

**BERROWS WORCESTER JOURNAL**  
**1841 to 1844**

**1 January 14 1841**

**BARGEMEN AND BOATMEN** A meeting was held at Stafford on Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> instant to establish a County Association for promoting the moral and religious improvement of this neglected class. The chair was taken by the Bishop of Lichfield, who in an able speech advocated the claims of the Society, pointing out the demoralised state of the watermen in general, and the necessity of using every effort for their instruction. His Lordship urged the importance of petitions from Magistrates, canal proprietors and carriers, merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen and others, as well as parishes and public bodies, for a Legislative enactment to put a stop to Sunday traffic on rivers and canals throughout the kingdom. He mentioned that a petition from 300 boatmen had produced a powerful effect in the House of Lords ; that Lord Normanby had promised the appointment of a Committee next Session to investigate the subject, and Lord Hatherton to obtain the necessary information from evidence. The Bishop enforced upon the meeting the duty of supporting this good cause as men, as patriots and as Christians. Archdeacon Hodson read a most interesting and encouraging report from the Chaplain appointed to instruct the boatmen employed in the Trent and Mersey Navigation, which was listened to with deep attention. Earl Talbot, the Lord Lieutenant of the county, Lord Sandon and others moved and seconded the various resolutions. The Duke of Sutherland, Lord Dartmouth and Lord Bradford sent donations, and stated their regret at unavoidable absence from the meeting. The Bishop, after acknowledging the usual vote of thanks as chairman, expressed his high gratification at the excellent spirit which had pervaded all the proceedings of the day, and his assurance of final success through the Divine blessing. We understand that the resolutions embraced three objects :-

- 1 The appointment of Canal chaplains
- 2 The building of schools and small churches on the different navigations
- 3 Petitioning Parliament for the cessation of Sunday labour on rivers and canals.

Among the subscriptions, it was gratifying to see £40 per annum from the proprietors of the Trent and Mersey Navigation : an example well worthy of imitation. It was recommended by some of the speakers to include, in the petitions, Sunday traffic on railroads by the carriage of goods, not interfering with passengers. We feel assured that all classes will cordially unite in endeavouring to secure for their poor brethren, the watermen of the United Kingdom, the privileges attached to the day of sacred rest. Instances have occurred of the greatest benefits resulting to this neglected class from having had religious instruction imparted, and we cordially wish success to the benevolent exertions which are now called forth on behalf of so numerous and useful a body of our countrymen.

**THE WEATHER** Since our last, and up to Sunday, the frost has been intense ; the river Severn has been frozen over in various places, sufficiently so as to admit of skating. We have had several heavy snow storms ; the roads and streets are in a most disagreeable state for travelling ; and indeed, without much extra diligence, pedestrians find great difficulty in preserving their footing. The atmosphere has been warmer during the last two or three days, but the snow still remains on the ground, and is trampled down into a close and hard coating, which will take a long time for the sun's rays to dissolve at this season of the year. Some of the boatmen who have been thrown out of employment in consequence of the stoppage of the navigation have been parading the streets in the guise of morris dancers, and imitating their comic moves and tricks, much to the amusement of hosts of young fry.

On Friday last, **Richard and William Rice**, two respectable barge owners of Tewkesbury, were summoned before the Magistrates of that borough for having obstructed several excavators belonging to the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway Company, in the execution of their work at the Quay on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December last, and thereby preventing them from driving stakes and making

the necessary excavations in order to make the required depot for the above company. The defence was most ably conducted by Mr W L Chandler ; but after a protracted investigation, the Magistrates fined the defendants each in 20s and expenses under the provisions of the said Company's Act of Parliament.

## **2 January 21 1841**

**WORCESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** A meeting of this body was held on Friday morning last at the Guildhall ; J Dent Esq, President, in the chair ; for the purpose of considering the propriety of supporting, both by petition and pecuniary assistance, the great question of the improved Severn Navigation.

The object of the meeting having been briefly stated by the Chairman, J Tymbs Esq, the Secretary, read the following draft of a petition :-

*“To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled ;*

*The humble Petition of the Worcester Chamber of Commerce*

Showeth – That the River Severn is one of the most important water communications in the kingdom, but that its utility for the conveyance of merchandise is seriously affected by the existence of shoals, which render the river for at least one third of the year unnavigable, except by vessels of very light burden ; in consequence of which goods, which ought to be conveyed along the river, are sent by other routes. The injury which the impediments referred to occasion may probably be best estimated by the fact that a very slight increase has taken place during the last fifty years in the traffic on the river, although four canals open into it, viz, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, by which the minerals and manufactures of those counties are conveyed to Stourport ; the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, which brings the manufactures of Birmingham and the surrounding district, together with coals, to Worcester ; the Droitwich Canal, by which salt for exportation reaches the river ; and the Gloucester and Hereford Canal, which empties itself into the River Severn near Gloucester.

Your petitioners, in addressing a branch of the Legislature so well acquainted with subjects of this description, deem it superfluous to enter into any minute details to prove the disadvantages attendant upon the river being in such a state ; but they will adduce the following facts as sufficiently illustrative of these disadvantages ; namely, that foreign vessels (and more especially those which require cargoes of salt) are frequently detained at Gloucester for want of freight, and often depart from that port in ballast, though if there were a sufficient depth of water in the river above Worcester, they might obtain cargoes to any extent. That vessels trading on the river being constructed with the view of enabling them to pass the shoals above referred to, they are found to be unfit to encounter the dangers of the navigation between the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal and the ports below ; and the result has been that many vessels with valuable cargoes have been lost between those points. That, notwithstanding such construction, vessels are frequently detained for weeks together by the want of sufficient water over the shoals ; and in the month of May last year, 227 vessels were detained at a place about ten miles below Worcester, not being able to pass a shoal near that part of the river. When from these impediments vessels are compelled to lighten, not only great expenses are incurred, but pilferage and breakage occur to an extent which is seriously injurious both to the shipper and receiver of goods.

Your petitioners are informed that a bill has been introduced into your Honourable House for authorising such improvements as would render the river navigable at all seasons of the year ; and your petitioners are assured, by eminent engineers who have been consulted on the subject, that these improvements may be effected at a moderate expenditure, and that a very light toll would be sufficient to pay off the capital at no very distant period, besides accumulating a fund for keeping the works in repair ; after which the river may be again declared free. The advantages which trade would derive from the improvement contemplated are manifest. The ports of Bristol, Gloucester, Newport and Cardiff would be materially benefited, as well as merchants, manufacturers and

proprietors of mineral property in the Midland districts. Goods could be shipped at ports in and connected with the River Severn at a very reduced cost of transit, and foreign produce could be received back on equally favourable terms.

Your petitioners therefore, feeling assured that, if the said improvements are carried into effect, they will prove beneficial to one of the most important districts in the kingdom, humbly pray your Honourable House to pass the said bill, and that your petitioners may be heard by their counsel, agents and witnesses in support of the measure.

And your petitioners will ever pray, &c”

After a short discussion, during which it was stated that vessels had often been detained three, four and even six weeks together, in consequence of the impeded navigation,

J Isaac Esq moved that the petition be adopted.

G Allies Esq seconded the motion, and spoke of the crippled state in which many branches of trade (instancing the article of salt) had often been, in consequence of the want of a free navigation. Some time ago, there were two vessels at Bristol requiring upwards of 1000 tons of salt but, owing to the want of water in the Severn, they could only send 15 tons, so that these two cargoes were lost, while the transmission of the small quantity sent cost three times as much as it ought to have done. It should be added that at the time there were 7000 tons of salt at Droitwich. (Hear, hear).

The motion was carried unanimously.

R Evans Esq moved that the sum of twenty guineas be granted from the funds of the Chamber towards supporting the prayer of the petition. He was happy to state that the funds of the body now amounted to about £230, which fully enabled them to make the grant.

Mr Parry opposed the resolution. It appeared to him that the proposed measure, while it might benefit Worcester, would give greater advantage to Stourport. But he did not think Worcester could be benefited by anything short of a twelve feet navigation from Gloucester and a six feet continuation to Stourport ; Worcester would then become a depot for the West, but it was absurd to suppose that that would be the case while the trade could be carried twelve miles further into the interior of the country.

R Evans Esq had no doubt that Worcester, on account of its peculiar advantages, would always be a depot for Birmingham and Wales, if among its citizens could be found men of spirit sufficient to carry on the trade. He then spoke strongly in favour of the projected improvement, as a means of removing the disadvantages of detention, extra expenses and pilferage, which in the present state of the river made so considerable a drawback on the profits of the trade. Therefore he strongly recommended an improved navigation, and hoped that no feelings of jealousy would be entertained towards the neighbouring town of Stourport because it would partake of the advantages held out. (Hear).

Mr Parry repeated his objections, stating that the carriers might receive benefit, but the public would not.

R Evans Esq observed that in the article of coal alone Worcester would purchase at a £1000 cheaper than at present – would not that be an advantage to the public? (Hear).

J W Lea Esq, Chairman of the Improvement Committee, rose, and observed : Mr Parry, I conceive, has fully answered his own argument ; he has admitted that the improvement will be a benefit to Worcester, but objects that it will benefit Stourport more. We (the Committee) have taken up the measure on public grounds ; if the improvement be found desirable, then each place comprised in its scope must realise, for aught I know, that advantage which nature has allotted to it. (Hear, hear). That Worcester will be benefited by it I have no doubt – and to a greater extent than some persons imagine, and that others would wish to make it appear. I am aware that great prejudices have arisen against this question ; but how they originated it is not for me to say ; but it is certain that great pains have been taken to persuade individuals in Worcester that no benefit would result ; some have gone further and asserted that a positive injury would be sustained ; and, strange to say, many of these persons on a former occasion endeavoured to promote the improvement. As it requires so little argument wherewith to answer Mr Parry, and having made these few remarks, I will take the

opportunity of answering a letter which has been publicly addressed to me by John Williams Esq (inserted in the *Journal* of last week). Having read with much satisfaction many points of his letter, I wrote a note to that gentleman stating that, as this meeting would be held here today, and as it would present a favourable opportunity for the expression of his views and feeling, I accordingly invited him to attend it. I however received a letter in reply, wherein he excused himself on account of his advanced age, the inclement weather, and other reasons. I will therefore refer briefly to some of his arguments ; and in doing so, must take the opportunity of stating that, however much I may differ from that gentleman, I cannot fail to respect his experience, station and the great courtesy which has marked his conduct. (Applause). His first objection, then, is as follows :-

“The highest floods on the Severn, within my memory, were in consequence of the heavy rains and the melting of deep snows, with the channel of the river previously occupied by five or six feet of water above the ordinary low water level ; under these circumstances the river invariably overflows the adjacent meadows ; and this will often be the case even in the summer months, after a few days of heavy rain, if five feet locks and weirs are placed between Worcester and Gloucester ; for instead of having an average height of the banks or ditches *seventeen feet above low water level*, the overflow of water into the meadows will commence with a rise of *twelve feet of water in the river*”.

Now this objection is against placing locks and weirs between Gloucester and Worcester. He has previously stated that the navigation may be improved without them ; if that be the case, why has it not been done before? The Worcester and Birmingham Canal proprietors say the same thing ; but their canal has now been open for 25 years, and we all know that not one thing has been done to improve the navigation between this city and Gloucester, except dredging, which experiment we likewise know has done no good. Therefore upon this point, if the improvement had been so easy as Mr Williams imagines, it would have been effected before this time. And further, with reference to the objection which I have read, I will now extract a part of Mr Cubitt's report on the subject, dated January 5 1841 ; it is as follows :-

“The object of this report is to set forth the proposed plan and probable cost of the intended improvement in the navigation of the river Severn from Gloucester to Stourport, agreeable to plans and sections lodged with the respective Clerks of the Peace, preparatory to an application to Parliament in the ensuing session for that purpose.

In its present state the river Severn abounds with shoals, which very much impede the navigation, so as to render it impossible for the vessels which navigate it to proceed with full cargoes, or in a long continued drought to proceed along the river at all, to the manifest disadvantage of all that portion of the public which has any interest in or dependence upon the navigation of the river Severn.

The object of the proposed plan is to obviate these difficulties, and to obtain a minimum depth, at any time, of not less than six feet of water, in all parts of the navigation between the entrance lock of the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal at Gloucester to the entrance lock of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal at Stourport ; and upon such principles as will in no wise interfere with the due and proper drainage of the adjoining lands, or the discharge of the flood water of the river, as at present, except in so much as both may be improved and facilitated by the measure.

The means by which this improvement is to be carried into effect is by what are technically termed *weirs and locks*, of which there will be five of each between Gloucester and Stourport.

The effect of the weirs or dams in the river is to divide the whole fall of the low summer water, between Stourport and Gloucester, into five steps or falls ; and by a side cut or short canal (with a lock therein) round or past the site of the weir, the navigation is carried on in the same manner as in an artificial canal, whilst the river passes over the weir at a depth or thickness proportioned to the quantity of water coming down ; and the weir is so constructed as to height, length and position, that whilst it will never let out the water of the river below the fixed navigable depth in time of short water, it will nevertheless afford a greater capacity for the escape of flood water than it at present

obtains in the same place ; and as all the shoals in the river between the weirs are to be dredged out, to make a uniform navigable channel, it must be evident that the capacity of the river for the discharge of floods must be increased and improved – whilst through the same means the low summer water will be prevented from running off below its present level at the foot of each weir ; and from the low water channel being deepened at the shoals, the exit of the drainage water will be improved also, whilst the navigation will be at all times available, whether it be drought or flood.

The total fall of the river at summer water, from Stourport to the entrance of the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, is 32 feet in a total distance of 42 miles ; of which the lower portion, from Gloucester to Upton ham (the site of the first weir), being a distance of 18 1/2 miles, the fall is only four feet – a quantity but little more than sufficient to carry off the water in the ordinary state of the river ; the whole of which distance, being subject to the influence of the tides, no weir or locks will be required within those limits (that is to say from the Upton weir downwards), and no other operations than dredging and regulating the breadth of the low water channel, to obtain the requisite navigable depth, will be necessary. And it may be further observed that no dredging or deepening of the channel will be done on the Gloucester branch of the river below the entrance of the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, or on the Maisemore branch lower down than the entrance lock to the Herefordshire Canal, and to no greater depth than the sill of that lock, and of sufficient breadth to admit the boats which navigate it to pass to and from that canal and the river at the “Upper Parting” respectively ; by which means, and leaving untouched the remaining branches below the entrance to the Berkeley and the Hereford Canals respectively, it must be evident that no alteration will be made in the height or level of the surface water of the river up to the first weir, in a distance of 18 1/2 miles above Gloucester. Nor is it intended or required, by the present proposition for obtaining a 6 feet navigation, to erect any weirs or locks, or to do any works that may affect the height or level of the river below the weir at Upton ham ; or in any way to affect, alter or interfere with the adjoining lands, in relation to the river, as at present existing.

Proceeding upwards, the next weir and lock are at Worcester, just below the entrance lock at the Birmingham and Worcester Canal at Diglis – a point of 29 miles up the river from Gloucester ; the third weir and lock will be at (?Bevere) Island, 4 miles above Worcester, at a place where the river has two channels, in one of which will be placed the weir, and in the other the lock, by which the necessity for an artificial canal or side cut will be avoided ; the fourth weir and lock will be just above Holt Bridge, 3 3/4 miles above number 3 ; and the fifth and last at Lincomb Hill, 4 1/4 miles above Number 4, or just 41 miles from the entrance to the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal at Gloucester, and one mile and a quarter below Stourport Bridge ; making a total of 42 1/4 miles for the improvement of the river, and making a minimum navigable depth of 6 feet over the lock sills, without raising the usual summer height of water in the river at the tails of any of the locks and weirs, or causing any obstruction to the passage of flood waters.

Such is the mode by which it is proposed to improve the navigation of the river Severn ; and which may be more fully understood by a perusal of the plans and sections, as deposited with the Clerks of the Peace, in which the details of the measure, as required by the standing orders of Parliament, are clearly and correctly laid down”.

This I hope will convince most persons that the lands on the bank will not be injured. The next objection made by Mr Williams is :-

“In seasons of frost the river is always low ; and with the proposed locks and weirs the stream will be so slack that ice will form over the whole surface, after the manner of ponds and canals, and not as on all running streams, namely on the sides of the surface of deep water and on the bottom of the fords ; and after a fortnight or three weeks of continued frost, the ice will acquire so great a thickness as to be not only much longer in breaking up, but greatly endanger the bridges, locks, weirs and craft on the river, and also cause higher floods”.

This is founded in error ; because the proposed plan will neither be similar to ponds or canals. This

is lost sight of in the objection. Although the water may be pent up to a certain height, the same water must flow down the river as at present, and with the same velocity ; and there will be this advantage – it is well known that ice forms first upon shoals, then rises on the surface and floats down in masses, till it obstructs the navigation. Now, as the shoals will be removed in effecting the improvement, one of the facilities for the formation of ice will be removed. Therefore this objection is founded in error.

The third objection is :-

“Barges sail up the river in its present natural state with southerly or westerly winds, free of charges for being tracked up either by men or horses ; and when these winds are favourable the voyage is expeditious, and vessels follow each other in rapid succession”.

This can be done as well after the improvement as at present.

“It is no uncommon thing for two or three barges to arrive at Worcester bridge at the same time ; and the operation of passing through the second arch on the west side (the one usually chosen) is done at the same time that vessels on a downward passage are floated by the current, without charge, through the centre arch ; whereas, if the system of locks is adopted, one vessel only at a time can pass through the lock, up or down the river ; and when sailing up in strong winds they will be continually running foul of each other, or injuring the entrance to the locks. Again, in high water, vessels will be tempted to pass over the weirs sooner than be detained, or will in the night be liable to be drawn over by the force of the current, and meet with serious accidents. All these matters of detail must be well considered by practical men before it is too late”.

I agree with this ; but what has been the case on other rivers where improvements have been effected? If common prudence has been sufficient to prevent these accidents in other rivers, I presume it will do so with regard to the Severn.

The fourth objection is :-

“A gradual change has taken place in the character of the alluvial deposits brought down by the river after heavy rains. Many years ago I was in the habit of carrying away a quantity of fine alluvial soil, deposited near the Quay wall, St Clement's, and spreading it on my land ; but about twenty years ago I found this river soil became of a more coarse, sandy quality ; and since that period, considerable quantities of coarse heavy sand are brought down after every flood and deposited on the banks of the river, or where the current is not sufficiently rapid to keep it afloat. And I am of opinion much of this material will sink to the bottom of the river were locks and weirs planted in the low level south of Worcester. The increase of this sand and grit may be accounted for by the enlarged portion of land cultivated under the plough, the improved drainage of agricultural districts, wide turnpike roads, mode of reducing the materials used for their repair, and the increased traffic consequent on the increased population. During the prevalence of thunder storms in the summer months, I have frequently observed a rise of perhaps not more than eighteen inches of water, brought from the sandy district drained by the river Stour, so loaded with red sand as to appear to the eye to contain almost as much earth as water”.

I admit the deposit ; but that will be provided for by the dredging which from time to time will be necessary in the works ; and if Mr Williams asserts that the deposit will be greater than at present, I differ from him ; because the river in the wider parts will be contracted, and a uniform current of water having been obtained, there will be less deposit than at present. These are the chief objections urged ; but I now come to a part which is more important than the foregoing :-

“How will the citizens of Worcester and the landholders of the southern portion of the county be compensated for giving up the free use of a noble river, navigable without a lock above tide's way a

greater number of miles than the Thames, Humber, Trent, or any river in England? The answer I venture to give after many years' observation and consideration, is – to make it a navigable canal, fed by various and oftentimes a ungovernable supply of water, subject to a tonnage and various arbitrary restrictions, to great hindrance in passing locks, and to additional charges for tracking or steam tugging in ascending or descending the river, and the ruin of the fishery – at least the deprivation of three species, the salmon, the lamprey and the lampern ; for a gentleman who owned a valuable fishery above Ludlow (the late Mr Knight of Downton Castle) repeatedly informed me that he never saw or heard of one of the kind I have named being taken in his fishery. This cannot be owing to the mill dams or weirs, because in times of flood the water of the Tame exceeds the height of the weirs. And as regards salmon, their favourite streams seem to be those where every mile or two they meet with shoal water, where they will make their way almost to the source of such rivers ; hence the fact that more salmon are taken about Welshpool than in the deep water between Diglis and Kempsey”.

The only question here is “How are the citizens and landholders to be compensated &c?” Why, if the allegations on the face of the petition are true, it is answered ; and if the advantages will not be proved greater than the disadvantages, it is to be presumed that the measure will not be carried. Mr Williams next says :-

“The chief transit of goods on the Severn is from the middle of October till the end of the month of May. This I know to be the fact from my own observation. The freightage in the summer months is comparatively trifling, and this is not owing to want of water in the river, for there a few seasons that do not on an average give us “freshes” (to use a waterman's expression) once in every fifteen days ; these freshes generally proceed from the mountains in Wales ; and if a true account has been kept of the depth of water at the Diglis lock during the summer months last year, I have no doubt but that it will more than bear me out in the above assertion. I frequently see light vessels pass up the river in summer, laden with considerable cargoes of hay when the water is low ; and if barge owners generally kept vessels of the kind I allude to, for use in seasons of long drought, they would find it much more to their advantage than submitting to charges for lockage and the other inconveniences attending a locked river”.

If the first part be true, it is a matter for serious consideration ; if the bulk of the trade in the river is done between October and May, when there is no lack of water, this is certainly strong argument ; and I wish it to be fully canvassed and settled. It is far from my intention to suppress or prevent the fullest possible discussion upon every point against as well as in favour of the measure. I have no interest in it beyond the general good, and therefore do not wish that it should be effected if found to be unnecessary. I hope some gentleman who is more acquainted with the subject of this argument than I am will throw some light thereon. Mr Williams goes on to say :-

“As far as Worcester is concerned in this question, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the establishing of locks from Gloucester to Stourport will be injurious to the trade of Worcester, by diverting no inconsiderable part of the business connected with the transit of goods and transfer of cargoes to Stourport, and thus depriving Worcester of the advantages of its locality as compared with Stourport”.

Now perhaps some gentleman in the room who holds this opinion will make out the case ; for myself, I confess I cannot see what difference it will make to Worcester whether a load of goods passes under our bridge and goes on to Stourport, or whether it passes through the lock and goes up the canal to Birmingham. (Hear, hear).

Mr Parry : There would be the profits arising from reloading the goods in passing to the canal, which would not be experienced were the craft to go on at once to Stourport.

Mr Lea : This may apply to a small portion of the trade, but we must take care in this instance and

not mistake the smaller for the larger proportion ; the bulk of the trade comes up in boats through the canal to Birmingham ; therefore I conceive the assertion to a certain extent is unfounded. Improve the means of transit, and the parties engaged in the trade will no doubt soon find out the best mode of carrying their goods.

Mr Williams further states :-

“It was this advantage that gave rise to the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, *and the terminus was made at Diglis on account of its low level, and for the most part deep water*, and the practicability of improving the navigation, without the inconvenience of locks, to Gloucester”.

I have alluded to this before. I conceive that if 25 years is not enough time for parties to put in practice some plan of improvement in that part of the river where it is stated to be so easy, certainly we shall have little chance of effecting it now. Further :-

“And here I will call the attention of the Committee to a fact or two deserving of their most serious consideration. The balance of transit charges between Liverpool and Bristol, as far as the supply of the town of Birmingham and its populous neighbourhood, is in many articles of general consumption very nice. Put a toll on the Severn, and this balance will be turned in favour of Liverpool! To this I invite the attention of the merchants of Bristol and Gloucester, as well as the carriers on the Severn. The citizens of Worcester should also consider seriously the effect of losing so large a proportion of the transit trade”.

If the evidence of carriers employed on the river is to be taken as conclusive, this is also founded in error ; for they are willing to enter into contracts, for seven years, to carry goods at the same charge for freight as at present. (Hear). Therefore, as far as the question of charges goes, there will be no disadvantage. But then comes the main point. If you make the navigation practicable at all times of the year for vessels to carry their full cargoes, the scale will be turned in favour of Bristol, not of Liverpool. [The conclusion of this argument was lost to us, owing to some conversation which was going on near us].

“Our neighbours also at Droitwich should bear in mind the question of transferring their trade from Gloucester and Bristol to Liverpool”.

Now Mr Allies has stated several facts in connexion with this part of the question ; but I am prepared further to say – we pay now a certain freight for salt from Droitwich to Gloucester ; parties who now carry it are willing to contract to do so again for as much less as the toll will amount to on the river. (Hear). Therefore there is no cause for that alarm which Mr Williams has shown. We can get our salt for 6d a ton less than at present. The toll is not expected to be as much as that ; therefore we shall reap a benefit. Again :-

“In the last conversation I had with you on the subject of your proposed improvement, you said your engineer intended to dredge the lower part of the river – I presume from Tewkesbury to Gloucester – and by giving increased depth get more fall”.

It is from Upton to Gloucester that the increased depth will be obtained by dredging.

“But after viewing the great lake of water over the meadows in high floods, in some parts not less than four miles wide and five feet deep, there can be little hope of your taking off this water by deepening the river a few feet ; and you cannot dredge to any considerable depth without injuring the banks of the river, and the foundations of the Haw, Maisemore, Over and Gloucester bridges”.

That has been answered. I feel personally obliged to Mr Williams for taking so much trouble in



bringing this matter before the public, and for the courtesy which he has displayed in his address to me. He has done us great service, in leading to a discussion ; and I hope that no one connected with the matter will be found advocating a measure which they do not think will be advantageous to the public. I do believe it will be of advantage, and therefore I shall always persevere to the utmost of my ability in promoting it. I ought not to detain you longer, but I will mention one sentence more with regard to Worcester. A great deal has been said about Stourport ; and I will now only ask you one simple question – which is the natural locality for the supply of the surrounding districts, Worcester or Stourport? You will all say the former. (Hear). It is a place which, in the remembrance of many of us, has transacted a vast wholesale trade with Wales and the surrounding districts. A great portion of that trade, I am sorry to say, has left us ; and why? Because other places have improved their modes of transit, and therefore trade will inevitably go to those places where it can be transacted with the greatest regularity and the best terms. (Hear, hear). If Worcester did not possess these local advantages, it has preparations made for a trade which Stourport has not got – we have quay walls, wharfs, warehouses (many of which, I regret to say, are now empty and useless) ; the only thing wanted is a facility for carrying goods up and down the river ; and then Worcester, from its many advantages, must regain a great deal of that trade which some years ago it so eminently possessed as compared with other cities in the provinces. (Great applause).

Mr Leader Williams next addressed the meeting, for the purpose of explaining the point to which Mr Lea had alluded respecting the trade between October and May. He observed it was not fact that the low water was confined to the period between May and September ; it has not been the case in the present season ; for, since last flood, we have had constant successions of low water. For this reason the price of coal has increased ; because, although the Staffordshire Canal had been open up to last Saturday, and coals brought down it up to that time, yet there being no facilities for bringing it on from Stourport to Worcester, the price had therefore risen. Again, vessels laden with salt arrived at Gloucester more in summer than in winter ; but he did not think this was the case with Manchester goods, the trade and consumption being about the same in each article. Mr Williams combated the argument that the chief transit of goods was in the winter months, and contended that the summer trade would be greatly increased by the proposed improvement. Having substantiated Mr Lea's statement as to the effect of the removal of shoals in preventing the formation of ice, Mr Leader Williams next proceeded to observe that Mr Williams had divided the river into two districts, but without properly considering the boundary line of the different character of the river. The striking difference in that character was at Upton, as would be gathered from the following computation :-

	ft	in
From Gladder Brook to Holt Fleet Bridge, a distance of 7 miles, the fall was 15 feet, making an average fall per mile of	2	1 3/4
From Holt Bridge to Worcester Bridge, 6 3/4 miles, the fall was 8 ft 6 in, or	1	3
From Worcester Bridge to Upton Bridge, 10 miles, the fall was 6 feet, or	0	7 1/4
From Upton Bridge to Gloucester Bridge, 19 miles, the fall was 4 feet, or	0	2 1/2

The shoals for the most part above Upton are gravel, marl and rock, but below Upton they are sand &c. That was the variation in the character. All the engineers had recommended that the latter should be dredged, and that locks and weirs should be applied to the former.

Mr Parry contended that no advantage to Worcester had been made out, for the forthcoming contracts were to be made on the same scale as had been already paid ; he was however reminded by Mr W Dent, Mr G Allies and the Chairman that *regularity* in the receipt of goods was a great acquisition to a commercial establishment, tending to many advantages, not the least of which was the *constant employment of workmen*, who were often now deprived of work, owing to impediments

in the navigation.

After some further unimportant conversation, the resolution was put, and carried unanimously, with but one dissident.

A vote of thanks, on the motion of the Mayor, was then passed to the Chairman, for his able and courteous conduct in the chair, and the meeting broke up.

