

Mariners letters as signs of literacy

Colin Greenstreet
Community organiser
Signs of Literacy initiative

September 26th 2019
Video seminar

Welcome to today's seminar. My name is Colin Greenstreet and I am the co-director of the Signs of Literacy initiative, which I run with Dr Mark Hailwood, a social historian, who is a lecturer at Bristol University.

I am also the founder of the MarineLives project, which has been running now for seven years. MarineLives looks at the lives of mariners within the period 1580 to 1680, with a focus on commerce, materials, language and correspondence.

The topic of today's seminar is "**Mariners' Letters as Signs of Literacy?**"

I will start by giving a forty minute paper on this topic, leaving twenty minutes for discussion. The slides I am using to accompany the paper will be made publicly available after the seminar.

The paper will concentrate on letters and other written documents produced and read by mariners in commercial ships and will not deal with naval matters.

Did mariners write letters? And if they did, where are they?

So why aren't historians searching for and using these mariners' letters?

George Oxenden's correspondence with mariners

Letters received by Sir George Oxenden from mariners and mariner's widows, 1662-1667. Twenty-six in total.

[20th March 1661/62, Letter from Sir William Rider to Charles Conyers](#)

22th March, 1661/62, Letter from Wm Rider, Nic Hurlestone, Briab [?] Hassison [??], Edm. [OR Edw: Johnson [?John , Swanley to Sir GO, Trinity House

[24th March 1661/62, Letter from William Ryder to Sir GO](#)

[14th January 1662/63, Letter from Arnold Browne to Sir GO, Shipp Dunkirke Roade of Angedeiva](#)

[23rd February 1662/63, Letter from Ann Townesend alias Nicholls to Sir GO, London](#)

[20th March 1662/63, Letter from Peter Cooze to Sir GO, Ratcliff](#)

[24th March 1662/63, Letter from William Rider to Sir GO, London](#)

[25th March 1663, Letter from Nicholas Hurlestone to Sir GO, Redriss](#)

[26th March 1663, Letter from George Smith & William Rider, London](#)

[26th March 1663, Letter from George Smith & William Rider, London, Letter 2](#)

[26th March 1663, Letter from William Rider to Sir GO, London](#)

[March 1662/63, Letter from Peter Cooze to Sir GO](#)

[25th September 1663, Letter from Nicholas Millett, Loyalll Merchant, Surat Road](#)

[16th December 1663, Letter from Nicholas Millett to Sir GO, the Loyal Merchant](#)

[3rd January 1665/66, Letter from William Ryder to Sir GO, Bethnall Green](#)

[March 1665/66, Letter from Wilam Rider & George Smith](#)

[March 1665/66, Letter from William Rider to Sir GO](#)

[14th April 1667, Letter from Nicholas Millett to Sir GO](#)

[14th April 1667, Letter from Robert Bowen to Sir GO, Pladsto](#)

[16th April 1667, Letter from William Rider to Sir GO, London](#)

[22nd August 1667, Letter from William Ryder to Sir GO, Bethnal Green](#)

[October 1667, Letter from Robert Bowen to Sir GO](#)

[3rd October 1667, Letter from Robert Bowen to Sir GO, London](#)

[October 1667, Letter from William Ryder to Sir GO](#)

[7th October 1667, Letter from John Privett to Sir GO, Gun Yard, Houndsitch](#)

[15th October 1667, Letter from William Ryder to Sir GO, London](#)

Letter from Captain Peter Cooze, mariner and former master of the *Livorno ffrigot* [March 1663]

Worshipfull Sir George Oxinden

My most humble service presented to you with my prayers to God for your good health as I am in joye with my wife and mother at present who desires to bee kindly remembered to you;

Sir after many troubles, I shall acquaint you of the *Livorne ffrigot* that shee could not be recovered the reason was that the Spaniards ware against it for theire selfe ends; we did send most of the belonging to the Shipp to the vallue of £500 but the charges did eat the better part of it what remained I brought hoame to the valew of two hundred & [?] pounds which I have bought of the owners one consideration that I have payed the marriners 6 months wadges, which was two hundred pounds and 60 pounds which the shipp was indebted to me by accountt in the voyadge so that which was saved of the shipp hath floated the above sums no w the ffreight which I rceivvd at [Livorne](#) from Roushea was – 2997 dolbles besides we had 20 tonn dead ffreight which they under writt to lade at 24 dolbles the tonn; which is Dollbes 490 which now wee are in sute of law for it, I have acquainted Madam Dallyson withall, Sir that is all concerning the *Livorne*;

Now I have a small ffrigot upon the stocks, now of a 120 tonns. I could wish when shee is fitted that I weare in India with her that I could serve you, pray Sir if you have merchants in England of your acquaintance, to write theire good words for mee heere; Sir I have gained great disgust from Mr Love and Mr Briton which I do not much vallew, for I have not testified any thing but what I know upon oath and I hope that your cause will prove them what they are;

Sir I have not more to acquaint you at present I committ you to God who is all sufficient to give you health of soule and body and rest your humble servant

Peeter Cooze

My kinde love to Mr Master and Mr Gibin and the rest of my good ffreinds

Letter from Captain Peter Cooze, mariner and former master of the *Livorno ffrigot* [March 1663]

Sir,

After my most humble service to you, I make bold to trouble you with these few lines, Sir the bearer hereof Edwardd Tarver a musitioner hath a desire to stay in India with you, if you be pleased to vouch safe him entertainment. Sir, I have known him of a child that came of honest parents, and is a preitty sivil young man and for his musick I hope he may have thee happiness to play you a merry lessen. Sir, I pray excuse my boldness. My wife and mother desires theire kind remembrance unto you, I have written you in a former letter all thee particulars concerning thee *Livorne Friggatt*. It is inclosed in your letters sent by Madam Dallison.

Having not else at present I rest
Your ever respectful servant to
you and yours

Peeter Cooze

Queene Staires in [Ratcliff](#)

Letter from Captain Nicholas Millett, mariner and master of the *Loyal Merchant* [September 1663]

Right Worshipfull

Your welcome letter of the 14th present received belowe the riversmouth I beleeve you imagine with what joy it was received I have many things to write and speake to you, but I must leave it till a farther opportunity which I suddenly wish for, ffor to give you a full account of our voyadge I have not tyme, but in parte wee departed [the Downes](#) the 11th Aprill the *African* departe the 6th ditto; we arrived at Johannes the 19th August but no newes of the *African*'s arrivall theire or at Mohilia, I must informe that she was designed to touch at John DeNova called by some, but by the ould name Christophers, wheare his shipp was cast a way, his not arrivall heere, makes mee wonder I must referr the rest to tyme, and better intelligence.

I was in good hopes to have gott over this tyde, but had not opportunity so am a feard it will bee 2 or 3 dayes before I have an opportunity to gett over, in respect of the tydes falling out soo late, and so earely, and our shipp drawing soo much watter. I shall endeavour all wayes possible, to gett her in, that you may bee assured off; Sir I have many letters, tokens, and severall things for you, and to advise you which I omitt, I send up the purser with the Company pacquett. Onely I must tell you I have £1000 in gould for you which [XXXX] the [XXXXX]. But of that an other tyme.

Of what you write in your letter lett mee so bould to tell you, that if Sir George had not beene in India, India should not have seene me, therefore shall referr all to you, as to a person which I dare trust with all that I have; a little indisposednesse of health makes me bee the creditor and to requite that favour of you, that you would send me Mr Ward as soone as possible.

I had fforgott to tell you that your mother, brother, and sister (my ownely) with Sir George Smith, D. Pennington with all yourr freinds, are well, and desire to bee remembred to you; Sir to those that are with you my kinde respects.

I have no more to write but that I am still, as I ever was.

Your Worshipps humble servant
and ffaithfull freind to comand
Nicholas Millett

Shipp *Loyall Merchant*
Surat Roade September 25th 1663

To Mr Goodyer in particuler my service and Mr Gary

Letter from Ann Townesend, widow of John Nicholls, deceased master of the *Expedition* [February 1663]

Right Worthy Sir

I had once a husband whose name was John Nicholls and was master of the *Expedition* whome you very well did know, I made bould to acquaint your Worshipp in London about my sufferings, and by whom, and your Worshipp was pleased to promise mee your helpe when God brought you to India. Mr Goodyer can very well informe you who has my husband's will for hee was on board when he dyed; I desire that I may have the will heare.

I have given a letter of attorney to one Mr John Oates cheife mate in the *America* who with your powerfull assistance is willing to act for my releife in it; without your Worshipp's helpe hee cann doo nothing I shall not need to begg your helpe of the just and mercyfull whome your Worshipp is well knowne to bee,

Sir I am in a suffering condition, my wants are great, and my desires are no more than just, under God my hopes are in you soo craving pardon for my bouldnesse I take leave and rest

London the 23th ffeb 1662:

Your troublesome friend
and servant
Ann: Townesend
Alias - Nicholls

What can we learn from Sir George Oxenden's correspondence in the 1660s?

He corresponded with mariners and former mariners

- Arnold Brown, master of the *Dunkirk*
- Robert Bowen, master of ship
- Peter Cooze, master of the *Livorno ffrigot*
- Nicholas Hurlestone, master of ship
- Nicholas Millett, master of the *Loyall Merchant*
- John Privett, master of the *London*
- William Rider, merchant, former master of multiple ships

He corresponded with wives of mariners

- Anne Townesend, widow of John Nicholls, master of the *Expedition*

Topics raised by mariners

- Bills of exchange
- Goods sent out on ships
- Greetings from friends and family
- Investments in hands of Surat merchants
- Invitation to invest in new built ship
- Legal matters
- News of imminent arrival
- Personal adventures sent out to Surat and back to London
- Shares in existing ships
- Summary of voyage
- Testimonials

Sent from

- London; Bethnal Green; Plastow; Ratcliff; Rotherhithe; Plastow; Plymouth; Surat road

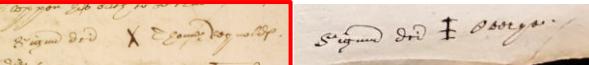
Women as writers and recipients of letters to and from mariners

Depositions of mariners wives

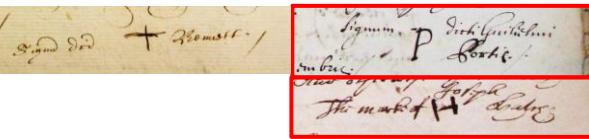
| Name | Relationship & residence | Age | Signoff | Reference |
|---------------------|---|-----|-----------|--------------------------|
| Elizabeth Beale | Wife of Simon Beale, mariner | 31 | Signature | HCA 13/61 f.232r |
| Jane fflaney | Wife of Charles fflaney, mariner, who bought ship the <i>Jonathan</i> | 30 | Signature | HCA 13/44 f.223r |
| Dorothy Goodladd | Widow of William Goodladd, mariner and master of the <i>Adventure</i> | 22 | Signature | HCA 13/53 f.217v |
| Susanna Grame | Widow of unknown man, living at Camberwell, Surrey; mother of Elisabeth Tison, wife of Thomas Tyson, mariner of Limehouse, Middlesex, and widow of James Sladd, mariner and master's mate on the <i>Abigail</i> | 43 | Signature | HCA 13/55 f.602v; 605r |
| Susann Haies | Wife of John Haies, mariner of Ratcliff, Middlesex | N/A | Signature | HCA 13/58 f.617r |
| Isabell Seaman | Wife to Captain Edward Seaman, mariner and master of the <i>Sampson</i> of a ship, of Wapping, Middlesex | 47 | Signature | HCA 13/70 f.225r |
| Elizabeth Thomas | Wife of Richard Thomas, surgeon of Ratcliff, Middlesex [Simon and Thomas] | 37 | Signature | HCA 13/61 f.206v; f.208v |
| Elizabeth Tyson | Wife of Thomas Tyson, mariner of Limehouse, Middlesex | 21 | Signature | HCA 13/55 f.604v |
| Marie de Vos | Wife of Jan de Vos, mariner and master of the <i>ffox</i> , of London | 43 | Signature | HCA 13/73 f.202r |
| Sara Willis | Wife of John Willis, mariner, on the <i>Lisbon Merchant</i> [London/Lisbon/Brazil/?Lisbon/?London] | 26 | Signature | HCA 13/58 f.69v |
| Maria Davison | Wife of Allan Davison, mariner | 34 | Initials | HCA 13/52 f.16r |
| Joane Edwards | Wife of William Edwards of Shadwell, Middlesex | 42 | Initials | HCA 13/51 f.386v |
| Jane Hooper | Wife of Richard Hooper, mariner of Ratcliff, Middlesex | 21 | Initials | HCA 13/52 f.243v |
| Dorothy Hutton | Wife of William Hutton, mariner of Ratcliff, Middlesex | 56 | Initials | HCA 13/42 f.63v |
| Elizabeth Siborne | Wife of John Siborne, mariner of Ratcliff, Middlesex | 35 | Initials | HCA 13/52 f.276r |
| Catherina White | Wife of John White, mariner and owner of ship | 36 | Initials | HCA 13/61 f.46v |
| Elizabeth Wilkenson | Wife of James Wilkenson, mariner of Wapping, Middlesex | 43 | Initials | HCA 13/42 f.107r |
| Joane Zouch | Wife of a fisherman, of Barking, Essex | 66 | Initials | HCA 13/70 f.250v |
| Margareta Canada | Wife of John Canada, mariner; female servant to Mr Garland, master of the <i>Lisbon Merchant</i> | 22 | Mark | HCA 13/58 f.70r |
| Maria Davison | Wife of Allan Davison, mariner | 34 | Initials | HCA 13/52 f.16r |
| Helena Goodwin | Wife of Thomas Goodwin, mariner of Shadwell, Middlesex | 50 | Mark | HCA 13/52 f.243r |
| Maria Hawkins | Wife of John Hawkins, mariner of Shadwell, Middlesex | 40 | Mark | HCA 13/56 f.19Av |
| Christian Hutton | Wife of David Hutton, mariner | 36 | Mark | HCA 13/58 f.512v |
| Rabitch Lee | Wife of [XXX] Lee of Ratcliff, Middlesex, mariner; Former servant to William fflaile | 30 | Mark | HCA 13/42 f.44r |
| Maragaret Man | Wife of Silvanus Man, mariner and master of the <i>Josua</i> | 40 | Mark | HCA 13/41 f.25r |
| Isabella Simerton | Wife of Edward Simerton, mariner of Wapping, Middlesex, master of diverse ships | N/A | Mark | HCA 13/44 f.44v |
| Rosa Wrighte | Wife of Thomas Wrighte, mariner of Wapping, Middlesex | 45 | Mark | HCA 13/58 f.82v |

Unable to write or read

MASTERS

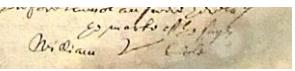


HIGHER OFFICERS

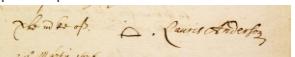


"He cannot write nor read written hand"

LOWER OFFICERS



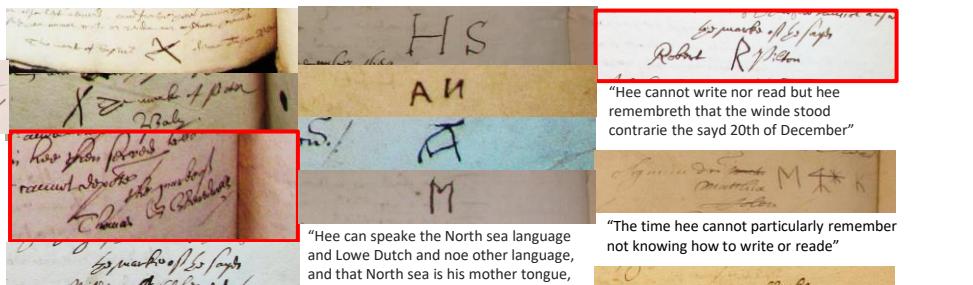
"Hee cannot write nor reade and soe kept noe journall of the shipp's passage from place to place"



COMMON MEN



"For what accompte or to whom they were there to bee delivered hee cannot declare, nor how they were marked because hee canrott write nor read nor knows any letters."



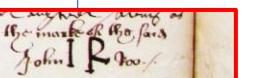
"Hee cannot write nor kepty any accompt how the windes stood the tyme interrogated"

FISHERMEN

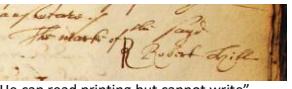


"Hee cannot write nor reade written hand, but hath seene writings and heard them read"

Able to read not write

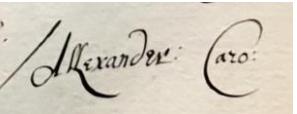


"Hee can neither write nor reade, but yet can keep accompt of times, by a sort of cyphering which hee hath learnt for his owne use, and thereby remembreth the time"

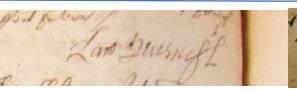


"He can read printing but cannot write"

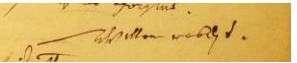
Able to write and read



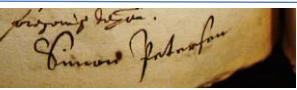
"Hee this examine did keepe a ... journall of the ierate shipps voyage and that is now under this examine's custode in his chest aboard his shipp called the Elisabeth and Mary at ffalmouth"



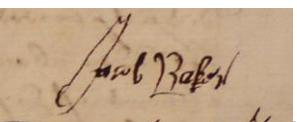
"This hee knoweth for that hee kept a journall"



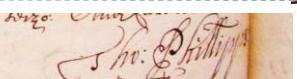
"Hee can write and reade, and learned the same when hee was a youth...hee can reade written hand well, and understandingly"



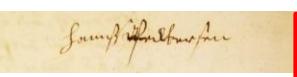
"Hee saith hee can write and read written hand, and sawe and tooke notice of all the goods aboard and of what was as aforesaid embeazled and wanting"



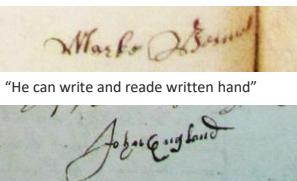
"[He] kept a journall of the sayd voyage or memoriall of such tymes as the sayd shipp sett sayle from any place and of her arrival at any place during the sayd voyage"



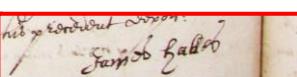
"Being accompt keeper for and on the behalfe of the said shipp's boateswaine, who could not write, this examine entred the said goods and marks and for whose accounts the same were, into the said boateswaine's booke"



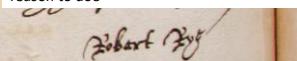
"All the sayd bills of lading are subscribed with the proper hand writinge of the sayd Wybrants havinge seene many of his subscriptions in the sayd voyage"



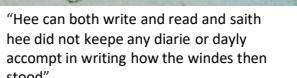
"He can write and reade written hand"



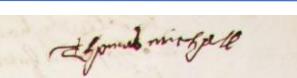
"Hee can write and reade, and saith hee did not take any note in writinge of the tyme when the disaster aforesaid happened, but very well remembreth it, as hee hath great reason to doe"



"Hee can write and read but remembreth not the date of the writings by him predeposed of"

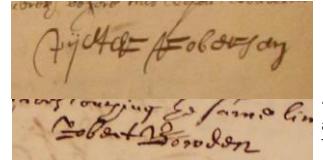


"Hee can both write and read and saith hee did not keepe any diarie or dayly accompt in writing how the windes then stood"



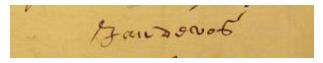
"He can both write and read and hath divers tymes seene writings in the hands and custodie of the stewards for the tyme beinge of the mannor and hundred of ffaversham"

Able to write and read in multiple languages



"He can write and read written hand and saith he can speake and understandeth ffrenc, Dutch and Spanish, and a little English"

"Which noate this deponent (being acquainted well with the sayd Trenchpaines hand writeing and understanding the french tongue) verily beleveeth (although hee sawe not the same written) was and is the proper hand writing of the sayd Trenchpaine"



"Hee can read written hand in Dutch very well, and understandingly, and in English hee can reade the names in a Commission, And some few words besides"

CALIBRATING LITERACY: "Can you write and read?"

