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The Masters and Mariners of Newcastle upon Tyne in the Late Seventeenth Century

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SUMMARY

While the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle upon Tyne have been researched for their influence on the government of the town, little attention has been paid to another important element of local society, the Masters and Mariners of Trinity House. Information about them can be gleaned from the admission books for their apprentices and the Town Chamberlains' accounts. These sources shed light on the social background of members of a guild which ran the port of Tyne at a time when Newcastle was famous for its domination of the English coal trade. Individuals are rounded out by use of wills and probate inventories preserved in the Special Collections housed in the Library of the University of Durham.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past years various aspects of seventeenth-century Newcastle have been studied, most notably by the late Roger Howell jr in his *Newcastle and the Puritan Revolution* (1967). In this he analysed the influence of the Merchant Adventurers and their offshoot, the Hostmen, in the control of coal production and its shipment to London.¹ The predominance in the seventeenth century of the Tyneside/Wearside coal fields in supplying the needs for fuel of London and the east coast is the theme of John Hatcher in *The History of the British Coal Industry 1: Before 1700* (1993).² Both examine the role of the Hostmen and the colliery-owners, and Howell demonstrates the way control of the coal-trade

led inexorably to infiltration by them of political power in Newcastle. Both agreed that the coal required shipment by sea, and discuss in passing the reality that most of this shipping was owned outside the river Tyne. When the East Anglian ship-masters boycotted the river in 1639 in protest at a rise in coal prices at the quayside, Sir John Marley wrote that his staithes were 'like to fire' with the unsaleable coal left thereon.³ This article is an attempt at a snapshot of the ship masters who were members of Newcastle Trinity House in the 1660s and later, their ships, apprentices, places of residence and, where possible, their financial standing.

The background to the Newcastle Trinity House is outlined by John Brand in his history of the town, published in 1789.⁴ The Society of Masters and Mariners of Newcastle acquired its base in Broad Chare off the Quayside when in 4 January 1506 it ordered the building of a hall, a chapel and an almshouse for its poor brethren at Dalton Place, the site having been acquired from Robert Hebborn for that purpose. The society already sponsored a chantry called the Trinity Altar in All Saints church, which loomed above the complex; and pieces of this church had been dropping into its courtyard from the seventeenth century onward – the principal cause given for the demolition of the medieval church in 1786 and its replacement by a fashionable new Georgian building.

Henry VIII formally incorporated the society or guild in 1536. It was to be governed by a master and four wardens. In addition, the society was given charge of the buoys in the haven and river of Tyne and exclusive rights of

pilotage. They were to build two lighthouses, one at the entrance to the haven and another on the hill adjoining, and maintain a light at night, for which they were authorised to levy 4d from each foreign ship and 2d from each English ship using the port. The charter was renewed to them by Queen Elizabeth in 1584 under the style of master, pilots and seamen of the Trinity House of Newcastle upon Tyne, and the fraternity was to consist of 19 elder brethren who, with the younger brethren, would elect annually on the Sunday after Candlemas [2 February] a master, two elder wardens and two younger wardens, together with four assistants from the elder brethren and four from the younger, who were to act as a kind of Council. James I in 1607 restricted the governing body to a master, 12 elder brethren, two elder and two younger wardens, and four assistants; he also extended their jurisdiction to cover shipping at Blyth, Sunderland, Hartlepool, Whitby and Staithes. They were to appoint pilots for the Tyne and, from income from dues on goods brought into the river, they were to support 12 poor brethren or their widows, and shipwrecked mariners. They continued to be responsible for buoys and beacons on the river.⁵

It goes without saying that Trinity House was the home of ships' captains or at least ships' officers, not of 'ordinary seamen'. Few, however, would be shipowners, even in the sixteenth century, when ships were comparatively small. The wills of rich Newcastle merchants disclose part-ownership of ships, boats and keels, because total ownership was too risky.⁶ Shipwrecks, locally on the Black Middens or the Herd Sands, were all too frequent. Storms in the North Sea effectively closed winter sailings of coal to the Thames and London. In November 1675 Anthony White of Newcastle, master mariner, 'being about to take a voyage to sea and considering the uncertainties of this present life and the many hazards and dangers attending a seafaring life, not knowing how it may please God to dispose of me before my returne, doe make and declare this my last will and testament. . .'. It is pleasing to record that he survived the journey and did

not die until February 1683/4, his burial being recorded in the register of All Saints church.⁷

Coal was the principal commodity shipped from the Tyne. It was carried by ships owned in many different English and a few foreign ports. According to Hatcher the volume carried in 1666/7 amounted to 282,028 tons sent coastwise and 10,112 overseas. Ten years later the volume was 515,173 tons and 38,489 respectively.⁸ (Overseas shipments are more difficult to trace annually.) Knowledge that the carrying trade from Newcastle was buoyant was widely disseminated. Although few master mariners entered the charmed circle of Merchant Adventurers or of the Hostmen of Newcastle, who had the exclusive right to trade in coal, entry to it might be gained over several generations, as in the case of Abraham Dixon (see below, p. 166). Trinity House did not have a direct vote as to the composition of the town-council, only a shared vote with fellow by-trades. This article seeks to investigate the degree to which the parents of potential apprentices, entered by occupation and place of residence in the Admissions Books, were guided by experience of the work entailed or whether they were buoyed by hopes of El Dorado.