### **3 February 11 1841**

**THE WEATHER** The north and east winds have during the past week swept over our island ; and frost and snow, combined, have rendered the severity of the cold intense. Indeed, that most intelligent personage, “the oldest inhabitant”, does not remember such a continuation of winter for nearly a quarter of a century past. At the London Zoological Gardens, the coldest point was 25 degrees Fahrenheit at two o'clock on Saturday morning. At Hackney, at ten o'clock on Friday night, it was 24 degrees ; at seven o'clock on Saturday morning 26 degrees ; at ten o'clock on Saturday night 24 degrees ; on Sunday morning at seven o'clock 23 degrees ; and at noon 24 degrees. The barometer has fallen but little, and on Sunday at noon stood 29.391 inches. The bad effects of the easterly winds have already been more severely felt upon vegetation than were all the more severe frosts of last month. The effects have been equally injurious to the vegetable, meat and fish markets. The prognostication by the “flight of birds” has been made in favour of a lengthened winter, from the fact of seagulls and wild fowls of all descriptions having made their appearance in abundance. A gentleman in Aberdeenshire says, “I saw a touching sight last week at Tulloch, near Ballater – about a dozen of small birds frozen on the branches of a tree, and some more upon a cart, quite dead. Another incident of the storm was the somewhat ludicrous circumstance of a poor cat that had gone outside of a cottage window, and was found standing as stiff and starched as a German soldier, frozen to the spot, but not quite dead”. The condition of the poor, we fear, is in many places most distressing ; and in this city, were it not for the various public and private charities, so liberally dispensed as they are, hundreds of poor families would meet their death through hunger and cold. There is now in every street and lane most ample room for the exercise of benevolence. The unemployed boatmen are parading the streets – some of them hauling the model of a boat, and soliciting charity ; others tricked up as Morris dancers.

### **4 February 25 1841**

**MERSEY AND IRWELL FLATMEN'S FRIENDLY SOCIETY** The anniversary of this interesting institution was celebrated by a tea party at Runcorn on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, when about 450 persons assembled – including the watermen, their wives and friends. The whole was conducted with the utmost propriety and decorum ; and it was truly gratifying to see how much the religious privileges enjoyed by these men had evidently been the means, under the divine blessing, of raising them in the scale of society. The contrast between them and the same class who are left without similar instruction and rest on the Sabbath is very striking to all acquainted with the general character and habits of bargemen and boatmen. As usual, the Treasurer (Mr Edward Atherton Lingard, agent to the Old Quay Company), a gentleman whose services in promoting the best interests of the men intrusted to his care cannot be too highly appreciated. Six clergymen were present, and some of the most respectable inhabitants of Runcorn, including those kind ladies who managed 37 urns, put in requisition on the occasion. After tea, of which 70 gallons had been dispatched, together with 136 lbs of good roast beef and 300 lbs of plain and currant loaves, the Treasurer read the annual report. It appears that the Society consists of 230 members ; and that, after having liberally provided for the sick during the year and discharged the funeral expenses of ten of its members, removed by the hand of death, there remained in the hands of the bank and Treasurer a balance exceeding £360. It was pleasing to see among the items of expenditure subscriptions of £1 1s each to the following five Societies :- namely, the Christian Knowledge Society, the Gospel Propagation Society, the Church Missionary Society, the Church Pastoral Aid Society (this latter provides a stipend for the Curate of the Mersey and Irwell flatmen), and the Prayer Book and Homily Society. After the report had been read, the assembly was addressed by the Treasurer and Clergy present, who ably inculcated, in

eloquent language, the principles and precepts of our holy religion, at all times important to be enforced – but especially in these days, when infidelity, Socialism, Chartism and dangerous doctrines and delusions of all kinds abound. The attention of the flatmen seemed riveted by each succeeding speaker ; and the loud plaudits called forth by the heart stirring addresses of their friends proved that they were appealing to an audience fully capable of understanding and applying sound instruction. A band attended. Appropriate selections from Addison, Montgomery and other Christian poets were sung, together with the national anthem. The company were occasionally refreshed with oranges during the evening, while cheerful and friendly conversation prevailed. Instead of those disgraceful scenes which sometimes occur at the celebration of benefit societies, when the intoxicating draught has been indulged in, all was here harmony, peace and brotherly love. After hearing the 13<sup>th</sup> chap of the 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians read, and receiving the blessing of the clergyman in whose district the meeting was held, the party broke up, having enjoyed a most delightful evening, prepared to go forth to their allotted station as those who desire ever to bear in mind the Apostolic injunction – To “honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the Queen”. When we see such happy results from attention having been paid to the moral and religious improvement of bargemen and boatmen, we cannot but cordially wish success to the efforts now making in Staffordshire and other quarters for the benefit of this long neglected class ; and we do hope that something effectual will be done this Session of Parliament to put an end to Sunday labour on rivers and canals in every part of the kingdom, that a numerous and useful body of our countrymen may enjoy the privileges to which, as British subjects, they are so justly entitled.

#### **5 March 25 1841**

The following petition from the inhabitants of this city to both Houses of Parliament has been signed by the Mayor, Magistrates and others :-

“That your petitioners, highly prizing the privileges of the day of holy rest, and desirous that all their fellow subjects should partake of the same religious advantages which they themselves enjoy, humbly approach your honourable House on behalf of that portion of their countrymen who gain their subsistence by working upon rivers and canals, and who by the present system are cut off from the repose of the Sabbath, being compelled to toil during its sacred hours. This class of men have become proverbially immoral ; and your petitioners have reason to believe that their degradation is to be clearly traced to that system of Sabbath desecration which so universally prevails among them, to the dishonour of Almighty God and the injury of his creatures. Your petitioners feel convinced that were the whole Sabbath granted to bargemen and boatmen in general, and the means of religious instruction provided, a gradual improvement would, through Divine blessing, take place among them ; and great benefits would thereby result, not only to the poor men themselves and their families, but also to their employers and to society at large. And, inasmuch as many canal carriers and other commercial men, anxious for the welfare of this class, are desirous of the interposition of the Legislature, your petitioners humbly entreat your honourable House to enact such laws as may tend more effectually to put a stop to Sunday labour upon rivers and canals. And, in order to prevent any unfair competition, your petitioners further humbly hope that the carriage of goods on railroads upon the Sabbath day will also be by law strictly prohibited. And your petitioners will ever pray”, &c.

#### **6 April 29 1841**

**WEAVER CHURCHES** The first stone of one of these churches was recently laid at Weston Point by Sir Richard Brooke, Bart, one of the trustees of the navigation, surrounded by a numerous body of spectators, deeply interested in the erection of the first church ever proposed to be built and endowed for the express purpose of promoting the spiritual benefit of that too long neglected class of our countrymen, the bargemen and boatmen. Sir Richard addressed the assembly in a very appropriate manner. He expressed “the great pleasure it afforded him to be instrumental in promoting a work so great and good as that of erecting a house of prayer, in which the liturgical services of the Apostolic Church of the land might be regularly used, and in which the Gospel might

be faithfully preached". He likewise observed that "he hoped, while the temple to be raised would be a beacon to the waterman, guiding him safely into Weston harbour, that it would also guide many a poor waterman to the gates of heaven ; and he could only further say that he trusted those sacred walls, the foundation stone of which he had just had the honour of laying, would endure throughout many a generation, and be a blessing to thousands yet unborn". The worthy Baronet was followed by the Vicar and Curate of Runcorn, and by the incumbent of the new district church in that parish, who in able addresses pointed out the vast importance of "remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy", and providing for all classes suitable places for public worship. Many striking observations in accordance with the principles and precepts of the Gospel were made by the Rev Speakers, who were listened to with the deepest interest by the surrounding multitude. We regret that our space will not admit of extracts from these excellent addresses. We understand that the projected church will be an elegant Gothic structure, with a light and beautiful spire, and will be erected upon the pier head at the entrance of Weston basin. From the River Mersey it will present an object of great beauty. It will afford accommodation to about 350 watermen and their families, and will be fitted up in a simple manner with forms, like an old parish church, and not apportioned into pews. The next church will be erected near Northwich, with 500 sittings. The spire and ornamental parts of the sacred fabric will be presented by the surrounding inhabitants, and the money voted by Parliament be laid out on the rest of the building. The third church in this navigation will be erected at Winsford, in the same style of architecture as the other two. These churches will present a delightful object to the eye ; and on each returning Sabbath, instead of the flat or barge hoisting its flag in defiance of the Lord at the Sabbath, the vessels will be moored in harbour, and the sound of the church going bell will summon to the house of prayer hundreds of immortal beings, for whose souls "no man was wont to care" ; but who are mercifully invited to partake of the blessings and privileges of that Gospel which was expressly commanded "to be preached unto the poor". We shall rejoice to find that many proprietors of navigations, hearing what has been accomplished with reference to the River Weaver, will "go and do likewise" ; and we doubt not that the public will support them in such truly benevolent undertakings.

SEVERN NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENT We have had great pleasure in observing that at the late meeting of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Company, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to :-

"That the obstructions of the navigation of the river Severn existing between Stourport and Gloucester have hitherto proved a serious obstacle to the general trade, not only of that part of the kingdom, but of the country at large. That the measure now before Parliament for the improvement of the navigation of that river is calculated to remove those obstacles, and to perfect the navigation of the river, at little, and probably eventually at no cost to the public ; and that it is entitled to the strenuous support of all parties interested in the trade of this district".

We also rejoice to notice that the paramount importance and utility of this national undertaking has now gained so firm a footing generally that there is no doubt of its being speedily carried through the Legislature. The bill is expected to go into Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> instant.

## **7 May 6 1841**

At the Public Office, Kidderminster, on Thursday, **Charles Worrall** of Stourport, boatman, was charged by Superintendent Allen of the Stourport division with having violently assaulted him while in the execution of his duty, in attempting to prevent his breaking the peace in a fight at Stourport on the previous evening. The prisoner in his defence said he was so drunk that he did not know his customer, or he would not have done so. He was fined 10s and 11s 6d expenses which, after some delay, was paid.

**8 May 13 1841**

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS, HOUSE OF LORDS MONDAY MAY 10 Lord Hatherton presented petitions from merchants and traders of Birmingham and elsewhere, and from traders and carriers in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, against Sunday traffic on canals and railways. This was a very important petition, as it contained not only the names of a large number of traders, but of persons employed in carrying on railways and canals. The Noble Lord also presented petitions to the same effect from the watermen employed on the river Severn, signed by 150 persons ; from individuals employed on the navigation of the new Birmingham canal ; and from individuals employed in the navigation of the old Birmingham canal.

**9 June 17 1841**

CITY MAGISTRATES **George Woodford**, boatman, was allowed a fortnight to pay 5s for being drunk and disorderly late on the previous night at the Angel Inn, Clap Gate.

**10 July 29 1841**

**William Price** of Stourport, bargeman, was on Monday last convicted before the Rev J Foley for carrying away some fencing from a field in the occupation of Mr Brazier, at Shrawley ; he was fined ten shillings, which has since been paid to the Female Asylum.

**11 July 29 1841**

At Upton Petty Sessions on Thursday, **Noah Dayus**, of the parish of St Martin in this city, was fined 40s and costs for using a donkey on the Worcester and Gloucester Horse Towing-path without taking a ticket for the same.

**12 August 5 1841**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE **Charles Bradley**, a stunted boatman, was brought up by policeman 3, charged with a brutal assault upon **John Thrupp**. Thrupp, who had the management of a boat belonging to **Mr Groves** of this city, stated that on Sunday night the boat was moored near the steps at the Upper Quay, when the prisoner came and boarded her, but met with so stout an opposition from him (the complainant) that at last he was pitched over into the water ; he however rallied, procured a stick, and gave the complainant such blows on the head and jaw as effectually prevented any further resistance. Thrupp's head presented a shocking appearance, and he appeared very weak from loss of blood. It appeared that the prisoner had been in the habit of sometimes sleeping in this boat, and had lately persisted in doing so, although Thrupp had remonstrated with him, in pursuance of his master's injunctions that no stranger should sleep in the boat ; till at last, finding remonstrance useless, he had come to the resolution of protecting his master's property *vi et armis*. The case appearing to be of a serious nature, the magistrates remanded Bradley till Wednesday, in order to ascertain how it would result as regarded Thrupp.

**13 August 19 1841**

A man named **John Langford**, boatman of Droitwich, is in custody on the charge of stealing two £5 notes of the City and County Bank from a person named **Cheedle**, also a boatman of that borough. The prisoner was apprehended at a beerhouse in the Droitwich Road near this city on Thursday last, by Sergeant Chipp of the city and Sergeant Petford of the County Police, where he was drinking in company with a girl. The two stolen notes have been recovered, both singularly enough having fallen into the hands of Mr Goodwin, flour dealer, Mealcheapen Street, the one having been received by Mr Goodwin from a customer, a beershop keeper at Fearnall Heath to whom Langford passed it on Monday, and the other from Mr Walter, pawnbroker, to whom he had paid it in the purchase of a watch, which watch was found upon his person, together with £5 10s 6d, the unspent portion of his ill gotten booty. In buying the watch at Mr Walters's, the prisoner stated his name to be that of the party robbed, namely Cheedle. He was conveyed to Droitwich on Friday for examination upon the charge before the magistrates, by whom he was fully committed for trial.



#### 14 October 7 1841

The Bishop of Chester has conferred the appointment to the Watermen's Church at Weston Point upon the Rev Christopher Bush, Incumbent of Lower Peover.

#### 15 October 21 1841

##### WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS

**Robert Moore**, 18, boatman, was charged with having stolen, on the 7<sup>th</sup> August at Dudley, a hat, the property of Evan Rees. Two months' imprisonment, the last fortnight solitary ; to be once whipped.

**Peter Smith**, 13, boatman, charged on the oaths of John Marshall and another with having stolen, on the 20<sup>th</sup> July last at Alvechurch in this county, a bridle, the property of Henry Barratt, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment, to be once whipped.

William Kilby, 23, butcher, **Edward Hollis**, 20, boatman, and William Jones, 18, labourer, were charged with having stolen, on the 10<sup>th</sup> August last, at Stoke Prior, an iron tram, the property of Richard Brown. Kilby and Hollis were acquitted ; Jones was found guilty, and sentenced to two months' imprisonment, to be once whipped.

**John Grainger**, 16, waterman, was charged with having stolen, on the 16<sup>th</sup> ult at Hartlebury, a brass lock and key and a knife, the property of John Bellamy. Guilty : Four months' imprisonment, to be once whipped.

#### 16 October 21 1841

CITY SESSIONS The Recorder addressed the Grand Jury as follows :-

Gentlemen of the Grand Jury, there is only one case in the calendar of prisoners for trial at these Sessions which calls for any observation from me : that is the case of a waterman named **James Grainger**, charged with committing an assault upon the person of his daughter, with a certain intent, she being between ten and twelve years of age. This, according to the law of England, is a substantive offence, and the consent or dissent of the child is perfectly immaterial to the establishment of the charge. But, in cases of this kind, it is peculiarly important that the evidence of the child should be received with caution. On the one hand, you must not lightly reject evidence from such a quarter ; but on the other, you should receive it with caution ; and where it is capable of corroboratory proof, let such be procured and duly considered. I have been induced to say thus much, because in this case it appears to me, from the depositions, that the statement of the child is not borne out by the evidence of the medical officer. You will, of course, duly consider the evidence both of the child and the surgeon ; and should you not think there is sufficient in it to substantiate the graver charges you can, should you think fit, send the prisoner for trial on a charge of common assault.

James Grainger, 30, was found guilty of carnally assaulting a little girl on the 21<sup>st</sup> September last at the Blockhouse, and was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment.

#### 17 October 28 1841

##### WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS (Continued from our last)

**Thomas Gardner**, 20, waterman, was charged with stealing a watch and chain, the property of Mary Evans at Eckington on the 11<sup>th</sup> instant. The prisoner, having been to a neighbouring fair on the day in question, obtained permission to sleep at the house of Mrs Evans, who is a widow ; he slept in a room adjoining to where the prosecutrix and a young woman were sleeping. The two females got up in the morning an hour before the prisoner, when it is supposed the theft took place ; and the watch was a few days afterwards found in a boat, with other things belonging to the prisoner. Six months' imprisonment, the first and last week solitary.

**John Langford**, 29, boatman, was found not guilty of stealing two £5 notes from the person of John Chambers at Dodderhill on the 7<sup>th</sup> August last. Discharged.

#### 18 October 28 1841

On Sunday morning last, a barge laden with coals and apples, belonging to **Mr William Brown** of

Stourport, and which was lying at the Quay at the bottom of the Butts, was sunk at its moorings. In the course of Monday, two empty vessels were placed at either side of the boat which sunk on Friday se'nnight (and in escaping from which the ill fated **Mary Ann Monklin** lost her life), and in the course of two or three hours strenuous exertion, the men engaged succeeded in raising it. The boatmen who had such a narrow escape of going down with the vessel recovered their wearing apparel &c from the cabin, together with the shoes, shawl and bonnet which had belonged to the unhappy girl. It is supposed that about a ton of coals has been lost from the cargo.

### **19 October 28 1841**

Three worthies named **William Greenway**, **John Lea** and **Charles Willis**, boatmen, all of the "faithful city" are safely lodged in Hereford Gaol, to take their trial at the next Assizes, charged with a burglary in the house of Mr Antonio, the Biddulph Arms near Ledbury, and stealing therefrom a quantity of bacon and other provisions.

### **20 November 4 1841**

**WEAVER CHURCHES** The friends of that long neglected class, the watermen, will be gratified to find that the good work of providing for the religious instruction of the flatmen of the Weaver navigation is, through the Divine blessing, prospering. A clergyman has been appointed to the Incumbency of the Weston Point Church, near Runcorn, by the Bishop of Chester, and we are informed has met with a most cordial reception from those among whom he has been called to labour, evidencing that they take a lively interest in a measure fraught with such blessings to themselves and their posterity. As a proof that they are not so indifferent on the subject as some anticipated, it might be mentioned that the watermen have commenced a subscription for the purchase of a clock for their new church. "The sound of the church going bell", which the poor men employed on the river Weaver formerly never heard as they passed along its rich valley, or only heard to remind them that they were cut off from public worship on the day set aside by the Most High for holy rest, will now fall delightfully on their ear, because it will convey an invitation to enter a temple erected for their accommodation, and where they will be welcomed by their own minister, with whom they will join in prayer and praise, and from whose lips they will hear "the glad tidings of salvation" to which they have been, by our commercial system of Sabbath desecration, so long kept strangers. The locks on this navigation being closed from twelve o'clock on Saturday night till twelve o'clock on Sunday night, time is allowed to the men not only to attend public worship, but to spend the whole day in a manner becoming the servants of the Lord of the Sabbath. Benevolent individuals have on some canals permitted the boatmen to have a cessation from labour during what are termed church hours ; but the men being often exhausted by extra toil during the Saturday night or early on Sunday morning, are generally too fatigued to attend Divine service ; and besides this, a portion of the Sabbath being allowed to be violated, a dangerous principle is established, and we are not surprised that the result has been unsatisfactory. An intelligent boatman once observed, "We are not told in the bible to keep holy part of the Sabbath day, but all of it". If the plan of the Trustees of the river Weaver were universally adopted, both as relates to shutting the locks and providing instruction for the watermen on the Lord's Day, the most beneficial effects would doubtless be produced through the blessing which cometh from above. We earnestly hope that the proprietors of canals, carriers and other influential individuals connected with the commerce of the country will be led to see more and more strongly the solemn responsibility devolving upon them to use every effort to obtain for the boatmen the privileges of the Sabbath, privileges to which they are entitled by the laws of God and man, and from which as British subjects (to take the lowest ground) they cannot be excluded but by injustice.

### **21 November 4 1841**

**CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE** A boatman named **Jarratt** charged two of his fresh water brethren, **John Lloyd** and **John Thomson**, with stealing coal from his boat. Prosecutor stated that on Saturday night last, he safely moored his boat, the *Eliza*, at Baker's Corner (Upper Quay), and

then went to treat himself with some ale ; on coming out of the beerhouse and proceeding towards the Quay, he saw a vessel alongside of the *Eliza*, and hastening on deck found her “all on one side” with a quantity of water in her, occasioned by the displacement of some coal, which had been stolen. He said he could not swear that the two defendants were the men who actually took the coal; but they were the parties who belonged to the vessel he had seen alongside, which belonged to “old Robin Richards of Shropshire” ; and further they had been seen taking the coal by a witness, whose name however he did not know, nor could he now be found! The policeman observed that this statement was very different from that previously given by the prosecutor when he gave the men in charge, on which occasion he asserted that he had himself seen the coal taken by the prisoners. From this and other circumstances, it appeared that a compromise had taken place between the parties, and the Magistrates were compelled to dismiss the case, after remonstrating with the prosecutor.

## **22 December 2 1841**

INQUESTS BY MR HYDE At the Britannia yesterday, on **Louis Stockton**, boatman, who died on Sunday night last. From the evidence of **Charles Dooley**, another boatman, it appeared that on that night they both went on board their boat on the Severn to sleep ; witness was awoke by a noise which the deceased made, who immediately fell upon the floor on his face ; witness procured assistance and also ran for Mr Orwin, surgeon, whose attempts to restore animation were, however, fruitless. Deceased was liable to fits, and Mr Orwin was of opinion that death was occasioned by a rupture of blood vessels on the brain. Verdict : “Died in a fit of apoplexy”.

## **23 December 30 1841**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE **Charles Vaughan, George Davis and George Hunt**, three boatmen, were sentenced severally to two months', six weeks' and one month's imprisonment for brutally assaulting, late on Monday night, **Henry Lowe**, the private watchman employed at Lowesmoor wharf.

## **24 January 6 1842**

WORCESTERSHIRE EPIPHANY SESSIONS

**Edward Evans**, 37, waterman, was charged with stealing, on the 11<sup>th</sup> December last, a lump of coal, the property of Mr Samuel Crane, at the hamlet of Lower Mitton. The prisoner was met several times on the night in question in the vicinity of the prosecutor's coal yard, and subsequently a policeman detected him coming from the same direction with a lump of coal under his arm. Next morning, fresh marks of shoes similar to those worn by the prisoner were found in the yard. Guilty. A previous conviction for felony at the Worcester City Assizes in 1836 was proved against the prisoner, and he was sentenced by the Court to seven years' transportation.

**Thomas Warring**, 16, boatman, was found guilty of stealing from a boat on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal a waistcoat and a shilling's worth of copper money, the property of **Mr Samuel Beetley**, his master, and was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and to be once whipped.

NOT GUILTY AND ACQUITTED **Samuel Dannell**, charged with stealing a gate, the property of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Company.

## **25 January 6 1842**

CITY SESSIONS **John Morris**, 45, boatman, stood indicted for a violent assault upon his son, Francis, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December last, by beating him violently and throwing him into the canal at Sidbury. The defendant was found guilty and fined £1 1s, or one month's imprisonment, and to enter into recognizance to keep the peace for twelve months, himself in £40 and two sureties in £20 each.



## 26 January 6 1842

CONSECRATION OF THE FIRST WEAVER CHURCH The stern opposition which the Weaver Church Bill had to encounter from the enemies of the Church of England excited a deep interest in its behalf on the part of its friends. The success of the measure was a subject of congratulation, not only with reference to the spiritual benefit of a numerous body of British subjects, but because the principle was announced, maintained, and nobly vindicated, that employers are under the obligation of exerting themselves to promote the immortal welfare of their dependants. The consecration of this church, erected by the Trustees of the River Weaver Navigation, was hailed with pleasure by friends of that long neglected class, the watermen.

On Friday morning, Weston Point presented a very animated appearance. Crowds of people, chiefly watermen and the poorer classes, were to be seen on the banks of the Weaver, waiting the arrival of the Lord Bishop and the Trustees, in order that they might be present at the interesting ceremony, and thus manifest their thankfulness to their benefactors. The vessels in the basin hoisted the Union Jack ; and where practicable we presume the crews attended the ceremony. The gentry and clergy of the surrounding neighbourhood had been invited to attend, to assist in the ceremony, and to meet the Bishop at Sutton Bridge in order to convey him to Weston Point. For this purpose, the River Weaver Barge had been tastefully fitted up ; and at eight o'clock in the morning it started from Acton Bridge, and shortly before ten reached Sutton Bridge, where the Lord Bishop and his Secretary, and the Rev the Chancellor of the Diocese, were taken on board, and the barge immediately proceeded to Weston Point, where his Lordship arrived about eleven o'clock.

In addition to the other classes assembled, one hundred watermen were in the church. The ceremony was followed by an excellent sermon by the Bishop of Chester on the 2 Sam ii 30 : “They that honour me I will honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed”.

After introducing his subject in very appropriate terms, his Lordship said, “They were assembled for the purpose of honouring God in such a poor way as their weakness and impotence allowed ; and the occasion which brought them together was one indeed by which he was especially honoured. If a further testimony were offered to his holy name – if another temple were erected to his glory, in which sinners might approach the Father, through the Son of his love, God might be said to be truly honoured ; and as such a temple had now been dedicated, he prayed that it might be the means of increasing the faith, both of those who had erected it, and those who would worship within its walls, that they might inherit the blessing which God had promised to those who honoured him”. His Lordship proceeded to show further – first, how God might be honoured ; and secondly, how he might be despised. He was honoured when the laws of a nation were in accordance with his will. The Bible prescribed no precise form of civil government, but the general tenor of his will might be gathered from it ; and hence the rulers of our land had endeavoured to make their laws in accordance with the word of God. He was honoured when crimes were punished, committed by man against man, which would otherwise break up the very constitution of society ; when the sanctity of the Sabbath was provided for, and when the infringement of that sanctity was rendered criminal. He was honoured when provision was made that his will should be declared to the whole body of the people, and when the rulers of a country were the patrons and promoters of true religion. Hence, in England, every division of the land had its appointed minister in order that, as far as practicable, no place might be left destitute of a knowledge of the revealed will of God. True, the laws of the land did not originate this arrangement, but they had since confirmed it. Again, God was honoured where his providence was avowed, and where he was acknowledged as the dispenser of natural prosperity ; hence the proceedings of their events of judicature and the assemblies of the great legislative bodies of their land were never commenced without a solemn act of worship being first offered. He was honoured too when the necessities of man were provided against by the nation ; and hence it was an acknowledged principle of the law, that where there was destitution there should be an appointed remedy ; and if the intention of these provisions were not always carried into effect, it did not arise from defects in the laws themselves, but from the corruption of those who were the subjects of such laws. As a nation therefore they did set God before them ; their laws rested on what they believed to be his will, and their national

dependence was based upon his providential mercy. "Blessed are the people who are in such a case ; yea, blessed is the people whose God is the Lord". His Lordship then proceeded to show the importance of personal religion, inasmuch as single individuals constitute the nation, and every instance of increase or decay in personal religion adds to or diminishes the stock of national religion. His Lordship then alluded to the means by which God might be despised, viz, if a nation's laws were framed or remodelled without reference to his commandments. God would be despised if the laws which protected the sanctity of the Sabbath were repealed, and people were permitted to follow their usual avocations on that holy day – if all penal laws were abrogated, and bad men were permitted to do evil without fear of punishment – if provision for maintaining the national religion were withheld, and the property of the church were diverted to uses other than those to which it is now appropriated – or if an education were to be given, in the course of which the Word of God was not made the basis of instruction. If these things were ever to be realised, it might well be asked, "What shall the Lord do to such a nation as this?" But he hoped better things of England ; and although history informed them that such a state of things might come to pass, he was sure that were it attempted to be brought about in England, the nation would rise, if not as one man, at least as an armed man, sufficiently powerful in the cause of truth to be able successfully to repel the minority of blasphemers and unbelievers who might oppose them. The above are a few of the heads of the discourse, upon which his Lordship dilated with peculiar eloquence and emphasis. After service had concluded, the National Anthem was sung by the choir. His Lordship was then conveyed from Weston Point to Sutton Bridge by the Weaver Trustees in their barge, and thus concluded the proceedings of this interesting and happy day.

## **27 January 20 1842**

**BOATMEN AND BARGEMEN** At the January meeting (held a few days since) of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Secretary read the notice of motion given by the Rev Frank Hewson at the previous meeting :- "That it being a well known fact that there exists in this country a large body of persons employed on the canals and rivers, who from certain causes are deplorably ignorant of Christian knowledge, and consequently are exceedingly depraved in mind and body, it is expedient that this Society, formed for the purpose of promoting Christian knowledge, do take immediate steps to remedy this evil, and that a Committee be named to make inquiries as to the best method of communicating instruction to this class of men".