Source: Signs of Literacy Initiative,
SOLM2019 dataset,
ver.3.8, pub. 17/09/2019

On coal ship

Isabell Seaman, forty-seven years of age, wife of Captain Edward Seaman, master of the *Sampson*, living in Wapping, Middlesex [1654]

"After the returne of the shipp the *Sampson* interrate, (whereof this deponents husband Captaine Seaman ^[1] interrate was commander) from Smyrna to Legorne, this rendent received severall letters from her said husband at Legorne, some or one whereof did import and require this rendent to enquire by her selfe or freinds, whether the policy entred in the Assurance Office here concerneing the trading voyage of the said shipp did stand good. And saith, that none of the said letters did import any thing otherwise or contrary to what is predeposed saving that the said shipp *Sampson* was to be employed in the service of this Commonwealth against the dutch. And that upon that occasion the said Captaine Seaman desired to knowe whether the said policy of assurance would stand and continue valid and effectuall till the said shippe's returne for England, whereof this rendent being affirmatively assured returned an answer accordingly to her said husband...

In prosecution of her said husbands order shee desired the interrate Mr Hoxton Justice of Peace to enquire on what condition the said policy of assurance stood, but as to the demannds made by the assurers to the said Justice Hoxton as is interrate shee saith shee is utterly ignorant thereof....

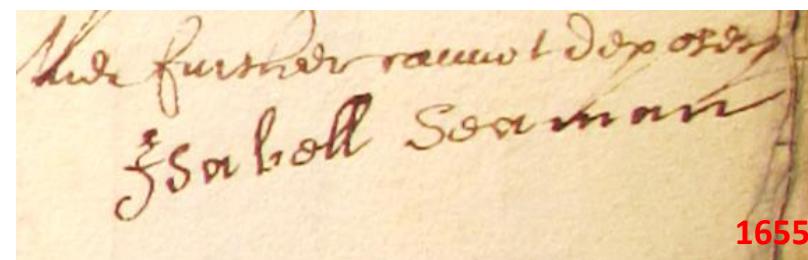
To the best of this rendent's remembrance shee never returned any answer to her said husband upon the report of the said Justice Hoxton, but having by some others of the freinds understood, that the said policy of assurance did stand firme and valid shee did as aforesaid intimate so much by letter unto her said husband then at Legorne...

(1) Edward Seaman (see deposition of Thomas Death, goldsmith, who saw Captain Edward Seaman at the mole of Leghorne in February and March 1652 (HCA 13/70 f.60r); The *Sampson*, set out as a man of war, was equipped with 36 to 44 guns and had a crew of between 90 and 130 men (Carl Ballhausen, Der erste English-Holländische Seekrieg, 1652-1654 (Dordrecht, 1923), p.527). The ship the *Sampson* was attacked by the Dutch, caught fire and exploded., near Leghorne.

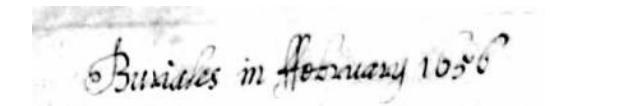
Shee never received any letter or letters from her said husband to the effect interrate. And further shee cannot depose...

Shee hath no letter or letters remaining in her custodie to the effect interrate, nor doeth shee knowe where any such letter or letters are, adressed to her selfe or any other person whatsoever for or concerning the businesse aforesaid, nor hath shee or any other person of her knowledge kept any copie or copies of letters sent by her to her said husband concerning this or any other businesse, nor can shee recollect her memory so farr, as to be able to expresse the particular contents of the letters mutually sent and received to and from her said husband during the transactions in question otherwise then as aforesaid...

Shee never heard her husband Captaine Seaman interrate say, that hee had ever expressed any forwardnesse, or made any voluntary proffer to engage his said shipp in the service interrate, but that hee was by authority and commannd from Mr Longland the then Agent of Legorne for this Commonwealth forced and impressed into the said service, and that to the effect and order by the said agents procurement was read and published at the maine mast of his said shipp then at Legorne." (HCA 13/70 ff.224v-225r)



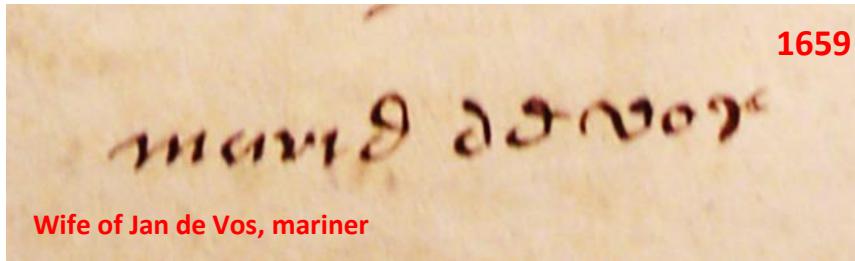
1655



In Esabell Seaman wife of Edward Seaman buried at Wapping

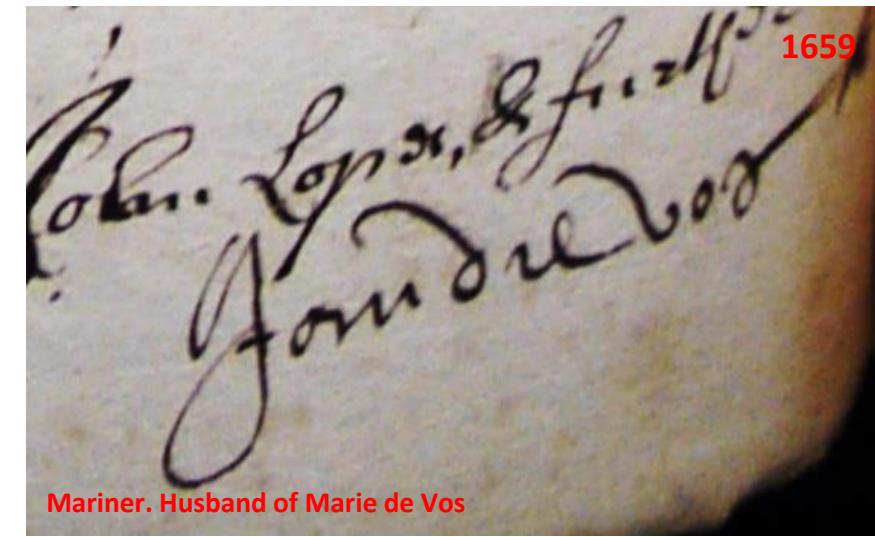
Saint Mary Whitechapel, Parish
Register, 1653-1665, Ancestry.com
Burial date 11/02/1656/57

Marie de Vos has signature just as competent and practised as her husband, Jan de Vos, mariner and master of the *ffox*. She had lived in Middleburg, Amsterdam, Dover and London and had recently travelled to Amsterdam.



Wife of Jan de Vos, mariner

Marie de Vos, forty-three year old wife of Jan de Vos, mariner and master of the *ffox*. Living in London. Formerly lived in Middleburg, Amsterdam and Dover. Deposed April 21st 1659. HCA 13/73 f.202r.



Mariner. Husband of Marie de Vos

Jan de Vos, fifty-three year old mariner of London. Master of the *ffox*. Born at Nieuport, Flanders. Formerly lived in Middleburg, Amsterdam and Dover. Deposed April 21st 1659. HCA 13/73 f.201v.

[Captured ship: Fox of Ostend, master Joos de Vos. History: bound from Ostend to Rouen...](#)

High Court of Admiralty: Prize Court: Papers. Depositions and Examinations in Prize Causes, Second Anglo-Dutch War. Nos. 201-400. (Described at item level).... Captured ship: Fox of Ostend, master Joos de Vos. History: bound from Ostend to Rouen, laden with cheeses, alum and lanthorn horns; taken in February 1666 by HMS Colchester ketch (Thomas Langley)

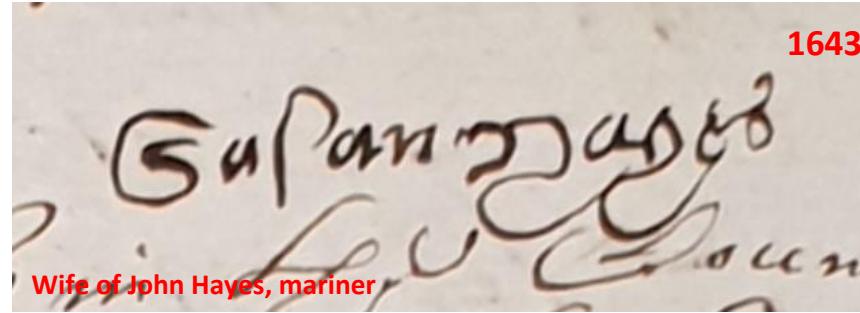
Held by: The National Archives, Kew - High Court of Admiralty and colonial Vice-Admiralty courts

Date: 1666

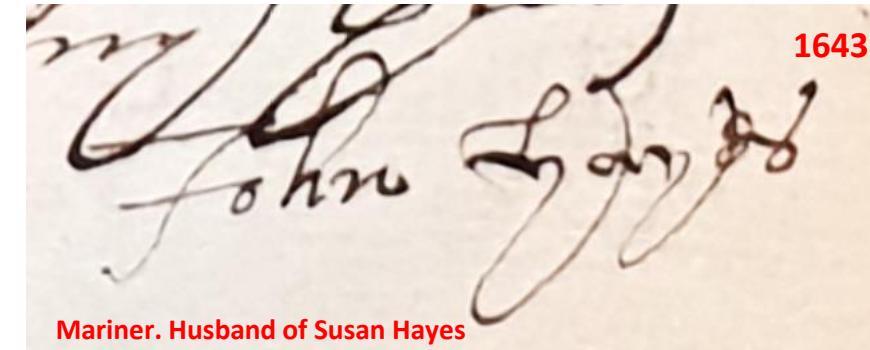
Reference: HCA 32/11/365B

Subjects: Armed Forces (General Administration) | Conflict | International | Litigation | Navy | Operations, battles and campaigns

Basic signature of Susan Hayes. Definitely able to read and could probably write basic letters. John Hayes, her mariner husband, has a competent signature.

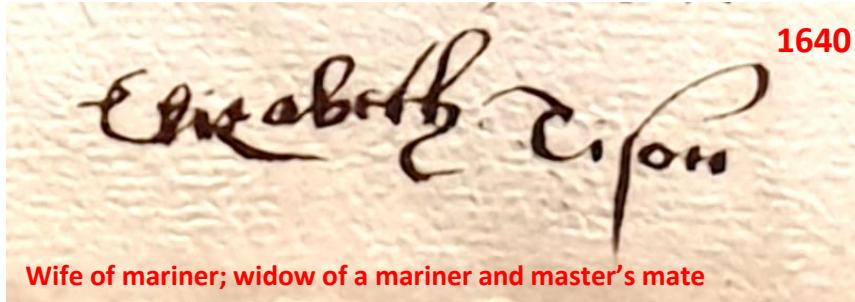


Susan Hayes, age unknown, wife of John Hayes, mariner of Ratcliff, Middlesex. Deposed April 19th 1643. HCA 13/58 f.517r.



John Hayes, forty-three year old mariner, of Ratcliff, Middlesex. Deposed April 19th 1643. HCA 13/58 f.517r

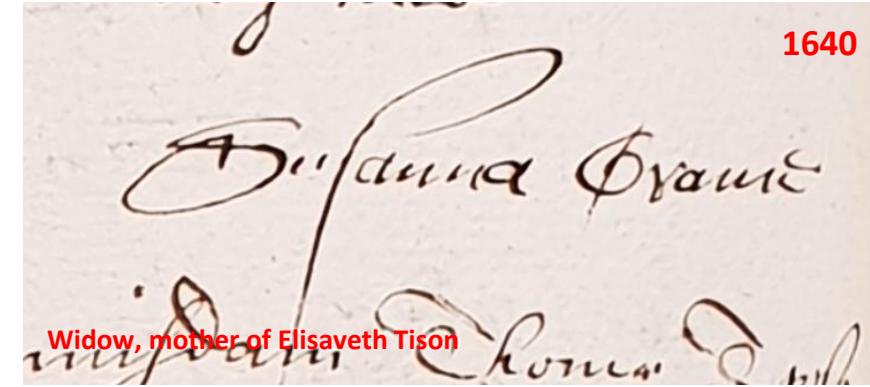
Elizabeth Tison, wife of Thomas Tison, mariner of Limehouse, and the widow of James Sladd, deceased master's mate of the *Abigail*; and her mother, the widow Susanna Grame



Wife of mariner; widow of a mariner and master's mate

Elizabeth Tison, twenty-one year old wife of Thomas Tison, mariner of Limehouse, Middlesex, and widow of James Sladd, deceased master's mate of the *Abigail*, who was on a voyage from London to Saint Christophers.

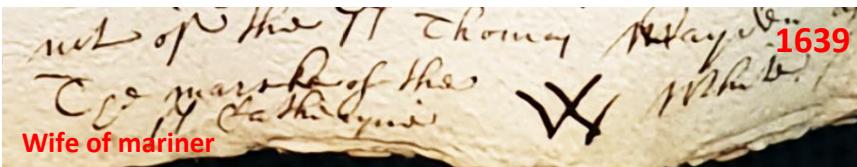
Deposited April 16th 1640. HCA 13/55 f.604v.



Widow, mother of Elisaveth Tison

Susanna Grame, forty-three year old widow, of Camberwell, Surrey. Deposited April 16th 1640. HCA 13/55 f.602v.

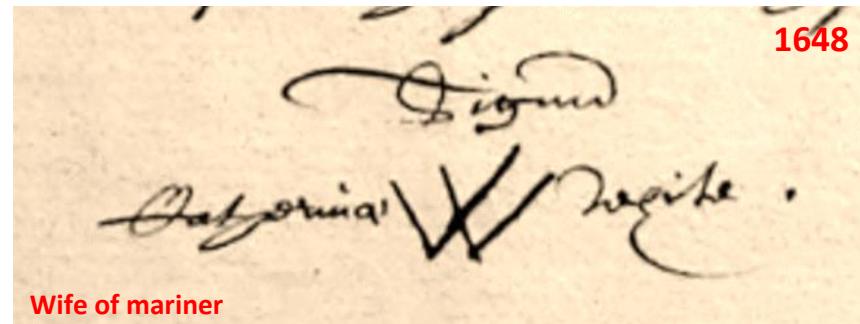
Catherine White, wife of John White, mariner and owner and master of ships, of Saint Mary Bermondsey, Surrey [1639; 1648]



Catherine White, eighteen year old wife of John White, mariner of Saint Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, Surrey, who purchased then sold the *Anne*. Sister to Thomas Mayden, mariner, son of Anne and Thomas Mayden. Deposed August 26th 1639. HCA 13/55 f.222r.

"At the signe of the Naggs Heade a taverne scituete in Thames streete London upon or aboute the 8th of October 1638 in the presence of her this examinate and other witnessses then presente Anne Mayden the wife of Thomas Mayden whoe was then very sicke did deliver and pay into the arlate John Cardwell the summe of fifty twoe pounds sterling to bee layd out and otherwise disposed of here at the discretion of the said Cardwell and the value or proceede thereof to bee delivered and payd unto her this examinate's husband the arlate John White sonne in lawe to the said Anne Mayden at Ostend the said Cardwell beinge then ready to goe over theither and her said husband beinge then there aboute buyeinge of a shippe there for the use of himself and his freindes, and the said Cardwell was as shee conceiveth noe ways tyed or obliged to deliver the same money which was delivered to him to her said husband but to dispose thereof in such manner as hee should thincke moste conveniente which the said Cardwell did undertake to doe upon the delivery of the said money, but did not, as shee this examinate conceiveth, for that since the arrival of her said husband with th arlate shippe the *Anne* here at this porte of London, both the ssaid shippe and her said husband were in trouble about the said money and her said husband enfored to sell his intereste in the said shippe to the arlate William [?Hocke]...The schedule arlate was and is subscribed with the proper hand writeinge of the arlate John Cardwell , which shee knoweth to bee true, for that shee sawe him subscribed the same and shee hath subscribed her name or marke as a witness thereunto."

[Deposition of Catherine White; HCA 13/55 f.222v]



Catherine White, twenty-six year old wife of John White, mariner of Saint Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, Surrey, master and owner of the *ffortune*. Sister to Thomas Mayden, mariner, son of Anne and Thomas Mayden. Deposed May 1st 1648. HCA 13/55 f.222r.

"Shee this deponent well knoweth the ship the *ffortune* arlate, having often seene her and bin on board her in the river of Thames whiles shee ws in the custody and belonging unto the arlate John White her this deponent's husband, and saith the said John White her husband about two years and a halfe since bought the said ship and furniture thereunto belonging by bill of sale of the arlate David Morris and Elizabeth his wife, as shee this deponent hath often heard her said husband say. And saith that for the space of nyne monethes or neere thereabouts after such his buying of her, hee the said John White was in quiet and peaceable oossession of the said ship the *ffortune* of her sight and knowledge beinge diverse times on board her in that time, and in the said time of such his being in quiet possession of her, hee the said John White made one voyage with her to Burdeaux and safely retourned, this deponent seeing her upon such her retourne from that voyage..."

Shee is wife unto the interrate John White whoe solde the said ship in question unto James Smalley the producent...

Shee hath often heard her said husband John White saye that when hee bought the said ship of the interrate Morris and his wife hee paid them five pounds in part towards the same, but whether hee paid any more for the same at any time or not, shee saith shee knoweth not nor hath heard her husband saye that hee paid any more....Her husband upon selling the said ship to the producent James Smalley, received of him the said Smalley in part of payment for her the summe of eight and twenty pounds, which was paid him at this deponent's father Thomas Mayden his house in Bermondsey parish aforesaid, this deponent being then present in the same house."

[Deposition of Catherine White; HCA 13/61 f.46v]

Literacy map for two Bermondsey families in the 1630s and 1640s. Shipwrights and mariners.

*Morgan H. son of John Morgan
Chamab Mayden son of Thomas Mayden*

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: April 15th 1642

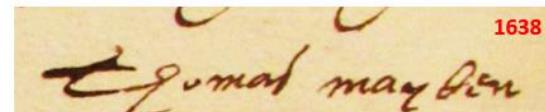
*Chamab Mayden son of Thomas Mayden
John Mayden son of John Mayden
John Mayden son of Robert Mayden
John Mayden son of Chamab Mayden*

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: September 11th 1642

Page 50, September 1609

Page 70 : June 1613

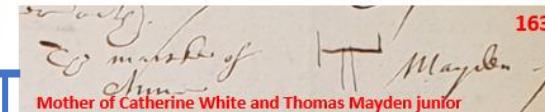
Page.130, May 1624



Shipwright. Husband of Anna Mayden.
Father of Thomas Mayden [junior] and Catherine White

Thomas Mayden [senior], fifty-nine year old shipwright of Saint Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, Surrey. Owner of dock in Bermondsey. Father of Thomas Mayden [junior] and husband of Anna Mayden. Deposed January 12th 1638. HCA 13/54 f.390r.

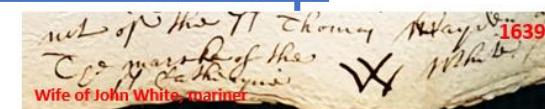
Owner of shipwright's dock in
Rotherhithe [Redriff]



Mother of Catherine White and Thomas Mayden junior

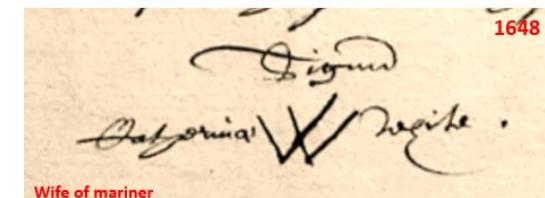
Anne Mayden, fifty year old wife of Thomas Mayden, shipwright, of Saint Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, Surrey. Mother of Catherine White, who was married to John White, mariner, of Saint Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey, Surrey. Deposed August 26th 1639. HCA 13/55 f.222r.