TYNE TRADE

Most ships sailing to the Tyne came in quest of coal. A detailed analysis of the Newcastle Chamberlain's Account Books from 1662 to 1670 confirms this. These were difficult years, when trade was constrained by a virtual blockade of the Tyne during the Dutch Wars of 1664 to 1667, although resuming its buoyancy after 1668.⁹ The bulk of the shipping came from outside the port. Concentrating on ships described as 'of Newcastle', out of 116 named vessels, only 21 were noted with a cargo other than coal for the outgoing voyage.¹⁰ Among these was the *Mary* of Shields, which on her 14 recorded visits to the Tyne entered with corn and normally left with salt; as she cast her ballast at Mill Dam she probably loaded her cargo from the South Shields salt pans. The majority of the ships entered in ballast.¹¹ Two

entered with flax. The Baltic timber trade is hinted at, with the *Primrose* of Shields entering in March 1665 with deals, leaving with coal. The *Providence* of Shields entered in July 1667 with 20,000 'cutts', 15 dozen oars, 1,000 deals and 400 spars, leaving with 374 tons of coal. The *Loving Friendship* of Newcastle entered in June 1670 with oak boards and left with coal and stones. The *Fancy* of Newcastle, which entered in ballast, left on 7 October 1667 with 34 chaldron of coal, a half last of tar, a barrel of starch, 100 smelts, 17 gross of tobacco pipes, a hogshead of wine, and an unspecified quantity of copperas. Such information must not be regarded as a record of the total cargo, as the word *unfree* often accompanies the entry. Where the shipper was a freeman of Newcastle he appears to have been exempt from the tolls collected by the town chamberlains. On the fourth week of November 1665 a ship of Ostend entered with 15 tons of ballast and unspecified 'goods', probably owned by freemen of the town and thereby exempt from toll. A belief that the cargo description was affected by the status of the shipper is reinforced by an entry under April 1668: 'Received of George Atkinson pro Mr Ellyson for unfree goods shipped in St Mary of Sheeldes, Robert Featcher master, namely 1 cwt of tow, 1 barrel starch, 3 reams of paper, $1\frac{3}{4}$ cwt rason solis, 10 cwt coperas, 3 barrels of soape, 2 hogsheade of vinegar, 4 cwt of hemp, 4 cwt of madder, $\frac{1}{2}$ hogshead of spirritts vallue £3. 10s, small grosere value £3, $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt of rosen, $\frac{1}{2}$ barrel soape, 1 cwt coperas, $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt of trickell [treacle], 4 cwts madder, 2 cwt of scranell [offcuts] value 20s, 1 barrel of figgs, 1 cwt of Barbados souger and 4 barrels of soape. No ballast dues, 7s 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.' The same ship left with 7 chaldrons of coal, which suggests that the remaining capacity escaped payment of dues because the merchant responsible was exempt.¹² In other examples the respective incoming and outgoing cargoes would seem to be more equally balanced. William Foreman, master of the *Loves Desire*, having entered with 'free' goods, left in late November 1669 with 10 chaldrons of coal, 4 fothers of lead, 40 firkins of butter, and 99 barrels of salmon, all classified as 'goods unfree'. Edward Woodmas, master

of the *Hart* of Hartlepool, was a regular visitor to the port of Tyne with cargoes of salt. When, however, on 27 August 1666 he anchored with 6 iron pots, 22 weys of salt and a half last of tar, Mr Robert Ellison paid 3s 9d on 18 cwt of alum and 12 cwt of woad *unfree* and Robert Jenison paid £6 on 20 last of salmon *unfree*.¹³

A welcome confirmation that a ship with the suggestive name of *Antigo Merchant* really did trade in America was the payment in late April 1670 of 6s 8d for 'unfree tobacco, which 'beinge most damnified' was valued at £40. This was paid in addition to dues on 40 tons of ballast. When the ship left the following week the declared cargo, on which tolls were paid, consisted of 74 chaldrons of coal.¹⁴ A month later William Toote, master of the *John* of Newcastle, arrived with 23 firkins of unfree butter and left with 18 weys of salt. The following July Abraham Rankins, master of the *Robert and Mary*, entered in ballast and left in coal, but Edward Stockdale had to pay 9s 8d for 25 chaldrons of corn carried in the same. In short, while the Chamberlains' accounts provide a glimpse of shipping on the Tyne and the ports they represented, they are of little use for a general overview of trade.

OWNERSHIP OF SHIPS

It should be noted in passing that Newcastle-owned ships were in the minority of ships entered in the Chamberlains' accounts. In comparison with the three ships registered in Newcastle for the last week of October 1665 there were eleven from London, three each from Whitby and Bridlington, two each from Hull and Ipswich, and one each from Copenhagen, Colchester, Feversham, Scarborough, Stockholland, and Wells by the Sea. A total of £542 2s 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d was collected that week in dues.¹⁵

The Chamberlains' account books note the port of origin of each ship but not the name of the owners. A few master mariners owned a share in the ship in which they sailed. This can be shown from surviving wills of master mariners. John Holborne, master mariner, died

