY

ALLEGED HAY STEALING **Joseph Marson, John Poxon** and **Thomas Poxon**, boatmen living at Wolverhampton, were charged with stealing a truss of hay, the property of James Paddy, hay and straw dealer, Basford, Stoke-upon-Trent. Mr Ashmall prosecuted, and Mr Paine defended prisoners. Prosecutor said on the 4<sup>th</sup> November he met a boat near Rugeley, and engaged prisoners to convey thirty three trusses of hay to Longport. He met the boat at Longport on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst and saw it emptied, when there were only thirty two trusses. He spoke to prisoners about it, and afterwards found another truss at the end of the boat concealed under bags, previously informing them that unless they found the missing they would be given into custody. Prosecutor afterwards went for an officer, but on returning the boat was gone. In company with the officer, he then went after the boat, which was overtaken near the Harecastle Tunnel. Six shillings were paid to prisoners for the carriage, and six shillings for the tonnage of the hay, together with about 1 ton 16 cwt of turnips. Police-constable Snape said prisoners' boat was overtaken at the mouth of the Harecastle Tunnel, when Thomas Poxon said the truss of hay which was in the boat tied up with cord was not prosecutor's property, but had been bought in Cheshire. Eliza Malpass, wife of Henry Malpass, near Middlewich, said she sold Thomas Poxon a quantity of hay, the same as the sample produced, on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. Abraham Candy, carrier, Derby, said the boat belonged to him, and Thomas Poxon had been in his employ for some four or five years, during which time he had borne a very good character. It was not witness's custom to allow his boatmen to take up cargoes between places without his knowledge. He would have required 6s per ton instead of 6s for the three tons for the carriage. Prisoners were then remanded for a week, bail in £10 being accepted.

**163 13 November 1880** At the Bristol Assizes, Mr Justice Denman passed sentence upon **Thomas Ames**, a bargeman on the Kennet and Avon Canal, who was on Tuesday found guilty of

the manslaughter of a boy named Miles, by shutting the lock gates and letting in the water, at a lock near Bath. The judge sentenced the prisoner to seven years' penal servitude.

**164 20 November 1880**

HANLEY COUNTY – MONDAY

ALLEGED THEFT OF HAY **Joseph Morrison, John Paxton** and **Thomas Paxton**, boatmen, were charged on remand with stealing a truss of hay, the property of Mr Paddy, hay and straw dealer, Basford. Several witnesses were examined, and several specimens of hay were produced, with a view to disprove the identification of the hay said to have been stolen, and which was produced in court. Mr Ashmall appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Paine defended. It was shown that Mr Paddy bought thirty two trusses of hay at Rugeley, and entrusted the prisoners with the conveyance of it, by canal to Stoke. When the hay was delivered at Stoke, one truss was found to be missing, and a truss was found in the possession of the prisoners ; but, after some evidence had been given, it appeared impossible to show that the hay found in the possession of the prisoners was the same as that which was entrusted to them for conveyance. For the defence, several witnesses were called, including a young woman named Malpass, who proved that about that time the truss was found in the possession of the prisoners, she sold them one. The Bench said that there seemed to be some doubt in the case, and they gave the prisoners the benefit of it by discharging them.

**165 1 January 1881**

HANLEY BOROUGH – WEDNESDAY

ILL TREATING A PONY **William Sergeant**, boatman, was charged in custody with cruelly ill treating a pony on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Mr Windle said he received information that a pony was lying on the banks at Wedgwood's works, and on inquiring into the affair found that the prisoner had left the animal so long exposed to the cold and without food that it fell to the ground exhausted. When the prisoner came to the pony and found that it could not rise, he kicked it several times. Witness corroborated this statement, and prisoner, who denied the kicking, was fined 10s and costs.