Witnessed bill of sale of the Anne Catherine



Catherine White, eighteen year old wife of John White, mariner of Saint Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, Surrey. Sister to Thomas Mayden, mariner, son of Anne and Thomas Mayden. Deposed August 26th 1639. HCA 13/55 f.222r.

Witnessed bill of sale of the
Anne Catherine and subscribed
"her name or mark"



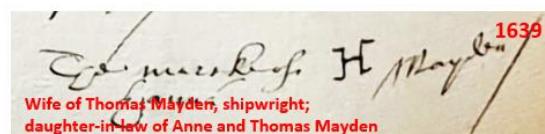
Catherine White, twenty-six year old wife of John White, mariner of Saint Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, Surrey, master and owner of the ffortune. Sister to Thomas Mayden, mariner, son of Anne and Thomas Mayden. Deposed May 1st 1648. HCA 13/55 f.222r.

*Sarah the daughter of John & Prudence White - 18
times married Octobr 1639*

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Buried: Oct. 18th 1639

*Elizabeth the daughter of William & Elizabeth Smith married Aprill 12th 1640
to Richard the son of Richard & Elizabeth Smith*

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: Nov. 4th 1640



Wife of Thomas Mayden, shipwright;
daughter-in-law of Anne and Thomas Mayden

Hanna Mayden, nineteen year old wife of Thomas Mayden, shipwright of Saint Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, Surrey. Daughter-in-law of Anne and Thomas Mayden, shipwright. Deposed August 26th 1639. HCA 13/55 f.222v.

Witnessed bill of sale of the Anne Catherine

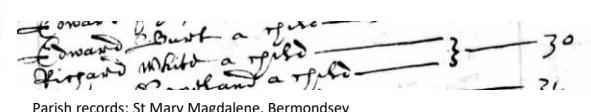
Hannah Mayden
b. Aug.1639

Thomas Mayden
b. Jul.1641
d. Jul. 1641

Thomas Mayden
b. Aug.1642

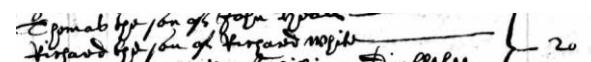
*Anna Brown
Mr. William Smith householder - 20*

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Buried: February 20th 1620/1621



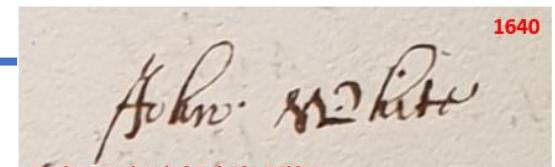
Edward White son of Edward
Edward White son of Edward
Edward White son of Edward

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Buried: August 30th 1641



Edward White son of Edward
Edward White son of Edward

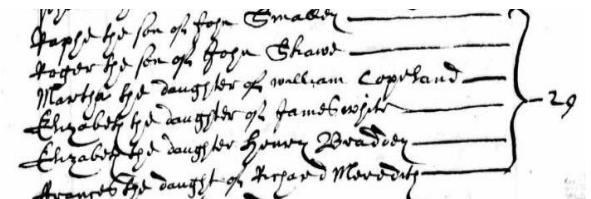
Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Buried: February 20th 1641/1642



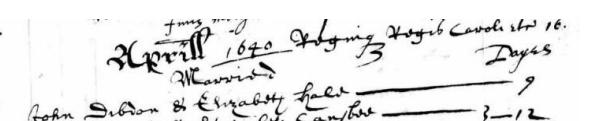
Mariner. Husband of Catherine White

John White, twenty-seven year shipwright of Redriff, Surrey. Husband of Catherine White. Deposed June 11th 1640. HCA 13/56 f.79r.

Owner, probable master, and
forced seller of the Anne Catherine [1639]
Owner and master of the ffortune [1648]



Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: Sep. 29th 1639



Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Married: Apr. 12th 1640

Literacy map for two Bermondsey families in the 1630s and 1640s. Shipwrights and mariners.



John the son of Edward Maydon — 22
Thomas the son of Thomas Maydon — 23
Sarah the daughter of John Savage — 24

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: October 22nd 1616

John the son of Edward Maydon a child — 30

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Buried: October 30th 1616

Edward the son of his wife Jane — 9
Thomas the son of Thomas Maydon — 16
Sarah the daughter of Thomas Maydon — 20

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: August 16th 1618

John the son of John Maydon — 26
Elizabeth the daughter of George Maydon — 26
Sarah the daughter of George Maydon — 26

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: December 26th 1620

George — 26
William Maydon & Elizabeth Cisdale married January 6th 1617/1618

Parish records: St Mary Rotherhithe [1556-1630]
Married: January 6th 1617/1618

John the son of William Towland — 22
Hannah the daughter of Thomas Maydon — 23
Sarah the daughter of John Savage — 24

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: Aug. 4th 1639

Sarah the daughter of Thomas Maydon — 23
Thomas the son of Thomas Maydon — 23

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: Jul. 23rd 1641

Sarah Allen a child — 26
Thomas Maydon an infant — 28

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Buried: Jul. 26th 1641

John the son of — 25
Thomas the son of Thomas Maydon — 25

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey
Christened: August 25th 1642

Anno Domini 1636 Regni Regis Caroli Et
December — Days
Married

Thomas the son of Margaret Signott — 13
John the son of Sabrina Mayo — 22
William Digott & Françoise de la Fauver — 27

Parish records: St Mary Magdalene Bermondsey [1603-1642]
Married: December 22nd 1636

Literate women associated with mariners as wives, mothers, sisters and business partners

**Widow; daughter married to mariner
Saw note written by master's mate of goods laded for private adventure**

*Elizabeth Evans
and John Evans*

"Shee saw a noate of what particular goodes the said Sladd had laded aboard the arlate shippie the *Abigall* the voyage in question outwards bounde for his owne accompte in the custody of the said Sladd's wife, which to her beste remembrance was subscribed or written by the said Sladd, and shee knoweth the places where hee bought some of the said goodes and shee beleeveth the schedule arlate which shee hath nowe seene at the tyme of this her examination is a copie extracted out of that noate which shee sawe because shee doth remember and knowe of some of the particulars therein mentioned, which the said Sladd had provided to transporthe in the said shippie the said voyage and knewe where they were bought.

Shee beleeveth all the several goodes and commodities which the said Sladd laded or caused to bee laded aboard the foresaid ship outwards bounde and which hee did die possesse of were the proper goodes and merchandizes of the said Sladd and others his frende for whom hee was intrusted and they were all as shee hath heard and beleeveth worth to the value of one hundred pounds sterlinc little more or lesse.

Shee this rendent was and is the natural mother of Elizabeth Tison whoe was the widowe of the said Sladd deceased and that neither shee this rendente nor the foresaid Tison or any other to his knowledge hath any promise from the interrate Younge in case he prevale in this suite and recover of the interrate Cason more then his due debte oweing to him, of any parte or parcel of the said Sladd's estate, neither doth shee ever expecte any benefit thereby only shee hopeth that the overplus or some parte thereof shalbee allowed towards the maynetenance and bringing upp of a childe of the said Sladd's which shee this rendente doth yet helpe to provide for and keepe."

[43 year old widow of Camberwell, Surrey] (HCA 13/55 ff.601v-602r)

**Widow of deceased mariner and master's mate
Husband's estate owed money by master of ship**

Elizabeth Tison

"Within the tyme libellate whileste the arlate shippie the *Abigall* lay at Gravesend outwards bounde the arlate Casson [master of the *Abigall*] came to the Redd Lyon the place where shee and her said gusband James Sladd had layne the nighte before, and then and there shee this examinee did deliver to her said husband the summe of £10 sterlinc which hee noe sooner received but presently goeing into the nexte roome hee delivered the same to the said Cason for stonge waters which hee was to have of him the said Cason that voyage according to agreement between them and afterwards shee heard the said Cason acknowledge and confess the receipte of the said money her said husband demanndinge the said stonge waters of him that hee might sett his marche upon them, and shee then alsoe heard the said Cason say that his stonge waters were unknowne to him put into the hold of the said shippie and that hee could not then well come to them but hee the n sayd hee should have them after hee came to sea and for that ten pounds and the foresaid forty shillings for his harbour wages due as aforesaid hee was to have had 12 or 13 cases or bottles of stonge water of the said Cason

[21 year old wife of Thomas Tison, mariner of Limehouse, Middlesex, and widow of James Sladd, mariner and master's mate of the *Abigall*, who died on a voyage from London to Saint Christophers] (HCA 13/55 ff.603v-604r)

The interrate shippie the *Abigall* the voyage in question outward bounde departed from Gravesend the third of March laste was two years[1638] to her nowe beste remembrance.

**Widow of mariner and master's mate
Entrusted with note of particulars of her husbands private adventure**

Elizabeth Tison

"Within the tyme libellate her said husband James Sladd deceased did provide divers such sorts and kindes of goodes as in the arlate schedule as is expressed and sett to bee transported in the arlate shippie the *Abigall* for his owne proper accounte the voyage then intended the value of which did amounte unto above one hundred pounds sterlinc, which shee knoweth to bee true for that shee sawe a greate parte of the said goodes and knoweth the several places where hee bought the same, and as shee verily beleeveth in her conscience all or moste of the goodes scheduled were laden aboard the arlate shippie by her said husband deceased whileste she was and ramined in the river of Thames outwards bounde for Saint Christophers giving a reason of such her beleife for that her said husband gave her a noate of what goodes hee had laded aboard the said shippie for his owne accounte and his frendes for whom hee was intrusted which noate shee delivered to the partie producente and out of which noate shee beleeveth the arlate schedule was extracted [the note containing the values of the goodes]...Shee sawe some of the cloth scheduled aboard the foresaid shippie at Gravesend under her husband's mark...

The said shippe the *Abigall* was caste away in a whirle wynde as is interrate...This shee heard from Cason's owne mouth.
All or moste parte of the said goodes in question were packed upp some in packs and some in barrels and such other things as her husband deceased thoughte moste fit and convenient for that use which shee knoweth to bee true for that shee this rendent did packe upp all or moste parte of the lynnen in the arlate schedule mentioned in packs to bee laden aboard the said shippie the *Abigall* and did after the said shippie was at Gravesend mende a faulfe which shee sawe in one of the packs wherein the said lynnen was made upp in...

Shee this rendent finding that her said husband's debts after his death were greater and more then shee expected or thought of and beinge [XXXX] to marry againe and leste to bringe her selfe and her second intended husband no trouble and for noe other reason or reasons shee did renounce the administration interrate [21 year old wife of Thomas Tison, mariner of Limehouse, Middlesex, and widow of James Sladd, mariner and master's mate of the *Abigall*, who died on a voyage from London to Saint Christophers] (HCA 13/55 ff.603v-604r)

**Wife of mariner (possibly of a master of a ship)
Shipped a servant of her husband on a ship bound for Lisbon**

John & Elizabeth

"This examinee living then at Shadwell the next doore to the arlate Garland was often at the house of the said Garland and heard him hired men to goe to sea with them that voyage and head him still tell there that they were to goe with him to Lisbone and whither else his designe should fall, without naminge any other place...Shee doth not know the names of any of the marriners that were hiered as aforesaid, saving that Garland's wif and this rendent were present with him in the hall of theen his house at Shadwell when hee hiered some of the men as aforesaid, and heard him agree with them....Shee heard Garland when hee shipt some of his men tell them yt may bee his voyage might bee ten or twelve monethes, or 18 monethes or perhaps longerm hee could not tell untill hee came to Lisbone."

[22 year old wife of John Canada, mariner of Ratcliff, Middlesex, and servant to John Garland, mariner and master of the *Lisbone Merchant*] (HCA 13/58 ff.69v-70r)

**Female servant to master of ship and wife of mariner
Heard hiring of men in her master's house**

John & Elizabeth

"When the arlate shippie the *Lisbone Merchant* was bounde out for Lisbone this last voyage shee this examinee beeing then servant to the arlate Garland heard him hire divers men to goe to sea with them that voyage and head him still tell there that they were to goe with him to Lisbone and whither else his designe should fall, without naminge any other place...Shee doth not know the names of any of the marriners that were hiered as aforesaid, saving that Garland's wif and this rendent were present with him in the hall of theen his house at Shadwell when hee hiered some of the men as aforesaid, and heard him agree with them....Shee heard Garland when hee shipt some of his men tell them yt may bee his voyage might bee ten or twelve monethes, or 18 monethes or perhaps longerm hee could not tell untill hee came to Lisbone."

[26 year old wife of John Wills, mariner, Ratcliff, Middlesex] (HCA 13/58 ff.69r-69v)

**Mother to wife of mariner and master of ship
Heard hiring of men in her son-in-law's house**

John & Elizabeth

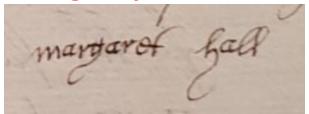
"Whilst the arlate Garland was shipping his company to goe to sea with him in the arlate ship the *Lisbone Merchant* the last voyage, his wife lying in, and this examinee helping to tende her and her childe, did hear him hire divers men to goe to sea with him that voyage, and heard him tell them still when they asked him whether they shoule goe, that they should goe to Lisbone and then as the designe should proffer, hee did purpose to imbrace yt, and that until hee came to Lisbone hee could not tell whether hee should goe to the Streights or whether else...And this shee affirmeth upon her oath to bee true, being mother to the said Garland's wife.

Shee doth not knowe the name of any of the men that shee heard Garland ship as aforesaid more then Burrowes the chief trumpeter, but they were hiered att the said Garlands house at Shadwell."

[66 year old widow of Shadwell, Middlesex, and mother to wife of John Garland, mariner and master of the *Lisbone Merchant*] (HCA 13/58 ff.70r-70v)

Literate women associated with mariners as wives, mothers, sisters and business partners

**Widow; kept a Stepney victualling house
Witness in case brought by a mariner**

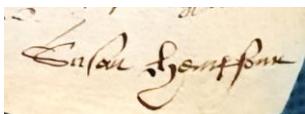


"Shee this examine hath knownen the arlate Goodwyn for the space of these two years laste paste and some thing more and saith that before the said Goodwyn's laste goeing to sea with Mr Betts hee the said Goodwyn was at a victualling house at the signe of the Carpenters Armes situate in Olde Gravell Lane within the parise of Stepney... shee then haueinge a chamber in that house..."

She cometh to testifie in this cause at the requeste of Mr Betts the producent...Shee first came acquainted with the said Goodwyn at the signe of the Shipe Carpenters Armes aforesaid shee then keepinge that house and the greateste of her acquaintance with him was theree comeinge as a gaste to that house to drincke and hee is somewhat a browne sathe man and of a reasonable stature somewhat stoopeing forward"

[35 year old widow of Old Gravel Lane, Stepney, Middlesex, keeping a victualling house] (HCA 13/58 ff.84v-85r)

**Widow of mariner and master of ship
Planning to peruse her husband's accounts**



"Shee this examine using the shoppe where the interrate Richard Clarke lived hath knowned the said Clarke as shee beleeveth for the space of these twelve yeaeres laste paste...Her husband deceased and the interrate Clarke have often had dealeings togeather and soe shee beleeveth they had the voyage in question, but for what shee saith shee knoweth not, but beleeveth it was for such commodityes as the said Clarke tradith in hee beinge by profession a lynnyn draper, and that the said Clarke the voyage in question outwards bounde did adventure some commodityes with her said husband since deceased who wente out master of the interrate shipp the *Royall Merchant*, but to what value shee knoweth not, neither doth shee knowe whether there were any debts betweene her husbande and the said Clarke or what haveinge not yet received or examined over her husband's accounts nor had any accounte of the said Clarke about any such thinge."

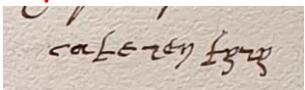
And shee this examine hath alsoe had dealeings with the said Clarke and hath had and boughte things of him but never had or boughte any thinge of him upon truste but payd him ready money for the same..."

For her parte shee never received any monies, pearls or other goodes whatsoever by the interrate shipp the Golden Angell or any other shipp or shippes upon accounte betweene her husband deceased and the foresaid Clarke since the departure of the interrate shipp the *Royall Merchant*...

Shee never received any peeces of eight of or from the interrate Henry Trewen or any such man"

[40 year old widow of mariner and master of the *Royall Merchant*, of Limehouse, Middlesex] (HCA 13/58 f.32r)

**Widow; husband's occupation unclear
*Had seen many letters from merchant nephew in Naples***

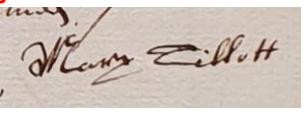


"Shee this examine did knowe and was very well acquainted with one Stephen Therry the sonne of John Therry late of the parishe of Saint Steevens Colemanstreete London deceased whoe whileste hee lived was by trade a weaver but by profession a merchante and shee knoweth the said Stephen by the space of twelve or fowerteene years before his goeing over beyond se which was about twelve yeaeres since and shee hath heard the said Stephen is nowe livinge at Naples which shee beleeveth is true for that her sonne received a letter from him about Christmas laste dated at Naples (which letter shee sawe and had in her hand and before that many other letters) but how longe hee hath lived there shee knoweth not"

[64 year old widow of Whitechapel, Middlesex. Aunt through her husband to three nephews, two of whom moved overseas, one to Amsterdam and the other to Naples] (HCA 13/55 ff.136v-137r)

[34 year old widow of mariner and master of the *John and Dorothy*, of Wapping, Middlesex] (HCA 13/55 f.216r)

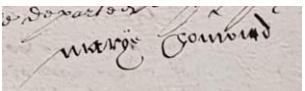
**Widow of master of ship
*Received letters and other writings from her husband***



"This examine doth verily beleeeve in her conscience the five bills of ladeinge in Dutch in the article mentioned beinge nowe shewed unto her at the tyme of this her examination were and are subscribed by the proper hand writeinge of her husband John Tillett whoe went out master of the arlate shippe the *John and Dorothy* in this her last voyage to sea in which voyage homewards bounde shee was caste away and perished in the sea and as shee is informed by some of her company whoe not without greate dannger escaped to shoure a live, her sayd husband was in swimmenga a shoure drowned and for that shee is very well acquainted with her sayd husbands charecters and manner of writinge haveinge divers tymes heretofore in his life tyme received letters and other writeinge from him and many tymes seene him write his name. Shee beleeveth the contents in the sayd two bills of ladeinge because as shee conceiveth subscribed by her sayd husband as before shee hath deposred were and are true and soe had and done as is therein contained." (HCA 13/55 f.216r)

[36 year old widow of mariner and master of the *John and Dorothy*, of Wapping, Middlesex] (HCA 13/55 f.216r)

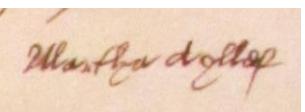
Mother of apprentice who went to sea with his mariner godfather, a mariner



"Upon Easter Wednesday was twelve monethes the arlate Robert Bishopp came to this examinat's house situate in Wrestlers Vourt in Bishopsgate street London and tould this deponent that he was goeing to sea on a fishinge voyage for Scotland and asked this deponent's sonne the arlate Richard Gomond if he would goe with him, and this deponent replied that she intended that he should have gone into Spayne to one Mr James Busfield, but referred it to her sonne to take his choyce, and the sayd Richard Gomond beinge then and there present sayd that he would rather goe with his godfather (meaninge the said Robert Bishopp) then with any man in England and the sayd Bishopp tould him that it should be a very good voyage to him, and that if the sayd Gomond did not goe with him he must take another, but sayd he had rather have him the sayd Gomond then another, because (as he conceived) he could speake some languages, and her sonne tould him that he could speake Dutch, Spanish and Portugall, and teh sayd Bishopp replied that perhaps he should have occasion to use his Dutch tongue, if he mett with the Hollanders, as hee thought they should...His the sayd Gomond's chiefe worke and imployment should be to be his the said Bishopp's interpreter for the Dutch tongue if he mett with the hollanders upon the sayd coaste and to marke barrels and to doe such tother things as the sayd Bishopp should directe him to doe..." (HCA 13/51 f.52v)

[40 year old mother of Richard Gomond, party producent, who was on a fishing voyage on the *Nathan* off the Scottish coast] (HCA 13/55 f.216r)

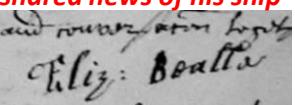
**Wife of Bermondsey ship carpenter
*Privy to legal proceedings concerning repayment for a debt owing her deceased husband of a female friend***



"[She] hath severall times heard the said Leonard Guy say and acknowledge that hee had made over and by bill of sale his said hulke to the said Mary for and in consideration of the said debt and money, or in part of satisfaction for the same. And againe since the same, this deponent was present and sawe the said Leonard at this deponents husbands house on Redriff wall bring and deliver some amounts to the said Mary and heard him tell her that that was the first money hee had earned with her hulke, (speaking of the said hulke Elizabeth) and that every weeke hee would bring her some"

[36 year old wife of ship carpenter of Saint Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey, Surrey, whose house was on Redriff wall] (HCA 13/72 ff.56r-56v)

**Wife of Stepney mariner
*Friend with neighbour, whose husband was master of a ship and shared news of his ship***



"Shee heard it reported before such time as Richard Little master of the shipp the Marigold came home that the said shipp was lost, but heard not certaintie of such losse before his said coming home, but at or about what time it was that hee soe came home shee saith shee cannot by any meanes call to minde it beinge soe longe since, neither can shee remember of whom shee heard the said report..."