apparently while in Denmark. At least, that was where he made his will in 1620. He was a man of substance. 'For my shiping I will that it be sold to pay my debts all save a sixth part of the *Rowbe* which I give to my sonne, Roger Holborne, and goe Master of her if the rest of the partners think good; my partners are these: Mr Henry Soame an eight part, my brother Luke Whetstone one eight part, James Stenhouse an sixtene part, a friend of Mrs Jarrard Reads an eight part, whereof there resteth to me that part twenty six pounds at the rate of nine hundred and forty poundes. . . ' There was a legacy of 20s to the poor of Trinity House, Newcastle, to be shared among them, and another 20s to the poor of All Saints parish.¹⁶ As for other master mariners, we find from the inventories of Robert Locksmith (died 1680) and Bartholomew Kirkhouse (died 1682) that the latter was master of the *Mary and Katherine* of Newcastle, in which he had two shares (a sixteenth and a thirty second). Locksmith owned a thirty-second share in the same ship, valued at £20. Richard Elbrough at his death in 1675 owned a sixteenth share in the *Conclusion* of Newcastle, of which his son Michael was 'maister'. In addition to this sixteenth he owned a sixteenth of *Owners Love* of Newcastle, a sixteenth of the *Nightingell* of Newcastle, a sixteenth of the *Loveing Friendship* of Newcastle, and a sixteenth of the equipment and the same share of their profits of trade (all of which he left to his son Michael). When Anthony White, Thomas Richardson, John Collyer and John Vacry came to value the effects of Abraham Dixon in April 1683 they found he owned three sixteenths of the 'good ship Dread nott of Newcastle, whereof Abraham Dixon was late mate', worth with its stock £393 15s.¹⁷

Ownership was spread through such partnerships, to share the risks of loss. Henry Maddison provides an extreme example of putting his eggs in many baskets. A merchant of Newcastle, when he died in July 1634 he owned a quarter and a sixth share in the *Henry and John* of Colchester, this share being valued at £163. His inventory also listed a third and a sixteenth share in the *Blessing* of Ipswich, worth £200; a quarter share in the *Wrym Rose* of Newcastle,

worth £25; a fourth part of the *Isabel* of York, worth £20; an eighth part of the *Content* of Colchester, worth £80; a fourth part of the *Marygold* of York, worth £90; a quarter of the *Neptune* of Newcastle, worth £30; an eighth and a sixteenth part of the *Blessing* of [Col]chester, worth £120; a sixteenth part of the *John* of London, worth £40; a sixteenth part of the *Elizabeth* of Maldon, worth £40; a sixteenth part of the *Mary* of Maldon; a sixteenth part of the *Mary Bonaventure* of Hull, worth £20; a sixteenth part of the *True Love* of Aldborough, worth £40; a thirty-second part of the *Dove* of Ipswich, worth £30; an eighth part of the *Elizabeth* of Selby, worth £50; an eighth part of the *Gift* of Ipswich, worth £50; an eighth part of the *Endeavour* of London, worth £30; a sixteenth part of the *Denis* of Lynn, worth £25; and a sixteenth part of the *Protection* of Ipswich, worth £25; together with full ownership of nine keels, worth £200, to ferry coal down to the mouth of the Tyne to the sea-going colliers.¹⁸ His shipping interests, therefore, included ships in Colchester (3), Ipswich (4), Hull (1), Aldborough (1), York (2), Selby (1), Lynn (1), Maldon (2) and London (2) as well as Newcastle (2), the most valuable shares being in ships of Colchester and Ipswich.

MASTER MARINERS

It is difficult to trace the career of the Trinity House apprentices after they had served their seven years and obtained their freedom of Newcastle. The simplest test of success is whether they later became masters or elder brethren of Trinity House, the names of whom are recorded. George Swaddell, for example, had been admitted to his freedom in October 1647, during the turbulent days immediately after the siege and capture of Newcastle by the Parliamentarians, the end of the first Civil War, and the imprisonment of Charles I in Anderson Place. He served as master of Trinity House in 1665, and paid on 5 chimneys for his house in Wall Knoll ward the same year. He sailed as master of the *Constant* of Newcastle between

October 1664 and May 1688, this being a collier whose Hostman was Mr John Blackett, a leading merchant of that town. Swaddell figured prominently among the masters to whom apprentices were bound, apparently taking on two or more within the same year on several occasions (1665, 1668, 1669, 1671, 1672, 1675, 1676, 1680). Their fathers ranged from Bertram Anderson, deceased merchant of Newcastle, and Rowland Widdrington, lately merchant of London, to Edward Greene, deceased shipwright of Newcastle. (He seems to have taken on his own son Richard as apprentice on 1 May 1680.)¹⁹

Edward Carr provides another documented example of success. He was admitted to his freedom in 1658 and served as Master of Trinity House in 1679. In 1665 he was living in North Shields, where he was taxed on 4 hearths, and his first wife Mary was buried at Tynemouth on 12 June 1665. He subsequently married Margaret Wrangham by special licence at St Nicholas's church, Newcastle, on 23 May 1667. He too took many apprentices, including Joseph Sisson, whose father was a Durham attorney, and George Johnson, whose father was a Newcastle hostman. According to the Hostmen's Books, Carr was master of the collier *Providence*. He was evidently of good repute, being admitted to a personal freedom of the Hostmen's Company on 20 January 1680, while his son Edward, having served his apprenticeship as a Merchant Adventurer, was admitted to that freedom (and to the Eastland Company) on 18 January 1689.²⁰

Thomas Richardson, master of the collier *Prosperous* about 1665, and Master of Trinity House in 1684, had been admitted to his freedom in 1663. He too had many apprentices, fifteen of which (out of 21) came from south of the Tyne from as far afield as York and Constable Burton. This bias raises the question of whether lads or their parents chose their master from personal recommendation. Once a non-Tynesider had proved himself as a master mariner did he seek out or be sought out by his old neighbours? Thomas Swainston, admitted to his Newcastle freedom in 1652, probably came from Stockton, where a namesake signed

the Protestation of 1641. His ship, the *Amity*, was 'registered' there, and four of his apprentices came from Stockton, one from Billingham, one from Blackwell, one from Thornaby, one from Carlton, and one from Greatham. The other two were from Yorkshire.²¹