**166 8 January 1881**

STOKE

BOATMEN'S TEA PARTY About 125 boatmen, with in many cases their wives and children, sat down to tea on Thursday evening in the North Staffordshire Railway Works' Mess room. The affair took place in connection with the Lichfield Diocesan Barge Mission, and the expenses were defrayed by subscriptions. Afterwards the Rev P H Moore, chaplain of the barge mission, presided, and after he had addressed the meeting several songs and glees were sung by the choir of the Stoke Band of Hope. Songs were also contributed by several boatmen. A very pleasant evening was spent. On Wednesday a tea meeting and entertainment of a similar character was held in the same place, when about 80 boatmen were present. On that occasion the Chaplain presided, and addresses were delivered by the Ven Archdeacon Stamer, the Rev J Martyn and other gentlemen. Songs and recitations were contributed during the evening.

**167 5 February 1881**

NEWCASTLE COUNTY COURT – TUESDAY

AARONSON v HOLLAND BROTHERS This was an action by George Aaronson, a travelling jeweller of Manchester, to recover the sum of £9 16s from **Charles** and **Job Holland**, boatmen, Harding's Wood, balance due on the sale of a watch. Mr Fowler was for the plaintiff and Mr Richardson (instructed by Mr Sword) appeared for the defendants. Plaintiff stated that on October 11<sup>th</sup> of last year he met the defendants at Butt Lane, with another man named Green, where Job undertook to take a silver watch, but after which a gold one was missing. This led to a charge of theft against Green which, when brought before the magistrates, was dismissed. It was stated that Job was prepared to pay for the watch by instalments, according to arrangements if he was applied to. His Honour gave a verdict for the plaintiff for the amount claimed.

**STAFFORDSHIRE ASSIZES**

**THE MURDER OF A SWEETHEART NEAR STAFFORD** James Williams (24), tailor, was indicted for the wilful murder of Elizabeth Bagnall at Great Haywood on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1880. Mr Alfred Young and Mr H Corser appeared for the prosecution ; and Mr Matthews QC and Mr Fisher defended the prisoner.

The charge was read over to the prisoner who, in a firm voice, pleaded "Not guilty". Prisoner is an intelligent looking young man, and evidently felt the serious nature of his position.

Mr Young, in opening the case for the prosecution, said the jury were now to enter upon the most solemn and momentous enquiry which ever fell to their lot ; for upon them depended the question whether the prisoner at the bar was to live or die. He was quite sure they would bring to bear upon every stage of the enquiry their most anxious attention, and would apply the best of their judgement in considering the serious issue which they were called upon to determine. They could readily understand that the anxiety and responsibility which all must feel in this case was almost more than they could bear ; but at the same time he might truly say that the real responsibility rested with the jury alone because, while each of the legal gentlemen engaged would endeavour, so far as depended on them, to assist the jury in arriving at a righteous conclusion in the case, with them rested the duty of saying whether the prisoner was guilty or not. They would notice from the indictment that the charge was one of wilful murder, and it must be shown to the satisfaction of the jury that the deceased lost her life by the act of the prisoner at the bar, he being actuated by malice aforethought. It might be that they would be called upon by Mr Matthews to view this case in a different light, and to consider and ask themselves the question whether they could not reduce the crime to manslaughter. He did not intend to enter into anything like an elaborate definition of the difference between murder and manslaughter, but it would be necessary to bear in mind that the person about whose death they were enquiring was a woman, and differently situated from the prisoner so far as physical strength for entering into any personal conflict was concerned, and in dealing with the question of provocation, should that plea be brought forward in explanation of the prisoner's act, it would be for them to consider from what quarter the provocation came, and whether it was if an adequate amount to induce the act which was charged against the prisoner. The deceased was 23 years of age, and was a domestic servant in the employment of Mr Dunn, a tailor living at Great Harwood. The prisoner was 24 years of age, a tailor by trade, and resided with his parents at Hixon, which was a mile or two beyond Great Haywood. The prisoner had been employed as a tailor by Mr Dunn during a period of eight years, and in the course of this employment by Mr Dunn an intimacy sprang up between the prisoner and the deceased, which resulted in a courtship, and there was every reason to suppose they were going to be married. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of December a "Servants Fair" was held at Stafford, and between 11 and 12 on the morning of that day the prisoner, in company with the deceased, left Great Haywood for Stafford. They proceeded along the canal side to the railway station at Milford, where they took train for Stafford. At that time the prisoner and the deceased appeared to have been on friendly terms ; and, so far as could be ascertained, there was no reason to believe they were otherwise than on intimate terms previously to the visit to Stafford. They reached Stafford shortly after eleven. Nothing was known as to what became of the prisoner and the deceased from that moment until a quarter past two, when they went to the house of a person named Gretton, where they remained until half past five. They still appeared on the most intimate terms, and to be perfectly sober. Shortly after half past five Mr and Mrs Gretton and their children, together with the prisoner and the deceased, left the house to go to the Oak Inn. The deceased on her way called at Mr Plant's drapery shop, and made some purchases to the extent of £1 3s 1d. She joined the party at the Oak Inn, taking with her the parcel of goods, which included a collar that has since been found on the canal side. The prisoner had two glasses of rum, the deceased one glass, and when they left the prisoner took with him half a pint of rum in a bottle. After leaving the inn the prisoner and deceased left Stafford by the 6.42 train for Milford, where they arrived at 6.48. As they were walking together up the Tixhall Road they were passed by a person of the name of James Harrison, and they continued their walk along the canal side in the