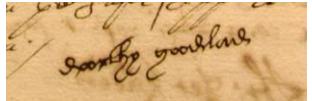
About a day or two after this examine heard the foressaid report of the losse of the said shipp, she acquainted the interrogate Mrs Little therewith, which was before such the said Littles comming home, but the daye of the moneth or other certaine time shee remembreth not..

Mrss Little and this examine live about 6 doores distant each from other at Wapping Wall and at the time interrate they lived there about 20 doors distant each from other and saith that they have had often meeting and conversation together "

[31 year old wife of Simon Beale, mariner, of Stepney, Middlesex] (HCA 13/61 f.232r)

Literate women associated with mariners as wives, mothers, sisters and business partners

Widow of mariner and master of ship

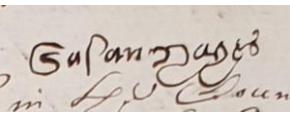


"Upon a Sattirday beinge the fower and twentieth day of October anno domini 1635 (late in the eveninge) John Bredcake the master's mate of the arlate shipp the *Adventure* came to this deponent and her husband William Goodladd since deceased late master of the sayd shipp at their lodginge at one Mr Gardner's house at Tower wharfe and tould them that the sayd shipp was arrived and come to an anchor that day at Gravesend and the next day this deponent and her husband dyninge at the arlate Mr John Marstone's house in London, tould him that the sayd shipp was at anchor at Gravesend and therupon the sayd Marstone appointed to goe downe to Gravesend the next day beinge Munday the 26th of October 1635, and accordingly the same Munday the said Marstone and this deponent and her husband went downe to Gravesend and there sawe the said shipp ridinge at anchor, and on the Wednesday followinge beinge the 28th day of the same moneth the sayd shipp sett sayle from Gravesend and on her then intended voyage for Cadiz, which she knoweth to be true for that she went downe in the sayd shipp from Gravesend to Leigh in the countye of Essex with her sayd husband..."

This rendent's father-in-lawe William Goodladd was owner of one eighte part of the sayd shipp, tackle and furniture, Katherine Goodladd late of Lee aforesayd widdow deceased in her lifetyme was owner of another eighth part."

[22 year old widow of William Goodladd, mariner and master of the *Adventure*] (HCA 13/53 f.217v)

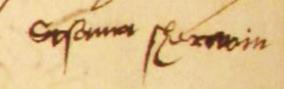
Wife of mariner Took out an assurance policy in the name of her husband on his ship



"Shee affirmeth upon her oath, that neither Andrewe Shawe, Christopher Hutton, Robert ffortune, nor any other person or persons whatsoever did deliver her any letter directed to her husband, nor had shee any other information on Sonday or Mondy before Easter last was two yeaeres, that the interrate shipp the *Jonas* was cast away or neere Holand, nor before shee caused the pollicy of £150 to bee made in her husband's name... After David Hutton the master of the said shipp came home, hee telling this examinee that the[rest] of the owners of the said shipp that had assured expected to have a share with those that had, shee said yt should bee soe yf her husband would consent thereunto"

[Susan Hayes, age unstated, wife of John Hayes, mariner, of Ratcliff, Middlesex] (HCA 13/58 ff.506v-507r)

Wife of mariner and master of ship Received husband's letters from Allicante and from his successor as master of his ship sent from Venice



"In the yeaeres 1633 and 1634 and part of the year 1635 the arlate Thomas Sherwin since deceased was master of the arlate shipp the *Scipio*, which kneweth to bee true, for that all that tyme shee was the wife of the said Thomas Sherwin and was divers tymes within that tyme aboard the said ship with her said husband..."

Within the tyme arlate the said Thomas Sherwin sett saile with the said shipp from this port of London bounde upon a voyage to the Streights, and puttinge into Allecante outwards bounde that voyage the said Thomas Sherwin as appears by his letters written to this examinee from thence and from his speeches since was there arrested and imprisoned, but his shipp rideing then without commander there, [XXXXed] and sett saile from thence on her intended voyage under the command of the arlate Humphrey Barrett being then the said Sherwin's chief mate....

Since the said voyage was ended shee hath often heard tehs aid Barrett confesseth that hee caused the said anchors to bee put on shoare at Venice and lefte them ther in the hands of one Yates a merchant, and shewed this examinee a noate which hee said hee had from the said Yates for the receipte of those anchors, and that noate the said Barrett the nexte voyage carried forth with him in the said shipp being the bounde to Venice, and from Venice that voyage the said Barrett wrott a letter to this examinee her husband being then dead whereby hee did advise her that yt was not known but that those anchors were her husbands, and that one of them was souled, and that the party with whom hee the said Barrett lefte those anchors was dead, but had lefte sufficient to pay every body."

[Susanna Sherwin, 46 year old widow of Thomas Sherwin, deceased master of the *Scipio*, of Wapping, Middlesex] (HCA 13/58 ff.506v-507r)

Letters received by mariners wives and widows

A decent portion of mariners wives and widows were literate

- 37% of mariners wives and widows in SOLM2019 data set use signatures [10/27]

There is clear evidence of mariners wives receiving letters from their husbands

- Three examples
 - "Shee is very well acquainted with her sayd husbands characters and manner of writinge haveinge divers tymes heretofore in his life tyme received letters and other writeinges from him and many tymes seene him write his name" [Mary Tillott, thirty-four year old widow of John Tillett, the deceased master of the *John and Dorothy*, who was drowned. Living at Wapping]
 - "This rendent received severall letters from her said husband at Legorne, some or one whereof did import and require this rendent to enquire by her selfe or freinds, whether the policy entred in the Assurance Office here concerneing the trading voyage of the said shipp did stand good...this rendent being affirmatively assured returned an answer accordingly to her said husband... shee did as aforesaid intimate so much by letter unto her said husband then at Legorne..." [Isabell Seaman, forty-seven years of age, wife of Captain Edward Seaman, master of the *Sampson*, living in Wapping, Middlesex]
 - "Puttингe into Allecante outwards bounde that voyage the said Thomas Sherwin as appears by his letters written to this examineate from thence and from his speeches since was there arrested and imprisoned ...from Venice that voyage the said Barrett wrott a letter to this examineate her husband being then dead [Susanna Sherwin, 46 year old widow of Thomas Sherwin, deceased master of the *Scipio*, of Wapping, Middlesex]

Arguably a culture of letter writing existed within mariner families

- Combining personal and commercial lives
- Wives of masters, master's mates and surgeons, but quite probably wives of other men with different offices and places

Reconstructing literacy within ships

The Anne of Hulbridge

Voyage: Wakering [Essex]/London

Return lading: ?

Ship burthen = 130 tons [60 chaldron of coals]

Known company = 2 men

Missing company = 1 man

Total company = 3 men

1609

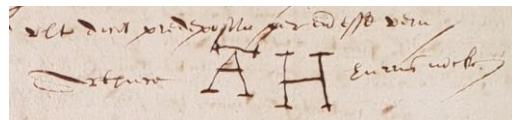
Master: Arthur Harris senior

Voyage length = 1 to 2 days

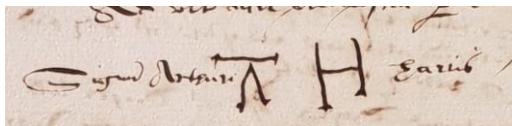
Definitely unable to write or read

Probably unable to write or read

Probably able to write and read



Arthur Harris senior, sixty-one year old mariner
of Hulbridge, Essex. Master of hoy named the
Anne of Hulbridge.



Arthur Harris junior, sixteen year old mariner and
son of Arthur Harris. One of two of the company
of the hoy the *Anne of Hulbridge*.

The Successe of Dover

Voyage: Newcastle/Dover [Kent]

Return lading: Coals

Ship burthen = 100 tons

Known company = Master + 4 men + 1 boy = 6

Missing company = 2

Total company = 6

ca. 1654

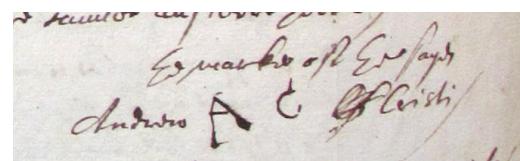
Master: David Adamson

Voyage length = N/A

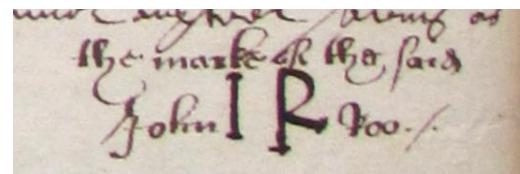
Definitely unable to write or read

Probably unable to write or read

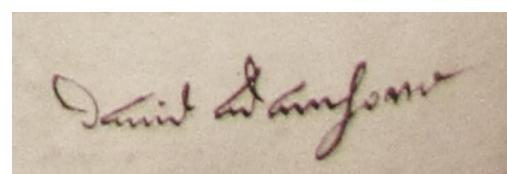
Probably able to write and read



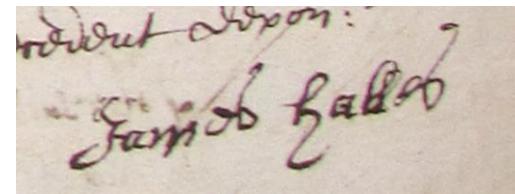
Daniel Cristi, fifty year old mariner of Dover, Kent. Common mariner of the *Successe* of Dover.



John Roo, forty-six year old mariner of Dover, Kent. Master's mate of the *Successe* of Dover.

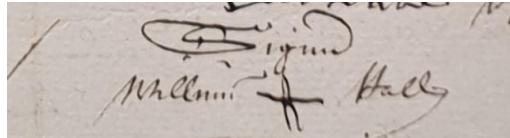


David Adamson, thirty-six year old mariner of Dover, Kent. Master of the *Successe* of Dover.

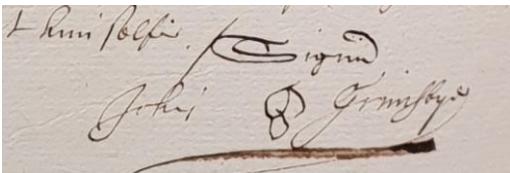


James Hales, fifty-seven year old mariner of Dover, Kent. Ordinary mariner of the *Successe* of Dover.

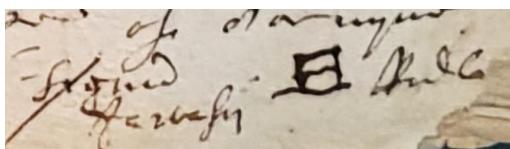
All probably unable to read or write



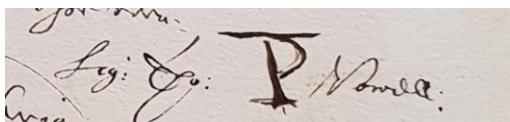
William Hall, age 25, of Deptford, Kent; mariner, one of the company of the *Plyades*. "Hee hath used to goe to sea for these eleaven yearees laste paste but never as master or masters mate of any shipp nor ever tooke uppon him the charge of a shipp as master or master's mate."



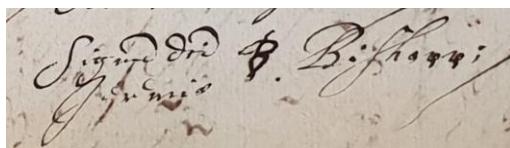
John Grimsby, age 33, of Deptford, Kent; mariner, one of the company of the *Plyades*. "Hee this rendent the tyme aforesaid was one of the company of the interrate shipp the *Plyades* but had no office in her."



Gervase Ridla, age 38, of Stepney, Middlesex; served in the *Plyades*. Came into the *Plyades* at Venice and served in her for 16 months, including 14 months in service of the Duke of Venice.



Thomas Powell, age 35, of Stepney, Middlesex; shipwright, carpenter's mate of the *Plyades*.



Jeremy Bishopp, age 38, of Redriff, Middlesex; mariner, master's mate of the *Plyades*.

The *Plyades* of London

London/San Lucar/Malaga/Venice//Venice/?/Corfu/?/Venice//Venice/?/Zant/?/London

Return lading: currants; oil

Ship burthen = 350 to 400 tons

Known company = Master + Purser + 15 men

Missing company = 23 to 33 men

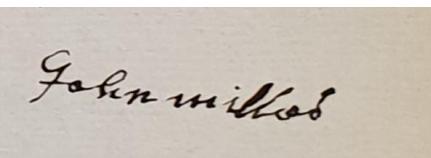
Total company = est. 40 to 50 men

ca. October 1637 to ca. May 1640

Voyage length = 32 months

"This hee affirmeth uppon his oath to bee true, who was then at Venice master's mate of the shippe the Love of London then alsoe lett out there for the same service and was there on shore with the said Anthony and others of the company of the *Plyades* after they went there on shore out of her as aforesaid" (HCA 13/58 f.150r); "The said Anthony [the chirurgeon], 3 of the quarter masters, the carpenter and boatswaine's mates, 3 trumpeters and some other of the company of the *Plyades* as were on shoare at Venice and there stayed fower or five dayes and this rendent heard them say that they would not goe onboard her againe and proceed in the service of the Duke of Venice unlesse they might have more wages than they were shipt for in England" (HCA 13/58 f.150v)

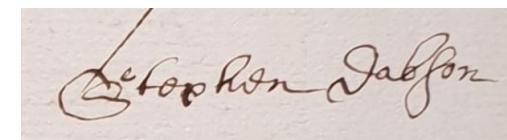
All almost certainly able to read and write



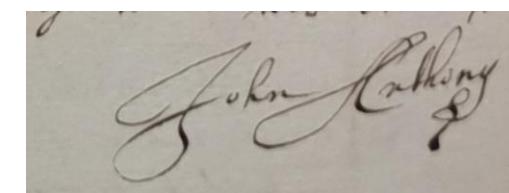
John Milles, age 28, of Stepney, Middlesex; mariner, foremast man of the *Plyades*.



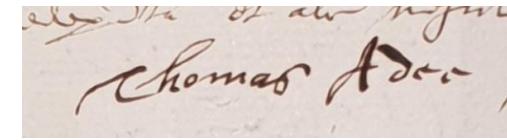
Jefferie Steavens, age 30 or 33, of Saint Brides, London; mariner, master's mate and one of the company of the *Plyades*.



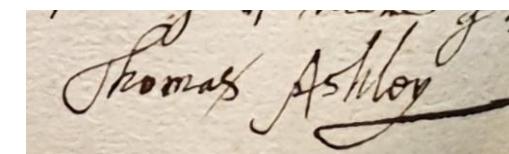
Stephen Dabson, age 27, of Wapping, Middlesex; mariner, one of the company of the *Plyades*. "Hee hath used the sea as a common sailor or mariner for the space of about these fower years laste paste."



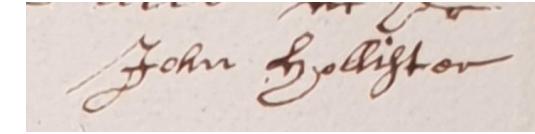
John Anthony, age 28, of Saint Dunstans in the East, London; one of the company and chirurgeon of the *Plyades*.



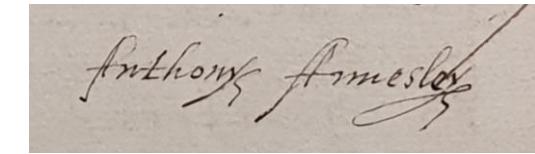
Thomas Adey, age 35, of Wapping, Middlesex; quartermaster of the *Plyades*. "Hee hath bine imploied as a seaman or mariner in merchants' shippes and the King's shippes in all for the space of about these fourteene years laste paste."



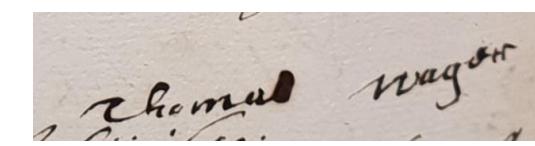
Thomas Ashlye, age 40, of Limehouse, Middlesex; mariner, chief master's mate and pilot of the *Plyades*.



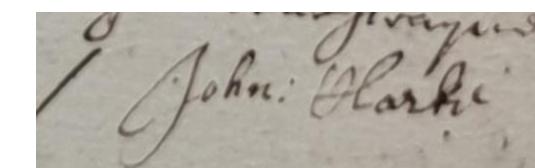
John Hollister, age 20, of Stepney, Middlesex; mariner, second master's mate of the *Plyades*.



Anthony Annesley, age 40, of Limehouse, Middlesex; mariner, first boatswain's mate, then gunner's mate of the *Plyades*.



Thomas Wager, age 40, of Limehouse, Middlesex; shipwright, carpenter of the *Plyades*.



John Clarke, age 26, of Deptford, Kent; boatswain of the *Plyades*.

66.7% signature literacy on partial headcount

The William of London

Voyage: ?/Tunis [Barbary]/Livorno/?

Return lading: ?

Ship burthen = N/A

Known company = Master [deceased] +12 men

Missing company = ?

Total company = ?

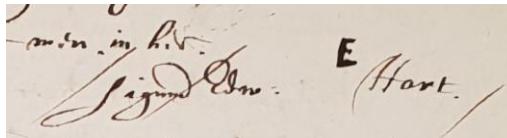
ca. 1640

Master: Abraham Steevens [deceased by 1640]

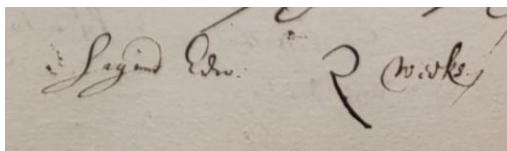
Voyage length = N/A

83.3% signature literacy on
partial headcount

All probably unable to read or write

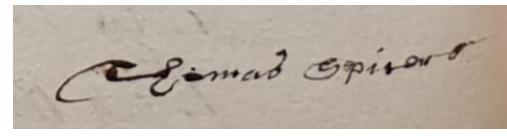


Edward Hart, 38 year old mariner of Limehouse, Stepney. One of the quartermasters of the *William of London*.