Anthony White had been admitted to his freedom in January 1656. In 1665 he was taxed on three hearths in the Wall Knoll ward. He was Master of Trinity House in 1681, and up to his death in 1683 he had had at least 26 apprentices, including two who were the sons of gentlemen living in the Carlisle area. His 'gentlemen' apprentices included John Pye, son of Edward Pye of Newminster Abbey, Morpeth, and Robert son of Sir Robert Layton of Sexhow, Yorks (significantly 'deceased'). White married his first wife, Elizabeth Fell, on Christmas Day, 1657. She died seven years later and was buried at All Saints, Newcastle on 18 August 1664. On 16 April 1668 he was remarried by special licence to Elizabeth Aubone. At that date he was master of the *Nevis and Antego Merchant* of Newcastle, suggesting that he was sailing to the Americas. His own burial at All Saints was on 21 February 1684. According to his will his house was situated in Pandon and it would appear that he was survived by his wife but no family, as, after his widow, the sole beneficiary was his niece Mary Bierley.²²

MASTER MARINERS AT HOME

We know a little of the homes of the master mariners from their liabilities for hearth-tax. This tax was levied at the rate of 2s a hearth by act of Parliament in 1662 as compensation to the Crown for loss of feudal revenues as a result of the Civil War, and was levied each year until 1689 and the flight of James II. Returns have survived for 1664/5 and 1666 for Newcastle and Northumberland. From these we can identify areas where a number of master mariners lived, such as the Wall Knoll ward (16), Pandon Tower ward (8), Sandgate ward (7), Austin Tower ward (2), and Corner Tower ward (2) in Newcastle, with several residing in

North Shields.²³ (According to the burial register at Christ Church, North Shields, Edward Hudspeth ‘of the Low Lighthouse . . . an ancient Brother of Trinity House, Newcastle’, was buried there on 10 September 1678.)²⁴ The inventory of Abraham Dixon indicates a comfortable home in Spicer Lane,²⁵ Newcastle, with a kitchen, hall, parlour, with three over-rooms and a garret. In the hall were a pair of virginalls and frame, a looking-glass, a map, a picture, a spice box, a case of bottles, and an old carpet. The garret contained a pack of kersey valued at £18, two old beds, and 32 planks, 1½ inches thick and worth £4. He owned silver plate weighing 203 ounces 12 penny-weights and worth £48 4s, and there was £100 in cash and £80 in gold in the house. He was followed to sea by his son Abraham, who became Master of Trinity House in 1697, but apprenticed his own son in May 1703 to Edward Dawson, a boothman and merchant adventurer.²⁶ Thereafter the Dixons flourished as entrepreneurs, with Abraham Dixon IV buying an estate at Belford, obtaining a market charter, and setting up a blanket manufactory there.²⁷

Cuthbert Atkinson was another master mariner living in Spicer Lane. He was master of Trinity House in 1659 and paid on six hearths in the Pandon Tower ward in 1665. According to the inventory of his effects, made in January 1677, his house consisted of a hall – with a clock in its case, seven pictures and a map among other items – a parlour, with six little pictures and a small looking-glass, and a chamber above, a kitchen and a chamber above, a brewhouse and a great and a little cellar. Silver plate consisted of 3 silver ‘cans’, a large caudle cup, 4 silver beer-bowls, 3 little caudle cups, 4 silver beakers, 5 wine cups, a sugar-dish, 2 little ‘carsters’ and a dozen silver spoons, the whole valued at £36 5s. There were also 8 gold rings, a silver seal, and a silver tobacco box, the whole valued at £2 5s. In addition he had an extensive stock of timber consisting of long and small spars, ‘swales’, Hamburg deals, ‘best’ and ‘worst’ deals, sawn and unsawn deals, Swedish swales, oak boards, wainscott, fir baulks, and great and small masts to a total value of £228

18s 2d, and 235 bushels of malt and 404 bushels of barley valued at £60 14s 8d. With £200 in ready money, pieces of gold worth £72, and debts owing to him worth £100, Cuthbert was a ‘warm man’. He owned a sixteenth share in the *Merchants Adventure* of Newcastle, of which his son was master, another sixteenth in the *Dolphin* of Newcastle, and a further sixteenth in the *Loves Increase* of Newcastle, the three worth £125. We know from the All Saints’ registers that his first wife, Margaret, was buried there on 25 April 1670, and the following 25 October he married Eleanor Simson there by special licence. He died in December 1676, and his widow Eleanor was buried at All Saints on 30 October 1688. His second marriage explains the reference in his will to the fact that he had already settled his house on his eldest son Edward, and the bequest to Eleanor of ‘all the goods and chattels brought with her on her marriage, also £150 payable by the executors from his personal estate for her ‘third dower and widdowright’’. His daughter Margaret was left £50 payable by her brother Edward within six months of entering into possession of the house, with a further £150 payable by the executors as her ‘filial and child’s portion’. The remainder of his goods, shipping, debts, rights, credits, estate, movables or immovables, after payment of any debts, were left to his two sons Thomas and Joseph, to be divided equally.²⁸

