Port Books of Portsmouth

Sea Trade Around Portsmouth in the 1630s

Many people see Portsmouth in the past as purely a naval port with the fortunes of Gosport waxing and waning with its bigger neighbour across the harbour. Gosport grew from Leland's "little fishing village" in the 1570s to a town larger than the nearby market town of Titchfield by the mid 1650s. Most of this growth occurred with the expansion of the navy during Cromwell's Commonwealth. Before this spurt of growth the Port Books show a steady flow of trading vessels moving in and out of Portsmouth.

The coastal trade of Portsmouth shows vessels voyaging around the coast as far as Swansea to the west and Newcastle to the north east. Outward cargoes included timber, malt and other agricultural products together with the odd cannon, brown paper and red iron. Inward cargoes included butter and coal. In 1634 1730 quarters of malt and more than 3750 dozen barrel hoops were shipped out of Portsmouth.

On the 16 February 1633 the 40 tonne "Katherine and Jane" of Ryde set sail for Plymouth. Her Master was John Smythe and she carried the following cargo owned by John Woods.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4000 | feet one inch board | 7 | loads hoops |
| 10 | dozen oares | 2 | loads of quarters |

On 19 September 1634 Henry Sparling was the Master of the "Sara" registered in London. This 20 tonne vessel was carrying cargo for Clement Browne and was bound for London. Her cargo included:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1000 | barrel boards | 5 | loads of bark |
| 6 | tons of iron | 7 | loads of timber |
| 9 | loads of plank | 2000 | trenails |

Inward bound vessels included the "Peter and Joane" and "Delight" of Gosport and the "Elizabeth", "Thomas" and "John" all registered in Portsmouth. All of these vessels arrived carrying cargoes of coal which were mainly for the account of the Master. The coal was usually loaded either in Wales or on the north east coast of England and was carried in fairly small quantities. Typical was the "Elizabeth" who arrived from Sunderland carrying 14 chaldrons of coal. The Port book for 1635 is signed by one of the Customs officials, Richard Lardner. During the year he has noted two vessels arriving coastwise with coal as only part of the cargo. Is it possible that other vessels also arrived so loaded but did not need recording?

*Coal arriving in Portsmouth in 1635.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ship's Name | Port of Registry | Master's Name | Loading Port | Quantity |
| Elizabeth | Portsmouth | John Baily | Sunderland | 14 chaldrons |
| Peter and Joane | Gosport | William Sayt | Swansea | 8 waytes |
| Remembrance | Portsmouth | Daniell Bradley | South Barry | - |
| Speedwell | Sandwich | Richard Collins | London | 35 chaldrons |
| Thomas | Portsmouth | John Carter | Sunderland | 9 chaldrons |
| Peter and Joane | Portsmouth | William Sayt | Swansea | 8 wayes |
| Anne | Chichester | Richard Woollen | Newcastle | 18 chaldrons |
| Sarah | London | Henry Sparlins | Sunderland | 12 chaldrons |
| Thomas | Portsmouth | John Cartar | Sunderland | 9 chaldrons |
| Elizabeth | Portsmouth | John Baily | Swansea | 13 wayes |
| John | Portsmouth | John George | Newcastle | 12 chaldrons |
| Mary | Yarmouth | William Sacey(?) | London | 25 chaldrons |
| William and Catherine | Lynn | William Cornish | Lynn | 12 chaldrons |
| Delight | Gosport | Edward Capewell | London | 20 chaldrons |
| Robert | Portsmouth | Robert Frampton | London | 6 chaldrons |

The two examples of ships arriving from other ports in England with cargo other than coal were the Robert of Portsmouth and the Speedwell of Sandwich. The Master of the Robert was Robert Frampton and arrived from London on 20th November 1635 with the following cargo for Josias Fletcher:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6 | chaldrons sea coal | 1 | last of hemp |
| 18 | barrels of tar | 8 | cwt of cable yarn |
| 1 | tun of vinegar | 2 | tuns of red iron |