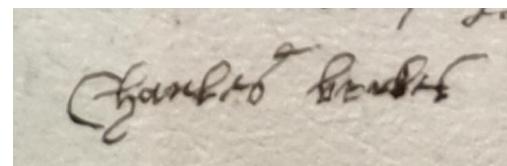


Edward Weeks, 24 year old shipwright of Stepney, Middlesex. Carpenter's mate of the *William of London*.

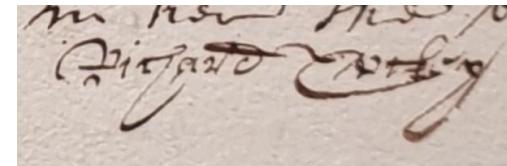
All almost certainly able to read and write



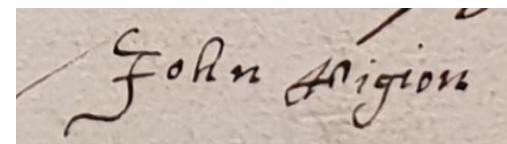
Thomas Spicere, 32 year old ship carpenter of Stepney, Middlesex. Carpenter of the *William of London*.



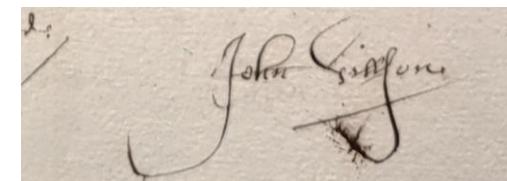
Charles Becket, 38 year old mariner of Saint Olaves, Southwark. Cook of the *William of London*.



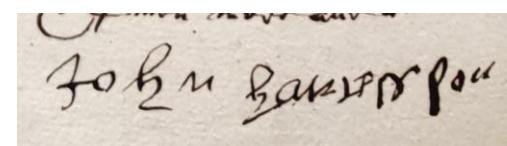
Richard Tuckey, 36 year old mariner of Saint Olaves, Southwark. One of the quartermasters of the *William of London*.



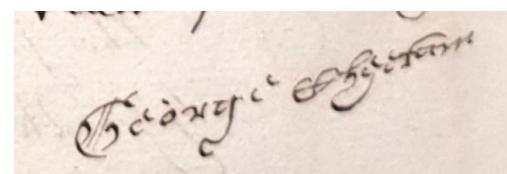
John Pigion, between 18 and 19 years of age, mariner of Stepney, Middlesex. Mariner of the *William of London*.



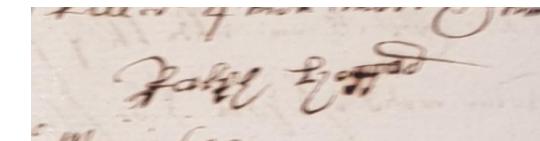
John Gilson, 36 year old mariner of Limehouse, Stepney, Middlesex. Master's mate of the *William of London*.



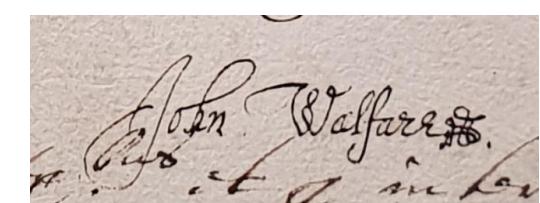
John Harrison, 40 year old, Saint Bottolphs within Bishopsgate, London. Cooper of the *William of London*.



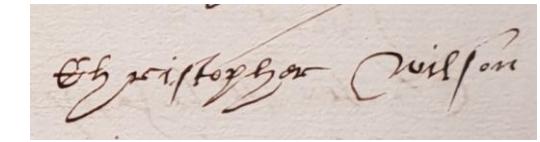
George Cheetham, 20 year old, Greenwich, Kent. Trumpeter's mate of the *William of London*.



Ralph Huggard, 45 year old mariner of Greenwich, Kent. One of the quartermasters of the *William of London*.



John Welfare, 26 year old, of Stepney, Middlesex. Surgeon of the *William of London*.



Christopher Wilson, 47 year old mariner of Limehouse, Middlesex. Boatswain of the *William of London*.

Mariners letters

Few mariners letters have been clearly identified and contextualised

They were, however, frequently written and received, and were written both for commercial and personal reasons.

Their existence and range can be inferred from legal depositions in the English High Court of Admiralty.

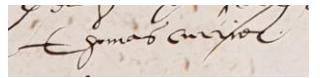
Evidence of mariners writing and receiving letters in all offices and places on board ship

- Commercial and personal letters
- Masters; pilots; master's mates; gunners; boatswains; pursers; coopers; coxwains

Letters of masters and pilots

Master

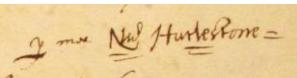
Seen letters from former ship mates, now galley slaves



"William Knott, John Sicksworth, Martyn Mason, William Browne and John Twayth and divers other marriners went forth in the *Prosperous* of Legorne belonginge to the greate duke of fflorence from this porto of London to the porto of Legorne in the parts of Italy about three yeres laste of this examinee's knowledge for that hee was master of the said shipp at that tyme... The foresaid marriners with 11 more whose names hee doth not nowe remember gott passage in a shipe of Holland bounde for Holland... of his certaine sighte and knowledg for this examinee sawe them when theye wente on bord the said Holland shipp and should have come in her himselfe at that tyme, but that hee had some busines to the said duke which hee had not then dispached... This hee affirmeth to be true for that hee hath seene letters written from the said English men gallislaves as aforesaid declareing theirre takeing and miserable service [in Barcelona gallies]" [35 year old mariner of Ratcliff, Middlesex. Master of the *Prosperous* of Legorne, on a voyage from London to Livorno] (HCA 13/40 ff.145v-146r)

Master

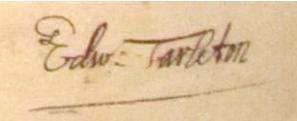
Received letter from purser on his ship whilst he, the master, was on shore at Seville



"The arlate shipp the ffortune (whereof the arlate John Roope was master) as at Cadiz in July laste and this examinee in the shipp the Society of London (whereof hee was master) as also then there hit uppoun some occassions this examinee went himselfe to Sivill leaveing his shipp aforesaide at Cadiz and whilst he was soe at Sevill his purser that hee lefte the despatch of his busines with at C diz wrott this examinee a letter to Sevill adviseing him that hee together with the said John Roope the master of the ffortune and John Crowther the master of the Jonas the last day of July aforesaide were carried by the Governor of Cadiz and that hee commannded them to put in [?fienza] for thos shippes not to depart out of that porte or else hee woud put souldiers aboard them" [30 year old mariner of Redriff, Surrey; master of the Society of London, on a voyage touching at Cadiz] (HCA 13/54 f.67r)

Master

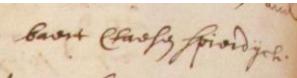
Received letters in London from ship's owner, dated Liverpool and Coventry



"The last time and place that this deponent saw the said Sandiford, was on Monday last near three weeekes in that Eaten Streete where the said Sandiford was on horseback come out of the Maidenhead Inne going for Manchester, whence hee said hee was to goe for Ireland; And saith the since his departure hee this deponent hath received a letter from him dated at Liverpool the twelveth instant (which came to this deponents hands about three dayes after) and before that this deponent received other from him the said Sandiford which hee wrote and dated from Coventry as hee was going downe the Wednesday week after such his departure, which letters hee hath now here in his custody" [30 year old mariner of Liverpool; master of the Manchester, bound out on a voyage from London to Dublin] (HCA 13/72 f.623r)

Master

Received letter sent by his brother from Spain to Amsterdam



"On or about the eighteenth day of March (new stile) next following the said moneth of May 1654, and about six weeekes before Generall Penn and the English flette came to Hispaniola (according as hee hath heard of the time of their arrival there) the Governor and officers of Santa Domingo caused this deponent and his said brother to be imbarqued in a Spanish frigot and sent them away prisoners for Spaine, in regard of such their comming (as was by the Spaniards pretended) to trade at Santa Domingo, And saith that in their course of proceeding for Spaine comming to the Westward of the T[?]e]rc[XX]a Ilands they met a flushing man of war, which being of greater strength than the Spanish frigot tooke this deponent out of the frigot, but with consent of this deponent and of his said brother staid still in the frigot to the end to goe to the King of Spaine and obtaine reparation of their said vessels and goods; which according his said brother [as hee afterwards wrote into Holland procured, (namely libertie for himselfe and sentence of restitution of both the said shippes and their goods, with license to saile to Santa Domingo with a dutch shipp and dutch men to fetch away the said shippes and lading. Which newes ariving at Amsterdam by letter from his said brother, this deponent coming to Amsterdam to give his owners an account of their voyage, was by them in or about December 1655 new stile sent from Amsterdam to Cadiz to assist his said brother, and to buy or freight a shipp for Santa Domingo for the effect aforesaide, and consigned this deponent to John [DorXXX] and Peter Pulla the younger (sonne of the said Peter one of the owners) both dutch men resident in Cadiz to be by them supplied with moneys for the ends aforesaide" [34 year old mariner of Amsterdam; master of the twenty-two gun ship the *Yellow Sunn*, on a voyage with his brother (who was master of a sister ship, the *Nicholas*, to Guine to procure slaves to be transported to Martinica or Saint Christophers] (HCA 13/72ff.339r-339v)

Master

Familiar with hand writing of Teneriff factor; received letter from London merchant with advice; had general letter copied out and distributed to other masters at Teneriff

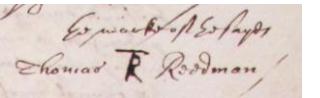


"Having perused the letter in this fifth article mentioned (hee being well acquainted with the arlate Mr Arthur Inggrams hand writing) doth hee doth verily beleeveth the sayd letter to bee all his the sayd Mr Inggrams hand writing...

[He] was at the Canaries the voyage in question in the shipp the *Catherine* whereof hee was master and came home full laden, and saith hee received a letter at the Isle of Wight before his goeing on his voyage to Teneriff from his merchant advising him that hee thought it convenient for for him their deponent to staye there eight dayes before hee proceeded on his voyage to Teneriff...

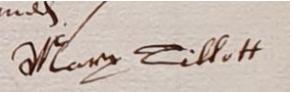
The generall letter predeposed of sent from the factors at Teneriff came first to this deponents hand and by him was [?commonisated] to the rest of the masters of the English ships then there lyeng and among the rest to the sayd Smith aboard the shipp *Katherine* in Teneriff road saith they all of them read the originall and then caused every of them copies of the same to bee transcribed out of it and saith the copies that have their deponent caused to be made thereof was examined with the originall by this deponent and another" [42 year old mariner of Deptford, Kent; master of the *Catherine*, on voyage from London to Canaries and back] (HCA 13/71 ff.61v-62r)

**Pilot and master
Saw letter from part-owner of ship giving master directions**



"Hee sawe a letter from one Mr Edward Jackson of Gainsburgh (who is accompted owner of the greatest part of the shipp *William*) wherein hee ordered the sayd Huntington her master, (after his ladeinge brought to London delivered) to goe with his sayd shipp *William* to the Sheilds and there lade salt for his the sayd Jacksons accompt and goe therewith to Gainsburgh And beleeveth shee was bound then soe to doe" [49 year old mariner of Kingston upon Hull, Yorkshire; pilot of the *William* of Gainsborough; experienced pilot and master of ships for twenty years (HCA 13/70 f.51v)

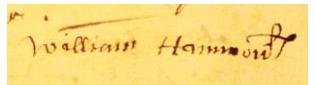
**Widow of master of ship
Received letters and other writings from her husband**



"This examinee doth verily beleeeve in her conscience the five bills of ladeinge in Dutch in the article mentioned beinge nowe shewed unto her at the tymes of this her examination were and are subscribed by the proper hand writeinge of her husband John Tillet who went out master of the arlate shipp the John and Dorothy in this her last voyage to sea in which voyage homewards bounde shee was caste away and perished in the sea aand as shee is informed by some of her company whoe not without greate dannger esapced to shoare a live, her sayd husband was in swimmenga a shoare drowned and for that shee is very well acquainted with her sayd husbands charecters and manner of writeinge haveinge divers tymes heretofore in his life tyme received letters and other writeinges from him and many tymes seene him write his name. Shee beleeveth the contents in the sayd two bills of ladeinge because as shee conceiveth subscribed by her sayd husband as before shee hath deposid were and are true and soe had and done as is therein contained." [34 year old widow of John Tillet, the deceased master of the *John and Dorothy*, who was drowned . Living at Wapping. (HCA 13/55 f.216r)

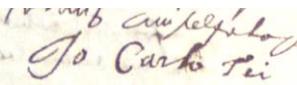
Letters of masters

Mariner; part-owner of ship; acting master
Acted in response to a letter



"In or about the end of November last past this deponent (who was and is a part owner of the said vessel) going to the said Captaine John Greene to his house at or neere Saint Catherines, to enquire about freight for the said vessell, the said Greene told him that hee had received a letter from the said Goulding (dated from Sandwich or Ramsgate) inviting the said Greene to come downe and speake with him about account of the said shipp, and tould this deponent that hee should goe downe with him and take command againe of the said vessell" [70 year old mariner of Redriff Wall, Surrey; part-owner of the *Prosperous*; requested to act as master, replacing John Goulding] (HCA 13/81 f.577r)

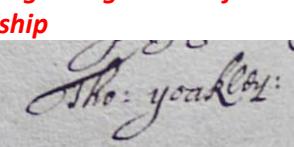
Colourable Italian captain
Received letter from shore at Canaries



"The said merchant lader during such abode of the said shipp at Legorne, the better to secure her (being an English vessell) procured a passe or certificate from his highnes the grand duke of Tuscany, purporting that the said shipp belonged to Italians, subiects of the said duke, and calling her in the said passe the *Santa Antonio di Padua*, and put this deponent (an Italian) Captaine of her, whose name was contained in the said passe as Captaine of the said vessell soe therein named the *Santa Antonio di Padua*, all which was donne and shee was furnished with the said dukes colours to secure and preserve the said shipp the *Lisbone frigot* and her lading from seizure by the Spaniards, in regard of the warres betwext England and Spaine..."

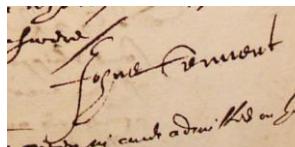
Two dayes after this deponents said retourne aboard the officers came to the sea side and sent aboard the said shipp the *Lisbone frigot* (then there riding by the name of the *Saint Anthony of Padua*), to have her bills of health and dispatches brought ashore to them to the end that they having visited them, the said ship might proceed to her pratique or trade, and at this comming of the said officers, the said John Maria Basso the next day before their said comming advised this deponent by a letter. And saith that the Captain del Marie or officer usually imployed in that behalf being soe come aboard at the end of the said two dayes, to advertise them of the Lieutenants or officers attendance ashore to view their dispatches, and the said Capitan Dell Mara withall requiring in the name of the said officers ashore that this deponent should come with the said dispatches and bring the masters mate, pilot, chirurgion and boatswaine with him, and one of the shippes company putting it into the said Bartholomew ketchers his h?ead that this was some trick to get them ashore and betray them" [25 year old mariner of Livorno; (HCA 13/73 f.37v)]

Master and part-owner of ship
Received letters regarding rescue of his ship



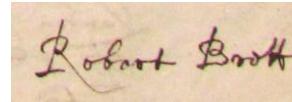
"Hee well knoweth the ship the *Thomas arlate*, And saith that the arlate Mr Cowell and one Mr Canham Mr Reed and Michael Yoakeley the elder, and Michael Yoakley the younger and this deponent, set out the said ship, about January 1653 from this port of London on a voyage to bee made with her from hence to Roan, and to other places beyond the seas and they the said Cowell Canham, and Reed, and the said Yoakeleys are the true and lawfull owners of her and by the consent of thereof her said owners went master of her, and saith the said ship, (being in her course for this port and coming from Morlaix) was together with this deponent, and company seized by a three Brest men of war; on or about the fifteenth of April 1654; and saith that hee hath bin certianly informed by letters and otherwise that the said Ship *Thomas* was taken as aforesaid rescued and brought unto ffalmouth" [21 year old mariner of the precinct of Saint Catherines near the Tower of London; master of the *Thomas*, voyage from London to Rouen, Morlaix and back to London] (HCA 13/73 f.84v)

Master
Read open letter circulated amongst Scottish masters



"Hee alsoe well knew the vessell of warr interrogate belonging to Rotterdam the commander whereof was the interrogate Captaine Kirkoff and saith the said vessell of warr carried eight gunnes and fifty men or thereabouts and was about the beginning of March 1655 English style in the river of fforth neere Boraston in Scotland whether hee came as convoy to several shippes from Rotterdam to the sayd place and saith that the sayd Kirckoff while hee soe lay there did give notice by letter to masters of shippes in generall upon the sayd coast (each of them to show it to others) that hee was bound for Rotterdam and would accept under his convoy all shippes thereabouts that had occasion to goe for holland and secure them in their voyage thither from the danger of all men of war or to that effect which letter was communicated and showne to this deponent by one Robert Camell master of a shipp belonging to Leith" [32 year old mariner of Kircaldy, Scotland; master of the *Union of Leith*] (HCA 13/71 f.179r)

Presumed master
Received letters from one of ship owners

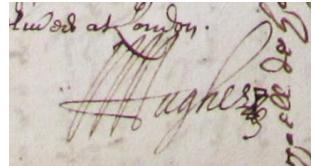


"He well knew a shipp called sometimes the *Dolphin* and sometimes the *Prince Arthur*, which said shipp lay at Dartmouth in the year 1654 but he cannot remember the time when he the deponent being putt in possession of the sayd shipp by one Thomas Cowell, Arthur Ottaway and John Greene, this deponent being in possession therof for their use did receive a letter from the sayd Thomas Cowell to deliver or surrender up the sayd shipp to Mr Wheeler the then Mayor of Dartmouth for the use of Alderman Frederick the party productus as of the sayd Wheeler, which he the deponent did accordingly" [31 year old mariner of Wapping, Middlesex; (HCA 13/70 f.354r)]

Letters of purasers

Purser

Letter from Livorno sent via English merchant at Zant and delivered to master of ship



"The letter interrate came from Legorne inclosed in a letter to Mr George ffrington [merchant] at Zant, who delivered the same as now it is to the said George Hughes [master of the Thomas Bonadventure]" [23 year old rope merchant of Deptford, Kent; former purser of the Thomas Bonadventure, on voyage from London to the Eastern Mediterranean] (HCA 13/70 f.158r)

Purser

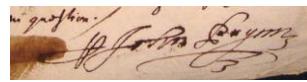
Wrote letter on behalf of master of ship and sent from Livorno to freighters in London



"To the first Interrogatorie and schedule therein mentioned and now shewne unto and perused by this examinee, hee saith and deposeth, that the same was and is a letter written with the proper handwrittinge of this rendtent by the appointment of the said George Hughes [master of the Thomas Bonadventure], and that this examinee by appointment as aforesaid sent the said letter from Porto Longone to the interrate Alderman frederick and Companie, and saith that the contents thereof were and are true." [23 year old rope merchant of Deptford, Kent; former purser of the Thomas Bonadventure, on voyage from London to the Eastern Mediterranean] (HCA 13/70 f.157v)

Purser

Carried open letter from London to Cork, which he read



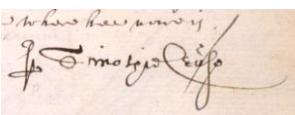
"The arlate Marston in the monethe of October 1653 did confesse unto this deponent that hee was an owner of the sayd shipp the *Alexander* and did pretend to this deponent that hee had the sole dispose of her all the tyme arlate, but of what part of her hee was owner hee this deponent knoweth not. And saith that the sayd Watson did usually observe the order of the sayd Maston as an owner of the sayd shipp ..."