Edward Nixon lived in Sandgate ‘without the walls’ on the north side of Fore Street. He left this property to his youngest son Joseph and his heirs, failing which the property should pass to his daughter Barbara Nixon and her heirs, failing which it would pass to his third son Abraham. He paid on 5 hearths in the Sandgate ward in 1665. His first wife Elizabeth died in March 1666, and he married Margaret Martin by special licence on 29 September 1667. He also held a lease of property in Lower Heworth, on which he laid a charge to provide annuities of £16 13s 4d for the first three years after his death to his sons Leonard and Abraham, and his daughter Barbara. His eldest son, Edward, was charged to renew the lease when the time came. His best silver tankard was left to Barbara, the silver ‘can’ to Edward, and the

rest of the plate and household goods were bequeathed to his widow Margaret.²⁹

Richard Elbrough was another master mariner who remarried late in life, thereby causing considerable ill-feeling in the children by the first match, as is eloquently expressed in his will: 'for prevention of suits and troubles which otherwise after my death might arise and happen between my wife and son touching my state. . .' He left his house in Newcastle to his widow for life, with remainder to his son Michael, to whom he left all his shipping interests. But the bequest was conditional on Michael making no trouble over her occupation. Otherwise the bequest would be transferred to 'cousin' Robert Hickson's nine children and to 'cousin' Nicholas Laxe's three children, who otherwise could expect only 10s a piece 'for a token'. Interestingly, the household effects listed in the will included ten little pictures, a clock, a musket and rest, three brushes, a Bible, and ten small books, also two silver cans, a silver salt, four small silver cups, and a dozen silver spoons. In his cellars were wainscott board, small deals, slit deals, 4 long swales, 16 handspikes, 2 spars, 12 small fir chests for glass, an old cable, a keel cable, 3 coils small rope, a pair of scales, a baulk, a small parcel of old rope, a block, 2 anchor stocks, 6 half deals, 4 old casks and some weights and shot, the whole worth £36 18s.³⁰ These items remind one of Admiral Collingwood's practice of saving old rope in the expectation it would come in useful!

Several master mariners lived at North Shields and are recorded in the Hearth Tax of 1666. These were William Botterell (whose house had two hearths), Christopher Dawson with three hearths, Thomas Potts with one, Abraham Reedhead with four, and William Swann with eight. None commanded a ship 'registered' in Shields. Botterell had no apprentices. Swann in 1664/5 lived in the Newcastle ward of Wall Knoll, and therefore had just moved down-river.³¹

THE APPRENTICES: STATUS AND HOMES, 1664–1702

The admissions books for apprentices to the master mariners of the Newcastle Trinity House sheds light on the families from which applicants were drawn. Table 1 indicates areas from which the young men came between June 1664 and August 1702 and covers 1405 individuals. The areas have been subdivided into Newcastle itself, Gateshead, elsewhere on Tyneside (including North and South Shields), Northumberland, County Durham, Yorkshire, and 'elsewhere'. The last area in the period 1664–1677 included four from Cumberland, three from Westmorland and one each from Cork in Ireland and Fren draught in Aberdeenshire.³²

It is understandable that many of the local parents had a seafaring background. Nineteen of the Newcastle fathers in this early tranche

Table 1 *Origins of Newcastle Trinity House apprentices, 1664–1702 (percentages).*

	Total	Newcastle	Gates'd	Tyneside	North'd	Durham	Yorks	Wash to Thames	Elsewhere in England	Foreign
1664–69	224	28	5.3	13.3	20	20.9	8.4	1.3	1.3	0.9
1669–74	278	27.3	11	19	13.6	15.4	6.4	2.8	3	0.9
1674–79	339	25	4.4	17.6	18	19	8	2.6	3.5	1
1679–84	269	20.8	4.8	17.4	14	22.6	10.4	2.9	6.7	–
1684–89	202	21.7	4	29.7	12.8	16.3	6.9	3.4	3.4	1.4
1689–94	427	18.8	6	23	19	13.8	5.8	8.4	3	1.8
1694–99	263	19.7	8.3	19	15	10	8.7	8.3	4.8	5.3

had themselves been mariners, as had five of those from Gateshead and four from South Shields. There were 4 shipwrights, 3 anchor-smiths, 3 keelmen and 2 watermen. Some were tradesmen in allied crafts such as house-carpenter, barber-surgeon, butcher, baker and brewer, smith, and barrel-maker or cooper. One wonders about the attraction of the sea for a father who was a basket-maker, a house-painter, a bricklayer, a chapman, a silk-weaver, or a schoolmaster, unless he thought it a path to possible riches undreamed of in his own trade. This belief is supported by consideration of the number of fathers from outside the Tyneside area described as 'gentlemen', a number of whom, significantly, were 'deceased' so it was their widow who had made the application. They came from Durham city, Barnard Castle, Thornaby and Stokesley, Yarm and Chichester. Fathers styled 'yeomen' were based at Bedlington, Sedgefield, West Auckland, Norton and Stockton (3 each), Ulgham and Aberdeen (2 each), and Craster. Ten fathers were described as merchants, coming from as far afield as Hamburg, London, Hull and York. Two were Leeds clothiers. One was a mason from Aberdeen, another was a brewer from Ipswich, another a shoemaker from Whitehaven, and another a tailor from Anstruther, Fife.

Various explanations can be advanced for the fluctuating proportions of candidates from each geographical grouping. The 'elsewhere on Tyneside', covering North and South Shields and up-river as far as Byker and Heworth, offered alternative employment. There were the ship-building trades (and allied trades such as rope-making, anchor-making and sail-making) during the decades of war with the Netherlands. A glass-making industry was developing at South Shields and in the Ouseburn area, with salt-making also at North and South Shields. The steady growth of interest from 'elsewhere' may be more surprising. There were sons of 'gentlemen' from Dublin, Mattingley (Hants), Boroughbridge, Westminster, Helmingham (Suffolk) and Burton (Lincs); of clerks from Arkengarthdale and London, of an apothecary from London, and of a lawyer from Swindon.

It might be understandable that a mariner from Rotherhithe, Shadwell, Ipswich, Montrose, Strensey in Orkney, and Bannon Bridge in Ireland should send a son to learn the trade at Newcastle; they would meet Tyne mariners by way of normal business. But what of the mason from Dunbar, the locksmith from Leith, the miller from Londonderry, the tobacconist from Holborn in London and the trumpeter from Shoreditch?