direction of Great Haywood. The next thing that occurred was at half past eight o'clock, when the prisoner knocked at the door of Mr Dainty, who resided at Haywood Wharf. The prisoner made a statement to Mr Dainty to the effect that he had drowned Lizzie Bagnall at Swivel Bridge. Dainty, it appeared, did not believe that statement, as he took no notice of the communication. Prisoner was shortly afterwards seen at the Fox and Hounds, Great Haywood, and there he entered into conversation with a man named Reynolds, whom he knew, and to whom he made a statement to the effect that he had murdered – that he had pushed Lizzie Bagnall into the cut. The prisoner added she wanted to father a child upon him, and he signified it was not his child, but that of a person named Lee. Subsequently to the discovery of the body the prisoner stated to Mrs Dunn that Lee, who was in her husband's employment, was the cause of what had taken place. In this statement there was evidence of motive for the crime. The prisoner appeared to have entertained some feelings of jealousy against Lee. After some further conversation at the Fox and Hounds, Reynolds took the prisoner to the police station, and to the police sergeant he repeated what he had already mentioned to Reynolds. A police-constable, two or three other persons and the prisoner then went to the canal, and the latter pointed out the spot where they were likely to find the body of the deceased. They went to the Swivel Bridge, which was about a mile and a half distant from Milford Station. These people accompanied the prisoner to a spot about three or four feet from the drop of the bridge. Prisoner all the time was making use of strong epithets and ejaculations with respect to the person whom, according to his own account, was the cause of the jealousy. About four feet from the bridge drop one of the persons – a Mr Leaver – found the dead body of the unfortunate woman floating in the canal immediately close to the towing-path. As Mr Leaver took hold of the body he found in the deceased's hands particles of blades of grass which it appeared had been torn from the side of the path. From that fact he thought it was apparent that the woman had been attempting to save herself. Whether that was so or not he could not say. At this particular point of the canal the water was only about four feet deep, and he believed that for a considerable distance either way it was very shallow. In point of fact it would not be sufficiently deep to drown this woman had she at the time been in the possession of all her faculties, and knew that she was going into the water. The deceased was five feet six inches in height, and it was obvious if some circumstances over which she had no control had not intervened, she could not have been drowned at this spot. On the following morning the prisoner said he threw the bundle of drapery over the bridge into the river Trent. A purse of money and a ring were found upon the deceased at the time her body was searched. The prisoner was taken back to the police station, and on his journey he repeatedly alluded to the man Lee. From first to last, so far as anybody was able to give information, the deceased and the prisoner were on good terms, and perfectly sober when last seen together ; but witnesses would be called who, he understood, would state that after the affair the prisoner was the worse for drink, and was very much excited. He concluded by reminding the jury that, however distressing to them, it would be their duty to return an adverse verdict against the prisoner if they were satisfied that the prisoner was guilty of murder. If they found that he had received adequate provocation to produce uncontrollable fury or passion, they would be justified in reducing the charge to one of manslaughter.