Hee this deponent being present at the meeting of the sayd Warner and Marston in the sayd moneth of October 1653 did then heare the sayd Marston confess and acknowledge that hee had receaved notice from the arlate Watson of the contents of the sayd Watsons agreement with the sayd Warner touching the voyage in question...

Hee well knoweth that the sayd John Marston did by this deponent send a letter to the arlate Watson into Ireland [which letter was delivered to him this deponent open and by him read] wherein was conteyned to this effect that hee the sayd Marston did approve of the agreement made betweene the sayd Watson and the sayd Warner touching the voyage in question and was contented that the sayd Watson should proceede thereon and prosecute the sayd voyage to Virginia" [27 year old mariner of Newington Butts, Surrey; purser of the *Alexander*, on a voyage from London to Cork in Ireland and then to Virginia] (HCA 13/71 ff.432r-432v)

Merchant

Letter sent from Cornwall by master of ship driven onto rocks



"A certaine shippe called the *Saint Peter* of Amsterdam whereof John Olferson was master laden with rye bounde from Amsterdam towards Pharo in Portugall was in her course towards Pharo by stronge and tempestuous weather driven or forced in amongst the rockes upon the coast of Cornewall neere a place called Mounts baye where the master and his company for safeguard of the sayd shippe and goods was enforced to cast some of her ladeinge over board into the sea and to implore the ayd and assistance of the inhabitants theraboutes for safeguard of the remainder but soe it fell out that divers parties under pretence of saveinge and preserving the said shippes ladeinge, stoll and imbesled away parte of the same and converted it to theire own private uses to the prejudice and iniurye of the sayd master and his company and the true owners of the same whoe were and are merchants of Amsterdam some of whose names were and are Wessell Nooreman and Jacob [?Rowbands] and this hee knoweth to bee true for that about a moneth since hee speake with the said master of the sayd shipp heire in London and since that received a letter from him out of Cornewall where he nowe is" [53 year old merchant, resident in the parish of Saint Hellens, London] (HCA 13/62 f.3r)

Merchant, book keeper and letter writer

Letter sent via London post house to Dartmouth for master of ship



"hee this deponent by the space of five yeares and a half last past or theraboutes hath constantly resided and served the allate Antonio fernandez Caravajal, and hath bin by him employed to write in his booke and letters concerning his commerce and correspondence in merchandizing affaires..."

Which said letters and writings this deponent did see and carefully peruse and observe, and well remembred and knoweth, that by order and in the name of the said Fernandez a letter was written wherein the said order to Policarpio was inclosed by this deponent and by him delivered at the Poast house London to be delivered at Dartmouth to the master of the said shipp the *New England Merchant*, to the end and intent, to be by him delivered to the said Policarpio de Oliveira, as it effectually was upon the said shippes arrival at Porto Porto, as this deponent hath likewise seene and observed by and in a letter of the said Policarpio sent to the said Fernandez wherein hee acknowledged to have received the said order of his said correspondents, and also by a like letter of the said shippes master intimating his receiving of the said packett (to witt the packett wherein the said order was enclosed) and that he would deliver the same unto him, the said Policarpio upon his arrival at Porto Porto aforesaid" [21 year old merchant of London] (HCA 13/72 ff.477v-479r)

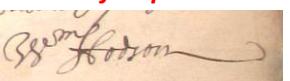
Merchant, former book keeper

Seen bills of lading and other writings from master of ship



"He likewise verily beleiveth that another of the sayd schedules (beinge a bill of lading in Spanish the translation wherof beginning I Cornelius Nieuporte, for that the sayd Nieuport was master of the sayd shipp [the *fortune of Dover*] by the space of three yeares or therabouts before her castinge away and within that tyme this deponent hath seene a great many of his subscriptions to bills of lading and other writings which is very like in the character to the subscription to the sayd bill of lading, and that the same bill is faythfully translated and the translation therof doth substantially agree with the originall which he knoweth because he hath compared them together and understandeth both the English and the Spanish tongues" [22 year old merchant of Dover; formerly book keeper for Peter de Thosse of Calais, merchant, who was sole owner of the *fortune of Dover*] (HCA 13/53 f.222v)

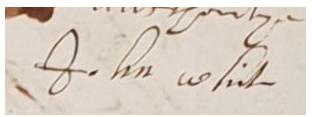
Servant to English merchant at Livorno Read open letter to master of ship



"He received a letter (open) from the interrogated Lister which was by this rendtent read to the master of the same shipp the *Salvadore*, and therein the said letter gave the master directions to followe this rendtent order, And he saith that his order (from the said Lister) was to saile with the said goods and indico to Civita Vecchia" [21 year old gentleman of Brixworth, Northampton; formerly servant to John Fairfax at Livorno] (HCA 13/65 f.2v)

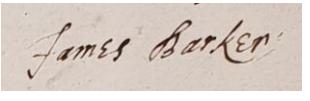
Letters of master's mates

Master's mate
*Sent letter along
Spanish coast
concerning death of
master*



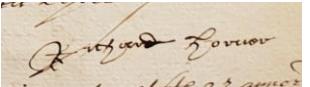
"The arlate John Lowe dyed at Nerca arlate and the arlate Steevens was then at Mallega which is distante from Nerca at leaste tenn leagues. And this examineate was at Nerca when the said Lowe dyed and did write a letter to the said Steevens then at Mallega to acquainte him of the death of the said Lowe which letter as hee heard was delivered the said Steevens at Mallega aforesaid...Hee this rendent was master's mate of the said shippe to the said Lowe deceased whileste hee lived and afterwards to the foresaid Steevens whoe succeeded Lowe in his mastershippe and hee hath received all the wages which hee expecteth to receive due to him for his service in the foresaid shippe the Beaver the voyage in question. And hee receaved the same of the said Steevens' 35 year old mariner of Wapping, (HCA 13/56 ff.69r-69v)

Master's mate
*Knows ship's master
wrote letters to his
owners on shore*



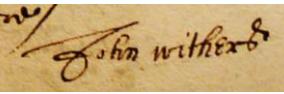
"The pilott asked the said Russell of hee would sett saile for Dunkerke, but hee the said Russell [the master of the *Desire* of Harwich] said hee could not then sett saile for that hee must goe a shoare to write letters home to his owners and that morneinge Russell wente ashore to Sandwich and when hee came a shoare he resolved not to goe to Dunkerke without further order from Mr Lewes [?Vandance] [English mariner; chief mate of the *Desire* of Harwich, on a voyage from France, touching at the Downs]" (HCA 14/45 ff.28r-28v)

Master's mate
*Received letter from
master, who was ashore,
giving instructions for
lading*



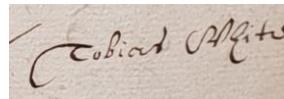
"Within the tyme arlate the arlate shipp the *Phenix* of Ipswich (wherof the arlate Richard Waade was master and part owner) was at Quinsborow deipe in the Eastland and the sayd Mr Waade went up into the countrey about the sayd shipp's affayres and beinge there sent a letter to him this deponent beinge his mate, directinge him what goods he was to take in of every merchant that was to lade goods aboard her and amongst the rest he have thin deponent direction to take in ten lasts of goods which were to come from Brownsborough in the Eastland for the accompte of the arlate Christopher Vincent..." [25 year old mariner of Ipswich, Suffolk; master's mate of the *Phenix* of Ipswich, on a voyage to Konigsberg in Prussia and the Eastland] (HCA 13/50 f.590r)

Master's mate
*Copied factors' letter
and compared to
original*



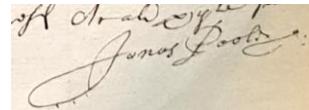
"Hee saw the original letter interrogate but did not see Ingram or Stevens [Arthur Ingram and David Stephens were English factors or merchants at Teneriff] or any of the rest whose names are thereto subscribe the same, but well knoweth their names are thereto and soe were when this deponent copyed out the same for the sayd Smith [master of the *Prosperous*], and saith hee copied the same by the sayd originall and compared it with the original, videlicet hee this deponent read the originall and John Yonge [commander of the *Exchange*] whose name is to the sayd copie looked upon the sayd copy, the rest who have alsoe subscribed thereto being present and saving the same soe compared, and for saith those premisses were done aboard the Richard aforesayd" [58 year old mariner of Deptford, Kent; master's mate of the *Richard* of London, on a voyage from London to the Canaries and back] (HCA 13/71 ff.63r-63v)

Master's mate
*Heard letter read out
loud to master of ship
from Alicante
merchant*



"He the said Cary [Alicante merchant who had received wrong bale of goods out of the ship *George and Elisabeth*] forthwith wrott a letter directed to the said Burdett at Naples to the effecte aforesaid, which hee read to the said Ellison [Master of the *George and Elisabeth*] in this examineate's heareinge and then delivered yt to the said Ellison in this examineate's sighte" [49 year old mariner of Ratcliff, Middlesex; master's mate of the *George and Elisabeth*, voyage from London into the Streights] (HCA 13/55 f.105v)

**Purser and master's
mate**
*Received many letters
from the master during
the voyage*



"The two schedules or bills of ladeinge arlate are as hee thin examineate verily beleeveth in his conscience subscribed with the proper hand wrteinge of the arlate Tillett the then master of the arlate shippe the *John and Dorothye* which Tillett is since deceased, and that all and singular the contents therin mentioned were and are true and were soe had and done as is therein contained...for that hee this examineate is very well acquainted with the said Tillett's hand and character and manner of writeinge haveinge often tymes seene him write and haveinge received many letters from him whyleste hee was upon the voyage in question and hee beleeveth the said Tillett was soe honeste a man that in a busines of this nature would not have subscribed his hand to a false bill of ladeinge" [27 year old mariner of Limehouse, Middlesex; purser and master's mate of the *John and Dorothye*; voyage from Lisbon towards Dover or Dunkirk, but cast away] (HCA 13/55 f.225r)

Master's mate
*Saw letter in hands of
master ordering his
discharge*

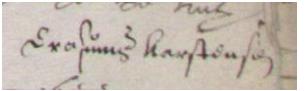
**SIGNATURE
[IMAGE MISSING]**

"About the latter end of december last past, this deponent saw a letter in the hands of the said Fawkner the master whereby the interrate Best gave order to the said Fawkner to discharge this deponent and the said John Vinitro [ship's carpenter], whereupon this rendent replied hee would have his wages before hee would be discharged and then the said master wished him this rendent to stay a while longer and see if any moneys would come for their payment this rendent not knowing of any other discharge neither of himselfe nor any other of the said shippes companies" [27 year old mariner of Limehouse, Middlesex; master's mate of the *Swan*; on voyage from London to the Bermudas (HCA 13/71 f.184r)

Letters of gunners, coopers, coxwains and common mariners

Gunner

Carried open letter from Amsterdam to Saint-Malo



"In or about the beginning of March last newe stile hee this deponent being at Amsterdam was there hired by one Mr La Gard a merchant there dwelling to goe to Saint Malo's to the shipp the *Crosse of Jerusalem*, (which hee said was lying at Saint Malo's) and to goe gunner of her from thence in a voyage for Spaine, whereupon this deponent went accordingly to the said shipp to Saint Malo's and there arrived on the 7th of Aprill next following or thereabouts new stile...

Monsieur La Gard sent this deponent and the said five others from Amsterdam for Saint Malo's in the shipp the *White Unicorn*, whereof Cornelius Jacobs Sayle was master, to whom the said Monsieur La Gard wrote in one letter (which this deponent read) that hee should receive and transport the said six persons in his said ship the *White Unicorn*, to Saint Malos, whither they were going to serve in the said shipp the *Jerusalem's Crosse*, and that the owners of the said shipp the *Jerusalem's Crosse*, should pay him the said master of the *White Unicorn* at Saint Malo's for their passage or transportation, or to the same effect, and saith hee this deponent carried and delivered the said letter from Monsieur Le Gard to the said master of the *White Unicorn*, who transported them accordingly....

Monsieur La Gard sent a letter by this deponent to Peter Martinsen master of the *Crosse of Jerusalem*, which this deponent delivered to the said Peter aboard the said shipp at Saint Malo's, and sawe him break it open and take thereout two papers for the said shipp, the one in ffrench and the other in dutch" [36 year old mariner of Amsterdam; gunner of the *Jerusalem's Crosse*] (HCA 13/70 ff.603v-604r)

Cooper

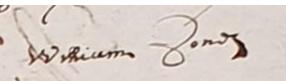
Reports letter sent by master of ship to master's servant

SIGNATURE
[IMAGE MISSING]

"Hee this deponent with some others of the said ships company were set on shore in Corenewall about the 14th or 15th day of february next after the seizure of the said shipp And saith that one John Hawten servant to his precontest having received a letter from his Master and order to deliver the same at London to his father assoone as hee could after hee was set ashore in England hee did make what haste hee could hither but hee being stripped and travelling on foote could not bee heere sooner than in 12. or 13. dayes space But what the contents of the said letter were hee knoweth not" [24 year old mariner of Southampton; cooper of the *Mathew and John*] (HCA 13/55 ff.254v-255r)

Coxswain

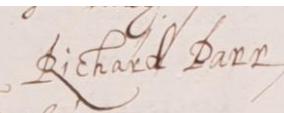
Delivered letters to Newfoundland ship masters and read them aloud to those who could not read



"He was cockswayne of the sayd shipp the sayd voyage and whilst the sayd shipp was at Newfoundland this deponent was by the master sent a coastinge to finde out some shippes from whom the sayd shipp the *Alethia* was to have her ladinge of fish and oyle and carried letters to the masters of those shippes from the owners of those shippes some of which letters he reade unto some of the sayd masters that were not able to reade the same themselves" [21 year old sailor of Limehouse, Middlesex; coxswain of the *Alethia* of London, on a voyage to Newfoundland and Lisbon] (HCA 13/51 f.4r)

Mariner

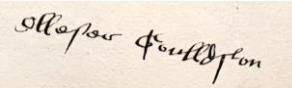
Reports purser sent letter from West Indies to part-owner of ship in London



"About Christmas after the departure of the said shipp from this porte of London the voyage in question outwards bound the said Jones had a letter from the purser of the said shipp dated at Tartuga an island in the West Indies which letter hee shewed to the arlate Man, and the said Man then told the said Jones that hee did not doubt but that the said shipp would make a good voyage and then againe promised to pay the £52 odd money to the said Awle which hee afterwards refused to doe" [29 year old mariner of Stepney, Middlesex. In the ship the *William and Anne*, voyage from London to Saint Christophers. (HCA 13/55 ff.254v-255r)

Mariner

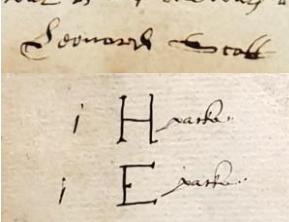
Seen letters from former ship mates, now galley slaves



"He hath seene letters written from the said English seamen gallie slaves as aforesaid whereby it doth appear that theye were taken by certaine Spaniards of Maiorcke and there imprisoned for a longe time and afterwards putt into the galleyes where theye nowe remaine" [29 year old mariner of the precinct of Saint Catherines near the Tower of London. Served in the *Prosperous* of Leghorne on voyage from London to Livorno] (HCA 13/40 f.147v)

Mariner; Nephew of Danzig factor to whom goods consigned

Carried letter containing a bill of goods) to master or boatswain of his ship



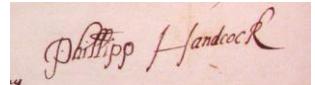
"There were several packs of cloath laden or caused to bee laden aboard the shipp by the arlate Leonard Scott his order videlicet one when shee was in Skitterroade before shee went to sea and the other in Hull roade after shee was driven backe in theither againe by some disaster or other which were to bee transported in the said shipp there hence to Danske for the use and accounte of him the said Leonard and that those packs of cloathe were marked with the marks in the margente articulate and one of them numbered E and the other H which hee knoweth to bee true for that hee this examineate carried them aboard the said shipp by the said Scotts order and when hee carried downe the firste of those packs which was delivered aboard the shipp in Skitterroade hee alsoe carried downe a letter with him from the said Scott wherein hee the [?sawel] there was a bill for the said packe of cloath which letter together with 5 shillings which the said Scott had sent to the company to drincke hee this examineate to his nowe best remembrance delivered to the said Hemislye the master of the said shipp or his boateswaine but which of them hee doth not at present well remember" [31 year old markiner of Hull Yorkshire; served on ship the *Pennrose* of Hull on voyage from Hull to Danzig and back] (HCA 13/57 ff.47v-48r)

Journal keeping

Journal keeping was widespread amongst Early Modern mariners. These master's mates kept detailed journals of the days, ports, winds & seas they encountered on their voyages.

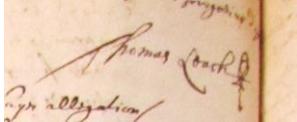
KEPT A JOURNAL

Master's mate



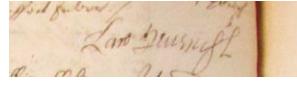
"[He] remembreth the same the better for that hee kept a journall or memoriall of the sayd voyage" [Master's mate of the Hopewell, voyage from London to Scanderoon and back]

Master's mate



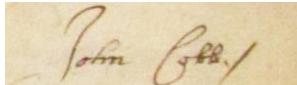
"Hee this deponent being masters mate [of the *Trades Increase*] as aforesayd kept a journall of the voyage in question and thereby knoweth that upon the fifteenth day of July last the sayd shipp *Trades Increase* came out of Spikes Bay in the Barbados laden with sugar and other goods and bound for England at which tyme shee was a staunch shipp and not [XXX] leakie soe as to prejudice her ladeing nor any otherwise leake them other which trade to such hott countries usually are and soe continued till the [XX] of August last on which day the sayd shipp in her passage from the Barbados towards England mett with an extraordinary storme and tempest" [XXXX; master's mate of the *Trade Increase*; voyage from London to Barbados and back] (HCA 13/72 f.193v)

Master's mate



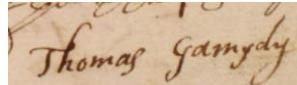
"The sayd shipp first sett sayle from London on the eighteenth of September last and thence went to Gravesend where the winde proving Easterly and the shipp being asoe of necessity to stay there to bee cleared by the officers of the blockhouse shee lay there to procure her cleereing and to expect a fayer wind from the nynteenth of the sayd moneth which was the day of her arrivall thither untill the twenty fourthe day of the same moneth, on which day shee sett sayle thence to the downes where shee arrived on the twenty fifth day of the sayd moneth in the night tyme and the next morning waied anchor and sett sayle from the Downes bound for Rotchell and touched at noe port till shee was by stome and contrary windes forced as aforesayd into Plymouth upon the twenty nyght of the sayd moneth. This hee knoweth for that hee kept a journal" [38 year old mariner of Dorcehster, Dorset. Master's mate of the *William and Anne*. On voyage from London to La Rochelle and Wexford, but cast away]

Master's mate



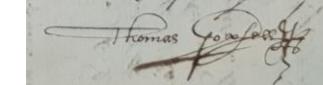
"He (having now his journall of the voyage in hand)...The premisses he deposeth having his journall now in his hand, wherein is faithfully and exactly sett downe every dayes passage of the sayd shipp during the voyage in question" [Master's mate of the *Gilbert*, voyage from London to Barbados and back]

Master's mate



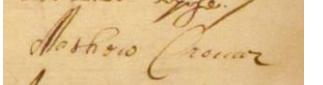
"Since the returne of the sayd shipp the Desire from the voyage in question Mr Slany, Mr Clobery, Mr Bence Johnson and the foresayd Mr Hooper and two others whose names he knoweth not mett together at the Shipp taverne behinde the Exchange and had some conference together concerninges the differences nowe in question and this deponent did then give the sayd Mr Bence Johnson a true copie of part of the journall kept by him in the voyage in question" [31 year old mariner of Wapping, Middlesex. Master's mate of the *Desire* of London. On failed voyage from London to the Tereras islands]