The Rev Frank Hewson said, that having been engaged as a clergyman for three years among the boatmen of Worcester and its neighbourhood, he had thus become acquainted with their spiritual condition ; and though no longer officially connected with them, he still felt an interest in their welfare. It was under such circumstances that he ventured, as a young member of the Society, to introduce the motion of which he gave notice at the last meeting, and in doing so he would endeavour to be as brief as possible. The persons for whom he was interested formed a numerous class throughout the country ; and besides boat and bargemen, properly so called, there were a large number of persons of similar station engaged in loading and unloading the boats and barges. These classes of men, whose influence for good or evil among the working classes was extensive, were so notorious for immorality that the term bargemen had come to denote everything degraded. Witnesses before the Houses of Parliament had testified to this. One witness stated that he did not think any other class so bad. A lock-keeper, who had been employed twelve years on one of the canals, stated that their habits are so abandoned that they thereby generally shorten their lives, so that there are scarcely any on the canal who were there when he first came to his situation. Men on their death beds had manifested the grossest ignorance concerning our Lord. They were drunken, profligate, Sabbath breakers, swearers, blasphemers. That evil principle within, which the Apostle describes as "swift to shed blood", influenced this class beyond others. If the reason were asked, "why more than others?" , he would answer in the words of Baron Gurney, who had expressed his regret at not being able to be present at the Board. That Judge asked a witness why a bargeman had used such improper language. The witness answered that it was the common language of boatmen and bargemen. "True", rejoined the Judge, "Those men have no Sabbath". The country was

however beginning to attend to the subject. Lord Francis Egerton had set an admirable example. In his part of the country, three churches were in the course of erection for the accommodation of the watermen. At Oxford, he understood that Mr Wood had provided some temporary place of worship for them. At Worcester, the Rev John Davies had done much for them. That Society had granted books for their use in a liberal manner, but books were of little good till the men acquired a taste for reading them. At present they generally found their way to the pawn shops. Watermen must first be instructed, and the regular clergy could not do this ; watermen were continually on the move, and more especially on the Sabbath. While, then, the Society granted books, he trusted it would not stop there, but do much more. Charity should begin at home, and if grants were made for promoting Christianity among the Druses, why should not similar grants be made for promoting Christian knowledge among the boat and bargemen of our own country – a class of men daily and nightly engaged in bringing home to our doors comforts and luxuries, and shown to be deplorably ignorant of “Christian knowledge” and consequently extremely depraved in mind and body. He did not presume to say how any money granted might be best applied, but it was evident that the Society was called upon to make some inquiries as to the most effectual method of promoting Christian knowledge among watermen.

The Rev Richard I St Aubyn seconded the motion.

The Secretary read a letter which had been received from the Rev John Davies. After noticing the degraded state of the watermen generally, he mentioned that improvement had resulted in those places where the rest of the Lord's day had been granted to the men by their employers. Among other things, he mentioned that at a church rate meeting, a waterman voted in favour of the rate. An infidel, who was present, asked him how he could vote in that manner. The waterman, shaking his pocket, replied that since he had observed the Sabbath and gone to Church, he had left off getting drunk ; in consequence of which he had now plenty of money for such rates. Another boatman, by a similar change of habits, had saved £13, which he had paid to his master to defray certain losses which his previous bad habits had occasioned ; and he had since saved sufficient to enable him to become the owner of a boat. Most of the Bibles in the boats on the river Weaver, the Bridgewater Canal and the Irwell and Mersey navigation bear the Society's name on them. When last at Runcorn, Mr Davies had received £400 from Lady Francis Egerton, towards the erection of an Infant Lord's Day School in the vicinity of the Bridgewater Canal.

After a few remarks from other speakers, Mr Burgess moved the following amendment :- “That this Board do recommend the subject of the spiritual destitution of persons employed on canals and rivers to the special consideration of the Standing Committee, in order that such additional supplies may be granted as the exigencies of the case may seem to the Committee to require ; and that the Committee be requested to report the result of their inquiries and proceedings with reference to this subject to the Board.” He expressed his regret at moving any amendment on a motion with the object of which he so entirely concurred. But there appeared to be objections in appointing a separate Committee ; and therefore he thought the object would be best promoted by referring the consideration of it to the Standing Committee.

Mr Rochfort Clarke seconded the amendment. (Mr Campbell also rose to second it). Mr Clarke said it was originally his intention to support the motion ; but, having observed so perfect a unanimity in the meeting in favour of the object proposed, and being persuaded, from what had fallen from members of the Standing Committee, that it was their intention to carry out the wishes of the meeting, by considering the best mode of promoting the due observance of the Lord's day on rivers and canals, and extending Christian knowledge among the men, he felt that the subject had better be handed over to the Standing Committee.

John Hardy Esq MP said he was quite satisfied, from what had been stated, that there was not a gentleman in the room who did not agree with Mr Hewson in his desire to promote the spiritual good of this class of persons. The mover of the amendment had the object at heart as much as the mover of the original motion. Therefore, as there would be no particular use in a Sub Committee, unless missionaries were to be sent forth, which it appeared was no part of this Society's plan, and as unanimity on such an occasion was very important, he would strongly recommend Mr Hewson to

withdraw his motion and concur in the amendment, as expressing the general feeling of the meeting.

Mr Hewson said he was persuaded the taking up of this subject would add much to the weight and influence of the Society. He understood that the motion was to be considered as virtually affirmed by the amendment. (Hear, hear). He would therefore withdraw his motion, and support the amendment.

The motion was withdrawn, and the amendment substituted and carried.

## **28 February 10 1842**

ANNIVERSARY OF A FRIENDLY SOCIETY AMONG WATERMEN It affords gratification to every philanthropic mind to see any class of British subjects rising in the scale of religion and morals, and consequently becoming more respected and respectable. The efforts which have been made during the last few years to instruct the men employed on our rivers and canals have been accompanied with most encouraging success, so we hope the name of a bargeman or boatman will ere long cease to carry with it opprobrium. These remarks were called forth by reading in the Manchester Courier an account of the anniversary “of the Mersey and Irwell Flatmen's Friendly Society”, held at Runcorn last week. On this interesting occasion more than 400 persons, including watermen, their wives and friends, sat down to a substantial tea, with plenty of good roast beef &c, in a room belonging to the Old Quay Company. The treasurer of the society, Mr Edward Atherton Lingard, the founder of its prosperity, read the annual report, from which it appeared that after every demand on the funds had been honourably discharged, there was a balance in hand of £468 18s 11 1/2d, being an increase during the year of no less than £102 7s 1d. The rules of this excellent institution (whose meetings are held in a school room) embrace all the benefits of a temperance society, a society for checking profane cursing and swearing, and for promoting the observance of the Sabbath, as well as relieving one another in times of sickness, calamity and distress. The assembly was addressed by the treasurer and several clergymen of the vicinity, who inculcated upon their hearers with much force and eloquence the importance of faithfully discharging the duties of their allotted station in accordance with the sound principles and precepts of the Bible, a book which is held in the highest possible veneration by these honest watermen. The evening was marked by kindness and brotherly love, the whole concluding with the national anthem and an appropriate prayer offered by the clergyman for the district for the continuance of the Divine blessing on the Society. A more truly pleasant as well as profitable meeting seems scarcely to have been held. The clergyman recently nominated to the new church at Weston Point on the river Weaver was present, and gave a most encouraging statement of the commencement of his labours among the men employed on that navigation. He remarked “that it had been declared by some persons that the promoters of the Weaver Churches had endeavoured to thrust religion on the watermen, who were careless about the matter ; this he denied – it was evident that no consideration would induce them and their families to give up their religious privileges. It had been said that, if churches were built, watermen would not attend ; this was disproved by the fact that the Church was well filled last Sunday, and he had no doubt it will soon be found too small for its object”. The watermen, he observed, had been long neglected, and he found that out of 65 children only 5 could read the Bible ; but the parents were civil, attentive and teachable, exciting every hope as to their improvement in religious knowledge, marked by correspondent practice. We rejoice to hear of this result, and shall hail the day when every navigation throughout the kingdom shall be closed from twelve o'clock on Saturday night till twelve o'clock on Sunday night, thus affording to every bargeman and boatman the opportunity of attending public worship, and enjoying the other privileges of the day of sacred rest. We are informed that about 180 boatmen, besides 50 women and children, were counted on Sunday week on our river and canal, left without any religious instruction. It is stated that there is a subscription set on foot by a clergyman of this city for the purchase of a vessel to be set apart for public worship, that these poor neglected wanderers might be invited to the fold of the good Shepherd. We can only say that we feel assured that our readers would be most happy to see such a vessel afloat.

### 29 February 24 1842

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE Mr Yewens, the agent of the Animals' Friend Society, brought a charge of cruelty against James Horsely, driver of one of the "busses" plying between this city and Spetchley, for allowing one of his team to run with "a raw shoulder" ; and a charge of cruelty to a donkey against a **Robert Featherston** ; but, in the first case, it having been proved that Mr Yewens had not summoned the individual by the right name ; and in the other, that the defendant was never the possessor of any donkey whatever, the cases were dismissed, and Mr Yewens cautioned to take more care in his prosecutions – especially as Featherston, who is a boatman, complained that his craft had been delayed a full day by the proceeding.

### 30 March 3 1842

#### WORCESTER SPECIAL GENERAL SESSIONS

**Edwin Bradley**, 21, waterman, was charged with stealing from the person of Richard Hall, at Ombersley on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, the sum of fourteen sovereigns. The parties had been drinking together at a beerhouse in that parish ; and when a little worse for liquor, the prisoner challenged Hall to show his money, which he foolishly did by pulling out the above mentioned sum. Shortly afterwards, Hall went to bed ; and Bradley, who was drunk, subsequently went upstairs and slept on the same bed ; and on the following morning Hall missed his money. Not guilty and discharged. (The prosecutor was not allowed his expenses, as the Chairman observed that it was a shame to saddle the rate payers of the county with expenses arising from the drunken misconduct of any prosecutor).

Mansel McDuff, 46, moulder, and Biddy Sherlock, 21, single woman, were charged with stealing a watch and other articles, the property of Richard Brazenhall, at Dudley on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January last. The prosecutor, an exceedingly stupid fellow, had engaged a bed at a lodging house in that town on the night in question, and on retiring to rest he was quite unconscious that any other parties were in the room ; but on the following morning he discovered that he was minus his watch and appendages, which on the night before he had carefully deposited in the pocket of his "unmentionables". Pursuing his investigations, he at length found out that on another bed in the room lay a corpse! Having scratched his head, and ruminated as to the possibility of any identity between the body of the robber and the body which he saw before him, he came to the conclusion that he ought to push his discoveries still further ; and accordingly, in a third bed in the same room, he found the two prisoners ; but the questions he put to them, of course, had no effect in restoring the lost property. A policeman was subsequently sent for, and the watch was found wrapped up in an old carpet in the room, the case was subsequently found in a warming pan downstairs, and the chain was found under the prosecutor's bed. An attempt was made to prove that the robbery must have been effected by the female prisoner without the knowledge of McDuff ; but the Jury returned a verdict of guilty against both of the prisoners, and the Court passed sentence of seven years' transportation. The prosecutor's expenses were not allowed, as it appeared that he had been drunk on the night in question. (A more disgusting connexion of circumstances cannot probably be conceived than those involved in the above case).

### 31 March 3 1842

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE **Charles Wattison alias Dooley** and **James Hardwick** were brought up by Inspector Phillips on suspicion of their being connected with several robberies which have recently occurred in this city, but more especially with the burglarious entering into the shop of Mr Barnsley, whitesmith, situated in Friar Street, which took place on the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> ultimo. The prisoners are boatmen and natives of this city. In consequence of information received by the Inspector, he on Sunday night, in company with Sergeants Sanders and Chipp, proceeded to a boat called the *Victory*, lying in St Clements Quay, in which they found the two prisoners in bed. The Inspector then searched the cabin, and in a hole under a cupboard he found a bag containing a quantity of skeleton keys, wrenches and other such like articles, and over the head of the bed



Sergeant Chipp found a crow bar ; on which Dooley observed to his companion, “We are betrayed ; this is done to transport us”. The prisoners were taken into custody, together with a third person named **John Hargest**, a “buttie” of theirs, but against whom no evidence was advanced today. A principal portion of the articles was clearly identified by Mr Barnsley ; and the crow bar or “jemmy” corresponded exactly with the marks made on a cupboard on his premises on the night of the burglary. Dooley volunteered a statement before the Magistrates that he could not be answerable for the finding of the articles in the cabin, as the vessel was accessible to anybody. The prisoners were remanded till the following day, in order to obtain evidence as to their connection with other robberies, but it was deemed advisable to postpone doing so till the period of their trial, which is to take place at the ensuing Assizes, they having been fully committed on the above charge.

### **32 March 10 1842**

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE LENT ASSIZES**

**Daniel Lamb**, 15, boatman, was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment, to be once whipped, for stealing a pair of trousers, the property of Samuel Martin, at Dudley on the 28<sup>th</sup> ult.

The following city case was then heard, in consequence of the Post Office Solicitor having business of pressing importance to attend to on Tuesday (the day appointed for hearing the city cases).

**James Snell**, 24, boatman, was put at the bar, charged with defrauding one **Ner Twissell** of a post office order for £1 by personating the said Ner Twissell. There were several counts in the indictment, varying the charge against the prisoner ; the first count being that of forging the receipt.

Mr Sergeant Ludlow opened the case for the prosecution, by simply stating the facts as they have already transpired ; he then called the following witnesses, who were examined by Mr Alexander :-  
Frederick Teacle : I live at Chalford in Buckinghamshire ; I am acquainted with Ner Twissell ; on the 15<sup>th</sup> October last I sent him a post office order for £1, which I had procured from the post office at Chalford, to be sent to Ner Twissell through the Worcester post office.

Mary Ann Cother : I am post mistress of Chalford ; the order now produced is the same as that which I gave to the last witness in October last.

Francis Best Loxley : I am an assistant at the Worcester post office ; the letter of advice now produced was received by me on 19<sup>th</sup> October last ; the order now produced was brought to me on that day, but I refused to pay anything on it ; the bearer went away, and brought back another person who called himself Ner Twissell, who presented the order, and asked why I had not paid the man whom he had sent for it ; I said we could not pay anything on the order unless he signed it ; he said he could not write, but would make his mark, which he did, and I wrote his name to it ; I then paid him the money.

Prisoner : Can you swear how much money you paid me?

Witness : No.

Prisoner : How do you know then, that I am the man?

Witness : I believe you to be the person.

Ner Twissell : I am a boatman for Mr Teacle ; I expected some money from him in October last ; the prisoner was subsequently pointed out to me in a public house in Worcester ; he said “he had drawn the money to bring me to a nonplus” ; I got no money from him ; I had given him no authority to receive money for me or to sign my name ; I authorised a man named Mayer to receive it.

Prisoner : Mayer's word is not to be taken.

James Rutter : I am a policeman ; I took the prisoner into custody on the 20<sup>th</sup> October ; I charged him with stealing the sovereign ; he said he had spent a part of it on some girl.

George Mayer : I went with the letter produced to the post office, but could not get the money as my name was not Ner Twissell ; I took back the letter to the boat where I saw the prisoner ; he then slipped the order out of the letter ; the prisoner and myself then went to the post office with the order.

This was the case for the prosecution.

The prisoner was undefended, but he maintained to the Jury that the clerk at the Worcester post office could not be supposed to swear to his person if he could not swear to the exact sum of money he had paid on the order. He then called two men named Hipwood and Clark, who gave him a good character.

The learned Judge then summed up the evidence in a very clear manner ; and the Jury having briefly consulted, a verdict of guilty was returned, and the prisoner was sentenced to the mitigated punishment of two years' imprisonment ; but his Lordship at the same time intimated that in consequence of the strong temptation under which the prisoner had committed the offence, as well as other circumstances to be considered, an application would be made to the proper authorities to reduce that term, in case it should be found that the prisoner had previously possessed a good character.

THE CITY PRISONERS were next arraigned, and the Petty Jury sworn. The first prisoner placed at the bar was :-

**Joseph Jenkins**, 27, boatman, charged with attempting an abominable crime against the order of nature on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of January last at the Blockhouse. Guilty : two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

### **33 April 7 1842**

#### WORCESTERSHIRE EASTER SESSIONS

**SOUTHAN AND SON v THE BIRMINGHAM AND GLOUCESTER CANAL COMPANY** this was an appeal against a recent conviction by the magistrates of this county, whereby the present appellants, who are carriers, had been fined in the penalty of £9 for alleged frauds in making incorrect declarations of the weight and quality of merchandise contained in one of their boats trading on the said canal in May last.

Mr Beadon (with whom was Mr Wood) appeared for the appellants, and took various objections to their conviction – that no sufficient description of the boat had been specified ; that the information should have been drawn against the person navigating the boat, as no demand of the account of goods had been made by the toll collector of the persons against whom the conviction was drawn ; that a joint award of a fine on a partnership concern was illegal, because although one of the parties might have paid his proportion, he was still liable to be imprisoned till the other had paid (see Paley) ; and lastly that the fine of £9 was not shown to be proportionate and fair, as the Act laid down that the penalty should be at the rate of 10s per ton, whereas the amount of tonnage of the boat in question did not appear on the face of the conviction.

Mr Wood also showed that the adjudication exceeded the offence, inasmuch as the amount of penalty originally claimed in the information was but £6 10s ; he also contended that the conviction was informal, for that it was not couched in the terms specified by the same Act under which the penalty was laid ; and lastly, that there was no power to appropriate the fine.

Mr Lee (with whom was Mr Huddleston) replied briefly to the objections. In his opinion the boat had been properly specified as belonging to Messrs Southan and Son, and as passing through a certain lock ; that the owners were the proper parties to be convicted, as the navigator of the boat was but their agent ; that the owners were identical as one individual in the ownership of the vessel, as regarded the cognizance of the law ; and Mr Wood's other objections were disposed of by direct, and proved negative.

Mr Huddleston followed ; and Mr Beadon rejoined.

The Court quashed the conviction.

**John Palmer**, 27, boatman, was charged with stealing a scaffold pole, the property of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Company, at Alvechurch in March last. Mr Lee took an objection to the terms of the indictment, and urged that no body or corporation, existing under an Act of Parliament, had the power of instituting criminal proceedings in its corporate name, but only by specifying the names of the individuals forming it, or the name of any one of its public officers if so empowered

by the Act. The objection having been somewhat overruled, the case was proceeded with, but failed in being conclusive or satisfactory ; and Mr Lee, after an eloquent address on behalf of the character of his client, proceeded to call witnesses to character, but was stopped by the Chairman ; and the Jury, under his direction, acquitted the prisoner ; on which the Chairman intimated that it was a case which should not have been brought into court.

### **34 April 14 1842**

CASE OF THE BARGEMEN AND BOATMEN We understand that there will be a lecture given tomorrow evening (Friday) at the large room of the Natural History Society, by the Rector of St Clements, on the duty and necessity of providing religious instruction for this class of men employed on the river Severn and the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. The lecture to commence at seven o'clock precisely. Subscriptions and donations are received at the Banks &c, but no collection after the lecture.

### **35 April 21 1842**

CASE OF THE BARGEMEN AND BOATMEN A lecture was delivered on Friday evening last at the lecture room of the Natural History Society in this city by the Rev John Davis, Rector of St Clement's, on the duty of promoting the religious instruction of this class of our countrymen. The meeting was numerous and respectably attended, and much interest was excited in the subject. We were pleased to notice at the lower end of the room some boatmen's jackets and smock frocks. The Reverend Gentleman corroborated the statements he had on former occasions brought forward, by extracts from the Constabulary Police Report, and from the report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sunday Traffic Bill, from which it was evident that the men employed on our inland navigation are very demoralised ; that the source of the evil is Sabbath desecration ; and that where any portion of them have been favoured with cessation from Sunday labour, and proper instruction provided, they have become much improved in character. Sir George Chetwynd, late Chairman of the Quarter Sessions for the county of Stafford, stated in his evidence that Ellis, one of the convicts left for execution at Stafford some time ago for the murder of a woman under most atrocious circumstances, but whose sentence was commuted, made "such disclosures as beggar description on the abominations that are committed on canals and the habits of boatmen, their pilfering and their horrid depravity". He further remarked that Ellis considered that the abolition of Sunday traffic and receiving houses would be one means of improving the conditions of this class ; that as to Ellis himself, "he had never been in any place of worship whatever until he was committed on a capital charge of murder ; that he is quite uneducated, not having the least idea of a God or a Saviour, or a future state ; in short, having no idea of religion whatever till he came to Stafford gaol". Sir George also stated that he believed that there were "a great number of boatmen in a similar situation"; but although as a body they are so "extremely illiterate, uninstructed and depraved, more so than any other class he was acquainted with", yet he had reason to believe, from having conversed with some of them, and from what he had heard from others, that they were susceptible of kindness ; and if clergymen were set apart for their instruction, and suitable places for public worship provided for them where they might assemble in their working dress if on their voyage, they would attend and gradually become elevated in the scale of religion and morals. It was on the trial of Ellis and his companions in guilt, who were afterwards executed, that Baron Gurney remarked, "There are no men in this country so destitute of all moral culture as boatmen – they know no Sabbath, and are possessed of no means of religious instruction". The Rev lecturer confirmed the testimony of Sir George Chetwynd by various facts of indisputable authority. It was proved that there are many reformed watermen who have become most exemplary in their conduct in consequence of obtaining the rest of the Sabbath. Mr Lea's and Mr Harrison's testimony before the committee showed that the boatmen on the Droitwich canal have decidedly improved since Sunday traffic has been prohibited on that navigation. The term of rest is 24 hours – from midnight on Saturday to midnight on Sunday. Messrs Whitehouse and Son, canal carriers, have for five years given their men the privileges of the Sabbath ; no loss has been sustained to the trade – no robberies



committed by the men, who are quiet and orderly. Messrs Ward and Son, who do not allow their boats to move on a Sunday, and who have provided a floating chapel on the Oxford Canal, make a similar statement with reference to their boatmen. Mr Lingard, agent to the Old Quay Company at Runcorn, read to the committee several letters from clergymen on the line of the Mersey and Irwell navigation, pointing out the beneficial effects produced, under the Divine blessing, from the religious advantages afforded to the watermen by the canal proprietors. The Rev F Wade of Kidsgrove, Staffordshire, gave similar testimony with reference to the manifest improvement of the boatmen in his vicinity, who thankfully availed themselves of the religious privileges they have lately enjoyed by a place of worship being set apart for them, and a clergyman devoted especially for the discharge of the duty. The Rev lecturer called attention likewise to a remark made by Lord Francis Egerton to the committee, that "too much must not be expected at first from a population which has been so totally destitute of all care and guidance in religious and moral matters", and read a letter from his Lordship's agent at Pastow Brook, proving the good which has resulted from the establishment of a floating chapel which his Lordship, with his accustomed liberality, had kindly provided at that spot. After an earnest appeal by the Rev lecturer, a resolution was unanimously adopted by the meeting expressive of their hope that the grant of the Sabbath would be universally made to this class throughout the kingdom ; and that especially as relates to the bargemen and boatmen employed on the river Severn and the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, some plan would be speedily adopted, under the sanction of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, to promote the spiritual welfare of this neglected body of men. We understand from good authority that a bill with reference to Sunday traffic on rivers, canals and railroads will be brought in by Sir James Graham this Session of Parliament. The Bishops of Chester, Winchester, Lichfield &c, as well as our own worthy Diocesan, countenance plans for diffusing religious knowledge among these poor benighted men. We would notice that recently, out of thirteen male convicts in our city prison, six were boatmen!

### **36      May 26 1842**

A lecture was given on Wednesday last at the Town Hall, Stourport, by the Rev John Davis, Rector of St Clement's, on the state of religion and morals among boatmen and bargemen, and the duty of promoting their religious instruction. The hall was completely filled by a most attentive auditory, and the claims of this neglected class were forcibly advocated. It was made evident that although watermen as a class are proverbially immoral, yet when placed under circumstances favourable to their religious improvement, they have been found gradually to become much altered for the better. Facts were brought forward from the report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sunday Traffic Bill, proving that such has been the case in various parts of the kingdom, where the Sabbath has been granted, and instruction provided for this class. It was urged strongly that manufacturers, factors, tradesmen and others greatly contribute to the profanation of the Sabbath by giving orders which cannot be executed in the time prescribed without profaning the day appropriated to be kept holy. A reformation on this point would produce a happy change, important to masters and workmen, as well as beneficial to society at large.

### **37      June 2 1842**

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE

HOUSE OF LORDS, THURSDAY MAY 26

SUNDAY TRADING ON CANALS Lord Hatherton presented petitions against Sunday travelling by canal. The boatmen working on the canals in England had no rest on the Sabbath from one end of the year to the other, and they felt the hardship severely ; they were in consequence in a state of great ignorance. But the boatmen were not the only aggrieved parties – there were many lock-keepers and others who equally felt the hardship. He did not approve of prohibitory enactments generally ; in this case, however, he was decidedly in favour of it. Lord F Egerton, on the canals on his property, had entirely abolished Sunday trading ; and he declared, in his report to the committee, that the prohibition had been attended with the most beneficial results. He wished to know if

Ministers intended to introduce a measure on the subject.

Lord Wharncliffe said it was not the intention of Ministers this session to legislate on the subject ; it however would not be lost sight of by the Government.

Lord Hatherton expressed his satisfaction at the latter portion of the Noble Lord's observations.

### **38 June 2 1842**

#### CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

**John Brace**, waterman, was brought up in custody of the police, on the following charge :- Policeman Mitchell said that, from information he received, he went last night, soon after nine o'clock, to the premises of Messrs Collison and Co, porter brewers, in Quay Street, and on searching their premises found the prisoner hammering away at some posts and chains (some fixtures on their premises), and on asking him what he was doing, said he was waiting for someone. He took the prisoner into custody, and another policeman who accompanied him searched the premises, and found a hammer and two chisels beside the posts and chains, and some lead piping, which had been removed evidently for the purpose of being carried away. The prisoner, who was drunk at the time, afterwards admitted that he went there "for some firewood and the paltry chain". He received a good character. Mr Sidebottom, not thinking the greater charge proved to warrant his committal to take his trial, sentenced him to a month's hard labour as a rogue and vagabond.

### **39 June 9 1842**

#### CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

THURSDAY A boatman named **William Griffiths** was fined £1 14s 6d, including costs, for a cowardly assault upon a girl named Jane Roberts. In default of payment, he was sent to gaol for fourteen days.

### **40 June 9 1842**

A bargeman named **Thomas Griffith**, a native of Tarvin, Cheshire, was run over a few days since close to the Parkside station, by the London up mail train from the north. The unfortunate fellow, who was quite cold and stiff when the engine was stopped, had been run over by two trains previously to being almost severed in two by the mail train, and had evidently by the marks on the sand been dragged a considerable distance. His shoes and hat were found scattered in different places. He had been intoxicated the previous night.

### **41 June 30 1842**

#### WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

**Cornelius Everall**, 23, boatman, Harriet Grant, 21, and Mary Ann Rice, 24, single women, were charged with having jointly robbed Thomas Whittaker of a pocket book containing three sovereigns and three shillings on the 9<sup>th</sup> May last. The prosecutor stated that between eight and nine o'clock on the evening of the above mentioned day, as he was going through the public entry leading to the Bell Inn, Kidderminster, he was stopped by the prisoner Rice, who took hold of him by the coat, immediately after which he missed his pocket book. A witness named Thomas Taylor deposed that he saw the whole transaction ; the prisoner Grant first came up to the prosecutor, took his pocket book from his coat and ran away, being accompanied by the male prisoner. Rice then stood before Whittaker, seizing him by the coat and impeding his egress from the passage. It was Kidderminster fair day, and the passage was much crowded with people passing at the time. Mr Whitmore prosecuted, and Mr Lee and Mr Readon defended the female prisoners. Everall was undefended. The Jury found Everall not guilty ; the female prisoners guilty, each four months' imprisonment.

James Cook, 14, labourer, **Samuel Marchant**, 16, boatman, and Benjamin Shepherd, 30, labourer, were charged with stealing a quantity of hay, the property of Job Bailey, at Kidderminster ; but were found not guilty and discharged.

**William Wilkes**, 37, boatman, was charged with having stolen a sovereign and other moneys, the property of John Rogers, at Kingsnorton. Six months' imprisonment.

**42 June 30 1842**

At the City Police Office on Monday, **John Kinsey**, a boatman, was fined 5s with 10s costs for an assault upon **John Whittle**, one of the same vocation, at the Lowesmoor Wharf on Friday night ; in default of payment, he was sent to prison for seven days.

**43 July 7 1842**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

THURSDAY **Thomas Chillingworth** and **Thomas Mable**, watermen, were brought up by Sergeant Hales, who charged them with creating a disturbance on the Lower Quay on the previous night. Chillingworth was committed for fourteen days in default of finding sureties for good behaviour, and Mable was discharged with a reprimand.

FRIDAY Henry Lowe, watchman of Lowesmoor Wharf, was charged by **George Hunt**, a boatman, with assaulting and striking him last night on the wharf. The defence was that the complainant had no business on the premises ; and Hunt being proved to be a bad character, he being one of the party who sometime since made an assault at night upon this same watchman, the case was dismissed.