What did the young men make of the trade chosen for them? Obviously, some had second thoughts! John Forster, son of John Forster of the Lee, Northumberland, gentleman, was bound to George Swaddell for seven years on 25 March 1667. There is the brief note after his name on the admissions register that he 'left the sea and did not serve in the same year he was bound'.³³ Jeffrey, son of Ralph Addyson late of Gateside, county Durham, glazier, deceased, was bound for seven years to Matthew Henderson on 3 December 1667 but was 'discharged from his Freedome' 18 months later.³⁴ William, son of William Hedley, late of Newcastle, mariner, deceased, was bound for seven years to Thomas Aubone junior on 6 July 1669 but 'is runne away from his maister and not to be admitted, this is his maister's desire, Aprill 11th 1670'.³⁵ Robert, son of Robert Smith, late of Newcastle, glover, was bound for seven years to the same Thomas Aubone junior on 31 January 1671 and 'is discharged from his master by consent, never to be admitted'.³⁶ Jeremiah, son of Henry Jackson of Halifax, chapman, was bound for seven years to Abraham Dixon on 18 October 1671 but 'put out by his master's order' on 1 July 1675, 'he having left the sea'.³⁷ William Bilton, bound for seven years on 19 March 1680, was 'to be razed out of our Booke by order of our Company, he being a married man before he was Bound to his brother Nicholas'.³⁸ Nicholas son of John Baley, late of Melton, Dorset, deceased, was bound on 13 January 1680 to Richard Carr for seven years, but 'made no service, bound after to a barber-surgeon'.³⁹ Josiah, son of Richard Stirzaker of Lancaster, Lancashire, butcher, was bound on 29 April 1693 to John Wilkinson, with a terse note beside the entry: 'This man is

crossed out by his master's order and noe seaman'.⁴⁰ James Rotherforth of South Shore, county Durham, bound to Abraham Dixon jr on 13 April 1689, was dismissed from his apprenticeship for theft.⁴¹ An interesting variant occurs with Isaac Cooper, 'apprentice to Thomas Hicke, a free man of the Towne butt nott free of the Trinity House, desires to have his Guills in the Towne that he might have the same freedome his master had: upon his submission to the Trinity House, he paying his fine of five pounds he was admitted to be Inrolled the 16th day of February 1694/5'.⁴² Faults were not, however, only on the part of the apprentice. Captain Thomas Swainston was fined £10 by Trinity House in February 1676 for failure to enrol three apprentices 'in due tyme', which would affect the date on which they would have completed their service and so be eligible for enrolment as freemen of Newcastle and of their own guild.⁴³

Some master mariners undoubtedly had successful careers at sea, justifying those loving parents who sought admission for their sons as apprentices of Trinity House. At the other end of the scale, however, we find Robert Cooke, mariner of Gateshead. His effects were appraised on 3 January 1671, when they were found to consist of 2 old chairs, 2 chisels, an old trunk, an old cupboard, a piece of old plank, a bond for £6, a panel chest, a coverlet, a happing, a blanket, 5 feather pillows, and clothes and apparel worth 5s. The total value of his belongings was £8 4s 10d.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

Sufficient material survives in the Newcastle Chamberlains' account books, the admissions

books of Newcastle Trinity House, the probate records of the diocese of Durham and the tax returns in London to weave a tapestry of the lives of some of the master mariners in the port of Tyne. They were a vital element in maintaining Newcastle's role as the leading port for coal shipment down the east coast of England, because even if they did not command all the shipping which made use of the port of Tyne they continued to be responsible for facilities on the river, including the lighthouses at North Shields, buoys on the river, and, most importantly, provision of pilots guiding ships to the mouth of the river and beyond. Their monopoly was swept away with the institution of the Tyne Improvement Commission in 1850, followed in 1865 by the transfer of Tyne pilotage to the newly-created Tyne Pilotage Authority, although five of its seventeen members were appointed by Newcastle Trinity House. In 1988 all pilotage was re-organised throughout the country, being transferred to Harbour Authorities, in the case of the Tyne to the Port of Tyne Authority. It was only then that the corporation finally lost its connection with pilotage on the Tyne (and certain other harbours in North East England). Nevertheless Newcastle Trinity House, Broad Chare, remains the headquarters of the company of Masters and Mariners of Newcastle upon Tyne, and the corporation continues to be a licensing authority for North Sea deep-sea pilots. Unique among the guilds, it requires its members to be not only children of freemen of Newcastle but also working master mariners.

APPENDIX

Master Mariners of Newcastle Trinity House active between 1660 and 1670 (derived from the Chamberlains' Accounts and the list of Masters of Trinity House in Brand, vol. 2, 337–38)