Master's mate



"The skiff belonging unto the interrate shipp the William (uppon the 25th day of October 1639 interrate) to this deponents knowledge by his journall was sent ashore to a small island therabouts to search for fresh water for the releife of the said shipp the William" [28 year old mariner of Redriff, Surrey. Master's mate of the *Olive Branch* of London. On unsuccessful voyage intended from London to Bantam and back to London via Livorno for pepper]

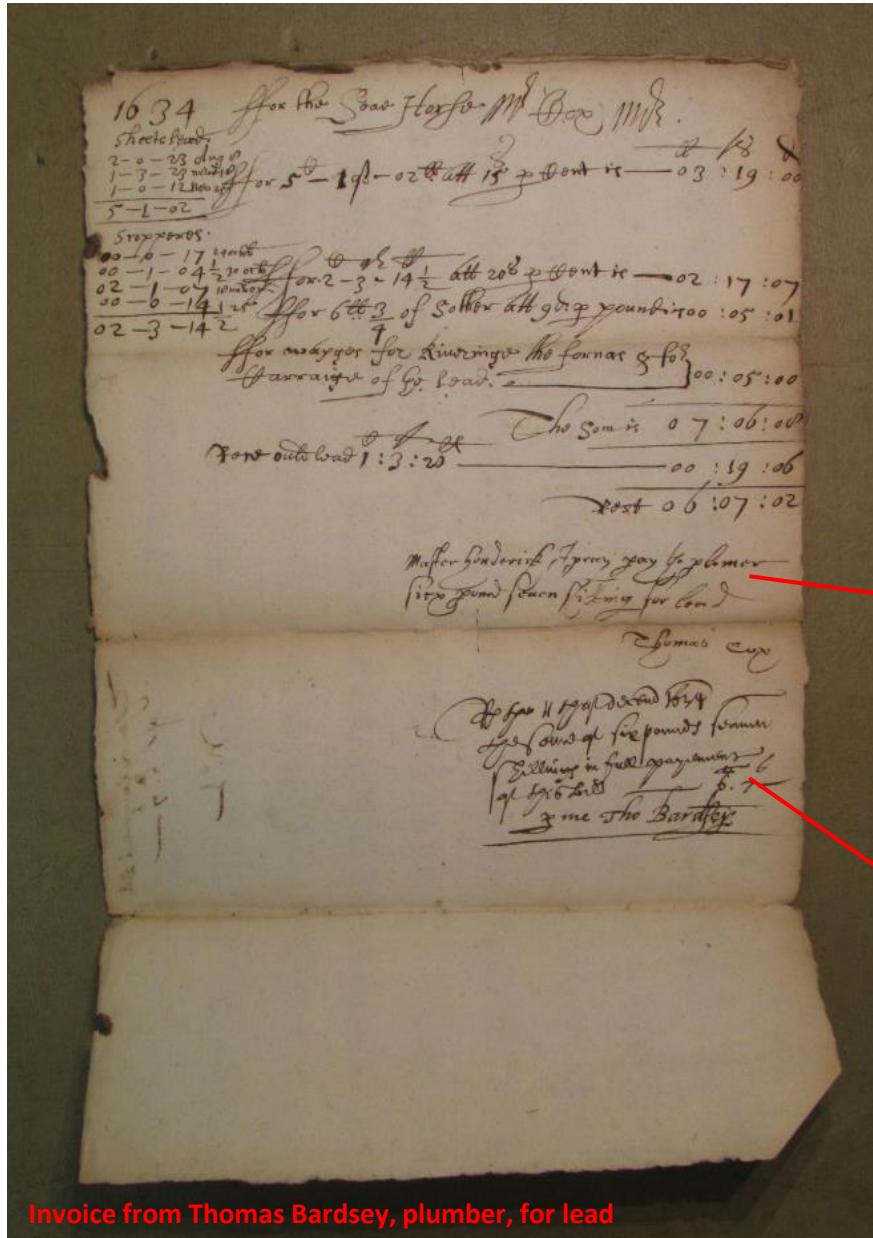
Master's mate



"Hee being master's mate as aforesaid and keeping a journall of the whole voyage in question thereby knoweth that the Olive Branch did not arrive at the port of Ligonre till the seaventeenth day of January 1657" [28 year old mariner of Saint Olaves, Southwark; master's mate of the *William* of London, on voyage from London to Spain, Barbados, Saint Christophers and Bristol]

Exploring literacy using invoices & receipts

Thomas Bardsey is a plumber. His signature is relatively simple, but competent. His handwriting is similarly competent. Thomas Cox, the master of the *Seahorse*, has a slightly simpler signature, but writes well and clearly.



As a twenty-four mariner of Redrith, Surrey, Thomas Cox signed an Admiralty Court deposition [1612]. He had already “used the sea in trade of merchandize” for twelve years. In 1634, clearly the same man, now master of the *Seahorse*, forty-six year old Thomas Cox, instructed his boatswain or purser to pay one of his suppliers, Thomas Bardsey, a forty-five year old plumber living in the parish of Saint Dunstans in the East

Plumber

1635

Signature of Thomas Bardsey, forty-five year old plumber of Saint Dunstans in the East, London. Deposed January 22nd 1635. [HCA 13/51 f.255v]

Mariner

1612

Signature of Thomas Cox, twenty-four year old mariner of Redrith, Surrey, where he has lived for sixteen years. Voyage from London to Livorno and Naples on a ship named the *Mantle*. Deposed February 24th 1612. [HCA 13/42 f.130r]

Instructions to pay invoice [1634]
Handwriting of Thomas Cox

Rd [received] the 11th of December 1634
the somme of six pounds seaven
shillings in full payment
of this bill 6 / 7 s
p [per] me Tho Bardsey

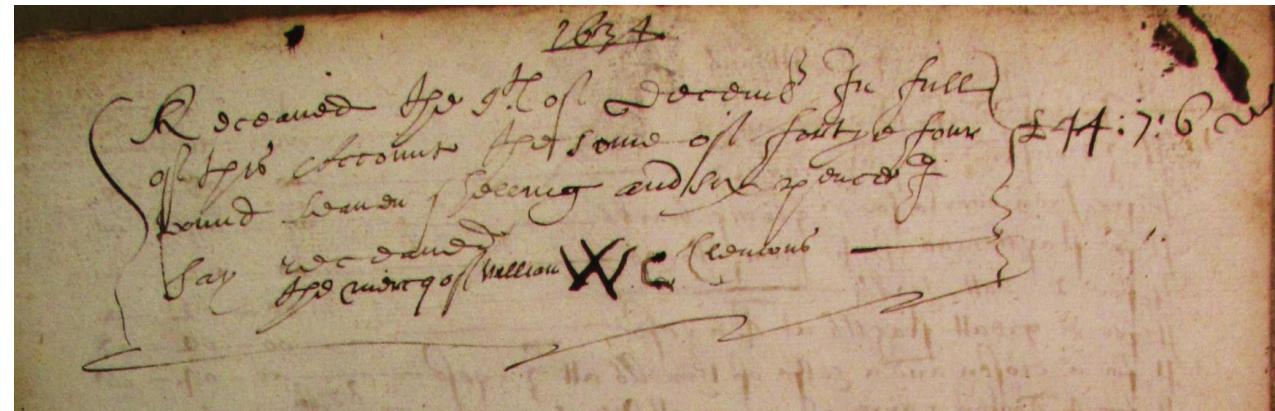
“Master henderick I pray pay ye plomer
sixe pound seven shilling for lead
Thomas Cox”
[HCA 15/1 unfol. 126_06_6666]

Rd [received] the 11th of December 1634
the somme of six pounds seaven
shillings in full payment
of this bill 6 / 7 s
p [per] me Tho Bardsey”
[HCA 15/1 unfol. 126_06_6666]

Initials of William Cleamans, smith. Handwriting of receipt in a different hand.



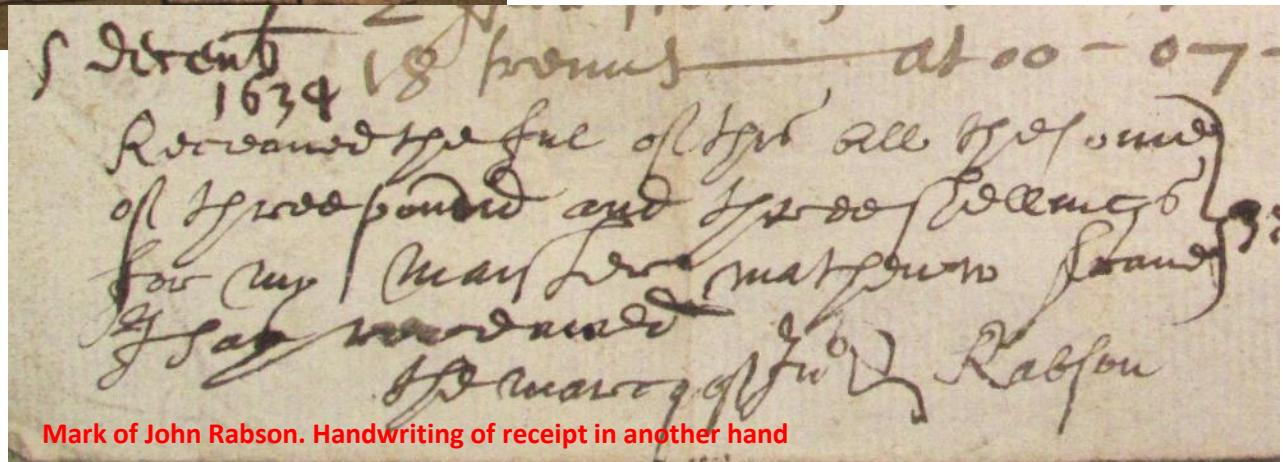
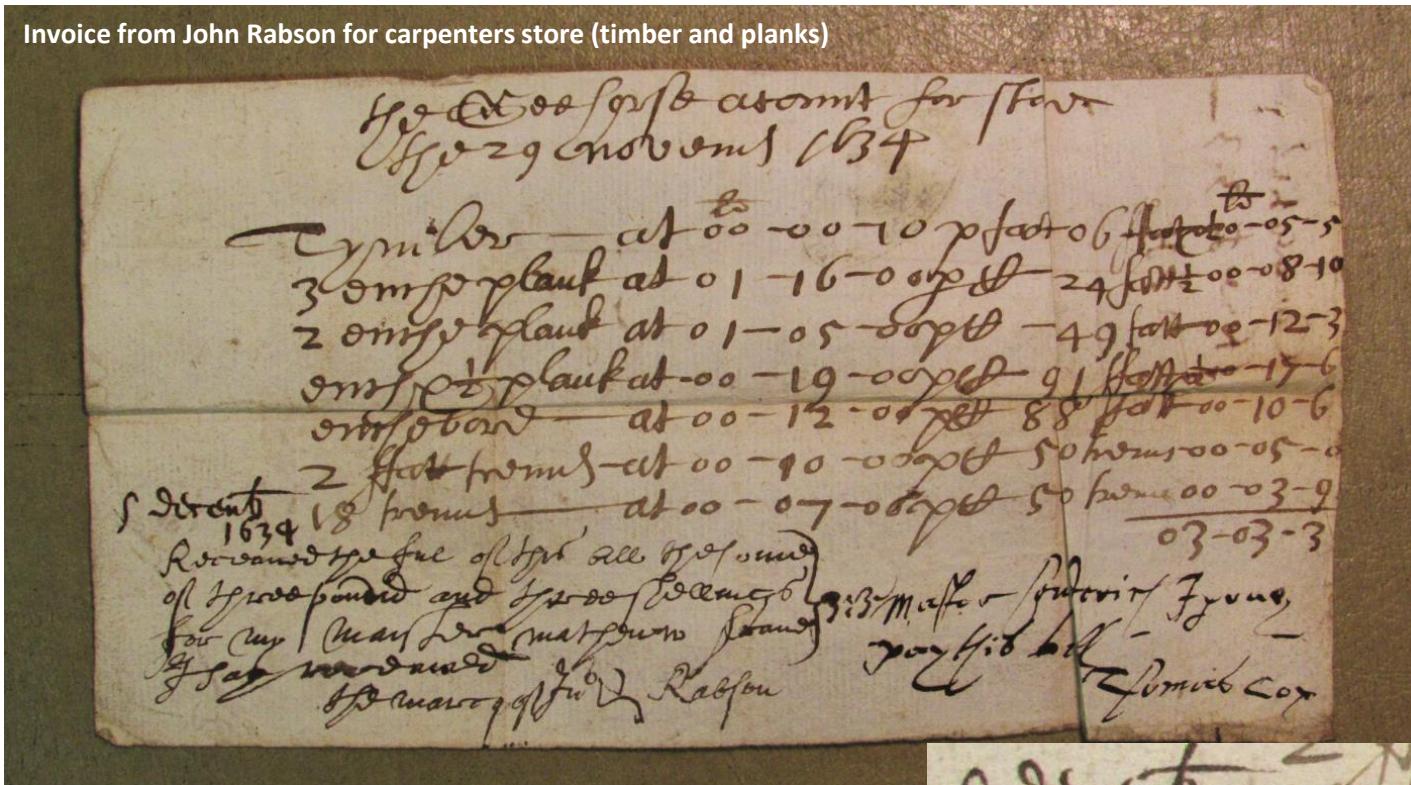
Back of invoice from Willaym Cleamans, smith, for work done



Initials of William Cleamans. Handwriting of receipt in another hand. HCA 15/1 unfol. 126_06_6671.

Mark of John Rabson. Handwriting of receipt in a different hand.

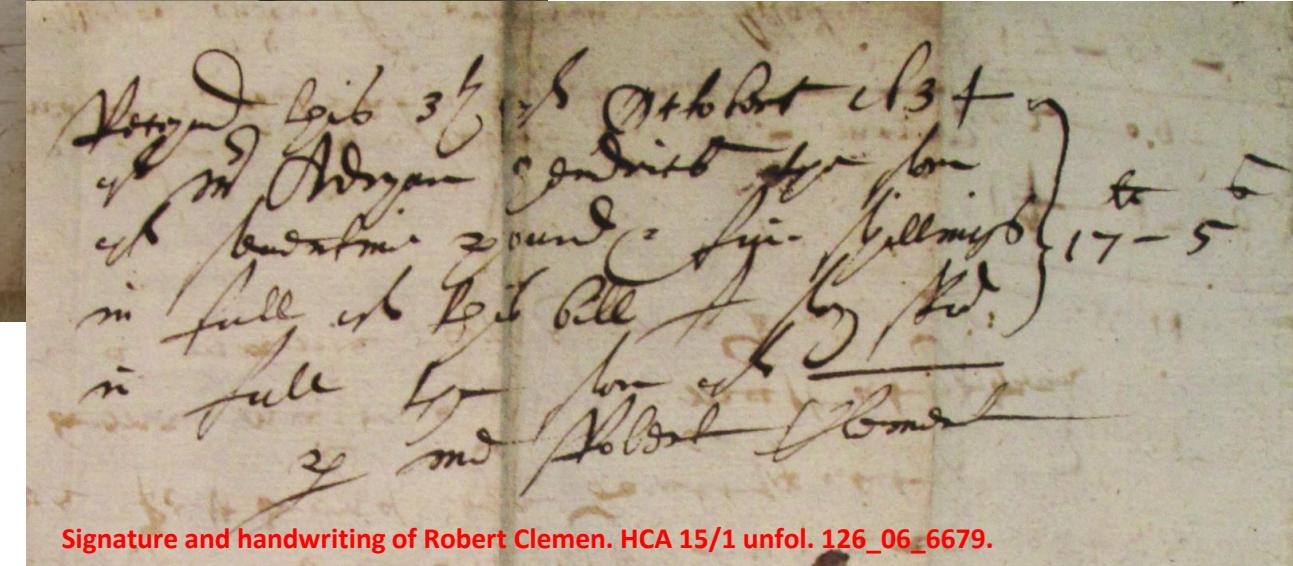
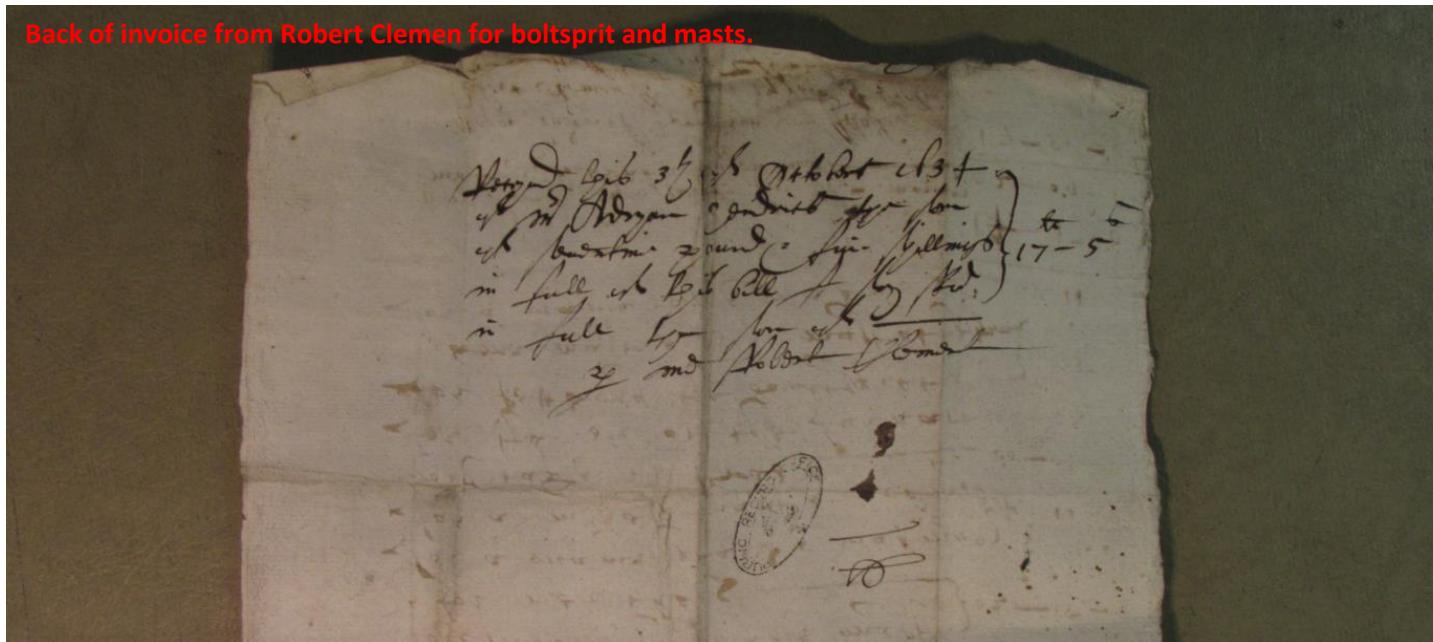
Invoice from John Rabson for carpenters store (timber and planks)