**44 July 7 1842**

WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS (Concluded from our last)

**Noah Dayus**, 30, boatman, and Thomas Perkes, 21, butcher, were charged with stealing an eel putcheon from a boat on the river Avon at the parish of Great Comberton. Henry Mann, fisherman, (the prosecutor) proved that on the 26<sup>th</sup> May last, the prisoner Dayus was "hauling" a boat on the river, when Dayus entered his (prosecutor's) boat, took a putcheon thereout, and threw it into the boat he was drawing. Perkes, who was steering, immediately concealed it under the fore deck of the vessel ; they did not observe that the prosecutor was noticing their movements. Policeman Allnut, stationed at Pershore, being informed of the above circumstances, awaited the arrival of the vessel at Pershore, and found the putcheon (produced and identified by the prosecutor) in Dayus and Perkes's boat. Guilty : each one month's imprisonment.

**Richard Wear**, 23, boatman, was found guilty of stealing two deal boards, the property of Messrs Southan, Evans and Co, at Kempsey. Six months' imprisonment.

**45 July 14 1842**

On Friday last, before J Thomas Esq at the County Police Office, Palace Yard, a boatman named **Henry Herbert** was committed to take his trial at the Assizes on the charge of stealing a hawling line and a cable rope from a boat lying at Diglis on the previous day ; **J Spragg** of Pershore, captain. The prisoner, on whom well founded suspicions had fallen, was captured by Sergeant Chipp on board another boat, with the articles stowed away in the bottom ; and on his being discovered, he denied having stolen them, but acknowledged that he had taken them for his own use.

**46 July 21 1842**

WORCESTERSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

**William Bevan**, 25, boatman, and **Henry Trivis**, 21, boatman, were charged with stealing a teapot, jugs, meat, bread and other articles, the property of **Daniel Darley**, at Dudley on the 29<sup>th</sup> June. The charge resolved itself into two indictments. The articles had been left locked up in a boat lying at Dudley Wood Wharf ; and the prosecutor and **John Slater**, his boatman, spent the night carousing at a beerhouse with the prisoners, who belonged to boats lying near to that of the prosecutor. They left

the beerhouse before the prosecutor and his man, and Trivis was subsequently seen by Darley to come out from the boat in which he had deposited the articles, which articles were afterwards found hid in the prisoners' boat ; whereupon they offered to settle it, and to pay the constable for his trouble.

Mr Allen, for the defence, endeavoured to turn the transaction into a practical joke, and also called witnesses who gave the prisoners a good character.

His Lordship having summed up favourably to them, the Jury found a verdict of Not Guilty.

The second indictment was not pressed.

**Thomas Rhodes**, 27, boatman, was charged with assaulting Abraham Gutteridge at Dudley on the 12<sup>th</sup> April, and stealing money and several articles from his person. The prosecutor was returning home from Dudley to his house in Tipton about midnight on the night in question, when he overtook the prisoner and two others, whom he saw full well by the light of the furnaces ; the prisoner, after a little conversation, seized the prosecutor and, with the assistance of the other men, rifled his pockets of 6s 6d, two knives and a book ; Rhodes also struck him on the head with a stone, which he held in his hand ; the men then made off, and prosecutor on the following morning gave information to the police, who, with the constable Jukes, went to the Tunnel Mouth near Dudley, and in a hovel where a number of fellows had assembled, the prisoner was picked out, being the only one identified by the prosecutor. Several witnesses were called, who gave the prisoner a truly excellent character for honesty. The Jury consulted a long time and then, to the astonishment of the Court, returned a verdict "that as none of the property was found on the prisoner, the offence was not proved". Discharged.

#### **47 July 21 1842**

**Henry Herbert**, 22, boatman, charged with stealing a rope and a hauling line from a boat called *Mary Ann*, moored in Diglis basin, the property of William Laughton of Pershore. Guilty : Six months' imprisonment with hard labour.

#### **48 July 21 1842**

INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES On Saturday at the Swan Inn, Stourport, on the body of Thomas Serles, aged about four years, who was drowned in the canal on the previous Thursday. **James Bough**, waterman's boy, deposed that he was angling in the basin of the canal on the day in question, about seven o'clock in the evening, when he saw deceased in company with another child, attempting to push off a pleasure boat moored in the basin near to Mr Rowley's yard ; and in their endeavours to do so, deceased slipped in. Bough immediately called for assistance, and the child was got out in about a quarter of an hour ; but every exertion used to restore animation was useless. It appears that the children belonging in the neighbourhood have been accustomed to play near the edge of the basin ; and Bough stated that he had rescued no less than four children in the course of five or six weeks. Verdict : "Accidental death".

#### **49 July 28 1842**

At Upton-on-Severn Petty Sessions, **John Lee** of Coombe Hill, boatman, was fined in the sum of forty shillings and costs for using a horse on the Gloucester and Worcester horse drawing path, without paying toll for the same. **Charles Thorn** of Tewkesbury, boat owner, was fined in the sum of twenty shillings and costs for hauling beyond the distance for which the ticket was granted.

#### **50 August 4 1842**

BARGEMEN AND BOATMEN The friends of this long neglected class will learn with satisfaction that arrangements are being made for opening an Episcopal Floating Chapel near this city, for the instruction of the men employed on the river Severn and the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. The venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has made a grant of £50 in aid of this benevolent design ; and our worthy Diocesan, the Bishop of Worcester, with his accustomed

liberality, has subscribed £25. Several handsome donations have been added, and a few annual subscriptions. We trust that commercial men and other respectable individuals on the line of these navigations will patronise an undertaking fraught with so many benefits to a body of men proverbial for their demoralised character, yet very useful in their station, and capable of improvement if placed under more favourable circumstances, as has been proved in various parts of the kingdom. Sunday traffic has had a most injurious effect upon this class. One of the boatmen executed at Stafford for the Rugeley murder stated to a clergyman who visited him in prison that during the fourteen years he had been employed on the canal, he had never once attended public worship. He was consequently in a most awful state of ignorance. Some years ago, a boatman suffered for the same fearful crime of murder at Chester. That wretched man solemnly declared he had never heard there was a place of reward or punishment in a future world, and had never uttered a prayer during his whole life, till he was committed to prison. Nothing could exceed the attention he paid to the chaplain's instructions. These things "ought not to be" in a country professing Christianity. It would be well if factors, tradesmen &c, when ordering goods to be sent by canal, would avoid infringing on the sacred rest of the Sabbath, a practice productive of the greatest evils. We hail, as philanthropists, the efforts being made to raise a degraded class of our countrymen in the scale of religion and morals. In addition to the three churches erected on the Weaver navigation in Cheshire, three places of public worship have been recently set apart for boatmen in Staffordshire – in other parts of the kingdom a friendly interest has been excited on behalf of this class, which we trust will soon become universally privileged with the grant of the Sabbath, to which as British subjects they are justly entitled.

**51 August 4 1842**

**INQUEST BY MR DOCKER** On Saturday at the Star and Garter, Bewdley, on a boatman named **Smith**. Deceased, on Thursday morning, was employed with two other men in wheeling coal from the premises of Mr Cox, in that town, when just as he got through the Welsh Gate, he fell down and expired. Verdict : "Died by the visitation of God". The deceased (who was 53 years of age) has left a wife and three children.

**52 August 4 1842**

**CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE** **James Perry** and **Abner Smith** were this day brought up on a charge of committing a violent and serious assault on William Hyslop, one of the city police, about twelve o'clock last night in the Blockhouse. It appeared from the evidence that the prisoners, while drinking with a number of other low fellows at the Union Inn, became quarrelsome, and that the landlord's sister, Mrs Hall, who had been left by him in charge of the house, found it necessary to send for police assistance to eject the party. Hyslop arrived, and put them all out ; but on going out himself shortly afterwards, at the door he met Perry, who declared he would not leave the house until the "parlour company" left ; and on Hyslop's attempting again to push him out, assisted by a man named Hughes, dragged Hyslop out of the house, and in the conflict the whole party came to the ground ; before Hyslop could rise he was struck and beaten most brutally on the head and face by the prisoner Smith, till he became senseless, when the vagabonds started off. Hyslop, on recovering, found himself too weak to spring his rattle ; and his whole appearance today betokened shocking treatment. The case was fully proved, and no defence being set up except drunkenness, the prisoners were fully committed to take their trial at the Sessions. They are apparently belonging to that neglected class of men, the boatmen ; they are both married, and have families ; Smith is from Dudley and Perry from Netherton. The man, Charles Hughes, who was described as having assisted at the commencement of the assault, was subsequently brought up on that charge ; he maintained his innocence of a bad intention, and having generally borne a good character for a brewer, he was fined in the mitigated penalty of 5s, with a like amount for costs.

**53 August 4 1842**

**DARING ROBBERIES WITH VIOLENCE NEAR THIS CITY** On Wednesday night about



twelve o'clock, as George Harper, one of the sergeants-at-mace of this city, was returning to his home in Wheeley's Gardens by way of the race course, he was met near the entrance gate by three men dressed as watermen, one of whom asked him for drink. Thinking that their intention was to plunder him, Harper endeavoured to divert it by saying, "I have got no drink, but if you like to go with me to the Hope and Anchor, I'll give you a jug of ale". One of the fellows then demanded money ; and upon his endeavouring to pass through the gate, another of the party placed himself in the way. After an ineffectual attempt to get over the gate, Harper ran across the Ham, and was pursued by the three fellows, one of whom caught him when about the centre and knocked his hat off ; and upon his stooping to regain possession of it, he was thrown upon the ground. They then placed their hands over his mouth and rifled his pockets of their contents, which consisted of two snuff boxes and about two shillings in silver and copper ; all of them then ran away. While upon the ground, he recognised two of his assailants as being **James Ferguson** and **William Onions**, two notorious fellows whose ostensible occupation is that of boatmen, but have long been under the eye of the police, and indeed have several times appeared before the Magistrates on minor charges. Information having been given to the police, these two fellows were next morning apprehended ; and from something which had come to the knowledge of Inspector Phillips, a man of equal notoriety named Henry Jones was also taken into custody on suspicion of having been implicated in the robbery. All the prisoners were on Thursday taken before John Thomas and Francis Hooper Esqrs at the Guildhall, and the above facts deposed to. Onions, in his defence, denied all knowledge of the robbery until within a few minutes of his apprehension, when he had asked Jones what Ferguson and Crawford (who had been apprehended on another charge) were taken up for, when Jones said, "We have been having a spree at Pitchcroft, and we have muzzled old Fanny Harper". The other prisoners made no defence, and they were severally remanded for further examination on the following day, when, in order to render the implication more complete and satisfactory, the case was adjourned until Wednesday. About half an hour after the above robbery upon Harper, a similar outrage, but accompanied by violence and an attempt to commit a crime of a much more serious character than the first, was perpetrated within two hundred yards of the same spot, and undoubtedly by some of the same party, upon a man and a woman who were walking along the public footpath leading through the first field adjoining the Moors, and at the back of Stephenson Terrace, towards the old waterworks at Barbourne. The parties assailed were Mary Edwards, a woman of loose character residing in Silver Street, and a labouring man named Abraham Doughty, with whom she had walked from Droitwich that same evening. We give the woman's examination as it was taken on Thursday before the Magistrates :- "Between twelve and one this morning I was walking with Abraham Doughty along the meadows beyond the York House, in the Moors. I saw the prisoners (Ferguson and Onions) and another man come from a hovel in the field. When they came up to us, Ferguson blackguarded us and struck Doughty with a piece of wood on his head, which knocked him down. Ferguson then laid hold of me by my two arms, and forced me down on the grass. I got from him two or three times, but was as often thrown down again. I cried for help, and Doughty came to my assistance. While I was struggling with the two prisoners, one of them took the shawl from my neck. At length we got away and the prisoners and the other man returned to the hovel. I soon after informed the policeman Mitchell. The shawl now produced is my property. The prisoners are strangers to me, but I am certain they are the men". Doughty corroborated the woman's testimony, and deposed to the blows which Ferguson had given him, and which he thought had been inflicted with a portion of a wooden paling. The men were apprehended by policeman Mitchell at a lodging house in Dolday on the following morning, and the woman's shawl was found by Mitchell in the hovel alluded to in Edwards's evidence. After a full examination of the prisoners upon each charge, Onions and Ferguson were fully committed on the charge of assaulting and robbing Edwards, and for the assault upon Doughty.

#### **54 August 25 1842**

##### UPTON PETTY SESSIONS

ASSAULT John Henry Rabey, No 30 of the Rural Police Constabulary, appeared against **George**

**Clay**, a waterman, whom he charged with an assault committed on the 5<sup>th</sup> instant at Upton. It seems that the policeman, having got scent of a "bruising match" on the day in question, doffed his uniform, mingled with the mob, and interfered for the purpose of putting a stop to the fight, whereupon he received the punishment of which he now complained. Clay was fined 2s 6d with 6s expenses ; and the policeman was reprimanded severely for attempting service in plain clothes ; the Magistrates observing that it was much better to prevent crime by the appearance of a recognised policeman than to allow of its commission for the sole purpose of detection.

SEVERN TOWING PATH COMPANY **Jacob Seymour**, boat owner of Gloucester, was informed against by Mr Bundy, agent to the Company, for towing a boat on the river without taking a ticket ; a similar complaint was preferred by Mr Crumpton against a boatman named **Smith**. They were each fined £2 and expenses. **Smith** not appearing, a distress warrant was ordered to issue.

### **55 September 29 1842**

A meeting of the Staffordshire Boatmen's Pastoral Instruction Society was lately held in the Boardroom of the Infirmary at Stafford, Viscount Sandon MP in the chair, when a grant of £150 was made towards the erection of a Boatmen's Chapel at Etruria ; and it was announced that the Rev E J Edwards of Trentham had declared his intention of contributing £25 towards the same object.

At the City Magistrates' Office, Elizabeth Gallimore, Elizabeth Loveridge, Jesse Folkes and Charlotte Lewis, inhabitants of the "Barracks" have been committed to gaol, the former three for one month and the latter for fourteen days, as idle and disorderly persons ; after a charge had been heard against them of defrauding one **Richard Jones**, a boatman, of a sovereign which he had tendered for drink in Iles's beerhouse.

### **56 October 13 1842**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE **Thomas Blake**, a boatman in the employ of Mr Hood, was charged by a policeman with having most cruelly beaten his wife, on Saturday night in the Blockhouse near the city gaol. The policeman deposed that he saw the poor woman just after the assault, and that she was bleeding and fainting ; her eye was closed, and there was a cut on the head. The prisoner is an old offender in this line, having some time since threatened to stab his wife ; and the magistrates therefore deemed it necessary to remand the case till yesterday (Tuesday), when his wife appeared and gave evidence of his brutal treatment to her, and begged the magistrates not to punish him for the sake of his family, she having four small children and no one to depend upon for support but her husband ; the magistrates, after reprimanding the brute severely, bound him over in his own recognisance to keep the peace for six months. After paying the expenses, he was discharged.

### **57 October 20 1842**

#### CITY SESSIONS

**John Howell**, 18, boatman, pleaded guilty to a charge of stealing, on the 15<sup>th</sup> September last, two loaves of bread from the Worcester Union Workhouse. One week solitary.

**James Perry**, 37, and **Abner Smith**, 34, boatmen, were charged with assaulting policeman Hyslop while in the discharge of his duty. Mr Huddleston appeared for the prisoners. Acquitted.

### **58 October 27 1842**

WORCESTER EPISCOPAL FLOATING CHAPEL This place of worship, set apart for the accommodation of the men employed on the river Severn and the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, was opened under the license of the Lord Bishop of Worcester on Sunday week by the Rev John Davies, Rector of St Clement's, the honorary chaplain, who preached from St Matthew xi 28, 29, 30v. The attendance of the watermen with their wives and children was numerous beyond all expectation. It was a most gratifying sight to witness so orderly and attentive a congregation in a

chapel provided for a body of men hitherto placed under such disadvantageous circumstances as to moral and religious improvement. Fathers and mothers of large families were present, who seldom or ever enter a place of worship. One honest boatman brought his little son in his arms ; another, a young man, was observed to be particularly attentive, and to join in the responses. Upon inquiry, it was found he had been brought up in a Sunday school in Gloucestershire ; and being informed that men of his class might, when on their voyage, meet in their working dress for public worship, he gladly availed himself of the privilege thus afforded him. There is reason to believe that such instances will continue to occur, and that many of this class will be induced permanently to exchange attendance at the beerhouse for attendance at the house of prayer. The great hindrance to the improvement of this body of men is Sunday traffic. It has been found that reformed boatmen, who had obtained cessation from Sunday labour and for a time conducted themselves well, when they have through change of masters or other circumstances returned to Sunday labour, have returned also to their vicious courses. But it is hoped that a beneficial change as to Sunday traffic will ere long take place through the exertions of benevolent individuals in the commercial world, anxious to promote the welfare of a degraded class of their countrymen. On some navigations an amelioration has been introduced in this respect, preparatory to further improvements. On the Bridgewater Canal, the Mersey and Irwell, the Trent and Mersey, the Oxford, the river Weaver and a few others, pains have been successfully taken for the religious instruction of the watermen. A communication recently made to a clergyman in this city by a gentleman holding a responsible situation in one of the above named navigations is gratifying and encouraging ; he states that the conduct of the boatmen during the riots which occurred in the vicinity was in the highest degree exemplary ; that there was not one of them who took any part in the riots or the strike, but on the contrary one and all expressed a firm determination to resist every attempt to induce or compel them to join in the agitation. This conduct speaks volumes as to the benefit derived from instruction and kind treatment. We cannot but rejoice in hearing of the improvement of a class of men so long proverbial for immorality of character, and we cordially wish success to the Worcester Episcopal Floating Chapel, and all similar undertakings of Christian benevolence.

## **59      October 27 1842**

### **WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS**

**James Stone**, 18, boatman, was charged with having stolen, on the 25<sup>th</sup> August last, a piece of wood, the property of S Hancocks Esq of Wolverley, near Kidderminster. It seems that a considerable quantity of wood had at different times been missing from Mr Hancocks's grounds ; and on the day noted above, a boatman named **Wyer** saw the prisoner take the timber laid in the indictment from a spot near to "the Swivel Bridge". He subsequently sold it to a hostler at the Three Tuns, Kidderminster, for 2 1/2d. In answer to a question put by the prisoner, the witness Wyer admitted that nine months ago he was convicted in that Court of stealing some watch seals, but he declared that the prisoner was the ringleader in that affair. On his examination before the Magistrates at the period of his committal, the prisoner declared that Wyer assisted him to carry away the wood. The prisoner was convicted of felony in this Court in February 1840. Seven years' transportation.

**Charles Hemms**, 21, boatman, was charged with stealing a pair of shoes at the parish of St Peter, from a boat moored in Diglis Basin, the property of **William Pardoe**, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October. The prisoner, when accused by Pardoe of having stolen the shoes, denied the fact, and witness and prisoner's master proceeded to search the boat in which the prisoner was employed, and the shoes were found under a cross-bed. When again accused of having stolen them, he denied it as before, and said "that he had not placed them there". Policeman Sanders was sent for, and took the prisoner into custody. When proceeding to the station house, prisoner said to Pardoe, "I have never robbed you before, and hope you will forgive me". Prisoner denied before the Court any knowledge of the matter, and was sentenced to three months' hard labour.



**Benjamin Ingram**, 20, boatman, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and to be twice whipped, for stealing a chain from the person of Joseph Millward at the hamlet of Tutnall and Cobley in September last.

**60 November 10 1842**

COUNTY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE **William Price**, boatman, was charged with wilfully and unlawfully damaging the property of Mr Thomas Bedford, boat owner, by cutting a rope attached to his boat on Saturday last on the river Severn in the parish of Hallow. It appeared that the complainant had two vessels abreast on the river, which were connected by the rope in question ; the defendant, being unable to pass his boat between, in consequence of this rope, requested that it should be eased, which was refused, whereupon he *sans ceremonie* cut it. The case involved some debate as to the laws of the river as affecting the transit of vessels abreast, the right of any party to obstruct the navigation by drawing a rope across, and the right of others to cut it. Price was eventually ordered to pay £1 for damage done to the rope, and 9s 6d expenses ; but being unable to pay the whole, and being so unfortunate as to own no "goods and chattels", he was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment.

**61 November 10 1842**

EPISCOPAL FLOATING CHAPEL On Sunday evening last, no small excitement was caused in the vicinity of the bridge, by the circumstance of this vessel having broke from her moorings and drifted down the river ; she passed through the central arch of the bridge, and was brought to a place of safety without sustaining any material injury. It was very gratifying to see the interest taken by the watermen in the rescue of their chapel. A young boatman, who had attended Divine worship in the afternoon, was the first who spied the disaster ; he hastened to inform his father, who instantly seized a boat and, joined by other watermen, soon succeeded in taking possession of the prize. Some who could not get admission into the boat waded through the river to attain their object. The right feeling manifested by the labouring classes in general on this occasion did them much credit. Thanks are due to several respectable owners in the neighbourhood, who encouraged their men to use every exertion for the safety of the vessel. It is supposed that some evil disposed landsman was the author of this act, and efforts are being made to discover and bring the offender to justice, for an act so disgraceful as well as mischievous. It is very satisfactory to the friends of the watermen, who have come forward to furnish them with this place of worship, to find that at the expiration of the first month's trial, it has been so well attended, and that the behaviour of the men has been so proper and becoming.

**62 November 10 1842**

INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES This morning at the Crown Inn in the Droitwich Road, on **Samuel Beard**, aged 32, waterman. Deceased was in the habit of working with boats on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal ; and on Monday he and another man (**Samuel Brick**) arrived with a boat at Gregory's Mill lock, on their way to this city, with coals. The deceased had to go to open the locks, while the other man was kept in the boat. The lock-keeper, **Benjamin Woodyatt**, hearing something like a plunge in the water, ran out, and saw the deceased struggling in the deep lock ; assistance having been procured, he was got out in about three minutes, according to the statement of the lock-keeper, but was then quite dead. Mr T W Walsh, surgeon, was immediately sent for, but life had fled. Verdict : "Accidental death". Beard was a native of Gloucester, was a married man, and has left a wife and six children. (We understand that subscriptions have been originated among the boatmen and others towards assisting the unfortunate widow and her fatherless children).

**63 November 17 1842**

At the County Police Office, Kidderminster, on Thursday last, **William Randle** of the parish of Upper Aveley, barge owner, was summoned by **John Dark**, bargeman, for non payment of 10s, balance of wages due to him. The Bench, after hearing the statement of both parties, ordered the

balance to be immediately paid, with 13s 6d expenses, which defendant accordingly paid.

At the Kidderminster Petty Sessions on Thursday, **John Darke**, a bargeman, summoned **William Randall**, a barge owner residing at Upper Aveley, for a balance of wages due to him, amounting to 18s. The case having been gone into, it appeared that Darke was fully entitled to his claim, and Mr Randall was ordered to pay the same with expenses, amounting altogether to £1 13s 6d, which he immediately paid, and left the Court.

**64 November 24 1842**

CITY POLICE Mr Stalworth, carrier of this city, appeared against **Charles Nairne**, boatman, charging him with having illegally left his service, by abruptly refusing to undertake a voyage from Droitwich to Gloucester, on the score of insufficient wages ; the complainant did not prove any contract or agreement, but urged that the custom of the river was to give and take a voyage notice of leaving service. The Magistrates were of opinion that this was incomplete evidence on the part of the prosecution, and the case was dismissed. (This should give a hint to all owners and carriers as to the necessity of positive agreements).

**65 November 24 1842**

INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES Also, at the Hole in the Wall, Droitwich, on a lad named **John Harrison**, son of a waterman, who died yesterday from the effects of a burning received on the previous day at the National School. (We are glad to learn that early in the ensuing Session, a return of all such accidental deaths by burning will be moved for, with the view of remedying the evil in some measure).

**66 December 22 1842**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS, YESTERDAY

**James Jones**, boatman of St Clements, was charged by Thomas Worthington with having assaulted him on the 13<sup>th</sup> instant in the parish of Ombersley. The assault consisted of a series of flagellations by means of a horsewhip, but why or wherefore they were inflicted we cannot state, seeing the parties themselves seemed to be entirely ignorant of the same. Jones was fined 2s 6d and 7s 6d expenses, and allowed four days to pay it in.

**67 December 22 1842**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

**John Macready** was brought up under a warrant granted at the instance of Joseph Reece, a groom, who stated that on the previous Monday night about twelve o'clock, he was coming up Broad Street, and saw a number of boatmen, among whom was the defendant, standing at the corner of Dolday ; and as he passed, defendant pushed him against the shutters, and with the help of another man carried him some distance by the arms and legs, and threw him down. On the police coming up and ordering them off, Reece proceeded up Broad Street, followed by the defendant and the other men, and when at the top of the street they again came up to him, and defendant said, "Do you mean to have us up tomorrow?", to which he answered, "No, if you will leave me alone". Upon this, one of the other men, with a brutal expression, struck him a violent blow which knocked him down, and when down kicked him in a very violent manner, knocking one of his teeth out and otherwise injuring him so that the blood flowed profusely. The defendant did not attempt to justify the assault, and was fined £1 0s 6d including costs, or 14 days imprisonment. In default of payment, he was sent down to gaol.

James Rogers and George Weaver, mentioned in our last week's police report as having been charged with stealing a stern strap from a boat lying at the Blockhouse lock belonging to **Mr Jesse Sessions** of Gloucester, were this day committed to take their trial, their identity having been proved by the captain of the vessel.

## 68 December 22 1842

Fowl stealers are on the alert in this neighbourhood. On Thursday last, in consequence of certain information which was given to the city police, Sergeant Chipp, accompanied by supernumerary constable Jones, found in Mr Lightwood's hovel in one of the Moor fields near the top of Pitchcroft, eight remarkably fine fowls. A watch was set upon the place, and between seven and eight o'clock two jobbing boatmen named **Gwynne** and **Jones** were apprehended in the act of entering the building. Suspicion had already attached to these parties, and in the course of the night one of their companions named Smith was taken into custody. They were brought up for examination yesterday (Tuesday), but as no person appeared to own the fowls, the case was remanded till Thursday. The fowls may be seen on application at the station house.

## 69 December 29 1842

GAME TRESPASS On Thursday, two young men, residents of Worcester named Oliver Southan and George Tustin, the former described as a yeoman, the latter a coachmaker, were brought up in custody of policeman Bateman at the County Magistrates' Office, Palace Yard, before the Hon and Rev W W C Talbot, Major Patrick, and Captain Sanderson, charged with trespassing in search and pursuit of game upon lands belonging to T G Curtler Esq of Bevere. Thomas Gwilliam, gardener to Mr Curtler, laid the information, which set forth that on the 19<sup>th</sup> ultimo, Southan stood at the outside of a coppice skirting the river Severn at Bevere, and fired at and killed a rabbit, then inside the said coppice. These facts were proved by **James Withey**, waterman, who was upon the spot at the time ; and despite an able defence by Mr Cresswell, solicitor, Southan was convicted in the full penalty of £2, which carried with it 19s 6d costs. The case against Tustin laid the offence as having been committed at the same place on the previous day, the game shot on this particular occasion being a pheasant. John Ross, a particularly stupid clown, was the principal witness against Tustin, and he stated that he heard a gun fired in the coppice, and afterwards saw a cock pheasant rise therefrom and fall into the river. He also saw Tustin, whom he knew from being a white faced man, coming from the coppice with a gun in his hand. After giving his evidence in identifying Tustin, Ross, when cross-examined by Mr Pullen, solicitor for defendant, admitted that he was on the opposite side of the river ; and on being closely pressed, ultimately refused to swear to defendant, stating that he was unable to identify him. Withey, the witness in the last case, was also called, but he could only speak to having seen the defendant beside the river afterwards, endeavouring to induce a dog he had with him to fetch out the pheasant, but as the animal would not do it, witness did, and gave it to Tustin on payment of sixpence. Mr Pullen submitted that there was no case against the defendant, in which view the Bench concurred and dismissed it, informing Tustin that he might consider himself a lucky fellow.

## 70 January 5 1843

### CITY EPIPHANY SESSIONS

**Henry Davis**, 18, and **James Crumpton**, 14, boatmen, were placed at the bar for stealing a cheese from the shop of Mr Davis, cheesemonger, High Street, on the 18<sup>th</sup> November last. Mr Gray appeared for the prosecution, and called William Coombs, china potter, who deposed to having seen Davis enter the shop and take a cheese, which he concealed under his smock frock ; that on coming out of the shop he met the other prisoner, and they went down Pump Street, when he followed them, and in New Street saw Davis give Crumpton the cheese, and they both went into a boat moored in Lowesmoor wharf. Other witnesses were examined who corroborated his statement. Guilty. A fortnight's solitary confinement for each prisoner.

**James Brickworth** and **Charles Critchley**, watermen, were charged with stealing a shaft from a boat called the *Bewdley Wherry*, the property of John Crump, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November last. The boat was moored on the Severn at the bottom of St Clement's stairs, where the defendants were seen putting the shaft on their own boat, which was lying close by, where it was subsequently found down at Diglis by policeman Wakeman, in company with John Oates, the person in whose care the

shaft was placed. Not guilty.

James Rogers, 21, labourer, was convicted of stealing a boat strap, the property of **William Simmons**, from a vessel moored in the canal at the parish of St Peter on the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ult, and sentenced to one month's solitary confinement.