Mr John Harley, architect and surveyor ; and **Mrs Sambrook**, wife of one of the lock-keepers of the canal, gave some formal evidence. The latter said she remembered the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> of December. On that evening she saw a courting couple walking along the canal side arm in arm.

Elizabeth Gretton, Stafford, said she had known the prisoner and the deceased. They were present at her house during the afternoon of the 28<sup>th</sup> of December. At the Oak Inn the prisoner had two glasses of rum and he took half a pint of rum away with him in a bottle. Cross-examined by Mr Marshall : Witness said the deceased and prisoner had tea at her house. Half a pint of rum was put in the tea. The deceased asked witness to go to the Register Office to give notice about her marriage. Witness told her she had better be married at church. Deceased replied, "Jem is too shy to be married in church". Nothing was said about the marriage being postponed. The deceased told her distinctly she had come to Stafford about the marriage. Prisoner, to witness's knowledge, had always been a kind, good hearted and well conducted young man. He was an excellent son to his

parents.

Some formal evidence was then given by Mr Plant, draper, with respect to the purchases made at his shop, and to the identification of the collar found on the canal side. Mr Albert Arnold, station master, Colwich Station, deposed to having known both the deceased and prisoner. He saw them at Milford Station on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> of December. Both appeared sober and on pleasant terms with each other. James Harrison proved seeing the deceased and the prisoner walking home together on the night in question. **John Cresswell**, boatman, said he was in charge of a boat from Radford to Great Haywood on the night that the woman was drowned. He had to pass Swivel Bridge and the locks. During the whole journey, which was made between six and eight, he did not meet anyone on the towing-path.

Richard Hancox, night clerk, Haywood Wharf, said he was on duty the whole of the night. His office was not far from Swivel Bridge. He did not hear any cries for assistance. In reply to Mr Matthews, witness said his office door, windows and shutters were closed during the night.

James Dainty, Haywood Wharf, said he had known the prisoner more or less all his life. Between half past eight o'clock and nine o'clock a knock came to the door, and a voice shouted, "Is Jim in?" He could not swear to the voice. After considerable pressure by the Judge, and the reading over of witness's depositions, witness admitted that it was the prisoner who came to his house. The prisoner made a statement about something he had done. Replying to Mr Matthews, witness said he was not aware that prisoner was nearly drowned in the canal some time ago.

John Reynolds, Fox and Hounds Inn, Great Haywood, said he had known the prisoner for some considerable time. At a quarter to nine on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> of December the prisoner came to witness's house and enquired for him twice. Prisoner said to witness, "Jack, fill me a pennyworth of rum ; I have done murder tonight at Swivel Bridge". Witness replied, "I shall not fill you anything. Who have you murdered?" To this the prisoner made reply, "I have murdered my sweetheart by pushing the ---- into the cut. Come outside and I will tell you all about it. I won't say anything more before the women". When witness got outside the prisoner said, "Jack, she is a ----, and wants to father a child on me that does not belong to me, and if you will fetch the ginger whiskered ---- I will fight him". He next asked witness to fetch his father, and to go and look for the body of the woman. Witness then took the prisoner to the police station. As they were going along the road the prisoner said, "I can't ask you to drink, as the bottle is empty". He asked witness to tell his relation quietly what had happened. John Leaver gave corroborative evidence. He added that the prisoner, when directing them to the spot where the woman was found, was "constantly on" about the "carrotty whiskered" man and wanting to fight him. Corroborative evidence was given by Albert Elsmore.