Mariners	Master of Trinity House	Ships
Joseph Allen		<i>Constant John</i>
Arthur Alvey		<i>Patience</i>
Henry Archer		–
Cuthbert Atkinson	1659, 1663	<i>Promise</i>
Edward Atkinson	1670	<i>Primrose, Marygold</i>
Thomas Aubonee sr	1656, 1666	<i>Peter</i>
Thomas Aubonee jr	1678	–
Robert Baley		–
Matthew Bates		<i>Ralph & William</i>
John Bee		<i>William</i>
George Bell		–
William Bell		–
Henry Bird	1650, 1661	–
Edward Booth		<i>Recovery, Mary</i>
James Brancckston		<i>Golden Mackerel, George</i>
William Brunton		<i>Constant James/Jane</i>
Robert Bulman		<i>Return</i>
Francis Burrell		<i>Hopeful Adventure, Leopard</i>
Edward Carr	1679	<i>Providence</i>
Tobias Clark		<i>Constant</i>
George Clarke		–
Joseph Clayton		<i>Hopeful Success</i>
Robert Comyn		–
Robert Cooke	1669	<i>Return, Recovery, Butter Tunn, Temperance Margaret, Employment</i>
Christopher Dawson		<i>Joseph</i>
John Dawson		–
Abraham Dixon		<i>Leopard, Dreadnot</i>
Thomas Dixon	1654, 1667	<i>Mary</i>
John Eden		<i>Raiph & William</i>
Joseph Edon		<i>Ralph & William</i>
Michael Elbrough		<i>Conclusion</i>
Richard Elbrough	1648, 1658, 1674	<i>William & Edward</i>
Ralph Fell	1647	–
George Fewler		<i>Friends Adventure</i>
Frederick Fletcher		–
Robert Forster		<i>Constant Ralph</i>
Robert Gaire		<i>Peter</i>
Thomas Greene		<i>Mayflower</i>
John Hall		<i>Hopewell</i>
Barthomew Harle		<i>Greenland Merchant</i>
Matthew Henderson		<i>Constant Francis</i>
Thomas Henderson		<i>Providence, Rose, Elizabeth</i>
John Hodgson		<i>Young Phoenix</i>
Anthony Hogshon		–
Edward Hudspeth		–
William Hymers	1686	<i>Susannah</i>
Henry Kirkhouse	1662, 1671	<i>Greenland Merchant</i>
Edward Lavorick		–

Mariners	Master of Trinity House	Ships
William Leck	1682	<i>Consent</i>
Timothy Lewen		—
William Lockett		<i>Greenland Merchant</i>
George Martin		<i>Prosperous</i>
Edward Nixon	1664, 1675	—
John Otway		<i>Blessing</i>
John Otway		<i>Providence</i> (of North Shields)
Michael Pallaser		—
John Parker		—
John Partridge		<i>Alloted Providence</i>
Thomas Partridge		—
John Pattison		—
Richard Pattison		<i>Providence</i>
Thomas Pattison		—
Rowland Pithie		<i>Marygold</i>
Thomas Potts		<i>Recovery</i>
Anthony Purvis		<i>Benjamin</i>
James Rand	1670	<i>Seaflower</i>
Robert Rand		<i>Dolphin</i>
John Ravens		<i>Rose</i>
John Read		—
Peter Reay		—
Roger Reay		<i>Primrose</i>
Arthur Reed		—
Abraham Reedhead	1672	<i>Respite</i>
Thomas Rewcastle	1688	<i>John & Dorothy</i>
Thomas Richardson	1684	<i>Prosperous</i>
Richard Righ	1676	—
Henry Robbinson		—
Edward Robinston		—
Thomas Rowcastle	1688	<i>Constant Melbanke</i>
Nicholas Sayles		<i>Satisfaction</i>
Thomas Selby		<i>Tryall</i>
Christopher Shadforth		<i>Rose, Peace</i>
Thomas Shafto		<i>Industry</i>
Thomas Simson		<i>Constant Ralph</i>
John Smith		<i>Respect, Amity</i>
George Smyth		<i>Nathan, Phoenix, Mary Pinck</i>
George Storey		—
George Swaddell	1665	<i>Constant</i>
Thomas Swainston		<i>Amity</i> (of Stockton)
Robert Swallow		—
William Swann		—
Joshua Tailor		<i>Mary</i>
Thomas Thompson		<i>Primrose</i>
George Usher		—
John Vaughan	1691	<i>John</i>
Thomas Watson	1692	<i>Providence</i>
Anthony White	1681	<i>Mevis & Antigo Merchant</i>
Robert Wilkinson		—
William Wright		<i>John & Elizabeth, Raiph, Hopefull Success</i>

NOTES

¹ R. J. Howell, *Newcastle and the Puritan Revolution*, Oxford (1967)

² J. Hatcher, *The History of the British Coal Industry 1: Before 1700*, Cambridge (1993), 9, 44–47, 70–71.

³ R. Welford, *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. 3, London (1887), 367.

⁴ J. Brand, *History of Newcastle upon Tyne*, vol. 2, Newcastle (1789), 321–31.

⁵ *Ibid*, 330.

⁶ Robert Lambe of Newcastle, merchant, on his death in 1586, held a lease of coal mines in Gateshead formerly belonging respectively to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Gateshead parish church and to Neasham nunnery. He owned silver plate valued at £16 5s 6d, and held in his warehouse iron, soap, pitch, alum, sugar and timber, and in his shop spices, dried fruit and haberdashery. He owned the bark *Lamb*, worth £160 with its equipment. Mr Robert Atkinson, merchant and alderman, on his death in 1596 owned a substantial house, and warehouses stocked with timber, lint, hemp, rye and lead. He had interests worth £20 in a fishing boat called the *Mary Forton* of Shields, a quarter of the *Newe John* of Newcastle, worth £50, and a sixth of the bark *Chancewell* of Newcastle ‘now at sea’, worth £60 (W. Greenwell (ed), *Wills and Inventories*, vol. 2 [SS, 38, 1860], 119–21, 259–64).

⁷ Durham University Library Special Collections [DULSC], DPR, Anthony White, 1683; Tyne and Wear Archives Service [TWAS], GU/TH/40/2 pp 45, 101. References to the parish registers of All Saints, Newcastle, derive from the transcripts in Newcastle Central Library Local History Collections (Burial [1681–1714], 18).

⁸ J. Hatcher, *British Coal Industry*, 490–91, 494–95.

⁹ *Ibid*, 88–89, 475, 478–79.