## **71 January 5 1843**

INQUEST Mr Hughes held an inquest on Thursday at Upton-on-Severn, on view of the body of an infant aged six months named **Joseph Brick**, son of **Stephen Brick**, waterman of that town, who died on Monday last. From the evidence adduced, it appeared that the child had from the time of its birth suffered much from ill health – being subject to convulsions ; that on the evening in question, the parents had a quarrel, and a fight ensued. Shortly after, the child was discovered by the mother to be in a dying state, and she went for assistance, but it arrived too late. The circumstance of the child's decease occurring so shortly after the quarrel, in connection with the fact of the body exhibiting discolouration in many parts, had given rise to a suspicion that the child had been maltreated in the affray ; but the evidence of Mr Marsh, surgeon, proved that death arose from a diseased state of the lungs, and that the discolouration was merely a natural change after death. Verdict : “Died by the visitation of God”.

## **72 January 12 1843**

### WORCESTERSHIRE EPIPHANY SESSIONS

**William Cooper, Joseph Daniel and Charles Summers**, three young boatmen, were charged with stealing four turkeys, the property of Mr Nathan Dyer of the parish of Bredon. Mr Lee prosecuted, and Mr Whitmore defended the prisoner Cooper. On the night of the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, a number of turkeys were stolen from the roosting place on the prosecutor's premises, where they had been seen safe at nightfall, and footsteps were traced towards a boat moored on the Avon near to the prosecutor's premises, of which vessel the prisoners Daniel and Summers formed the crew. These footmarks were found precisely to correspond with two pairs of shoes belonging to Daniel and Summers, found in the cabin of the boat. Potter, 39, of the Rural Police, took great pains and caution in comparing the footmarks with the shoes of the prisoners, and by his tact displayed in this particular proved himself an able and efficient officer in the detection of this peculiar and oft resorted to species of identity. He not only formed fresh impressions of the shoes in clay, but had actually dug up the earth holding the original impressions, and now produced it on the trial. The case against Cooper was very weak, and consisted merely of the fact of a boat hook marked “WCE” (supposed to represent “William Cooper, Eckington”) having been left upon the premises on the night on which the robbery was committed, and of a conversation which took place between Cooper and the other prisoners. While in the station house, Daniel was heard to call out to Cooper, “Remember, we don't know anything about the boat hook, Bill”, to which Cooper replied, “I say the same”. The Jury found Cooper not guilty, but convicted Daniel and Summers, and they were sentenced to three months' imprisonment, the first and last week solitary. At the conclusion of the trial, the Chairman called up the policeman Potter, and informed him that he had been requested by the Court to express their entire approbation of the manner in which he had discharged his duty ; the Chairman added that that opinion would be conveyed to the chief constable, Mr Harris, in the hope that he would be enabled to grant him some reward. Potter expressed his gratitude to the Court for their approbation of his services, and hoped that in his future behaviour in the force he should not forfeit their good opinion.

**John Clements**, 45, waterman, charged with stealing, at Ripple on the 19<sup>th</sup> October last, a smock frock, the property of William Hughes, was also sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment.

**73 January 26 1843**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

MIDNIGHT BRAWLS IN HIGH STREET **John Goddard**, waterman, and Elizabeth Fowles, a girl of easy virtue, were charged by Silvanus Ball with an assault. It seems that on Saturday night or early on Sunday morning, the complainant was returning home from some public house, and on passing by that notorious place (second only to the Barracks) called "Newdix Court", Goddard, who was leaning his back against the wall, put out his foot and tripped up Ball as he passed by ; this he followed up by challenging him to fight ; hereupon commenced the fray ; for a whole host of female furies, of that class whose

"Prostitution elbows us aside  
In all our crowded streets"

rushed from their dwellings and aided Goddard in his attack on the complainant ; and never was night made more hideous than on this occasion, if we are to believe the description of the scene as given by persons living in the neighbourhood who was awoke and terribly scarified at the unearthly yells, screams and execrations of the combatants. The offence was clearly substantiated against both parties ; Goddard was sent down for fourteen days' hard labour ; and Fowles, (an old offender), two months' ditto. Edward Fuller, charged with attempting to rescue Elizabeth Fowles from the custody of the policeman as he was escorting her to the station house, was fined 5s and 5s costs ; allowed fourteen days' to pay the amount, which indulgence was in consequence of his having a widowed mother and a young wife.

A FEW INCORRIGIBLES **James Dance**, boatman, was charged with cutting away and stealing a stern strap from a boat lying near Merryman's Hill bridge at the canal, belonging to one Parker, on Sunday last. Prisoner was seen on board the boat a few minutes before the strap was cut and the boat drifted by a man named Handy, who resides near that spot, and who having subsequently heard of the loss, gave information in the proper quarter, when search was made in the prisoner's boat lying at Lowesmoor ; the article was not found in the vessel ; but as an old trick among boatmen, of hiding their ill gotten booty under water, is now well known, further search was made, and the strap in question was found sunk in the water close to the stern of the boat. The prisoner was remanded till Monday next, in order to complete the evidence.

**74 January 26 1843**

INQUEST BY MR HUGHES On Friday at the Fir Tree, Oddingley, on the body of **John Hisard**, a boatman aged 21, a native of Pershore, whose death occurred on Thursday morning at Himbleton, in consequence of falling into the canal. Deceased was pushing a boat belonging to Mr Jones of Pershore through the Dunhampstead tunnel with a shaft when, in consequence of the hook breaking, the shaft slipped along the upper side of the tunnel and precipitated deceased into the water, from which it was impossible to extricate him until life had fled. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned ; and in recording it, the Jury, in consequence of the many accidents in this tunnel, suggested that if an iron chain were run along the surface of the water at the tunnel side, it would be the means of saving the lives of persons unfortunately falling in the canal under the tunnel ; and the Coroner undertook to call the attention of the Canal Company to the propriety of the suggestion.

**75 February 2 1843**

At the Bromsgrove Petty Sessions yesterday, **James Griffin**, boatman of Stoke Prior, was fined £2 with costs for allowing a man in his employ to open lock No 13, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, while a boat was coming up within 300 yards, thereby losing a pond of water.

**76 February 23 1843**

On Wednesday last, an inquest was held at the house of James Bennett in the parish of Brampton



Abbotts, near Ross, before N Lanwarne Esq, on view of the body of **John James**, which had been found in the river Wye on the previous Monday and conveyed to the Lower House. The body was identified by George Godsall of Much Birch as being that of his brother-in-law John James, a bargeman in the employ of Mr Powell of Old Forge. From the evidence, it appeared that the cause of death was completely accidental, and a verdict accordingly was returned.

**77 March 2 1843**

A daring robbery was committed last week at the corn warehouse of Messrs Cottrell and Wilson, Worcester wharf, Birmingham, and who also carry on trade in this city. From information received by the Police Inspector of this city, Sergeants Chipp and Saunders apprehended three boatmen, **Aaron Dayus, George Hunt and Henry Taylor**. It appeared from the evidence taken at the examination that on Saturday last, the prisoners having brought a load of coal from the Collieries, put their boat under the warehouse ; some time after, they met with one **Featherston**, a boatman, and asked him if he knew where **Withy** was (Withy is a steerer for one of Pickford and Co's boats) ; Featherston said he was at the Basin ; on which Dayus and Hunt said they had two bags of wheat for him, and at the same time asked Featherston if he would take some of them, to which it seems he did not consent. Having parted, Featherston subsequently came to Kingsnorton, and overtook Dayus, who then told him that "it was all right", for Withy had got their wheat, that he had put it into two of his own bags, and had thrown the stolen sacks into the water to avoid detection ; he also communicated the fact of the property having been taken from Messrs Cottrell and Wilson's warehouse. The case being clearly made out, Dayus and Hunt were committed to take their trial at the next Birmingham Sessions, and Taylor was discharged, it appearing that he was probably not connected with the robbery, but was asleep in the cabin at the time.

**78 March 2 1843**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE **Joseph Pritchett** and **Noah Dayus** (the latter a notorious scion of a notorious family) were charged with having feloniously and forcibly, with others, taken possession of a canal boat, the property of Mr H M Daniel, solicitor. The following are the circumstances of the case. Mr Daniel is executor and sole legatee of a Mr Henry Taylor, deceased, among the property left to Mr Daniel being the canal boat in question. Some time ago, Taylor's son took forcible possession of the boat, and Mr Daniel retained undisputed ownership till Friday morning last, when a party of some dozen boatmen seized the boat, carried it off along the canal, and threw out of it some property contained therein belonging to **Philip Boucher**, who rented the boat. Considerable disturbances ensued, and Boucher and his men were very near being thrown overboard – foremost among the gang being the persons above named. On being called on for their defence, Dayus and Pritchett declared that they had acted under a mistaken impression, for that **Taylor** (who was one of the parties charged with the robbery of Messrs Cottrell and Wilson's warehouse at Birmingham) had instructed them, at the time of his detention in Birmingham, to look after and take charge of the boat in question, affirming it was his, and of which they had no doubt at the time. Having expressed regret at their conduct, the case was not pressed by Mr Daniel, and the defendants were liberated.

**79 March 9 1843**

WORCESTERSHIRE SESSIONS

**Thomas Mew**, 17, boatman, was charged with stealing nine fowls, the property of Thomas Bushell, at Eckington on the (??) of February. The proof in this case rested on the identity of footmarks, and on the presumptive evidence that some white feathers, found in the prisoner's boat, had belonged to the missing fowls. He was stated to have possessed an excellent character. Not Guilty.

**80 March 16 1843**

WORCESTERSHIRE LENT ASSIZES

**James Ferguson**, 21, and **William Onions**, 25, boatmen, were charged with assaulting George

Harper at St Clement's in this city on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July last, stealing two snuff boxes and 2s from his person, and with having put him in bodily fear. The assault, it will be remembered, took place on Pitchcroft at about twelve o'clock on the night in question, as Harper was returning home to the Moors ; the two prisoners, in company with a third man, met him and asked him for drink, and as he tried to get away over some palings, they pulled him back and Onions knocked him down and secured him, while the others picked his pockets of the articles alleged in the indictment. The Jury found a verdict of guilty ; but as Ferguson was concerned in another charge, his Lordship did not pass sentence on either of the prisoners till after that had been heard.

James Ferguson, the same person, and **William Crawford**, 20, boatman, were next charged with making an assault on Mary Edwards on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, stealing from her person a shawl, and putting her in bodily fear. On the night in question, prosecutrix was coming from Droitwich to Worcester with a man named Doughty, and on coming to a meadow near the York House Moors, in this city (which was near to the scene and also to the time of the last mentioned robbery), three persons came up to her, of whom she afterwards recognised the two prisoners when before the magistrates. Ferguson knocked Doughty down with a piece of wood, and then knocked the woman down on the grass three or four times, and proceeded to take indecent liberties with her ; on crying out for assistance, Doughty came up and struck one of the men, on which he was again knocked down. Crawford took the woman's shawl from her while she was down, after which all three ran away to a hovel which was about fifty yards off. Michell, the police constable, was immediately informed of the circumstances, and on searching the hovel he found there the handkerchief which had been stolen from the girl Edwards ; Sergeant Saunders also found a piece of wood, which Doughty identified as that with which he had been struck. Mr Gray appeared for the prosecution and Mr Huddleston defended Crawford. The Jury, after a short consideration, returned a verdict of guilty against Ferguson, and guilty of the assault and robbery against Crawford. They were each sentenced to fifteen years' transportation ; and Onions, who had been found guilty in the previous case, was sentenced to the like term.

**George Banks**, 20, and **John Taylor**, 27, boatmen, were charged with breaking into the dwelling house of James Clarke at Berrow, and stealing therefrom a variety of articles on the 28<sup>th</sup> July last. A former conviction was proved against Taylor. Banks 12 months' imprisonment, Taylor 10 years' transportation.

**Charles Carter**, 20, boatman, and **George Willis**, 21, boatman, were charged with breaking into the house of John Underhill at Hanbury on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> ult. Mr Beadon having opened the case,

John Underhill, the prosecutor, was called, and deposed that he lived near the Hanbury Canal and had five fowls in his possession on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult ; on the night of that day he was awoke by a noise in the house, and on looking out of the window he saw some persons running away. On rising in the morning, he found two fowls missing, and then went into the garden with the policemen Petford and Randall, when they traced footsteps along the road towards the canal, over a mound of sand and a garden of stiff clayey soil, and found the fowls in a field near the house.

Policeman Petford said he had taken a pair of shoes from Carter's feet, whom he found sleeping in the boat on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. They were covered with sand, which was stuck on by a great quantity of stiff clay. On comparing the shoes with the marks near the prosecutor's house, the soles corresponded precisely, the nails in the shoes being in a different position on each foot. These statements were corroborated by Randall, who accompanied last witness.

As there was no evidence against the prisoner Willis, the Chairman directed his acquittal ; and he was immediately removed from the bar to the witness box, where he gave evidence in behalf of his companion ; from which it appeared that they had been drinking at a public house together, but that he had preceded him about half an hour in his return, so that Carter took nothing by his friend's motion. The Jury, after a long consultation, found the prisoner Carter guilty. Six months' imprisonment.

## 81 March 23 1843

The annual meeting of the members belonging to the Friendly Society of the flatmen employed on the Mersey and Irwell Navigation recently took place at Runcorn. Upwards of four hundred persons, including watermen, their wives and friends, sat down to tea in a large and commodious room belonging to their respected employers. There was an ample supply of good roast beef &c, to which full justice was done. The funds of the Society presented an encouraging appearance ; after 75 sick members had been liberally provided for during the year, and the expenses of seven funerals discharged, there remained in the hands of the treasurer the sum of £435 15s 6 1/2d. The appearance and whole behaviour of this respectable body of men were highly creditable. The evening was spent in a cheerful and friendly manner, and not without profit to all assembled. Several clergymen attended and addressed the meeting, inculcating sound Christian principles, to be evidenced by corresponding Christian practice. The Treasurer, Mr E A Lingard, made some most valuable observations which, with the other able addresses delivered on this interesting occasion, were received with cordial feelings of approbation. The room was tastefully fitted up, and appropriate mottos scattered over the walls, full of loyalty and right feeling. It is worthy of remark that the watermen at the late riots showed by their excellent conduct that they wished really "to honour the Queen", influenced by "the fear of God". It is gratifying to find that some of this neglected class are rising in the scale of morals, and we shall rejoice to hear that in every part of the kingdom, facilities are afforded them for religious improvement. We feel great pleasure in stating that we have every reason to believe that the Episcopal Floating Chapel, moored on the river Severn near our city, will be the means of doing much good, as we understand that the effects already produced are of a very encouraging description.

## 82 April 6 1843

**DEATH FROM STARVATION** An inquest was held on Friday, and by adjournment on Monday, at the Navigation Inn, Lowesmoor, on the body of **Elizabeth Dayus**, aged seven years, a daughter of **Aaron Dayus**, a boatman of Pleasant Street. Three witnesses were examined, but the most material evidence was that of the surgeon and of the mother of the child.

**Elizabeth Dayus** said : I am the mother of the child, and am anxious to know the cause of its death. The deceased had often complained of pains in her head, which however went off. On Wednesday she was again unwell, and threw up bile and water. She did not appear to be much worse until about eight o'clock at night, and at nine I fetched my husband from his club, and she died soon after. I did not observe any discolouration about the body until this morning.

The inquest was then adjourned in order that an examination of the body should be made by a medical man. When the inquest was resumed on Monday, witness proceeded :-

About a month since, I applied to Mr Tyler, the relieving officer, for relief for myself and children, as we were then in want. My husband was out with the boat, and I had no money to buy food. The officer said that he did not know where my husband's parish was, and that he must see him ; and he refused to give me anything. I did not go to any other person. We have lately been badly off for food. The deceased fared as well as we did. The child had bacon about once a week, and we very seldom had fresh meat, as we could not afford to buy it.

Mr Herbert Buss made a post mortem examination of the body, and after stating its appearances, proceeded :- There was not any trace of poison of any kind, or any smell. From the description given by the mother, the deceased had not anything to eat from Tuesday morning last to the time she was taken ill on Wednesday morning, except some bread and a little tea on Tuesday ; and on Wednesday the child was sick, throwing up toast and water. The death of the child arose from vomiting on Wednesday, which was produced by want of a sufficient quantity of food, the child not having had for two months previous to her death more than one meal a day, which was insufficient to support nature, and being attacked with vomiting, she had not the power to rally. From the evidence I have this day heard given by the mother, my opinion that the child died from the want of sufficient food is confirmed.

The Jury consulted for a short time, and returned a verdict of "Died for want of sufficient food".



(We must not omit to mention that the Jury, considering the destitution of the parents of the deceased, liberally presented them with the jurors' fees).

**83 April 13 1843**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE, MONDAY **William Crumpton** alias "the Tiger", a boatman, was charged by **William Hemming**, another of the same craft, with assaulting him on the night of Thursday last on his boat, moored near the College stairs on the river. It appeared from the evidence that Hemming's pugilistic propensities had been excited by divers potations of ale and other spirit stirring liquids during an evening's "boozing" about the city, and that he had repeatedly challenged the "Tiger" to a manual combat, endeavouring to arouse his ire by also styling him "pug nose". These challenges were offered until Hemming had arrived on his boat, when just as he was retiring to rest, the "Tiger" probably imagining that his physical powers would be underrated by the complainant, at once pounced upon him with a view to redeem his character ; and they fought what a witness called "one bit of a round ; but whether they hit one another he didn't know". The Magistrates however were satisfied that the "animal" was the aggressor, and therefore fined him 2s 6d and 12s 6d expenses, in default of paying which he was ordered to be "caged" in Mr Griffiths's menagerie for the space of seven days.

**84 April 13 1843**

MAN FOUND IN THE SEVERN On Saturday last, about nine o'clock in the morning, **Edward Jenkins** of Diglis Street, waterman, was standing on the bank of the river at the bottom of that street, when he saw something like the body of a man floating down the stream. Jenkins, in company with William Ratford, immediately got a boat and rowed to the body, and with a cord attached to the arm, rowed it to the shore, and it was shortly afterwards removed to the Shades Tavern, Diglis Street. The body was in a very decomposed state, and had the appearance of having been in the water two or three months ; there was a bruise on the right eye. On being searched, nothing was found in his pockets except a little tobacco ; from the dress of the deceased it was considered he was a driver of barge horses. Mr H D Mitchell, surgeon, examined the body, and stated that the mark over the right eye might have been caused by a blow before death or by the body rubbing against the bottom of the river after death ; there was also a mark on top of the chest, which might have been produced by the same cause ; but neither of the bruises was sufficient to have caused death. An inquest was held on the same day at the Shades Tavern, before Mr John Tymbs, Deputy City Coroner and a respectable jury, when a verdict of "Found drowned" was returned. The deceased's name has not yet been ascertained ; he appears to have been between 45 and 50 years of age.

**85 May 4 1843**

PETTY SESSIONS

UPTON, APRIL 27 **William Hanbury**, boatman of Upton, was, on the complaint of his wife, who alleged a series of acts of ill-treatment received at his hands, ordered to find sureties to keep the peace towards her. The Bench had some difficulty to prevent the indecorum of a regular "turn up" between these loving parties in their very presence.

**86 May 11 1843**

In consequence of the pressure of local and other matters, we cannot do more at present than simply call the attention of our readers and the city and county authorities to the statement made by Mr Southan to the Town Council relative to the horrible barbarities committed by watermen on their beasts. We trust that these doings, which are a disgrace to humanity, will be properly hunted up and most severely punished.

**87 May 11 1843**

WATERMEN'S CRUELTY TO ANIMALS Mr Southan called attention to the enormous cruelties

practised towards horses and asses on the towing-paths of the Severn and Canal. He gave some shocking illustrations which had come under his own eye ; one was of an ass which had had its back broken apparently by a blow, and at the time he saw it, the spinal marrow was oozing out at the wound. These poor but patient animals were hired at about 5s the voyage, during which they scarcely ever obtained anything to eat except what they gleaned from the hedges, and were frequently driven and over driven till death put a period to their sufferings. Some time since, he happened to meet a man driving one of these quadrupeds, which appeared much mutilated. He asked the man what could induce him to use the beast so ; when the fellow said, “Oh, he's wusser on t'other side”, which proved to be the case, for it had been literally beaten to a pulp! Another abominable instance occurred some time since, when an ass foaled on the path, but the inhuman wretch who drove her threw the foal into the canal and made the poor ass continue its journey! (Cries of “shame”). Mr Southan, having given other specimens of this horrible barbarity, concluded by proposing that the Watch Committee be requested to instruct the police to perambulate the banks of the Severn and the Canal to the extent of the city boundary, and to take into custody all persons violating the law for preventing cruelty to animals. The motion was seconded by Mr Hood, and immediately carried.

### **88      May 18 1843**

**IMPROVEMENT OF WATERMEN** It was our painful office last week to call the attention of our readers to some very gross acts of cruelty exercised by men belonging to this class towards the poor beasts used in dragging their vessels. But it is gratifying to find that although there are so many watermen hardened in vice and wickedness, there are others of a different character. At the anniversary of the Sabbath Society in London last week, there were many pleasing instances brought forward, proving that where cessation from Sunday traffic had been obtained, and religious instruction provided for these men, much good had resulted and a beneficial change had been, through the Divine blessing, produced in characters once abandoned and profligate. The following is an extract from the report read at the annual meeting of the Naval and Military Bible Society, held on the 9<sup>th</sup> instant :- “A novel and important feature in the past year's operations was the employment of a special temporary agent for nine months, to place the word of God in the hands of boatmen engaged in the inland navigation of our rivers and canals. The result of his labours in this interesting sphere was the distribution of 2,353 copies of the Holy Scriptures, of which 257 were *sold*, the remainder having been placed in boats as part of their stores. Much gratitude was expressed by many of these poor fellows on finding they were thus thought of and cared for by the Society ; and there is reason to hope that those who have been hitherto so ignorant and dissipated may, by these means, be elevated in their moral and religious habits. Agents at Northwich, Uxbridge, Dudley and Etruria (in Staffordshire) had also distributed to canal boatmen 521 copies ; and 120 copies had been furnished to the Inland Navigation Society, making a total distribution to canal boatmen of 2994 copies”. We understand that these grants were made among nearly 30 navigations, and many in consequence of express applications from benevolent individuals, kindly interesting themselves in behalf of this long neglected class of their countrymen, connected with their vicinity. We trust that increasing attention will be paid to the instruction of this class, proverbial for all kinds of vice ; for although the arm of the law may repress, to a certain extent at least, external acts of cruelty or robbery, yet no thorough reformation can be expected unless sound religious principles be inculcated and public worship devoutly regarded. We hope also that, in the plan adopted by the Legislature for the spiritual welfare of the working classes, this demoralised body of men will not be overlooked.

### **89      May 18 1843**

**WORCESTER CITY SESSIONS** **Thomas Wilson**, 22, waterman, charged with stealing several articles of female wearing apparel on the 11<sup>th</sup> ultimo, was discharged, the prosecutor not appearing.

**90 June 8 1843**

A church for the accommodation of boatmen is in progress at Etruria, Staffordshire. The estimated cost is £800. Messrs Pickford and Co, the extensive carriers, have contributed 20 guineas.

**91 June 8 1843**

CITY POLICE On Thursday, **William Chillingworth**, a boatman, was sent to gaol for a month, for violently assaulting policeman Packman by throwing a heavy stone at him, on Tuesday night in Birdport, during some "rude revelry" attendant upon the annual wake in that classic region.

**John Withy** and **John French**, boatmen, for a ruffianly assault on Mrs Beesley of the White Lion, Lowesmoor, were fined, Withy 20s and French 5s, together with 9s 6d expenses in each case.

On Monday, **Henry Greenway**, a boatman, was fined 5s for drunkenness and pugnacity, rather offensively exhibited to the annoyance of the lieges of Park Street on the previous evening ; this notorious fellow insisted that "four pints of drink weren't too much for a man as works hard", and also that when in a "state of ale" he had a right to "fillip" every person that came in his way.

**92 June 8 1843**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

BURGLARY **William Gardner** and **George Bradley**, boatmen, were brought up on the charge of breaking into the Diglis warehouse of Messrs Pickford, carriers, early on Monday morning last, and stealing therefrom a quantity of broadcloth. **Thomas Gould**, waterman in the employ of Messrs Pickford, deposed that he saw Gardner come out of the warehouse about half past two on the morning in question, and that suspecting something was wrong, he went and found the door of the warehouse partially open. On making search he discovered that two trusses or packs of cloth had been opened, but sewn up again in a very clumsy manner ; and on the packs being weighed, the one was found to be 7 lbs and the other 4 lbs deficient. Information having been given to Inspector Phillips, he, in company with Sergeant Chipp, subsequently apprehended the prisoners in Lowesmoor. They were remanded until Friday.

**93 June 15 1843**

A fatal accident occurred on Thursday evening on the Severn near this city. Two young men named William Henry Hobro, a carpenter, son of Mr Henry Hobro, residing in George Street, and William Haskew, also a carpenter, went out for a sail on the river in a small boat ill adapted for a sailing vessel, and which Hobro had himself made for the purpose of rowing on the Severn. They had proceeded up the river for some distance, and were within sight of Camp House when a sudden gust of wind, which was blowing with considerable violence and uncertainty at the time, caused the boat to upset, and the parties were precipitated into the water, which was almost on a level with the banks in consequence of the late rains. Haskew succeeded in holding on to the boat's keel, while Hobro swam towards the shore, and had actually reached within a few yards of the side when he sank to rise no more. This was witnessed by his companion, who momentarily expected a similar fate. After holding on by the boat for a short time, he became exhausted, and was in the act of sinking for the last time when a boatman named **Charles Hands** came to his assistance and, seizing him by the hair of the head, rescued him from a watery grave. The unfortunate deceased, Hobro, was about 22 years of age ; the body has not yet been found.

**94 June 29 1843**

WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

**Liney Cope**, 30, boatman, was charged with stealing a log and a piece of chain, the property of Messrs Bramal and Cochrane, at Dudley on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June. The evidence against the prisoner was that the property was seen on the prosecutor's wharf on the day of the robbery, and the day after it was discovered in a boat of which the prisoner was captain. But as there were several other persons

on the wharf at the time of the robbery, and no evidence being given to fix it on the prisoner, the Court directed the case to be stopped, and the Jury immediately found the prisoner not guilty ; discharged.

**Daniel Fletcher**, 27, boatman, was placed at the bar on a charge of stealing a sovereign and other monies, the property of John Rogers at King's Norton on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1842. The prosecutor in this case keeps the Navigation Inn at King's Norton and, on the night in question, the prisoner, in company with another man named Wilks, called at the house, and while sitting in the kitchen the landlady fell asleep, and Fletcher seized the opportunity to abstract the entire cash from her pockets. Shortly after, the prisoner asked the landlord to allow him to stay in the house till the rain was over, to which the landlord consented and went to bed. Soon afterwards, a child in the adjoining room commenced crying, and prosecutor got out of bed to go to it when he stumbled over the prisoner, who had taken off his shoes and crawled upstairs to the bedroom, where he had likewise managed to remove the cash from the landlord's small clothes. They were immediately given into custody, but the prisoner Fletcher escaped from the station house, and has since been at large until a few weeks ago ; the other, Wilks, was tried at the last Midsummer Sessions and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Guilty : twelve months' imprisonment. A further charge was preferred against him, but as no evidence was offered in support of it, a verdict of not guilty was returned.

**95 June 29 1843**

Two boatmen named **Tunks** and **Smith** were apprehended and on Thursday conveyed before H E Strickland and F Eyston Esqs at Pershore, charged with purloining a quantity of hay, the property of Mr Francis Holland, in whose employ they were at the time of the felony. It appears that the prisoners had been employed to convey the hay along a portion of the river Avon, and while the vessel, in which it was, lay at Fladbury Weir, the prisoners, with the assistance of others, abstracted the hay from the boat and subsequently disposed of it, and in so doing left the boat to take care of itself. As there was some difficulty in proving the identity of the hay, the prisoners were discharged on the accusation of the felony ; but committed for a month for neglecting their employment.

**96 June 29 1843**

The name of the unfortunate waterman who was drowned by falling from a coal boat at Gloucester quay on the night of Wednesday week was **George Lee**, and not Badhams, as stated by mistake. His body was picked up at Elmore on Wednesday last and identified by his friends, who reside at Worcester.

**97 July 6 1843**

INSOLVENT DEBTORS **James Knight** of Birmingham, boatman.

**98 July 6 1843**

A meeting of the Staffordshire Boatmen's Pastoral Instruction Society was held at Stafford on Wednesday last, the Ven Archdeacon Hodson in the chair ; at which various payments were ordered for the maintenance of the Society's operations, and a gratifying report of the Chaplain's proceedings and success was read. It was also stated that it is in contemplation shortly to hold a public meeting of the Society at Newcastle, or in that neighbourhood, with an especial view to assist the boatmen's chapel now building at Etruria.