Police-sergeant Goodwin said the prisoner was brought to his house by the witness Reynolds, who told him what the prisoner had been stating. Witness cautioned the prisoner, and he immediately said, "Oh, it is correct. Give me your hand ; come on, and I will show you where she is". The caution was repeated, and prisoner persisted in saying that it was quite correct. Suddenly he became stupid, and declined to move. As they drew the body from the water the prisoner said, "There the ---- is". He was close to the deceased. When witness formally charged the prisoner with the crime, he said, "I have no more to say". The body of the deceased was searched the same night. The woman had a purse in her pocket, and also a wedding ring. The following morning the prisoner said to his father, "I threw the parcel of drapery over the bridge into the river Trent". By Mr Matthews : The prisoner was drunk and very much excited when brought to the police station. His clothes were not at all wet.

Catherine Marshall said she searched the deceased. Her clothes were not in the least way disarranged. Her hands were black with mud.

Mr D E Tylecote, surgeon, said there were no marks of violence upon the body of the deceased. She was not pregnant. Probably she never breathed at all after going into the water. The cause of death was drowning. Assuming that she was pushed into the water and then became choked, there would be no external marks of violence.

Mrs Dunn said that on the night the deceased was found in the canal she said to prisoner, "Jim, what

have you done?" He replied, "It is all through Lee ; it is his fault". Five weeks before Christmas she saw the deceased in the prisoner's shop. She told witness that Jim had been accusing her of having been out late at the Butts. Witness understood they were going to be married. Lee was a married man. The deceased was the mother of two illegitimate children. She was under notice to leave witness's employment, and had gone into Stafford to seek for a situation. By Mr Matthews : She had accused the deceased of buying a wedding ring in order to plague the prisoner and terrify him. The deceased had told her she bought the ring for a bit of fun. Mr Matthews : Did Jim require a little stimulating to bring him to the altar? I thought he did. Mr Matthews : Don't you know, although he was extremely attached to her, he was hanging back in consequence of the jealousy. Witness : I cannot say. She told me she was going to be married the Thursday in Christmas week. The wedding was postponed on account of the dispute a few weeks before Christmas. The prisoner was always a kind, good hearted, well conducted man.

Mr Young, in summing up for the prosecution, briefly reviewed the evidence placed before the Court, and drew special attention to the feelings of jealousy in the mind of the prisoner, and which there could be no doubt had led to the murdering of the deceased. The jury, he argued, must place reliance upon the statements made by the prisoner on the night of the murder. The man was in his right senses, and was able to escort the police to the spot where the woman was found. The evidence, he thought, left no doubt that the woman found her way into the water by the act of the prisoner, and he further believed that the jury would be of opinion that malice aforethought, originating five weeks before Christmas, was then existing on his mind.

Mr Matthews, on behalf of the prisoner, denied there was any jealousy wrangling in his mind as would constitute malice aforethought according to law. They heard of the jealousy but once only. He was not going to ask the jury to disregard the statements which the prisoner made on the night in question. He was, at the time, in a state of excitement, and saying things he did not mean. In considering the statements made by the prisoner, he appealed to the jury to remember they were given by a man in a drunken and excited state, and were not the deliberate sayings of a sober man narrating what had taken place. The statements must be considered by the jury, but very large allowances must be made for them. The prisoner was not only excited, but in bitter remorse that he had done something which he regarded at the time, directly or indirectly, to cause Lizzie Bagnall's death. He admitted that some act of the prisoner's did in one sense cause her to fall into the water. He denied that prisoner had held the woman under the water in order that her death might ensue, and this, he argued, was clearly the case from the fact that his coat sleeves were not wet at the time he was in the custody of Police-sergeant Goodwin. Granted that the prisoner pushed the woman purposely into the canal, the jury would have to be satisfied that there was a deliberate attempt to kill, and this he contended was not the case. There were no external marks of violence upon the body of the deceased, and that must naturally tell very much in favour of the prisoner. The body of the deceased after getting into the water must have been caught by something or it would have risen, and she having come to the surface could have escaped. Looking at the absence of violence he thought it was one of those catastrophes which a thousand and one combined circumstances produced. There was no previous grudge existing between the prisoner and the woman, who were, on the contrary, devoted to each other. Something might have been said by the young woman with respect to the charge of being pregnant by him, and he, knowing that such was not the case, gave her a slight push and she, carelessly stepping forward, fell into the water. All the witnesses for the prosecution had admitted that it was pitch dark on the night in question. Something had been said on the other side, why, if the woman had fallen into the water, the prisoner did not attempt to rescue her. Granted, it would have been more manly on his part, and he would have been deserving of praise if, on that dark night – though on a previous occasion he had nearly lost his life when bathing through his inability to swim – he had, at the risk of his own life, gone into the water to try and rescue her. He hoped the jury would not infer from the mere fact that the prisoner did not get into the water that he had a murderous intention with reference to his sweetheart, and that he meant to kill her. That would be a most unfair conclusion to draw. If there had been any attempt at concealment then some weight might have been given to the fact that the prisoner did not see her.