Richard Collins, Master of the Speedwell, arrived on the 4th June 1635 and brought the following cargo from London for George Winstone.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 35 | chaldrons of coals | 3 | baskets of potts |
| ½ | tun of ---cers wares | 2 | barrells of cut glass |

Records were also made of vessels arriving from foreign ports. Although fewer in number than the coastal vessels they were usually larger and most anchored outside the port and discharged their cargoes into smaller boats to be brought ashore. Where this happened the Master of the small boat is often recorded and not necessarily the Master of the arriving ship. The value of the cargo is always recorded together with the subsidy that was payable. Imported wine was recorded separately.

Vessels were recorded in 1636 and 1637 coming from as far afield as Barbary (North Africa) and Newfoundland although the majority were from France.

*An extract from the list of vessels arriving from foreign ports.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ship's name | Home Port | Master | From | Cargo | | Value | | |
| John | Portsmouth | John Knight | Nantes |  |  |  |  |  |
| Blessing | London | Stephen Lock | Duarney | 3 | small balls con(?) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 4 | ells Normandy canvas | 16 | 00 | 00 |
| Dainty | London | Augustus Bright | Cambries | 20 | cwt white sugar | 66 | 13 | 04 |
| Saul | Portsmouth | Thomas Stroud | Newfoundland | 7 | tonnss trayne oil | 42 | 00 | 00 |
|  |  |  |  | - | wet and dry fish | - | - | - |
| Sarah | Portsmouth | Thomas Stoppard | Newfoundland | 10 | tonnes trayne oyle | 60 | 00 | 00 |
|  |  |  |  | - | wet and dry fish | - | - | - |
| Jonas | Poole | Richard James | Duarney | 3½ | wayte French salt | 3 | 10 | 00 |
| William | London | John Brook | Barbary | 50 | cow hides | 6 | 05 | 00 |
| Elizabeth | Portsmouth | John Baily | Dublin | 20 | cwt Irish tallow | 16 | 13 | 04 |
| small boat |  | Robert Sturt | Br- | 103½ | qtrs yew wood | 3 | 15 | 00 |
| small boat | Gosport | Nicholas Podd |  | 14 | cwt tallow | 11 | 13 | 04 |
| small boat |  | Francis Wardner |  | 2½ | cwts white sugar | 8 | 6 | 8 |
| small boat |  | John Triggs |  | 42 | galls Sallet Oyle | 3 | 10 |  |

*Only two vessels are shown sailing to foreign ports. Both are exporting the cargo landed from the Saul in October 1637.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ship's name | Home port | Master | Destination | Cargo | |
| Margery | Leith |  | Caen | 2 | tonnes trayne oyle |
| Edward | Gosport | Richard Hodges | Caen | 5 | tonnes Newfoundland trayne oyle |
|  |  |  |  | 6000 | wet Newland fish |

*Wine imports*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ship's name | Home port | Master | Load port | Cargo | | Merchant | Dues |
| John | North Yarmouth | John Knott | Nantes | 30 | tonnes wine | Richard James | £60 |
| Richmond | London | William - | Malliga | 20 | pcs Regsana | Richard James | 30s |
| Francis | Tremlade | James Mercier | Tramlade | 2½ | tonnes wine | own account | £ 7 |
| small boat |  | John Pickford |  | 4 | butts sack | Benjamin Woolnor | £ 4 |
| small boat |  | Robert Sturt |  | 1 | butt sack | John Triggs | £ 1 |
| small boat |  | Arthur Windest |  | 1 | butt sack | Benjamin Woolnor | £ 1 |
| - | - | - | Rochelle | 3 | h'heads wine |  |  |
| - | - | - | Bourdiny | 1 | tonne wine |  |  |
| - | - | - | Dunkirk | 3 | h'head wine |  |  |

Sources:

Port Books of Portsmouth

E190/824/4 PRO, London

E190/824/6 PRO, London

E190/823/9 PRO, London