**99 July 6 1843**

The Church Pastoral Aid Society having made a grant towards the stipend of the officiating minister at the Watermen's Church in this city, a sermon was preached on behalf of that Society at that Church on Thursday last, by the Rev John Davies, Rector of St Clement's, when the sum of £12 1s 5d was collected. It was previously understood that a portion of the collection would be given to the Accident Fund, the object of which is to furnish some assistance to the families of watermen

who may suffer from accidents &c, to which this class, from the nature of their employment, are peculiarly exposed.

**100 July 6 1843**

WORCESTERSHIRE MIDSUMMER SESSIONS

George Bradley, 19, labourer, and **William Gardner**, 20, waterman, were charged with having, on the 5<sup>th</sup> June last at Diglis Wharf near this city, stolen five yards of woollen cloth, which had been consigned to Messrs Pickford and Co to convey to Goodman and Co of Northampton. Several witnesses were called, when it was proved that Gardner was seen, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June, to proceed from the warehouse to the boat of which he was captain, and in which was Bradley at the time he entered. The cloth was subsequently found in the boat. There appeared to be no evidence against Bradley, and Gardner was sentenced to be imprisoned for 18 months.

**101 July 13 1843**

INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES On Monday at Stoke Prior on **Charles Hadley**, aged seven years, who on Friday last accidentally fell into the canal, while his father, a boatman, who had left him in charge of a donkey, had gone on before to draw the lock for the passage of his boat. Verdict : "Accidental death".

**102 July 20 1843**

WORCESTERSHIRE ASSIZES

ROBBERY AT UPPER MITTON John Lloyd, 19, labourer, was indicted for stealing from the person of **John Packwood** at Upper Mitton on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, two £5 notes, five sovereigns and other money and articles, his property.

The prosecutor, who is a boatman employed by Mrs Insull on the Worcester and Stafford Canal, deposed that on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, he was at a public house called the "Bird in Hand" ; he had then in his possession the above mentioned money, in a purse. Late at night, a man of the name of Bennett came to him and advised him to go to his boat, as he was robbed ; he went to his boat, but on feeling for his purse, found the money all right then ; he then lay down on his bed on the boat, and about half past three in the morning, on awaking, found that his trousers and purse had been cut, and some bills and money abstracted to the extent mentioned in the indictment.

Bennett, the person above alluded to, gave as his reason for cautioning the prisoner that he had seen him, while tipsy, surrounded by four or five other men, among whom was the prisoner, and that their conduct gave rise to suspicion.

A man named Cartwright deposed to having seen the prisoner and another man go on the prosecutor's boat and come out again that night, shortly after the above occurrence.

Charles Cook, a policeman, employed to apprehend the prisoner, ascertained that he had absconded, and the capture was effected by another policeman.

The Judge summed up the evidence, affirming that it was a case of strong suspicion against the prisoner, but admitting that it was a doubtful question, to be left to their consideration, whether the evidence had been sufficiently conclusive to bring home to the prisoner the act charged against him. The jury found a verdict of not guilty, and he was discharged with an admonition.

**103 July 20 1843**

WORCESTER CITY SESSIONS **George Hunt**, 19, boatman, for stealing a silk pocket handkerchief, the property of James Charington, on the 7<sup>th</sup> instant on the racecourse, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, the first and last month in solitary confinement.

**104 July 27 1843**

CITY POLICE Ann Hamlet was committed for trial on a charge of robbing **Edwin Farr**, a boatman, of about 14s in money. He had been drinking in her company, and incautiously fell asleep, when the robbery was effected.



**105 July 27 1843**

WORCESTERSHIRE ASSIZES

**George Hughes**, 19, boatman, was charged with having stolen a sovereign, the property of William Mann, on Monday last at the parish of St Alban. The prosecutor deposed to having met with the prisoner and gone in company with him to the cider vaults near the Bishop's Palace, where they had some cider, in paying for which he dropped some of his money in the presence of the prisoner, but picked it up again. He continued : I lay down on the banks of the river, and the prisoner lay down near me and was fumbling at my pockets ; when a man named Wheeler called to me from the cider vaults, that I was being robbed. The prisoner, who had by that time gone away, then came back and gave me my purse. I had three sovereigns and other money in my purse when I left the cider vaults, and when the purse was returned to me, I found only two sovereigns and the lesser coins in it. Several other witnesses were called, who corroborated portions of the statement made by the prisoner (*sic*). The prisoner in his defence made a rambling statement of particulars respecting a visit he, in company with prosecutor, had paid to a house of ill repute, afterwards calling at several public houses in the city, at each of which places the prosecutor had pulled out his money and dropped the gold through his fingers, exclaiming, "These 'ere things don't grow on the tops o' trees, my boys". The prisoner finally denied having ever touched the money himself. His Lordship having summed up, the Jury returned a verdict of guilty, and he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment with hard labour.

**106 August 17 1843**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

On Monday last, Thomas Hincks was fined 5s and 11s 6d expenses for administering to one **Henry Wedgbury**, a boatman, a brace of the neatest black eyes that ever glower'd in a Court of justice ; the offence was perpetrated in Withy Walk on Thursday night, and under a drunken recollection of an old grudge.

**107 August 17 1843**

An extraordinary verdict was on Thursday last returned by a Coroner's Jury at North Petherton, Somerset, relative to the death of one **Richard Hall**, a boatman, who recently lost his life in consequence of his boat striking against the timber work of a bridge belonging to the Bristol and Exeter Railway. A verdict was returned of "Manslaughter against the chairman, vice chairman and directors of the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company", alleging that the deceased came by his death owing to the criminal neglect of the Company in not removing the woodwork. The chairman is Frederick Ricketts Esq, and the vice chairman the Worshipful the Mayor of Bristol ; both of whom, with Mr Divett MP, W P King, Charles Morgan Esqs &c are included in this strange verdict. Should the coroner have issued his warrant, these gentlemen (some of whom are probably unconscious of the accident up to this moment) must be committed until bail has been received for them. The verdict seems to be the result of a great local excitement.

**108 August 24 1843**

**Thomas Powell**, a boatman in the employ of Messrs Bunning and Co, was fined 40s and costs on Monday last by the Gloucester magistrates for using a horse on the towing-path without first taking out a ticket and paying for the same. The information was laid by Mr Bundy of Upton, the agent to the Gloucester and Worcester Company of Proprietors of the Horse Towing Path.

**109 August 31 1843**

INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES On Saturday at the Bird in Hand, Droitwich, on **Thomas Harris**, a waterman aged 27, who on the previous night died suddenly just after retiring to bed. Mr W R Jacques, surgeon, deposed that apoplexy was the cause of death. Verdict accordingly.

### **110 September 21 1843**

**CAUTION TO BOATMEN AND OTHERS** At the Upton Petty Sessions on Thursday, **Thomas Stell**, employed in a boat belonging to Messrs Price and Co of Gloucester, was charged before the Magistrates by Mr Henry Bundy, agent to the Gloucester and Worcester Horse Towing Path Company, with using a horse on their road without first taking a ticket and paying for the same, and was fined 40s with costs.

### **111 October 19 1843**

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS**

**William Gittens**, 40, waterman, was charged with stealing a quantity of hay, the property of Robert Cordell, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July last at the hamlet of Tutnall and Copley. The prisoner was seen to jump over the hedge of a field near the canal side by the prosecutor, who saw the prisoner remove a tump of hay and throw it over the hedge on to the towing-path. Mr Huddleston, for the defence, cross-examined the prosecutor at some length, from which it seemed that the field from which the hay was stolen was partly in the county of Warwick and part in that of Worcester ; and Mr Huddleston contended that as no evidence, beyond the unsupported statement of prosecutor, was produced to designate the boundaries of the counties, the case must fall to the ground. A long discussion ensued, but ultimately the objection was allowed to be valid, and the prisoner was acquitted.

### **112 October 26 1843**

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS SESSIONS** (Continued from our last)

**Edward Hall**, waterman, pleaded guilty to the charge of stealing a deal plank, the property of Charles Bird, at the parish of St Peter the Great on the 8<sup>th</sup> August last. Having already been in prison upwards of two months, the Court sentenced him to 14 days' further imprisonment.

**William Hunt**, 58, boatman, also pleaded guilty to the charge of stealing two boltings of straw, the property of Thomas Dixon, at Alvechurch. He was committed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August last ; and the Court, taking into consideration his long confinement, sentenced him also to 14 days' imprisonment.

George Bradley, 19, labourer, and **Henry Griffiths**, 17, boatman, were placed at the bar on a charge of stealing four ash poles, the property of Mr Charles Bird, in the county part of the parish of St Peter the Great on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September last. A verdict of not guilty was returned.

**Samuel Miller**, 21, waterman, was charged with stealing a deal plank, the property of Mr Charles Bird, the prosecutor in the former case. Mr Huddleston conducted the prosecution. The prisoner was seen removing the plank from the timber yard of prosecutor between eleven and twelve o'clock on the night in question, which fact was corroborated by the testimony of several witnesses, and the prisoner, having been found guilty, was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment.

**William Lea**, 16, boatman, and Henry White, 26, labourer, were charged with stealing a hundred bricks, the property of Mr William Blow Collis, on the 9<sup>th</sup> instant at Stourbridge. Mr Owen conducted the prosecution. It appeared that the prisoners had been seen removing a quantity of bricks from a wall belonging to the prosecutor, and carrying them away to repair a chimney which they were building. A verdict of guilty was returned against Lea, who was sentenced to one week's imprisonment ; White was acquitted.

### **113 November 2 1843**

**WATERMEN'S CHURCH ON THE SEVERN** After two sermons preached on Friday last by the Rev E W Foley, Incumbent of Trinity Church, Tewkesbury, in aid of the funds for supporting this place of worship, the sum of £23 8s 8d was collected. The duty of providing religious instruction for a long neglected class of British subjects was on this occasion earnestly enforced upon Christian principles, and the result of the appeal was encouraging. Although the continuance of so much

Sunday traffic must necessarily operate as a check upon the progress of the moral improvement of watermen in general, yet are there not wanting honourable instances of masters willing to afford their men opportunities of attending public worship on the day of sacred rest, while evidently there is on the part of many of the boatmen a readiness to avail themselves of the privilege. The friends of this undertaking express themselves thankful that it has thus far succeeded beyond their anticipation ; and inasmuch as in many parts of the kingdom an increasing attention is being paid to the instruction of men employed on our inland navigations, it may be hoped that this numerous body of our countrymen, so long proverbial for their lawless conduct, will be found gradually rising in the scale of religion and morals.

**114 November 3 1843**

ADJOURNED CITY MICHAELMAS SESSIONS

Ann Hamlet, 49, married, was charged with stealing monies from the person of **Edwin Farr**, a bargeman, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July last, in a house of ill repute in the New Passage, Blackfriars. Guilty : three months' imprisonment, the first and last month in solitary confinement.

**115 November 9 1843**

On Wednesday afternoon last, a waterman named **William Holford**, who was at the time in a state of intoxication, went into the shop of Mr Joseph Morris, grocer of Westgate Street, Gloucester, and seeing on the counter a cup containing oil of vitriol, mistaking it for gin, put the cup to his mouth and drank off the contents. The consequences, as might be expected, were immediately serious and alarming. He was dreadfully burnt in the mouth, throat and stomach, and was thrown into a state of insensibility ; in which condition, and apparently on the point of death, he was removed to the Gloucester Infirmary ; and on Friday he was going on favourably. His own account of the transaction (but we do not know how far it is to be relied upon) is that a trick was played off upon him ; if this be so, it is most reprehensible conduct, whoever was guilty of it.

**116 November 23 1843**

COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS Henry White, landlord of a beerhouse at Kempsey, charged **Frederick Rammell**, boatman, with assaulting him a few days ago. The complainant stated that the boatman having been very abusive to some of his (White's) customers, he as landlord desired him to quit, which defendant not only refused to do, but struck him a severe blow on the side of the head. Rammell did not deny the assault, but pleaded intoxication in excuse, and expressed his regret for the offence. He was fined 10s, with 8s 6d expenses.

**117 November 23 1843**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE, MONDAY A man named Hall was charged with having sold the carcase of a horse belonging to a poor boatman named **Ince**, the horse having been accidentally drowned in the Severn. The matter was allowed to be compromised. The loss of the animal is a very serious thing for poor Ince, seeing that it was almost the sole support of himself and family ; and as he is an honest, industrious man, Mr Luke Maybury, carrier &c, has kindly consented to receive donations on his behalf.

**118 November 30 1843**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

CAUTION TO BOATMEN AND OTHERS Mr Pemberton, the city surveyor, laid an information against **Edward Head**, barge owner of Tewkesbury, for having lashed a rope from his barge to the balustrades of the bridge in this city, contrary to the Bridge Act, which imposes a penalty on all parties doing so for the purpose of "mooring or staying" their vessels. The defendant was discharged on payment of expenses, he having promised never to infringe the Act again, and also that he would expound the statute to his fellow traders.

**THIEVES BY WHOLESALE** James Chapman, tailor, **Henry Davis**, boatman, James Davis, whitesmith and George Hughes were brought up on suspicion of having been concerned in several robberies. James Davis and George Hughes were first charged with robbing John Paine of Castle Froome, pig dealer. Complainant said that about eleven o'clock on Saturday night last, after visiting Jones's liquor shop in Broad Street, he went down to the shop of Mr Groves, butcher, near All Saints' Church. On leaving Mr Groves's shop, he went up Merryvale and saw Davis and another man with him standing near to the top of Grope Lane. Witness went down Grope Lane ; and while there, a man in a blue jacket or frock (the dress of the prisoner Hughes) passed him and returned. The man in the blue frock then seized witness by the arms, while Davis ran up and, putting his hand into witness's pocket, took out his purse. Both men then ran away, and witness followed them ; but being interrupted by a cart which he ran against, lost sight of them. At the time of the robbery, witness had in his purse either twelve or thirteen sovereigns, besides some silver in another pocket, which was not touched. The money was the produce of a drove of pigs which he had brought to market that day. He swore to the prisoner Davis, but not to Hughes. After the evidence of the prosecutor, Mr Sidebottom adjourned the further hearing of the case until Thursday.

The whole of the prisoners were then charged with robbing, on Sunday night, the shop of Mrs Mary Ann Paine, who keeps a huckster's shop in the Lower Henwick Road. It appeared from the statement of the prosecutrix that she retired to bed at her usual hour on Sunday night, having first seen that the doors were fastened as usual. On rising on Monday morning, she found that during the night some persons had been regaling themselves upon a leg of pork, bread, cheese and butter, which had been left in the shop, and the remains of which were lying upon a table in the kitchen. From the shop a quantity of tobacco and tea had been purloined, and the till was emptied of its contents, about 12 or 13 shillings. The house had been entered by one of the doors, in which a hole had been cut, thus allowing the introduction of a hand to unfasten the bar by which the door was secured ; there was no lock to the door. On Sergeant Sanders taking Henry Davis into custody, he found some lucifer matches and tobacco papers on him, which were of the same description as the articles stolen from the shop. Sergeant Chipp apprehended James Davis, Chapman and Hughes on Monday, and found some papers of tobacco upon the former ; the papers and tobacco were of the same description as that stolen from the shop. Some copper money was found on Hughes and Chapman, but Mrs Payne could not identify any portion of it. All the prisoners were apprehended at the Black Swan in Quay Street. A young man named Francis Powell stated that he was emptying a mixen near to Mrs Payne's shop between two and three o'clock on Monday morning, and while so engaged he saw two men come out of the shop near to Mrs Payne's back door. He believed Henry Davis was one of the men, but did not think the others were of the party. The whole of the prisoners (with the exception of James Davis, who was committed for trial) were then remanded until Thursday (tomorrow), when they will be finally examined. (It is not unlikely that these parties were concerned in the robbery of the shop of Mr Spalding, baker of St Clement Street, which took place the same night. In this instance £8 was stolen from the till ; but fortunately they were not successful in their attack on an oak box which contained a large sum of money.)

George Hunt was remanded on a charge of breaking open the cabin of a boat in Lowesmoor basin on Monday week, and stealing divers articles of wearing apparel, the property of **Charles Beasley**.

### **119 November 30 1843**

**INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES** On Friday, at the Plough Inn, Upton-on-Severn, on the body of a lad, name unknown, which had that morning been taken out of the Severn by a boatman named **Gay**, in the employ of Mr C Hobbs of Stroud. The body was floating next to a tree which seemed to have been washed down by the flood ; but it appeared to have been in the water about a fortnight. The child was dressed in a black jacket, and his trousers had a patch on the thigh. There were only a few bruises on the body, which were probably received after death. Verdict : "Found drowned".

### 120 December 14 1843

We stated in the Journal of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ult that a woman named **Price**, the wife of a boatman, had either thrown herself or fallen into the Severn near this city on the night of the 18<sup>th</sup> ; and we have now to add that her body was picked up last Friday evening at Minsterworth, about five miles below Gloucester. By a singular coincidence, the body was picked up by her husband's brother, alongside his father's boat. The inquest was held on Saturday. Verdict : "Found drowned".

### 121 December 21 1843

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

WANTON ASSAULT **William Huckster**, boatman, was brought up, charged with assaulting a little boy named James Presdee in Friar Street last evening. The boy stated that he was standing on the flags near the Crown, watching the defendant and another man who were looking in at the window of a cook shop, when the defendant came up to him and kicked him several times on his leg, in proof of which he drew up his trouser and presented several severe bruises on his right leg. The defendant did not deny the charge, but appeared sorry for what he had done and offered to make the boy any compensation the Bench might direct, stating that he was drunk at the time or he should not have done it. After some consideration, the Bench dismissed the charge upon his giving the boy 5s.

### 122 December 21 1843

BIRTH EXTRAORDINARY On Tuesday (yesterday) morning at Bradley, in the parish of Sedgley, **Sarah Dolman**, the wife of **Frederick Dolman**, a boatman in the employ of Mr James Fellowes, gave birth to three sons who, together with the mother, are at present doing well. A subscription has been entered into for the relief of the poor parents of the children.

### 123 December 28 1843

Since Mr Edwin Calder, coal merchant of Sidbury in this city, has been in business, now some two or three months, he has been continually robbed, as much as half a ton of coal having been stolen in one night. Having again lost a quantity on Thursday week, Mr C and his men determined to keep a sharp look out, and about five o'clock the following evening, they succeeded in catching a boatman named **Henry Davis** upon the coal stack. He was given into the custody of Serjeant Sanders, and on Saturday Mr Sidebottom committed him to take his trial. This is the man who was taken up on suspicion of being concerned in the robbery at Mrs Payne's in Hylton Street the other day.

### 124 January 4 1844

WORCESTERSHIRE EPIPHANY SESSIONS

**Elias Cooper** and **Joseph Kester** were charged with stealing a wheelbarrow belonging to the Stratford-on-Avon Canal Navigation Company. Mr Selfe conducted the prosecution, and Mr Lee the defence. The prisoners are boatmen in the employ of Messrs Foster of Stourbridge, and were engaged in working a boat called the *Active* along the said canal ; and on their boat the wheelbarrow was found, having been missed from the towing-path where it had been left by a servant of the Company. Mr Lee, in his able address to the Jury, took an objection to the manner in which the first count of the indictment was framed ; the property being described as belonging to the proprietors of the Stratford-on-Avon Canal Navigation, not mentioning an individual proprietor, which he contended should have been done, as the Act whereby the Company had been incorporated merely gave them power to "sue and be sued" as the corporate body, which term he considered could only refer to civil actions, not to criminal prosecutions. Mr Selfe, in his answer, read the remaining part of the clause, which allowed the Company to have such chattels as were necessary to the navigation of the canal ; and contended that the consequent inference would be that they were empowered to protect those chattels in their corporate names ; in which opinion the Court coincided, and the objection was overruled. After a patient investigation of the whole affair, the prisoners received a most unexceptionable character, and the Jury returned a verdict of acquittal.



**William Easthope**, 41, boatman, was acquitted on the charge of stealing some coal and other articles, the property of Henry Bentley, at Dudley on the 13<sup>th</sup> ult.

**125 January 4 1844**

CITY SESSIONS

**Henry Davies**, 19, boatman, was charged with stealing a quantity of coal, the property of Edward Calder, on the 15<sup>th</sup> ult. Guilty : Seven years' transportation.

**Charles Willis**, 35, waterman, was acquitted on the charge of stealing a dead goose, the property of James Poole, in the parish of St Peter on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December last.

**126 January 4 1844**

INTOXICATION, QUARRELLING AND DEATH An inquest was held on Wednesday at the Navigation Inn, Wharf Street, Birmingham, on the boatman named **John Wood**, alias "Cheshire Jack", 28 years of age, who met with his death in a drunken fight on Sunday night week at the Worcester Wharf. Three men, whose names are **Thomas Jones**, charged as a principal, **Edward Biddle** and **Thomas Harris**, all boatmen in the employ of Messrs Pickford and Co, were brought up in the custody of Sub-Inspector Glossop, charged with having caused or aided in his death. The inquiry lasted for a long time ; and, after a very patient investigation, a verdict was returned of "Manslaughter against Thomas Jones".

**127 January 11 1844**

A grant of £25 was last week voted by the Staffordshire Boatmen's Pastoral Instruction Society towards the boatmen's church now erecting at Etruria, on condition that the remaining sum necessary to complete the edifice be collected within six months.

**128 January 11 1844**

CAUTION TO BOATMEN AND OTHERS On Thursday, a boatman named **Hodges**, employed with a boat belonging to Messrs Southan and Son of Gloucester, was charged before the Magistrates at Upton-on-Severn by Mr Henry Bundy, agent to the Gloucester and Worcester Company of Proprietors of the horse towing-path, with using a horse on their road without first taking out a ticket and paying for the same. The case was fully proved, and Hodges was fined in the penalty of 40s and costs. At the same time, another boatman named **Andrew Powell**, employed with a boat belonging to Messrs Clay and Newman of Droitwich, for using his horse beyond the distance for which the ticket was taken out, was fined in the penalty of 20s and costs.

**129 January 11 1844**

A brutal manslaughter occurred at Gloucester on Saturday. **George Fricker**, a waterman, while in a state of inebriation, entered a beer shop and challenged, among others, one Richard Cole, aged about 18, to fight. Cole was knocked down by a violent blow on the ear, and afterwards kicked ; he died in a few minutes. The landlord, in his attempt to separate the parties, was nearly strangled by the ferocious wretch, Fricker. At the inquest on Monday, a verdict of "Manslaughter" was returned.

**130 January 25 1844**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE A man named Charles Hames was this day committed by Mr Sidebottom for trial, on a charge of stealing several articles of wearing apparel from a barge lying at the Quay, belonging to **Mr G Davis** of Madeley. The property was removed on the evening of Saturday while the boatmen were on shore ; and suspicion falling on the prisoner, who is a hauler, from the fact of a handkerchief which was known to have belonged to him having been left on board, Sergeant Chipp and Mr Davis, the owner, went in pursuit, and on Sunday night apprehended Hames near Tewkesbury ; he had then one of the missing handkerchiefs on his neck, and the

remainder of the property was afterwards found at the Fish and Anchor, where he had left it in the custody of the landlord.

### **131 January 25 1844**

#### **UPTON PETTY SESSIONS**

**Isaac Baylis**, boatman, was fined 2s 6d and 10s costs, on the information of Superintendent Petford, for unmercifully beating a donkey at Upton on the 4<sup>th</sup> instant.

**SEVERN HORSE TOWING-PATH – BYE LAWS** Mr H Bundy, agent to the proprietors of the Gloucester and Worcester Horse Towing-path Company, cited **Reuben Harris** of Stoke Prior for having used a horse on the towing-path near the Ketch on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December last, without having first obtained a ticket. Mr Walker, solicitor of Upton, appeared for the company ; Mr Elgie, solicitor of this city, conducted the defendant's case. Mr Bundy proved that a written parchment produced contained the bye laws of the Towing-path Company ; whereupon Mr Elgin objected to their reception, in a speech of some length. He contended that the proprietors in a general assembly had no right to make a bye law such as that under which his client was summoned ; they could merely make bye laws for the “good Government of the Company, and for the good and orderly using of the undertaking”, which could only apply for the appointment of officers for conducting its affairs and the enforcing the proper and due performance of their duties. That the Company's Act never contemplated giving the assembly of proprietors the power to make bye laws for the punishment of offenders against those bye laws by summary conviction before the Justices, as now sought, was clear from the fact that the 45<sup>th</sup> clause enumerated a number of offences which should be punishable by fines, and these fines were ordered to be recovered in the manner of an action for debt in a Court of Record. Mr Walker having briefly replied, the Bench overruled the objection, and the case was gone into. Mr Edward Clarke of the Ketch proved that on the 29<sup>th</sup> ultimo, defendant came down the river with a boat drawn by a horse, and requested “an 18s ticket to Gloucester and back”, which he was told he could not have, but could have one down to Gloucester at 3d per mile. He did not take a ticket ; and witness was not aware that the horse was used beyond the Ketch. Defendant said if he could not have a ticket at the Ketch, he would go to Mr Bundy for one ; it used to be customary on the river to give return tickets. Mrs Bundy deposed to defendant applying to her for a ticket on the same terms as he did to Mr Clarke ; and as he could not get one, took his horse from the boat, and it was drawn down by men. Mr Elgie, in an able speech, contended that if the Magistrates decided according to the terms of the bye laws, they must convict every person using the towing-path between Worcester and Upton, inasmuch as the bye laws said that any person “using a horse before taking a ticket” was liable to a 40s penalty ; whereas the first ticket house was the Ketch, two miles down the river from Worcester ; but if they did not consider the using of the horse between Worcester and the Ketch an offence, then his client was innocent, as there was no proof of the horse having been used afterwards. Clearly no fraud was intended from the fact of the application at the Ketch, and the further application at Upton, accompanied as it was with the explanation that the ticket was for the whole distance between Worcester and Gloucester. He could prove that men hauled the boat between the Ketch and Upton ; but he was so satisfied of what must be the decision on the case for the prosecution, that he should leave the matter as it stood. The Bench dismissed the case, and in doing so remarked that there should be either a ticket house at Worcester, or that the wording of the bye laws should be altered.

### **132 February 1 1844**

**CITY MAGISTRATES'OFFICE** **George Hughes** and **George Hunt**, boatmen, two notoriously bad characters, were charged with creating a disturbance at the Glovers' Arms on Sunday night. It seems that the fellows came to the inn in a state of intoxication ; and the landlord refusing to supply them with more drink, they became very outrageous, and Hughes committed a violent assault upon one of the customers. He was fined £1 and 10s costs, and in default of payment sent to the treadmill for a month. Hunt was discharged.

### 133 February 8 1844

#### COUNTY PETTY SESSIONS

CAUTION TO BOATMEN Three boatman named **Lloyd, Tipper** and **Pountney**, in the employ of Messrs Shipston, water carriers, were cited at the instance of a brother craftsman named **George Weaver**, in the employ of one Mrs E Sankey, coal dealer, on a charge of maliciously and wilfully damaging a boat navigated by him, the said George Weaver, on the Birmingham and Worcester Canal, on the 16<sup>th</sup> ult. The transaction occurred at a lock called Gilbert's Bottom Lock ; to obtain first entrance into which a spirited contest took place between the parties, which terminated in a collision at the mouth of the lock ; the defendant's boat – which was a “reg'lar fly” - breaking the “knees” of its adversary and otherwise damaging it. Mr Rea appeared for the defence, and produced a table of bye laws relating to the navigation of the canal, the last of which set forth that all coal boats should give precedence to fly boats in the passing of any lock, and for that purpose they should stay at the first pound to allow the fly boats to pass into the lock ; it also subjects any defaulter to a fine of £5 ; which regulation Mr Rea contended it became necessary should be strictly enforced to enable the Company to compete with the railway. This being the case, the Magistrates dismissed the charge, ordering prosecutor to pay the costs incurred, amounting to 18s.

### 134 February 29 1844

On Friday night last, a fatal accident occurred to **William Lister**, a bargeman, at Hanley Quay. He, with some others, was preparing a rope to pull their barge up the river when, it is supposed, his foot caught in the rope, and he fell from the barge into the river. A line was immediately thrown out, but he was not seen afterwards till eleven o'clock on the following morning, when the body was picked up. It was a dark night. Deceased was said to have been sober. He is a single man aged 27. An inquest was held on Monday. Verdict : Accidental death.

### 135 March 7 1844

UPTON PETTY SESSIONS **James Griffin**, boatman, and William Henry Dixon, cheese and bacon factor, both of Upton, were charged by John Tandy, gamekeeper to Sir A Lechmere, Bart, with having, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January last at the hamlet of Queenhill, trespassed on certain lands, the property of the worthy Baronet, with a gun in pursuit of game. The informations were founded upon the evidence of a man named Thomas Robins, a labourer. Robins, however, upon being placed before the Bench today to repeat his statement, proved so utterly oblivious of the whole transaction, of which before he had given so conclusive an account, that no case was shown against either of the defendants ; and they were consequently discharged. Mr Walker, solicitor of Upton, appeared for the defendants.

### 136 March 7 1844

WORCESTERSHIRE ADJOURNED SESSIONS In the case of **William Rendall**, 23, boatman, charged with uttering counterfeit coin at Kidderminster, no prosecutor appeared, and he was consequently discharged from custody.