In his opinion the jury would be unable to find any other verdict than that an assault had been committed by the prisoner upon the deceased.

Numerous highly respectable witnesses were called, who gave the prisoner a most excellent character.

The learned Commissioner summed up at great length.

At 8.30 p m, the jury returned a verdict of "Wilful murder" with a recommendation to mercy. Prisoner was then sentenced to death.

**169 12 March 1881**

MILTON

A FATAL ACCIDENT **Jesse Meigh**, boatman in the employ of Messrs Jones at the Oil Works, Milton, died in a very sudden manner on Saturday night. About four o'clock in the afternoon he went to the Foxley Hotel, and there took several glasses of whiskey. He left about seven, and was soon afterwards seen to pass through the gates at the works on the way to his boat, in the cabin of which he lived. On Sunday morning, however, the dead body of the unfortunate man was found in the yard of the works by a workman named Bowyer, where it had lain throughout the night. An inquest will be held. It is assumed that in climbing over a gate he lost his hold and fell to the ground on the other side.

**170 9 April 1881**

BURSLEM POLICE – TUESDAY

ASSAULT CASE **Evan Humphries**, 44, boatman, was charged with assaulting Police-constable King at Kidsgrove, whilst in the execution of his duty. Defendant was drunk and creating a disturbance in the street. On the officer taking him into custody he became very violent, and struck him. The injuries were not of a very serious nature, therefore the defendant was let off on payment of a fine of 5s and costs for getting drunk, and 10s and costs for the assault on the officer.

**171 23 April 1881**

BURSLEM POLICE – TUESDAY

STEALING A KNIFE **William Bunn**, a young boatman, was charged in custody with stealing a pocket knife, value 6d, the property of a boy named George Latham. Prosecutor said he was by the canal side at Longport on Monday morning, when prisoner shook him, and he dropped his knife. Prisoner picked up the knife and gave it to a companion, who was helping in the unloading of a boat. Police-constable Howell apprehended prisoner, who gave up the knife, saying he would return it to prosecutor, as he wished to have no bother about it. Prisoner was severely cautioned, and fined 10s and costs.

**172 30 April 1881**

BURSLEM – THURSDAY

ASSAULT ON A WIFE **David Sheldon**, a boatman, was charged on remand with having assaulted his wife. On two previous occasions the defendant had been brought before the Court on this charge, remands being granted through the complainant being too ill to attend. It was now stated that although the woman was in a fair way for recovery, she would not be able to appear against her husband for a month. The assault took place on the towing-path at Tunstall Bridge. Mr Greenwood further adjourned the case for a month, but said he would allow prisoner to go at liberty on bail – two sureties in £25 each, and himself in £50.