¹⁰ TWAS, 543/44–47 *passim*.

¹¹ Management of ballast was of great concern both to the corporation of Newcastle and to the ship masters navigating the Tyne. Because wooden ships needed a dry cargo to keep them balanced in the water, any outgoing cargo of coal required a corresponding weight of incoming items. If there was an incoming shortfall, ballast of sand, stones, scrap iron and the like was essential. Indeed, by the sixteenth century the corporation was able to charge ship masters at the rate of 1½d the ton for casting ballast on special shores, and fining those who tried to evade payment by discharging ballast at sea. The justification for the charge was the need to keep a

clear passageway up the Tyne to Newcastle, and ballast required management to prevent slippage from the ‘hills’ into the river. The iniquities of the system were a recurrent theme in Ralph Gardiner’s diatribe, *England’s Grievance Discovered* (1655). See also C. M. Fraser (ed), *Newcastle Chamberlains’ Accounts 1508–11*, Newcastle (1987), xiii–xvi.

¹² The volumes consulted run from TWAS, 543/44 to 47. The information is to be found under the respective dates in the Chamberlains’ Accounts. Because of a peculiar system of dating, the tolls were entered under the first to fourth week of the month, using *lunar* months. This results in two months of October in each year! To complicate matters, 47 is unpaginated. The accountancy year appears to begin on the Monday after Michaelmas.

¹³ TWAS, 543/45 f. 93v.

¹⁴ TWAS, 543/47 unpaginated (second week in May 1670). Can the same inference be made concerning the *Greenland Merchant*?

¹⁵ TWAS, 543/45 f 13v

¹⁶ H. M. Wood (ed), *Wills and Inventories*, vol. 4 [SS 136, 1929], 135–37.

¹⁷ DULSC, DPR, Robert Locksmith, 1680; Bartholomew Kirkhouse, 1682; Richard Elbrough, 1675; Abraham Dixon, 1683.

¹⁸ *W&I4*, 257.

¹⁹ M. H. Dodds (ed), *Register of Freemen of Newcastle* (Newcastle upon Tyne Records Committee, III [1923], 60; TWAS, 543/44–47 *passim*; GU/TH/40/2 p. 98; R. Welford, ‘Newcastle Household holders in 1665’ *AA*³, 7 (1911), 74; Brand, *Newcastle*, vol. 2, 338.

²⁰ *Register*, 74; Brand, *Newcastle*, vol. 2, 338; N[atational] A[rchives], E. 179/158/103 m. 27: 105 m. 7; R.H. Couchman (ed), *The Parish Registers of Tynemouth*, vol. 1, North Shields (n.d.), 254; H. M. Wood (ed), *Register of St Nicholas, Newcastle*, Newcastle (1914), 59; TWAS, GU/TH/40/2, *passim*; F. W. Dendy (ed), *Newcastle Hostmen’s Company* [SS, 105, 1901] 134–35, 271; F. W. Dendy (ed), *Newcastle Merchant Adventurers*, vol. 2 [SS, 101, 1899], 307.

²¹ *Register* 80; Brand 388; TWAS, 543/44 f 75v; GU/TH/40/2 *passim*; H. M. Wood (ed), *Durham Protestations* [SS, 135, 1922], 177.

²² *Register* 72; DULSC, DPR, Anthony White, 1683; TWAS, GU/TH/40/2, pp 45, 101; Registers of All Saints, Newcastle: [Marriage, 1653–60], 49: 1660–81], 18; [Burial 1660–81], 244: [1681–1713], 18.

²³ Welford, *Newcastle Household holders*, 70–76; NA, E.79/158/103 m. 27.

²⁴ Couchman, *Parish Registers of Tynemouth*, vol. 1, 280.

²⁵ Spicer Lane ran parallel to Broad Chare to the east, down to the Quayside (Oliver's map of Newcastle, 1831).

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²⁷ DULSC, DPR, Abraham Dixon, 1683; *NCH 1*, Newcastle (1893), 392–3. Dixon married Jane Carnaby at All Saints church on 26 November 1657 (Marriage Register [1653–60], 49).

²⁸ Welford, *Newcastle Householdors*, 72; Brand, 337; DULSC, DPR, Cuthbert Atkinson, 1677; Registers of All Saints [Marriage, 1660–81], 24; [Burial 1660–81], 283, 333; [1681–1713], 72.

²⁹ DULSC, Edward Nixon, 1675; Welford, *Newcastle Householdors*, 75; Registers of All Saints, [Marriage, 1660–81], 17; [Burial, 1660–81], 254.

³⁰ DULSC, Richard Elbrough, 1675; Registers of All Saints [Marriage, 1660–81], 13. His new bride was Ann Rand, daughter of a master mariner.

³¹ NA, E.179/158/103 mm. 27–28. Ralph Smith, master of the *Elizabeth* and later of the *Nightingale*,

both ships of North Shields, lived at Walker (*Ibid*, m. 29).

³² TWAS, GU/TH/40/2, passim.

³³ *Ibid*, 13.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 20.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 28.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 38.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 42.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 97.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 94.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 159.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 135.

⁴² *Ibid*, 169.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 65–6. On 7 February 1675/6 Captain Swainston entered the names of Henry Law of Billingham, George Corneforth of Blackwell, William Peares of Thornaby, and two further apprentices. The first three should have been entered on 26 June 1660, 29 September 1668 and 29 September 1670 respectively.

⁴⁴ DULSC, DPR, Robert Cooke, 1670. He married Anne Thompson from Stanhope, Weardale, at All Saints, Newcastle, on 28 June 1654 (Marriage Register [1653–60], 7).