### 137 March 14 1844

#### WORCESTERSHIRE LENT ASSIZES

BRUTAL ATTACK ON A GAMEKEEPER AT SPETCHLEY **William Jordan**, 20, waterman, was charged with maliciously cutting and wounding one William Hallard, a gamekeeper in the employ of R Berkeley Esq , at Spetchley on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December last.

Me Lee and Mr Whitmore appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Allen for the defence.

Mr Lee opened the case by detailing at some length the circumstances of the brutal assault ; and Mr Whitmore called

William Hallard, who deposed : I am employed as watcher by Mr Berkeley of Spetchley. On Sunday December 17<sup>th</sup>, I was going between the railway and my own house between seven and eight o'clock, when I heard the sound of a gun in Sunday Hill Coppice. I went to the house of

Langdon, the gamekeeper. He was not at home, but his son accompanied me, and we went with Langdon's dog to the place from which the sound proceeded. It was a starlight night. After we arrived at Tadpole Meadow, we saw two persons between us and the coppice. The Tadpole joins the coppice. They came and met us. I did not know the first, the last was Jordan, whom I had known for three months. I knew his name from the other keepers. The other man met me and went past me. When Jordan came up, I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, "Oh, Mr Jordan, you are the man I've been looking for". Jordan then put his hand to his under jacket pocket, and he pulled out the barrel of a gun. I was close to him, and could see distinctly who he was. The moment I saw him take the gun barrel from his pocket, I loosed the dog and said, "Go to work, Spring", but the dog ran off to Tadpole Coppice, where there was another dog ; Jordan then took hold of the gun barrel with both his hands, and aimed a blow at my head which I received on my left arm, which it broke. I did not at that time see the other man. Jordan aimed another blow at my head, which I caught on a stick I held in my right hand. The next blow was on my forehead, and felled me to the ground. While on the ground I received several other blows on my mouth ; the blows knocked two of my teeth into the roof of my mouth, and I lost three others. My upper lip was cut and hung over my lower lip, which was also cut. I can't remember whether I cried for help. I do not recollect seeing the other man. I afterwards went home to Langdon's, and Mr Sheppard saw me the same evening.

Cross-examined by Mr Allen : I don't know that I was always so gentle as on this occasion. I was never charged with shooting at one of Mr Berkeley's keepers. I have been in gaol for poaching, but was acquitted. I have been in prison twice, once was for finding a trap before it was lost. Jordan was not on the path when I first saw him. He was at much as twenty yards from the path, which is a public footpath. I never said prisoner was on the path when I first saw him. The other man was walking with Jordan at the time I first saw them. I never spoke to the other man. I had no opportunity of seeing the other man, as I had enough to do on seeing Jordan pull the barrel from his pocket. I never at any time observed what became of the other man. I did not fall from the blow on my arm. The stick I had was not knobbed ; it was as good a bit of ash as I could cut.

Re-examined by Mr Lee : It was seven years this March since I was charged with poaching, and six years since the charge of stealing the trap. Jordan was coming across from the cover at the time I first saw him.

Daniel Langdon, the son of the keeper, and who was in company with prosecutor, deposed : I am 15 years old ; I recollect Hallard coming down to our house on the 17<sup>th</sup> December. It was between seven and eight o'clock. I went with him to the Tadpole meadow, where I saw Jordan and another man. It was a starlight night, quite light enough for me to distinguish anyone. I had known Jordan two or three years. I saw him last about twelve months ago. They were coming into the footpath in the direction of Sunday Hill Coppice. Jordan met us ; another man came with him, but he stood under an apple tree. I saw Jordan strike Hallard with the gun barrel, and heard Hallard say, "Go to work". He had father's dog with him. The strange dog was a brown terrier ; our dog is a bulldog. I then heard Jordan sing out, "Now, George, now, George", and the other man came towards Jordan. I went to meet him, and he struck at me ; the blow missed me, and I struck at him and he ran away. When I found I could not catch him, I returned to Hallard, and met Jordan running ; he passed me on my left hand. Hallard was gone when I got up to the place where the scrimmage was. Prior to my return, I heard Hallard say, "Oh, Lord, I shall be killed". I found Hallard's hat, and subsequently met him at Spetchley Common. Hallard was taken to my father's house and Mr Sheppard, the surgeon, was sent for. I and my father went to the place where the fight was, and found what was called a thief net used for catching fish or game.

Cross-examined by Mr Allen : The dog is kept for the purpose of going after other dogs and such like. We had got it with a string. Hallard had the dog by the string, and when he said, "Go to work", he let go the string. It is a large dog, but I don't know the exact height. I never heard of its killing any dogs or men. I remained in company with Hallard till Jordan sung out, "Now, George". I saw the blow struck that broke Hallard's arm, and I then walked to meet the other man.

William Allen : I live at Spetchley and am a labourer. I recollect the circumstance of Hallard's

assault. I was within a mile of Worcester, when I met a brown terrier which I knew to be Jordan's, and immediately after I met some persons, one of whom was Jordan. There were three, and they were going towards Spetchley. It was just before six. I have known Jordan three or four years. On passing by him, I touched his pocket, when he made use of some abusive language. On my return to Spetchley, I met someone coming from Spetchley for Mr Sheppard.

Here some interruption took place owing to Mr Allen having been compelled to attend in the other Court. Mr Justice Coleridge (after announcing that he should not take another cause that evening) having called on a cause in which he was engaged ; and the prisoner was therefore left undefended. Mr Huddleston was requested to take the brief, but not having been in Court during the hearing of the previous witnesses, he declined.

Mr Baron Parke said it was a very unfortunate circumstance for the prisoner, but he could not help it, and the case must proceed.

John Linton corroborated the last witness's statement.

J P Sheppard Esq, surgeon : On the 17<sup>th</sup>, I attended Hallard about nine o'clock. I found him sitting in the keeper's house, much covered with blood. He had an extensive cut over the left eye. Both his lips were much cut and bruised, several of his teeth were knocked out, and both bones of his left arm were fractured. The wound over the eye was an inch and a half long. The teeth were driven up into the mouth. The wounds on his face might possibly have been inflicted with a gun barrel. Blows from such an instrument would cause the injuries. The wounds were not dangerous in themselves. The blow on the head might have been so. The one over the eye was in a dangerous part.

The prisoner made a short statement in his defence, alleging as a reason for his appearance in the field that he had heard a gun fired, and had gone into the field to see who it was ; he then called George Carter, who said that he had met with Jordan, and he requested him to accompany him to the Spetchley station to meet a friend. He then related the particulars of the transaction, with but a slight variation from the other witnesses with respect to the number and nature of the blows received and dealt by prisoner. He also said that a Mr Elgie had seen him and told him he must give rather a different version of the affair, for Mr Berkeley was not a man to be trifled with.

His Lordship, in summing up, told the jury that the only two points for their consideration were, first, the identity of the prisoner, and secondly, the intention with which the blows were struck. With respect to the first, the prisoner's own witness had proved the fact of his being the party ; and with respect to the second, his Lordship said that a blow inflicted on the brow by an instrument capable of breaking a man's arm, as was the case in the present instance, he thought pretty conclusive that something more was intended than slight injury ; if on the other hand they were of opinion that the blows were inflicted without such intent, they would find the prisoner guilty of the common assault only ; but, if the contrary, they would not be discharging the duty they owed to the country if they did not find the prisoner guilty of the felony. Should they wish the evidence read over to them, he would do so with great pleasure. The Jury did not require this, but found a verdict of guilty on the major charge, and the Learned Judge sentenced the prisoner to transportation for twenty years.

### **138    March 14 1844**

#### **TRIAL OF THE CITY PRISONERS**

**Benjamin Patrick**, 33, waterman, was charged with stealing 350 slates, the property of Mr Rowlands, builder of this city, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January last.

Mr Huddleston appeared on behalf of the prosecution, and Mr Cooke for the defence.

In opening the case, Mr Huddleston, at some length, endeavoured to explain the peculiar mode of counting adopted by the trade, and then proceeded to call witnesses, who deposed that the slates had been purchased at Port Madoc by Mr Rowlands, from which place they had been conveyed by ship to Gloucester, from whence they were brought on to Worcester in prisoner's boat. The number counted into his boat was 7000 long count – or in exact numbers 8870 ; and a paper to that effect had been signed by prisoner at Gloucester. The number placed in Mr Rowlands's yard was but



8515, and the boat was afterwards removed to a spot in the canal near to Gregory's Mill, and a quantity of slates were sold by prisoner to a person residing near that spot for £2, a sum considerably below their real value. Several objections were made as to the legality of the indictment, and during the proceedings, his Lordship gave it as his opinion that the charge could not be constituted a larceny as there was no separation from any bulk, the slates not being bound together, but independent of each other. Some little discussion ensued on this point, but it ultimately proved fatal to the indictment, and the prisoner was acquitted.

**Charles Hems**, boatman, was charged with stealing three neckerchiefs, the property of **George Davis**, and a bag, with other articles, the property of **John Transom**, on board the *Tide Carrier*, in the parish of St Andrew on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January last. It seems that the prisoner went on board the prosecutor's boat, called the *Tide Carrier*, and asked him to allow him to lie down, and the prosecutor, having given his consent, left the boat ; but on returning, he discovered that the property had been stolen. It was subsequently found in a public house at Tewkesbury, in the custody of a witness named Hodges. At the time of his committal, prisoner made a statement confessing that he had stolen the goods, but had not broken any lock. A previous conviction was proved against him, and he was sentenced to ten years' transportation.

### 139 March 28 1844

INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES Yesterday, at Chaceley Stock, on **Joseph Whittall**, aged 20, boatman of this city, who accidentally fell into the Severn on Friday evening last, as he was attempting to hook his horse to the boat line. The body was not found till the following morning, although a labourer who was at work near the spot made every endeavour for that purpose. It appeared that the other two men in the boat did not lose much time in their search for the body. The boat belonged to **Mr James Bourne** of Droitwich. Verdict : "Accidentally drowned".

### 140 April 11 1844

**John James alias Williams**, aged 16, boatman, stood indicted with having stolen a bolting of straw, the property of William Benman, at Kidderminster on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March. The versatile landlady of the Navigation Inn, Kidderminster, where prisoner had been employed, deposed to having seen him on the night in question with the bolting of straw on his back, close to her premises, whereupon she called to her husband, who came and took it from him ; the prisoner at the same time swearing that he wasn't going to do anything with it, and indeed didn't know anything about it. The boy, it appears, was not only an audacious perverter of facts, but a very cunning fellow into the bargain, and cross-examined the prosecutor and his wife with a coolness quite opposed to the idea of the stolen article being found on his back. The old lady, however, being possessed of a fair average of the volubility usually falling to her sex, was more than a match for the young scapegrace ; and the case being clearly established, he was found guilty, but recommended to mercy. Fourteen days' imprisonment, and to be once whipped.

### 141 April 11 1844

#### CITY EASTER SESSIONS

Edward Freeman, 21, labourer, **Henry Jones**, 18, boatman, and **George Hughes**, 22, boatman, were placed at the bar, charged with having stolen seven bells and other articles, the property of Mrs Jane Yarnold, from her house in St George's Square on the 17<sup>th</sup> ult.

During the arraignment, the prisoners Hughes and Jones challenged several of the Jurymen, and some time elapsed before the panel could be completed.

Mr Gray appeared for the prosecution, and called Samuel Thomas, servant to the prosecutrix, who deposed that the house from which the property was stolen belonged to his mistress, and was unoccupied on the 14<sup>th</sup> ult. On the morning of that day, witness went and found the window open, and observed that several articles of furniture had been disturbed ; leaving no doubt that some unbidden guests had been occupying these "ready furnished lodgings" on the previous evening.

Witness made another visit the following Sunday evening, when he again found the furniture in disorder, and immediately gave information to Inspector Phillips, who accompanied him back to the house. On their return they found the three prisoners in the back kitchen, and on searching them, Phillips found five bells and a box of lucifers in Jones's pockets ; the remainder of the property was found upon the prisoner Freeman. A bundle of skeleton keys and a small saw were likewise found upon Jones by Policeman Bradford, who accompanied Phillips. On observing Jones, Phillips immediately collared him, being well acquainted with his notorious character, saying, "Here's Harry Jones". To this the prisoner made some reply ; but the Inspector "couldn't catch what it was, *as it was very dark*". (Laughter). After securing the prisoners, they proceeded to search the house, and in the passage leading to the yard they discovered that someone had been "ringing changes" upon the range of bells which were hung up there, the springs having been broken ; and on comparing the bells found on the prisoners with the remaining portion of the springs, they were found to correspond exactly. Mr Hill addressed the Jury in defence, and the Recorder having summed up, they returned a verdict of guilty against each of the prisoners. Previous convictions for felony were proved against Freeman and Hughes. The Recorder sentenced each of the prisoners to seven years' transportation.

**Mark Martin**, 24, boatman, was charged with stealing a pair of trousers and other articles of wearing apparel, the property of **Clement Bennett**, on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. The property was stolen from a boat called the *Perseverance*, moored in the canal near to Lowesmoor, and some part of it was subsequently pawned at the shop of Mr Gwin, Sidbury, and part at Mr Walter's, Broad Street. The remainder was found concealed in prisoner's house. The whole of the property was satisfactorily identified, and the Recorder having summed up, a verdict of guilty was returned. Two months' imprisonment, the first and last three weeks in solitary confinement.

#### **142 April 11 1844**

MELANCHOLY FATE OF ONE OF THE PENDERILLS **Richard Herbert Penderill**, aged 29, a lineal descendant of the Penderills whose loyalty to Charles II is a matter of history, perished in a miserable way on Wednesday. The deceased was a waterman on the Thames, and was subject to fits; and finding one approaching, held out his arm as a signal to his associates, but fell into the river before they could assist him, and perished.

*Shrewsbury News*

#### **143 May 2 1844**

UPTON PETTY SESSIONS

STEALING EGGS **George Cotterell** and **William Shepherd**, boatmen, were charged with stealing ten hen eggs on the 21<sup>st</sup> instant, the property of Mr Joseph Green of Upton. Committed for trial at the Sessions.

#### **144 May 9 1844**

MURDEROUS ASSAULT NEAR THIS CITY On the evening of Wednesday last, a diabolical outrage was committed by a bargeman on the Severn, near this city, under the following circumstances. Two men named **Hailey** and **Bentley**, employed on board *The Gloucester*, a barge plying between Ironbridge and Gloucester, had been quarrelling in coming up the river ; we do not know the cause of this dispute, but on the arrival of the barge at Diglis, near this city, the quarrel had become so warm that Hailey knocked the other man off the deck into the river. After some difficulty he crawled to the bank, when he picked up some pieces of turf and threw them at Hailey. The latter soon after went below deck and fetched up a gun, took deliberate aim at Bentley, as he was on the bank, and discharged the gun. Bentley was struck in the eye and immediately fell to the ground ; on partially recovering, however, and with the assistance of another person who came up, he managed to proceed towards the bridge, notwithstanding considerable haemorrhage was taking place. On being taken to Mr Orwin, surgeon of Bridge Street, it was discovered that although the

eyeball had not been forced out, the sight was irrecoverably lost ; he was then taken by some policemen to the Infirmary. Meanwhile, Bateman and Hall, two active policemen of the city force, having received information of what was going on, ran down to the river ; when the prisoner, who was steering the vessel, perceiving them, put her on the other side of the river. Upon this Hall ran round by the bridge, and Bateman shouted out to the prisoner that he had better give himself up, as he was bound to be captured ; he then came on shore and was taken into custody. Sergeant Saunders, who had also come up, went on board and secured the gun with which the murderous assault had been made. The wounded man remained in the Infirmary all night ; and on the following morning, about five o'clock, a man applied at that establishment for permission to see him, but was refused by the nurse on account of the early hour ; at seven o'clock the man came again, and having been permitted to see him, after some time they left together and did not return.

The case was investigated on Thursday morning at the County Magistrates' Office, Palace Yard, before J Williams Esq, when Charles Hailey was charged with unlawfully and maliciously shooting one Thomas Bentley with intent then and there to maim, disfigure and disable the said Thomas Bentley, or to do him some grievous bodily harm. The prosecutor did not appear, and it was suspected that overtures had been made to him for that purpose ; but in his absence, the evidence of Joseph Lewis, a shoemaker of the parish of St Helen, and who had been a witness of the transaction, was taken ; he deposed : I was on the West side of the Severn a little below the entrance to the Canal Basin yesterday evening a little before eight o'clock, where I saw the barge in question, and Hailey was on the deck of the barge ; I then saw him present his gun towards Bentley and fire ; I heard several persons on the opposite side of the river call out, "Stone him!", (addressed to Thomas Bentley). After Bentley was shot, he stooped down to pick up something ; I could not see what it was. The man reeled and fell to the ground ; he then got on his legs again, and went to the towing-path ; I went to his assistance, and asked him where he was shot. He said in his eye. The blood flowed in a stream ; I should think he lost a full quart of blood ; I lent him my handkerchief, which he pressed to his eye, I asked him if I should take him to the Infirmary. He said he could not then go, his head was so bad. When he had got better, I said to him, "What has been the matter between you on board the vessel?" He said Hailey had been abusing him all the day. I then led him to the bridge, and two persons offered to take him to a doctor. I went with policeman No 8 and met the barge, with the prisoner on board, opposite the Bishop's palace ; on which the policeman went on board and took the prisoner into custody, Sergeant Saunders took the gun, and the prisoner was taken to the station house.

The case was here remanded till Tuesday, in order to secure the attendance of prosecutor and other evidence.

Yesterday (Tuesday), the prisoner Hailey was again brought up for examination before J Williams Esq, who attended at the County Gaol for that purpose when, in consequence of the continued absence of the injured man, the case was again remanded. We understand that Bentley, on leaving the Infirmary, went to Shrewsbury where his friends reside, and where he is still suffering severely from the gunshot wounds. He has entirely lost the sight of one of his eyes, and the other is much injured. We believe that Bentley's father engages that his son shall be forthcoming when sufficiently recovered to bear the journey to Worcester, which it is hoped will be by Saturday next.

#### **145    June 6 1844**

We are glad to find that the Worcester Episcopal Floating Chapel is frequented by many who before it was opened never attended any place of worship. Instances have occurred of boatmen resting at Worcester on Sundays on purpose to join the congregation at the floating chapel, and on Monday morning starting at three o'clock to complete their voyage in time. Although the habits of this class are so demoralised, and their religious instruction has been so long neglected, yet there are symptoms of improvement evident, which afford encouragement to perseverance in labouring to promote their spiritual welfare. It has been observed that swearing and drunkenness have diminished among these men since the opening of this chapel ; but Sunday traffic presents a continual hindrance to the progress of their improvement, and is productive of the worst

consequences. Some of the navigators employed at Diglis have lately been among the attendants at this place of worship, to which they have been encouraged by their superiors. We are happy to add that Messrs Grissell and Peto have liberally presented a donation of £10 to the funds of the floating chapel ; and we understand that in other parts of the kingdom these eminent contractors have, much to their honour, endeavoured to promote the religious instruction of the men employed in their works ; an example well deserving imitation.

**146 June 13 1844**

CITY MAGISTRATES' OFFICE **George Leech**, boatman, was committed for trial on a charge of stealing, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May last, a pair of trousers from the cabin of the *Wonder* boat, while lying in the dock at Gloucester, the property of **George Price**, the captain. Prisoner had been employed on board the boat, and on the Monday following the robbery, he was apprehended at the Barracks in this city, where he was living with a girl named Mary Ann Lathom, who proved that on that morning she had, at the request of the prisoner, exchanged the stolen trousers for a smaller pair, at a shop in Pump Street.

A boy named James Waring was remanded to Saturday, on a charge of stealing 3s 6d from a boat moored in the Lowesmoor basin on Monday night.

**147 June 27 1844**

INSOLVENT DEBTORS' COURT

**Joseph Oakes**, late of Dudley, boatman. Unopposed – discharged.

**148 July 4 1844**

WORCESTER COUNTY SESSIONS

**John Smallman**, 25, boatman, pleaded guilty to the charge of stealing, on the 27<sup>th</sup> April last, a sovereign, the property of **Francis Reading**, his master. He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, the last week in solitary confinement.

**Edward Allchurch**, 38, boatman, was charged with stealing a sovereign, the property of **Thomas Shepherd**, one of the same craft, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May last at Hartlebury. The prosecutor was engaged in working his boat up the canal at Hartlebury, when the prisoner came and offered to work the boat for him if he liked to lie down, which offer he gladly accepted and retired to rest, leaving the prisoner to pilot the boat. Another boatman named **Walton** was called, who said that as he was passing the prosecutor's boat he observed there was no person working it, and stepping off his own boat into that of the prosecutor, he looked into the cabin and observed the prisoner with his hand in the prosecutor's pocket. On rousing him up, it was discovered that a sovereign was missing, and suspicion immediately resting upon the prisoner, he was committed for trial. On being called on for his defence, he made a lengthy and humorous detail of his adventures during the day – how he had picked up the “yellow boy” and never said “nothing to nobody” about it. He was found guilty and sentenced to two months' imprisonment with hard labour.

**149 July 18 1844**

INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES On Saturday last at the Pheasant Inn, Kidderminster, on the body of a child named **Thomas Massey**, who fell from a boat on the previous day into the canal near Kidderminster lock during the temporary absence of the boatman. The unfortunate deceased was on his return from Stourport to his parents at Stourbridge. Verdict : “Accidentally drowned”.

**150 July 25 1844**

At Upton Petty Sessions on Thursday, **Stephen Pato**, a boatman, was charged by PC Raby of Berrow with having, on the 27<sup>th</sup> May last, assaulted him while in the execution of his duty. Fourteen days' imprisonment.

## 151 July 25 1844

MURDER NEAR STRATFORD-ON-AVON Great excitement has been caused during the past week in the above town by a report of a discovery made of a murder, committed more than eighteen months ago, at Binton Bridge near Stratford. The unfortunate victim was a Jew pedlar, who met his untimely end through the brutal usage he experienced from some boatmen. At the County Court at Stratford on Wednesday last, before the Hon C Woodmas and G T Smith Esq, a voluntary confession made by one **Thomas Knight**, one of the parties concerned in this mysterious affair, to his landlord and his wife, was read as follows :-

“William Davis of North Littleton, having been sworn, stated that the prisoner, Thomas Knight, had lodged in his house since March last, and that his wife, Ann Davis, a short time ago, told him (witness) of a confession of a murder which Knight had made to her, to the following effect :- That he (Knight) had been drinking at Binton Bridge with three other men named **Badenham, Thomas Carless** and another named “Sam” ; he (Knight) said he wished he had £20, but did not want it to come “the same way as the *other* did” ; that a Jew had been drinking in the same house – that “Sam” had been threatening the Jew all the time, saying how he would serve him if he would come out ; after a time, the Jew did come out - “Sam” followed him to the bridge and knocked him down, and the others followed ; the Jew cried out, and said he would give them £5 if they would spare his life. Badenham came, and said, with an oath, “We will have the ruck”. “Sam” kicked the Jew again. They quite murdered him. The confession made to the husband (the witness) was entirely the same, up to this part. Davis asked Knight what they had done with the Jew. Knight replied that they had thrown him into the deep water below the bridge ; that there was no chance of the body's coming out, for they had broken a large stone and tied it with a pitch rope from the boat round the body and box, and thrown it into the deep water ; adding, “We left several notes in the box because they were numbered. I had 20 sovereigns”. To a question put to him by Davis, as to what the Jew said when they were murdering him, he said he (the Jew) made many grim faces, and then spread his hands ; “But”, said Knight, “I think the Lord will forgive me, for I had no hand in murdering him”. All this took place in the winter before last. Davis then said that Knight left his (witness's) house last Thursday week, and returned last Friday ; and that he (Davis) then told the police of his return. George Smith, police officer, swore to the capture of the prisoners. Badenham and Carless declared, in their defence, they were quite innocent. The confession being read over to Knight, he said, “I admit I told Davis all that has been read over”. The prisoners were then remanded. Persons have been employed in dragging the river ; and it is said that on Friday the drag caught against a hard substance which it could not bring up ; but that, on a man diving to the bottom of the water, he found and brought up a large piece of stone which, from its appearance, and its correspondence with the stone on the bridge, is considered to be that with which the body had been sunk.

## 152 July 25 1844

WORCESTERSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

STEALING HORSE COLLARS AT UPTON **Robert Bullock, Joseph Milton** and **Thomas Brick** (the latter name being evidently a nickname, occasioned by the well burnt frontispiece of the prisoner), three young men, boatmen, were charged with having stolen three horse collars at Upton-on-Severn, the property of Mr John Wells Fletcher, on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of July. Mr Curwood prosecuted, and Mr Huddleston defended.

John Watkins, a labourer in the employ of the prosecutor, deposed that on the day in question he and some others were at work in a meadow near the river, and after concluding their day's work they hid the gearing between an old and new hayrick, covering it with a little new hay ; but on returning the following morning, they found they could not go to work, as they had lost their collars.

**John Wheeler**, a waterman who hauled the prisoners' boat, in company with them on the night in question, deposed to having moored the boat near the meadow in question about eight o'clock on the above night, and that on returning to the boat shortly after twelve o'clock, he met Brick alone, within two or three hundred yards of where the ricks stood ; the two other prisoners were at the boat.



John Holloway, No 48 of the rurals, deposed that on receiving information of Mr Fletcher's loss, he pursued the boat up to Kempsey, and went on board. The three prisoners came up. On questioning them, it appeared that Bullock and Milton were the only ones who slept on board the previous night. They objected to his searching the boat, when the witness called Bullock on one side, and said, "I tell you what : I want to know if you have any sucking pigs on board". Bullock said, "Oh, if it's sucking pigs you're after, you are welcome to go on my boat". By this scheme the policeman obtained the *entree* ; and observing some hay there, he stirred it about, when Bullock said, "That's a devilish fine place to find sucking pigs". The blue coat however found the object of his search – the three collars mentioned in the indictment. He then took Bullock and Milton into custody ; but Brick, he said, then cut and run – *like a brick*. He was however subsequently taken into custody.

The prosecutor was here called, and at once identified his property.

Mr Huddleston addressed the jury, pointing out a distinction between the case of Brick and the others, it being very probable from the evidence that he had placed the collars in the boat without the cognisance of the others. The learned Counsel also called witnesses who gave Milton and Bullock a good character.

Under the direction of his Lordship, the Jury acquitted the two last named, and found Brick guilty. He was sentenced to two months' hard labour.

### **153 July 25 1844**

#### **WORCESTER CITY SESSIONS**

**Frederick Williams**, 16, boatman, was charged with stealing a gold watch, the property of the Rev Edward Harry Vaughan Colt of the Hill, Gloucestershire, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March last. Guilty, with a recommendation to mercy. Three months' imprisonment, the first and last solitary.

**William Fidoe**, 18, boatman, charged with stealing two cow hides, the property of James William Weaver and James Hicklin, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April last at the parish of Claines. Guilty : one week's solitary confinement.

**George Leech**, 19, boatman, charged with stealing on the 27<sup>th</sup> May last at Gloucester, a pair of cloth trousers, the property of George Price. Three weeks' solitary confinement.

### **154 August 1 1844**

**SUNDAY TRAFFIC** The new proprietor of canal boats from London (through Reading) to Bristol has advertised that his boats go every day *except* Sundays. This announcement is highly creditable to the parties concerned, and we trust is the commencement of a better state of things ; for the gross demoralisation of the boatmen in this kingdom is become proverbial and, it cannot be doubted, is to be traced to the system of Sabbath desecration on our rivers and canals, so generally adopted, and which, unhappily, has so long had the sanction of the British public. Many canal proprietors, canal carriers and others interested in the subject are desirous of seeing an improvement as to the existing state of things, which affects injuriously not only boatmen, but porters, lock-keepers, clerks and others. We understand that a considerable number of boat owners in Staffordshire have expressed themselves anxious to see change as relates to the present system. Much good may be expected to result from the united efforts of benevolent individuals connected with the commercial world, which ought to meet with universal encouragement and support. A clergyman of this city some time ago addressed fifty boatmen in a warehouse, not one of them, he was credibly informed, had been in any place of worship for the last twenty years. When such is the case, we must not be surprised at hearing of crimes committed by this body of men.