**173 30 April 1881**

HANLEY

DROWNED IN THE CAULDON CANAL The Borough Coroner, Mr J West Jones, held an inquest at the Duke of Wellington Inn, Joiner's Square, on Monday morning, on the body of a man unknown, which was taken out of the canal near the Cauldon Bridge on Thursday. **Sarah Ann**

**Cornwall**, wife of a boatman in the employ of Mr Thomas Sands, deposed that about half past one o'clock on Thursday, while she was steering her husband's boat past Mr Cole's glassworks, she saw the body of a man in the water. When taken out and examined, no marks of violence were discoverable on the deceased, and the general appearance led to the conclusion that the body could not have been in the water very long. The deceased smelt very strongly of intoxicating liquor. Mr **Richard Glass**, canal inspector, who examined the body after its recovery, was of opinion that deceased was in drink at the time he came by his death. He did not know who the deceased was, though he believed he had seen him before. No money whatever was found upon deceased ; the only articles taken from his pockets being a pair of spectacles, a piece of leather and two small pieces of blacklead, and there was nothing whatever about him by which his name could be traced. Inspector Vickers stated that every inquiry had been made by the police to discover the name and friends of the deceased. A description of the man and his clothing had been circulated throughout the district ; but up to the present no person had identified him. An open verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.

**174 7 May 1881**

TUNSTALL – THURSDAY

ASSAULT ON A WIFE **David Sheldon**, a boatman, was brought up on remand charged with having inflicted grievous bodily harm on the body of his wife. The assault was committed on the 16<sup>th</sup> April, but the wife has been too ill from the injuries she had received to attend the Court earlier. The depositions of the wife, taken when it was not expected she would recover, were now read over, and the evidence of Dr May, who had attended the injured woman, was taken. The doctor stated that the injuries of the woman were so severe that her condition was quite critical for two days, and he advised that her depositions should be taken. She was now in a fair way to recover. The complainant asked the Bench to deal leniently with her husband. Mr Greenwood said he had no power to deal with the case, and prisoner must be committed for trial, but he would be allowed bail.

**175 14 May 1881**

HANLEY COUNTY – MONDAY

THEFT OF A SPRUCE TREE **William Frost**, a boatman, was charged with having stolen a spruce tree, the property of Messrs Matthews, nurserymen, Milton. According to the evidence, on Saturday night the prosecutors were taking some spruce trees and other things home from Burslem in a cart, when the prisoner came behind the cart, took off the tree, and threw it down on the side of the road. A boy named Kirkham, who said he saw prisoner take the tree off the cart, told the driver what had occurred, and the cart was stopped and the tree recovered. Mr Greenwood said he had no doubt that prisoner took the tree off the cart, but whether he intended to steal it he did not know. He would be let off on payment of the costs.

**176 4 June 1881**

KIDSGROVE – THURSDAY

RAILWAY OFFENCE **W Williams**, a boatman, was charged with travelling on the North Staffordshire Railway without a ticket. Detective Harris stated that defendant travelled on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May from Harecastle to Chatterley without paying his fare. Defendant said he was guilty on conditions. J Carter proved receiving the ticket, which was an old one. The defence was that Williams had taken a ticket the night before, and was directed to the wrong train. This compelled him to walk to Chatterley where his boat was waiting. Mr Harris said if that were true, defendant would have had his fare back if he had asked for it. Fined 1s with 10s 6d costs.

**177 11 June 1881**

HANLEY BOROUGH – MONDAY

CRUELTY TO A HORSE **Obadiah Green**, a bargeman, was charged with working a horse while in an unfit state. Police-constable King deposed that on the 19<sup>th</sup> May he was walking by the canal

side at Kidsgrove, when he saw the defendant's horse pulling a boat. The animal had a very bad cut on the knee, about 1 ½ in wide, and appeared in great pain. Sergeant Bellfield corroborated. Inspector Green stated that on receiving information he visited the stable where the horse was kept, and could certify to the fact of the animal being totally unfit for work, as the wound was open, and in a very bad condition. A fine of 5s and costs was inflicted, defendant being cautioned against repeating the offence.