### **155 August 1 1844**

**BURGLARY AT DIGLIS** On Sunday morning last, about a quarter before two o'clock, as some persons were returning from Diglis Basin where they had been fishing, they passed by the Anchor public house, kept by a person named Richard Jones, who likewise keeps a huckster's shop ; when

one of the party, named Tilsley, observed that the shop door was wide open. The time of the morning not at all agreeing with the fact of the door being open, his suspicions were aroused, and going to the door, he knocked rather loudly, drawing the lower half of the door towards him and fastening it. A man, having no shoes on, immediately jumped over the half door, but was secured by Tilsley and his companions. Mr Jones, the landlord of the Anchor, being alarmed by the noise, started off in quest of a policeman, and he shortly afterwards returned with Workman and Short ; his wife, in the meantime, made a search through the premises, and discovered that the till, which contained principally farthings, had been broken open and some few coppers removed ; she also missed seven or eight quarter loaves, two pieces of cheese and some bacon. The burglar's name proved to be **George Matthews**, a boatman, whose bad character is notorious. A large coal hammer, which had been removed from an adjoining coal yard, was found resting against the staircase in Jones's house, and on being compared by policeman Workman with marks on the shop door, through which forcible entry had been effected, they were found to correspond exactly in size. On the prisoner were found a few coppers, including four farthings, a purse containing three sovereigns and two half crowns ; but no traces of the other stolen property have yet been made, leaving no doubt that the robbery was committed by a party, and we hope that the remainder will be speedily overtaken. An examination took place on Monday morning at Mr Cameron's office, Palace Yard, before J Williams Esq, when the prisoner Matthews was fully committed to take his trial at the next Assizes. Mrs Jones identified one of the farthings found on Matthews, it being marked in a similar manner to one she had seen in the till prior to the robbery.

#### **156 August 1 1844**

##### WORCESTERSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES

**Charles Hailey**, 43, waterman, was charged with having shot at **Thomas Bentley**, on the 1<sup>st</sup> May last in the parish of St John, with intent to do him some grievous bodily harm. Mr Beadon appeared for the prosecution, and Mr Cooke for the defence. It will be remembered that on the above mentioned day Bentley came up from Clevelode to Diglis in the barge *Gloucester*, of which the prisoner was captain, and while sitting by the river side there, the prisoner walked up to him and knocked him into the water. When he got out he threw some stones and dirt at Hailey, who was then standing on the barge, upon which the latter went into the cabin, and having fetched a gun, fired it at Bentley as he was walking away. A shot entered the left eye, the consequence of which is that he was entirely lost the use of that organ of vision. Mr Cooke cross-examined Bentley at some length, with a view to show that there had been considerable provocation on his part, but he could elicit nothing material. Two persons named Lewis and Walker corroborated the prosecutor's statement, and this was the whole of the case for the prosecution. Mr Cooke in his address to the Jury on the prisoner's behalf, submitted that there must necessarily have been great provocation given by the prosecutor, and prayed them to put a merciful construction on the case by returning a verdict of guilty of a common assault only. He then called three or four witnesses, who said that the prisoner was of a peaceful and humane disposition.

Mr Godson summed up at some length, and the Jury returned a verdict of guilty on the more serious count of the indictment. Six months' imprisonment.

#### **157 August 8 1844**

##### FATAL ACCIDENT AT THE NAVIGATION WORKS, DIGLIS

TWELVE LIVES LOST It is this week our painful duty to record the details of an accident which occurred on Monday night last, about seven o'clock, at the works of the Severn Navigation Improvement at Diglis near this city and which, awful to relate, was attended with consequences fatal to the lives of no less than twelve of the excavators engaged at that stupendous undertaking, the operations at which have, until the present unhappy occurrence, been conducted without a single accident having a fatal termination. From the evidence below, the following appears to be a condensed statement of the facts. Owing to the heavy fall of rain which took place on Monday, it was deemed necessary to continue the working on the Powick side of the river beyond the usual

hour, half past five o'clock, for the purpose of raising a "stank" to keep the water off the works ; which the labourers had not completed until nearly seven o'clock, when the boat usually employed in carrying them across to the Diglis side of the river was brought to the shore, and fifteen of the men who had been working immediately got into it ; and, if we may believe the witnesses, all conducted themselves in a steady quiet manner. The boat (which is a very good one, has been in the service of the Company ever since the commencement of the works, and has frequently carried as many or more than it did on the present occasion) drifted a little way down the river, and was steadily nearing the opposite shore, when a man named Richard White, who was standing at the head of the boat, laid hold of a rope which was connected with a barge for the purpose of hastening their progress, and which the boat would have passed over if he had not laid hold of it. The rope, however, passed under the stern of the boat, and the sudden shock received caused the men to swerve on one side of the boat, which immediately filled with water, and the whole of the fifteen were precipitated into the river. One of them, a time keeper named Dodson, was immediately rescued from his perilous situation by one of the excavators named Read, who was standing on the shore, and who ran into the water with a pole and dragged him to shore. Another man named Poulson, of advanced years, whose son was in the boat with him, contrived to get on the bottom of the boat, which was above water, and with a little assistance was brought to shore ; and the third saved was named James Spencer. The remaining twelve sank, and were not seen to rise after the first plunge.

An alarm having been given, Mr Jackson, the superintendent of the works, was immediately on the spot, and dispatched messengers to the fishermen at Diglis, and others for surgical assistance ; and upwards of twenty boats were soon in active operation, drags and other instruments being used for the purpose, while Mr Jackson personally superintended the search. It was not, however, before three quarters of an hour had elapsed that the first body was picked up ; and it being thought that life was not extinct, directions were given to convey it to Diglis, where the usual means were resorted to for restoring animation, under the direction of Mr Walter Jones, surgeon, but in vain. In the meantime the excitement became general throughout the city, and the inhabitants flocked in hundreds to the scene of the dreadful catastrophe, notwithstanding that the rain poured down in torrents. About nine o'clock, four more bodies were picked up close together, about forty yards from where the accident happened, and these were immediately conveyed to Whitehall, the part of the river from which the bodies were taken being without the city boundary. The search was continued for some time longer, vast numbers of the citizens watching the result with apparently the most intense anxiety. About eleven o'clock however, the night being exceedingly dark, the men discontinued their labours ; which were resumed the following morning at day break ; and five more of the bodies were found in the course of a few hours. A reward was then offered for the discovery of the two remaining in the water, and by one o'clock the whole of the bodies were recovered. Of the seven found in the morning, three were removed to the Anchor public house, Diglis, and the remaining four to Whitehall.

This melancholy affair has been the all pervading topic of conversation in the city since its occurrence. During the whole of yesterday, the spot was visited by hundreds of the citizens. The scene on the banks of the Severn on Monday night is beyond description ; considerable doubt existing for some time as to the names of the men who had been thus suddenly deprived of life ; and women and children were seen rushing through the crowd in all directions, searching for husbands and fathers. A sight such as this may be far better imagined than described.

The names of the unfortunate beings who have been thus suddenly launched into eternity will be found particularised in the evidence taken at the inquests held today (Wednesday) at Whitehall and at the Anchor Public house, Diglis ; it will be seen by the list that only two are married, and the greater part of the remainder are all young men without any friends or relatives in this city. We understand that Messrs Grissell and Peto have given directions that they should all be decently interred, and they will defray the incidental expenses. We hope that a public subscription will be entered into for the bereaved widows.

We subjoin the evidence as adduced before W S P Hughes, coroner, at the house of Mr Davis,

Whitehall, where the following eight bodies have been conveyed :-

Thomas Packwood, aged apparently about 28 years, a native of Ombersley.

George Poulson, jun, of Cheltenham, aged 19.

John Pegg, 24, married, leaving a wife but no family.

Charles Child of Herefordshire, aged about 19.

George Smith, aged about 25.

Charles Moscow, aged 23.

Henry Manks, a native of Solihull, aged 24.

James Marshall, aged 45, married, his wife keeping a public house at Liverpool, having five small children.

The only bodies at Whitehall identified by their relatives or friends are those of Henry Manks, George Poulson, jun, and John Pegg.

The following are the names of the gentlemen composing the Jury :-

Mr Edwin Sprague, foreman

Mr Thomas Taylor

Mr Aaron Brown

Mr Joseph Watkins

Mr James Bennett

Mr William Merrick

Mr John Callow

Mr Josiah Lawrence

Mr William Bishop

Mr Thomas Phillips

Mr William Willis

Mr Thomas Davis

Mr James Nicholls

After having been sworn, the Jury proceeded to view the bodies of the unfortunate men, which were deposited in the stable belonging to the house. The bodies of the three men who had been identified by their friends had been prepared for interment ; the others lay just in the same state as they were when taken from the water, and presented a most revolting appearance, very much bruised about the faces by the drags and other instruments used in recovering the bodies. On returning to the room, the facts were deposed as relating to Thomas Packwood ; the first witness called was

Charles Head, who deposed : I reside in St John's, and am a navigator employed at the works at Diglis, under Messrs Perry and Lutley, who are subcontractors under Messrs Grissell and Peto. I saw Packwood before he went into the boat on Monday evening. He had, in company with the others, been engaged in raising a "stank" on the St John's side of the river to prevent the water getting on the works in progress ; they were working over the usual time, in consequence of the sudden rise of the water. The usual time to leave off work is half past five, and they did not leave off on the present occasion till nearly seven o'clock. I was working with them. There is a boat kept for the purpose of crossing and re-crossing the river. On leaving work, fifteen of the men who lived on the opposite side of the river, for the purpose of going to their respective homes, got into the boat; I did not get in, but with others waited until the boat should return for a second load. It was between six and seven o'clock that they got into the boat ; I cannot say the exact time. The boat was not very large, but as many and perhaps more have crossed the river in it before at once. Mr John Dodson, a time keeper, was present, and was one who got into the boat ; he has authority over the men, and if he saw anything going wrong had the power to correct. After getting into the boat they launched her, and on getting into the stream, the current rather drifted her down the river until she came opposite a barge that was moored on to the opposite side of the river. The barge was fastened to the same side of the river as the boat had started from, a rope hanging all across the river for the purpose of drawing the barge across the river. The rope had been affixed to the western side of the river and was about to be removed when they were crossing. As they drifted towards this barge, one of the men caught hold of the rope with his hands and lifted it up for the boat to go under, and the rest of the men in the boat stooped down, and the weight being a little on one side, the boat capsized and the men all fell into the water. The rope was above the water, perhaps half way up the man's body who laid hold of it. It was not from the boat coming in contact with the rope that caused the upset, but I think it was from the stooping of the men. Richard White was the man who

caught hold of the rope, he was drowned. Immediately on seeing the men in the water, three of us who remained on the shore were very much alarmed. The rest of the men who had been working with us were going home towards St John's. I saw one of the men, John Dodson, making to the land, upon which I got a pole and ran into the water with it, and Dodson laying hold of it, I pulled him out. I was not present when Packwood was got out ; he was got out the same evening. There was no larking in the boat, nor was there any rocking, all of them were standing very steady. It was a flat bottomed boat ; they were all standing on the bottom of the boat and none on the seats. Richard White, the man who laid hold of the rope, was standing on the head of the boat. I saw Spencer saved ; but not any of the other men who were drowned. I have only been at the works a fortnight, and the boat has been in constant use since I went there. I did not see the barge go over, nor can I say how long the rope had been there.

John Dodson : I live in Worcester, and am engaged as time keeper to superintend the operations of the men under me. I had been waiting with the men and got into the boat last. There was no larking at all in getting into the boat. We left off work at half past six o'clock, fifteen of us got into the boat. She was drifting a little down the river, and we were going very steadily when Richard White caught hold of the rope which was across the river, and the sudden stoppage by White's laying hold of the rope gave the men in the boat a jerk, and caused them to go a little on one side, which overturned it and we were all thrown into the water. I think we should have gone safe over if the man had not laid hold of it. The rope was hung on to the timber head of the barge, and that part of the rope where the boat would have passed was under the water, and I am sure that the boat would have cleared it if he had not caught at it. Immediately on White's laying hold of the rope, one of the men on board the barge loosened the rope for the purpose of saving the boat. As soon, however, as he had done that we turned over. I think that the cause of the accident was White's laying hold of the rope, and by that means suddenly stopping it. On his lifting the rope, part of it came along the side of the boat and passed under the stern.

This part of the witness's evidence was rather at variance with the testimony of Head with reference to the situation of the rope ; and Head was recalled and stated that it was his belief the boat could not have passed the rope.

Mr Joseph Jackson : I am superintendent of the works at Diglis ; I was not present at the time of the accident but was about the works on the Diglis side. I was called on the alarm being given and was on the spot almost immediately. I saw none of the men in the water. Those that were saved had just got out. Search was immediately made, and the fishermen's boats from Diglis and our own were immediately put to work. I saw Packwood got out by one of the fishermen ; he was quite dead, the body was not found until nine o'clock. The first man that was taken out was sent to Diglis and a surgeon sent for, but all efforts to restore life were useless. The first that was pulled out must have been in the water three quarters of an hour.

Edward Owens, fisherman living in Diglis Street, being sworn, deposed : I assisted in recovering the bodies. I got out the first two on the Powick side of the river, they were quite dead. I do not know who they were.

**William Chillingworth** : I am a waterman living at Worcester. I was passing by the works at the time of the accident in a long canal boat. I had been detained at Diglis lock some time before, and I saw the barge go across from the one side of the river to the other. I was too far off to see by what means she crossed. It was between a quarter and a half an hour before the accident that the crossing took place. I saw the boat turn over ; had the boat been a round bottomed one, the stream would have run under, but being wall sided the water ran into her and she filled. I saw a man on the bottom of the boat, and I went in and got him out ; it was George Poulson, sen.

Henry Pritchard, watcher at the works : I was on the works at the time of the accident ; I saw the barge on the St John's side, and subsequently saw her on the Diglis side ; the time that elapsed between those times must have been about eight minutes, as near as possible ; but I did not see her cross over.

The Coroner then made a few observations on the nature of the evidence, stating that there appeared to be nothing on the face of it which would lay blame to any of the parties concerned. He would



have been better satisfied if one of the men connected with the barge had been brought before them ; as the cause of the accident seemed to be the laying hold of the rope, and it would have been more satisfactory to learn the exact time the barge had remained in that position ; the last witness had, however, cleared up the point by stating that the time was not more than eight minutes, which was not an unreasonable time for the purposes of loosing the rope. The facts of the case presented circumstances purely accidental in their nature, but attended with the most dreadful consequences ; and if they coincided in that opinion, their only course would be to return a verdict accordingly. A verdict of “Accidental death” was then returned as related to the whole of the eight cases, and the Coroner then left for the Anchor public house at Diglis, where the following four bodies, all single young men, were lying :-

Richard White, aged 21, of Defford, whose parents reside at Kempsey.

Charles Baker, aged 24, who comes from near Brighton.

Mark Lewis, aged 27, from near Walsall.

William Rose, aged 24, residence unknown.

Another jury was sworn, composed of the following gentlemen :-

Mr Herbert Cordle, foreman

Mr Thomas Rice	Mr William Burford
Mr Thomas Sanders	Mr Henry Davis
Mr Joseph Gibbs	Mr Thomas Cooke
Mr John Cole	Mr Henry Sharpe
Mr Richard Jones	Mr William Bingley
Mr William Tidmarsh	Mr William Martin

The same evidence was reproduced as in the former cases, by the same witnesses, it would therefore be unnecessary to introduce it here. Of course similar verdicts were returned in each of the cases.

We cannot conclude our report of this truly lamentable occurrence without noticing the exceedingly humane and praiseworthy conduct of the superintending authorities at the works. Immediately on being made acquainted with the nature of the accident, Mr Leader Williams, the resident engineer, and Mr Eastted, the acting agent for Messrs Grissell and Peto, hastened to the spot, and gave directions that no exertion should be spared to recover the bodies ; which instructions were strictly complied with, not less than twenty four fishermen being engaged in the search, for which they have been handsomely rewarded, we believe, to their entire satisfaction. Nor must we omit to notice the activity of Mr Jackson, the superintendent, who was personally engaged in conducting the search until the last body was found. It is also our duty to contradict in the most positive manner the reports which have been circulated that the boat was an improper one for the purposes of transit – the boat is nearly a new one, and has been similarly employed for some time, having on many occasions conveyed with perfect safety more than were in it on the present occasion ; and there is no doubt all would have been well at this time if it had not been for the unfortunate act of Richard White in laying hold of the rope, which seems to have been the sole cause of the accident, all the men standing perfectly steady at the time, and no blame whatever attaching itself to any person.

### **158 August 22 1844**

**A SHOAL OF RATS** On Thursday afternoon, a singular scene was witnessed in the river (Thames) at the Whitefriars Dock, nearly adjacent to Blackfriars Bridge, at the mouth of the new sewerage just constructed from Fleet Street. During the heavy rains, a large body of water had accumulated, stopping up one of the upper drains when, bursting its bounds, it ran with resistless force into the Thames, clearing out, as it were, every drain of its living tenants during the course of its passage. Rats, to the amount of some thousands, literally blackening the surface of the water, were seen floating about, which fell an easy prey to the bargemen and boys near the spot, who destroyed them with sticks. By this means numbers were killed, but thousands more were seen some time

swimming in large shoals, until they made their escape up the other drains and excavations in the vicinity.

### **159 August 29 1844**

**BARGEMEN AND BOATMEN** We have been requested by a correspondent to insert the following remarks, to which we readily accede, feeling commiseration towards a class of men generally considered the most demoralised in the whole kingdom. "Having noticed that you, as well as other editors of influential newspapers, have occasionally referred in strong language to the crimes committed by watermen, I have no doubt you will kindly admit the following extract from the last report of the Sabbath Society, which may tend to benefit a body of men whose moral and religious improvement has been so long and so lamentably disregarded. The above report says :- "There is one point to which we must especially direct attention ; it is this : that the poor bargemen and watermen are excluded as it were from the beneficial operations of Sir Robert Peel's Bill ; for if it can be proved that 2,000 stationary population exists in any spot, in a neglected condition as to moral and religious culture, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners may afford pecuniary assistance towards providing a clergyman to instruct them ; but if it were proved that double of that demoralised migratory class, the watermen, usually on their voyages frequented any spot, no assistance of any kind is allowed towards supplying them with a pastor. Surely this is not right in a country like our own, which owes so much to commerce. It ought to be noticed in a proper quarter, as an act of injustice towards a useful but neglected body of British subjects". We shall only remark that the case does appear hard, and no doubt the mistake is overlooking altogether such a demoralised class will in due time be rectified, by their claims to religious instruction being efficiently met as well as acknowledged. The Church of England ought to forget *no* class of the community ; and we may rest assured that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, when they have it in their power, will not be unmindful of the spiritual wants of the most degraded of all classes. Great Britain has derived many millions from her internal commerce, but how few hundred pounds have been ever expended on the instruction of the poor men who toil to promote its extension and who are, as a body, little better than the heathen. The great increase of the population of this country, as well as the migratory habits of boatmen, prevent the parochial clergy in general paying attention to this subject, which renders it more necessary that pastoral superintendence should be expressly provided for the men employed in our inland navigations.

### **160 September 12 1844**

At the County Petty Sessions yesterday, **Joseph Dayus**, a boatman residing in the Blockhouse, was charged with using gins for the purpose of taking game, on lands in the occupation of Mr John Green in the county part of the parish of St Martin. Fined 40s with 15s costs, or six weeks' imprisonment with hard labour.

### **161 October 17 1844**

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE QUARTER SESSIONS**

**William Perkins** and **John Mason**, boatmen, surrendered to their bail on a charge of stealing, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September last at the hamlet of Tutnell and Cobley, 1 1/2 cwt of clover, the property of William Overton. Mr Whitmore defended Mason. From the depositions of several witnesses, it appeared that the prosecutor, having suffered considerable loss of fodder from his clover field through which a canal and towing-path ran, he set some men to watch the field, and they succeeded in detecting the men cutting the clover, which they were in the act of conveying away in their boats on the canal, when they were pounced upon by the watchmen. Mr Whitmore, for Mason, called a boy, the driver of Perkins's boat, who swore that Mason's boat did not stop at the clover field. The Jury, however, found both prisoners guilty, and the Court sentenced them to four months' imprisonment.

Richard Tipton, 17, labourer, and **James Harper**, 31, boatman, were charged with stealing a

quantity of clover, the property of William Overton, from a clover field in the parish of Tutnell and Copley on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September last. The prisoner Tipton pleaded guilty. The evidence against the other prisoner was of so slight a nature that the Chairman directed an acquittal. Tipton was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.

**Francis Payne**, 29, boatman, and **Ambrose Cross**, 18, labourer, were charged with stealing a pocket book, seventeen shillings and a knife, from the person of one William Herbert at the parish of Shrawley on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October last. Both prisoners were found guilty.

## **162 October 17 1844**

### CITY SESSIONS

**Henry Harman**, 23, boatman, was convicted of having, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, stolen forty farthings, a quantity of tobacco and a bottle of raspberry brandy, the property of Thomas Farr. Fourteen days' solitary confinement.

## **163 October 24 1844**

On Saturday night, a man named Charles Cotterell, who had been drinking at a beerhouse in Newport Street till he had become quite intoxicated, walked off the North Quay and fell into the river. Fortunately the water was low at the time, or he would probably have been drowned ; but as it was, his cries brought some boatmen to his assistance, and he escaped with a good ducking. He was put to bed at the Rainbow Tavern, and soon recovered.

## **164 October 24 1844**

ANOTHER MYSTERIOUS DEATH IN THE AVON An inquest was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> instant at the White Lion in Bidford, before W O Hunt Esq, Coroner, and a respectable jury, on the body of a man unknown, who was found in the river Avon in the parish of Bidford. The following was the evidence :-

**James Goslin** : I live at Pershore, Worcestershire, and am a boatman. On the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, I was going along the Avon with a boat towards Stratford, and saw something floating on the water which I thought was a bag. I called to **William Ferris**, another boatman who was towing the boat, to stop. We pushed the boat back, and found it was a man ; we pulled the body out of the water, laid it on the bank, and called to a man who was working in a field near and sent him up to Bidford to get assistance. Several persons came down to the river, and the body was taken to the White Lion at Bidford. I do not know the man whom we took out of the water.

William Ferris corroborated the evidence of the last witness.

Thomas Hodgkins, constable of Bidford, stated that he went down to the place where the body was found, which was in the parish of Bidford, and ordered the body to be taken to the White Lion. The body, which appeared to be that of a labourer, had on a dark fustian jacket, dark stuff waistcoat, corduroy trousers and a pair of low boots, nearly new. There were no marks on his linen. In his pockets were found a shilling in silver and five pence halfpenny, a tobacco box, and two or three gins or snares ; there was a black leather belt round his waist. A hat was produced, in which was a piece of whipcord ; the hat was found in the river two or three days before the body was found, and near to the same place ; no mark was in the hat, or maker's name. Witness had made many enquiries, but could not find out who the man was, and there had been a great many people to see the body, but could not identify it.

George Haynes Fosbroke, being sworn, said : I am a surgeon at Bidford. I carefully examined the body externally, but found no marks of violence. I have made a *post mortem* examination, and have no doubt the man was submersed whilst living, and died from drowning. Every part of the body was healthy. I think the body had been in the water two or three days. Deceased was apparently about 25 years of age.

The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned". (The body was been identified and claimed since the inquest, and has been removed to Exhall for burial).

**165    October 24 1844**

WORCESTERSHIRE MICHAELMAS QUARTER SESSIONS

**Paul Vine**, 18, boatman, was charged with stealing a flannel frock and other articles of wearing apparel, the property of **John Pitt**, at Severn Stoke on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August last. The parties are fellow boatmen, and the prisoner abstracted the property from under his companion's pillow and appropriated it to his own use. Guilty : One month's imprisonment.

George Marsh, 16, sweep, and **Henry Jones**, 18, boatman, were charged with stealing two ducks and a drake, the property of John Laycock, at Leigh on the 16<sup>th</sup> August last. Mr Streeten conducted the prosecution. From the evidence of prosecutor's wife, it appeared that some person or persons had broken open the duck pen and stolen the ducks mentioned in the indictment while she was out at work. The two prisoners, in company with a third party, were disturbed in the committal of the fact, but ran away, and escaped detection for some time. Guilty : Three months' imprisonment.

**166    October 31 1844**

The Boatmen's Church at Etruria was opened on Sunday se'nnight, when the Rev C Gillmor, Rector of Shelton, preached an appropriate discourse to a crowded congregation, numbers being unable to gain admission. Between £12 and £13 were contributed. The Rev S Fisher has been appointed as the Incumbent.

**167    November 28 1844**

A boatman named **Daunter** was nearly drowned on Friday evening last, as he was taking a canal boat belonging to **Mr Dayus** across the basin at Diglis, in this city, in consequence of the shaft with which he was propelling it sticking fast in the mud, whereby he was thrown overboard. The man was intoxicated, as also were several other boatmen who were spectators, in consequence of which it was nearly a quarter of an hour before the alarm was given. **Mr Charles Lloyd**, who was standing on the Quay, was at length informed of the circumstance, and put off in his canal boat, by which means he rescued the half drowned man, who was then in a state of insensibility.

**168    December 5 1844**

WORCESTERSHIRE WINTER ASSIZES

ROBBERY AT DIGLIS **George Matthews**, 21, boatman, was charged with having, on the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> of July last, feloniously and burglariously broken and entered the dwelling house of Richard Jones at the parish of St Peter the Great in this county. Mr Huddleston prosecuted, and Mr Cooke defended the prisoner. Mrs Jones, the wife of the prosecutor, who keeps the Anchor beerhouse and also a huckster's shop at Diglis, near to the basin of the Birmingham and Worcester Canal, deposed that on the above night she locked up the premises, and with her husband retired to rest at about eleven o'clock. About two next morning, they were called up by **Mr Tilsley**, the lock-keeper of the canal, who lives near, when they found that the house had been broken into and a number of articles carried away. The outer door had evidently been broken open with a coal hammer, which on the previous evening had been left in the coal yard adjoining the shop, but which was found in the morning in the shop.

Jesse Franklin, a porter in the establishment of Messrs Webb, carriers of Diglis, was next examined. He stated that between one and two o'clock on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> July, as he was returning from fishing in the Diglis basin, passing the prosecutor's house he heard footsteps in the shop, and seeing the door open he went in and there found the prisoner. Others of the fishing party corroborated this statement, and policeman Workman, on receiving the prisoner into his custody, found upon him several farthings and a token ; but although coins of this character were stolen on the occasion, Mrs Jones could not speak to the identity of either of them. There were also found upon the prisoner three sovereigns and two or three half crowns, but no money of that description had been taken from the prosecutor's premises, nor were any of the eatables alleged to have been stolen found in his possession. Guilty. The prisoner had been convicted at the Midsummer

Sessions for Worcester in 1843, but the certificate for that conviction being informal, was not admitted in evidence. The certificate was signed "Thomas Waters", but in what official capacity Thomas Waters signed this certificate did not appear upon the face of the certificate. Ten years' transportation.

**169 December 12 1844**

INQUEST BY MR HUGHES On Saturday at the Pheasant Inn, Kidderminster, on the body of **William Mann**, a young boatman who expired on his boat while on a voyage along the canal, near to the above town, after a short illness. An examination of the body of the deceased was made after death by Mr Philbrick, surgeon, who found a perforation of the stomach caused by inflammation, which had no doubt been brought on by the presence of a large worm in the stomach. A verdict of "Died by the visitation of God" was returned.

**170 December 12 1844**

Our city police intelligence for the past week is fortunately very trivial. The only case worth mentioning was heard on Monday, when **Henry Hayes** was charged with assaulting Mrs Willis, landlady of the Fish in Diglis Street, on the 30<sup>th</sup> ult. The defendant is a boatman ; and on entering the house late at night, he was much disappointed at finding no beer allowed at so late an hour. "A pretty crib", said he, "this is, without any beer aboard". "You ---- ----", addressing the complainant, "Why don't you bring some out?" The retort courteous which this produced was to the effect that if she had "any more of that, she'd slit his head open with the candlestick". The defendant upon this pushed the hostess over the table, and herein consisted the assault complained of. The Bench fined Hayes 10s including costs ; but as he could not find the money, he was sent to prison for ten days.

**171 December 19 1844**

INQUESTS BY MR HUGHES On Friday morning at the Crown Inn, Droitwich Road, on the body of **Mary Lee**, aged 28 (wife of **Benjamin Lee**, boatman, residing in St John's), who died while pursuing a voyage up the canal for some coals. Mr Hilary Hill, surgeon, made a *post mortem* examination of the body, and stated that, in his opinion, the deceased died from a disease of the lungs and heart. Verdict : "Died by the visitation of God".

**172 December 26 1844**

STAFFORDSHIRE ASSIZES

MANSLAUGHTER ON THE BIRMINGHAM CANAL **William Ryley** and **James Hill** were charged with the manslaughter of **George Wickstead** on the 31<sup>st</sup> of November at the parish of Wolverhampton. The evidence showed that the prisoners are boatmen, and had charge of a boat on the Birmingham Canal on the 31<sup>st</sup> of November. The prisoner Ryley acted as steerer, and James Hill was driving the horse. When the prisoners' boat came to Rough Hills Top, it came in contact with another boat, in consequence of which the deceased, George Wickstead, who was on the cabin and endeavouring to prevent any collision, was thrown off and fell into the canal, where the water is 16 feet deep. The deceased was got out in about twenty minutes afterwards, but was quite dead. Several witnesses attributed the occurrence to the carelessness and negligence of the prisoners. The prisoner Ryley in his defence said that he could not see the boat of the deceased in consequence of the wind blowing his boat cloth up. Hill said he endeavoured to prevent the boats striking each other by checking his horse. The jury acquitted the prisoners.