Mark of John Rabson. Handwriting of receipt in another hand

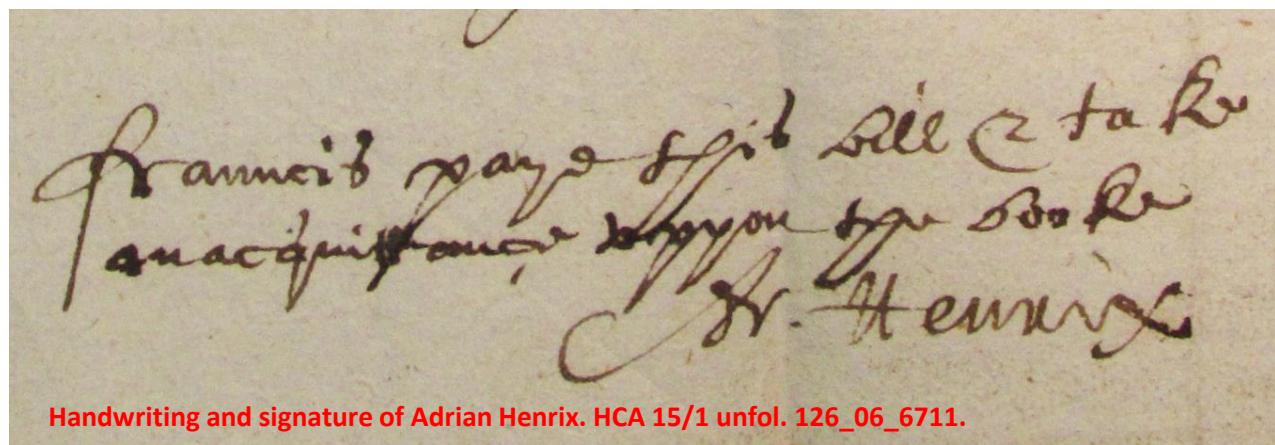
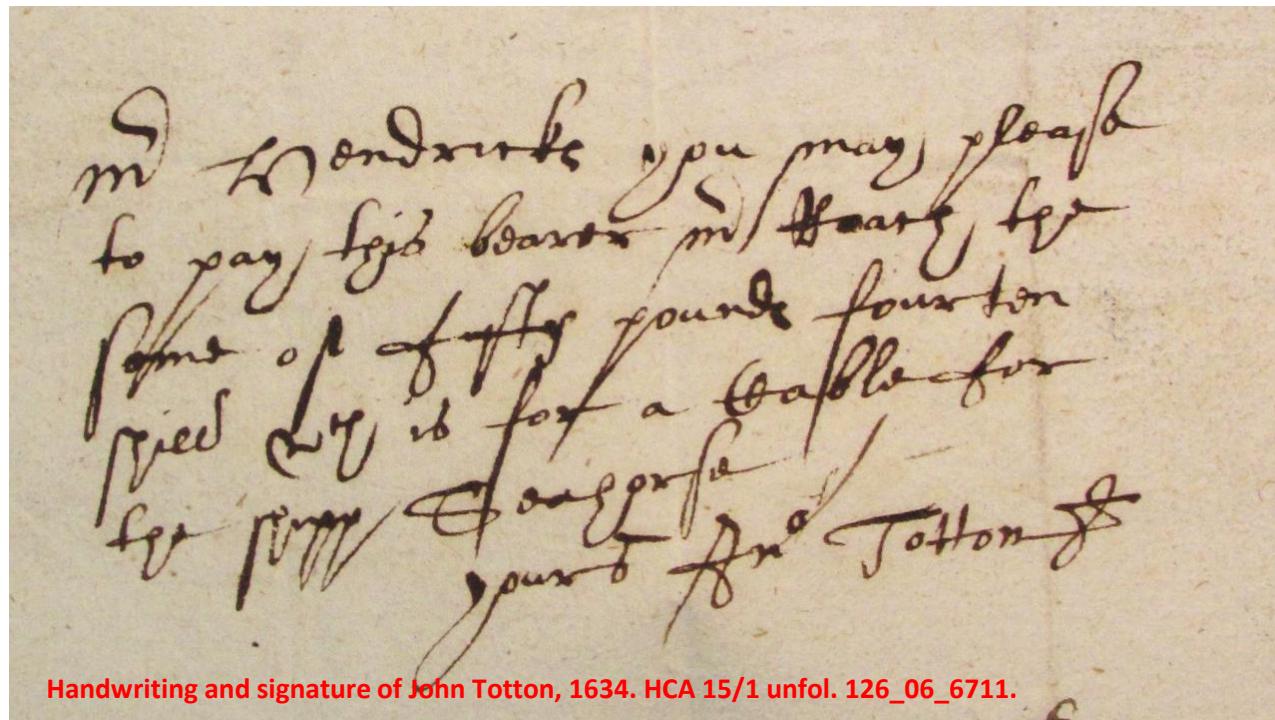
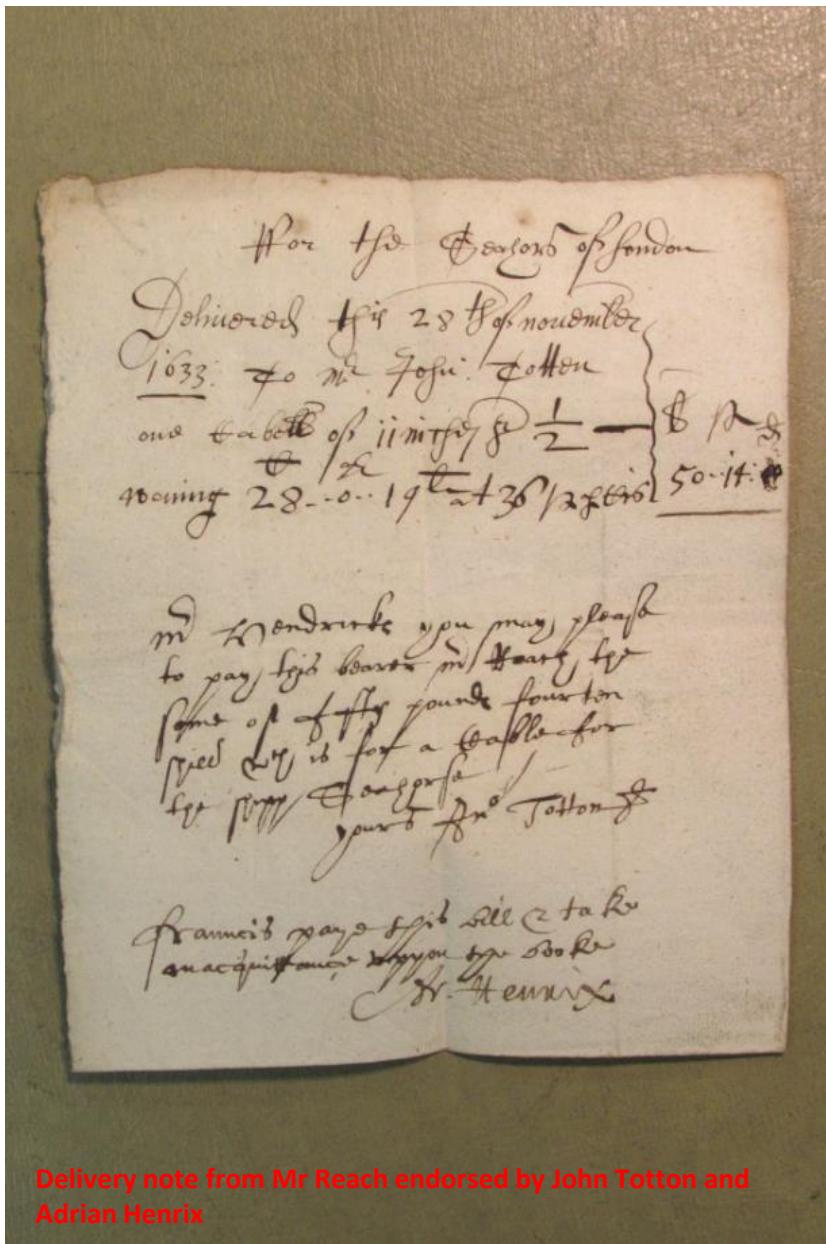
Signature of Robert Clemen. Handwriting of receipt is same as that of signature.

Back of invoice from Robert Clemen for boltsprit and masts.



Signature and handwriting of Robert Clemen. HCA 15/1 unfol. 126_06_6679.

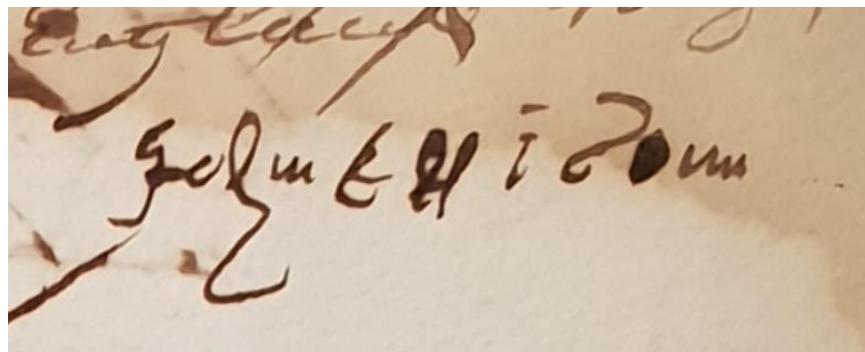
Signature and handwriting of John Totton, mariner, and Adrian Henrix, merchant



Impact of schooling on signatures

Unschooled hand of John Ellison, mariner and captain, father of Edmund Ellison. His signature is consistent between the ages of fifty-seven and sixty-six.

FATHER OF EDMUND ELLISON



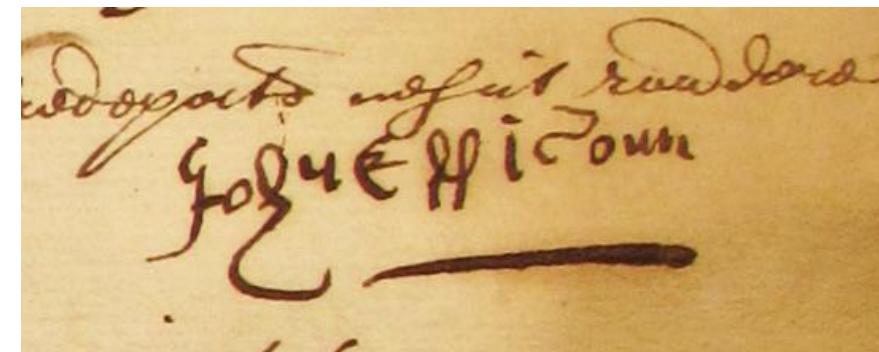
John Ellison, fifty-seven year old mariner of Shadwell, Middlesex. Deposed November 1639. HCA 13/55 f.390r.

Mariner and part-owner of his son's ship

"Before the arlate shippe the *George and Elisabeth* sett saile from Gravesend the voyage arlate the arlate George Hanger did treat and agree with the arlate Edmund Ellison in the presence and hearing of this examinate for the transportation of eleaven negroes in the said shippe from England to Mallega or some other places thereabouts in Spaine and the said Edmund Ellison aggred to finde them victuals at his chardge in their transportation...He is the natural father of the said Edmund Ellison the producent, and was owner of a quarter part wanting a 32th of the interrate shippe the voyage interrate." [Deposition of John Ellison, November 1639] (HCA 13/63 ff.389r-389v)

"Hee this deponent being a chirurgeon by profession was aborde the shipp the *George and Elizabeth* whereof the producent Captaine [Edmund] Ellison was capitaine and commander in and about the yeare 1635 interrate and was and did execute the place of chirurgeon all the said voyage abord the said shippe" [Deposition of James Russell, chirurgeon of the *George and Elizabeth*, under the command of Captaine [Edmund] Ellison; called as a witness in the HCA suit concerning Edmund Ellison as master and commander of the *Pearcy*] (HCA 13/63 f.124r)

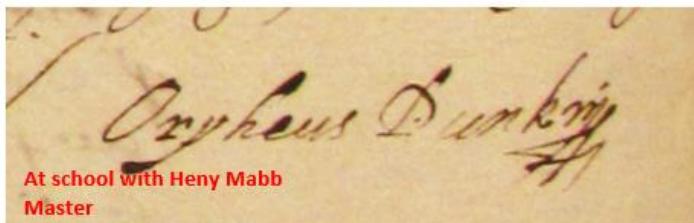
FATHER OF EDMUND ELLISON



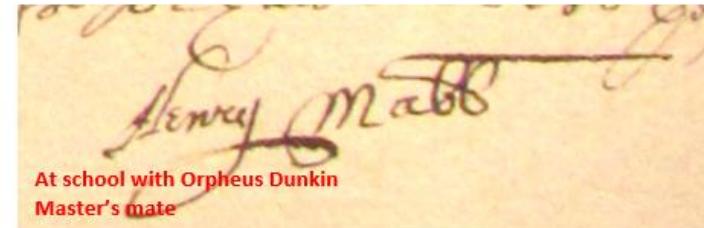
Captain John Ellison. Sixty-six year old mariner of Shadwell, Middlesex. Deposed October 1650. HCA 13/63 f.389r.

Mariner; Captain

What do schooled mariner hands look like? These pairs of signatures are of school friends. Orpheus Dunkin and Henry Mabb were at school together in Cornwall circa 1610. John Crockson and Edmund Ellison were also at school together, possibly in Shadwell.



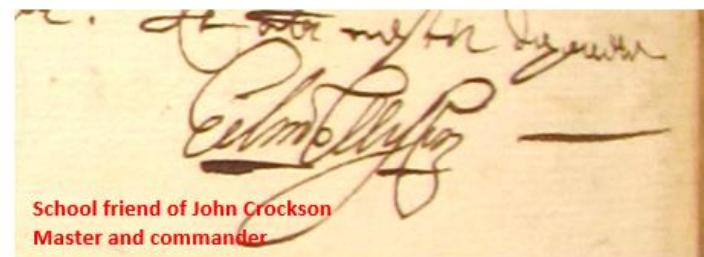
Signature of Orpheus Dunkin, thirty-eight year old mariner of Wapping, Middlesex. Master of ships for the last five years. Deposed April 28th 1638. HCA 13/54 f.79v.



Signature of Henry Mabb, thirty-eight year old mariner of the precinct of Bridewell, London. Master's mate of the *George and Elizabeth* of London. Dated May 25th 1638. HCA 13/54 f.101r.



John Crockson, forty-five year old mariner of Wapping, Middlesex. Boatswain of the *Rebecca* of London. Deposed May 1650. Carried survivors from the *Pearcy* home to London from Toulon. HCA 13/63 f.114v.



Edmond Ellison, mariner of Shadwell, Middlesex. Master of the *Pearcy*, a ship of ca. 425 tons, 26 guns and ca. 42 men; his ship captured in a fight with a French man of war on a voyage home from Livorno via Lisbon to London. Deposed May 1650. HCA 13/63 f.119v.

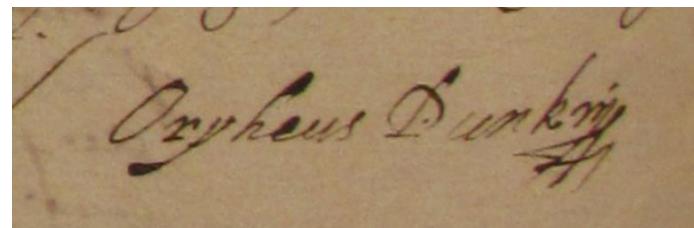
"This rendent went to schoole in Cornewall with the sayd Mabb and never knewe or heard that the sayd Mabb was brought up as a tayler or any other trade or profession but at sea but as he beleiveth he the sayd Mabb hath bene broughte up as a seaman but this rendent sawe him not from the tyme that he went to schoole with him which was about twentye eighte yeares since, untill about nyne or ten yeares since and then the sayd Mabb had the commannd of a shipp as master." (HCA 13/54 f.79v)

It is an open question how much schooling mariners had before they went to sea, from between the age of ten and sixteen, often as apprentices

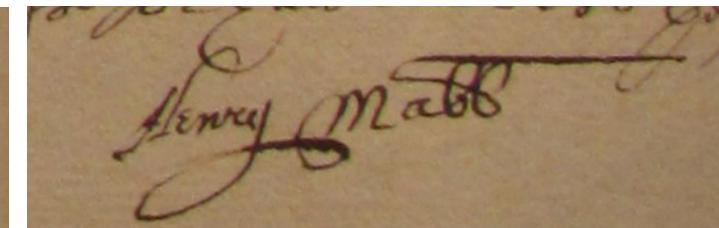
Implies that the two ship masters, Orpheus Dunkin and Henry Mabb were both at school together in Cornwall from about the age of eight until they were both about the age of ten.

"He hath knowne the arlate Henry Mabb the producent for these thirty years last past or thereabouts...This rendent went to schoole in Cornwall with the sayd [Henry] Mabb and never knewe or heard that the sayd Mabb was brought up as a tayler or any other trade or profession but at sea but as he beleiveth he the sayd Mabb hath bene broughte up as a seaman but this rendent sawe him not from the tyme that he went to schoole with him which was about twentye eighte yeares since, until about nyne or ten yeaeres since and then the sayd Mabb had the commannd of a shipp as master." (HCA 13/54 ff.79r-79v)

[**Orpheus Dunkin**, thirty-eight year old mariner of Wapping, Middlesex. Master of ships for the last five years. Deposed April 1638.]



Signature of Orpheus Dunkin, thirty-eight year old mariner of Wapping, Middlesex. Master of ships for the last five years. Deposed April 28th 1638. HCA 13/54 f.79v



Signature of Henry Mabb, thirty-eight year old mariner of the precinct of Bridewell, London. Master's mate of the *George and Elizabeth* of London. Dated May 25th 1638. [HCA 13/54 f.101r]

Thought experiment

How many letters did Early Modern English mariners write each year? How many of those letters have survived and where are they?

English mariner/sailor populations, late C16th to late C18th [Earle, *English Sailors, 1570-1775*, in Van Royen et al., 1997, p.86]

Table 1
Sailors and Shipping Tonnage

| Year | Tonnage | Sailors | Ton/Man |
|------|---------|----------|---------|
| 1582 | 68433 | 16119 | 4.25 |
| 1686 | 350000 | c. 50000 | 7.0 |
| 1773 | 581000 | 52789 | 11.0 |

Sources: 1582: tonnage from L.A. Harper, *The English Navigation Laws* (New York, 1939), 322; sailors from Great Britain, Public Record Office (PRO), State Papers (SP) 12/156, no. 46. The total has been inflated by 4.9% to include an estimate for Wales; see Harper, *English Navigation Laws*, 323, fn. 6. 1686: tonnage from Ralph Davis, "Merchant Shipping in the Economy of the Late Seventeenth Century," *Economic History Review*, Second Series, IX (1956), 72, fn. 5; sailors from John Ehrman, *The Navy in the War of William III* (Cambridge, 1953), 110-111. 1773: tonnage and sailors from Harper, *English Navigation Laws*, 329 and fn. 28.

Table 2
Regional Distribution of Sailors

| Region | 1582 | | 1792 | | % Inc |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | |
| Northeast | 2180 | 13.5 | 18197 | 20.8 | 835 |
| East Anglia | 2952 | 18.3 | 4820 | 5.5 | 163 |
| Southeast | 1888 | 11.7 | 4347 | 5.0 | 230 |
| London | 1325 | 8.2 | 30200 | 34.5 | 2279 |
| South | 983 | 6.1 | 2414 | 2.8 | 246 |
| Southwest | 5461 | 33.9 | 11658 | 13.3 | 213 |
| Wales | 790 | 4.9 | 3296 | 3.8 | 417 |
| Northwest | 536 | 3.3 | 12637 | 14.4 | 2358 |
| Total | 16115 | 99.9 | 87569 | 100.1 | 543 |

Notes: Northeast: Northumberland, Durham, Yorks and Lincs; East Anglia: Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire; Southeast: Essex and Kent; South: Sussex and Hampshire; Southwest: Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Gloucester; Northwest: Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumberland.

Source: For 1582: PRO SP12/156 No. 46, omitting the London "wherrymen." Welsh sailors have been estimated as in table 1. For 1792: BL, Add. Ms. 38432. This lists tonnage port by port and "the number of sailors usually employed therein," so that real totals would be less since not all ships would be at sea at once.

because there was no work. Sir William Petty estimated in the 1670s that only half of the country's population of sailors was at sea at any one time, probably an under-estimate but not outrageously so judging by individual experience as revealed in depositions.²⁸
Earle (p.88)

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Assume

Common man sig literacy = 50%

Common men = 70% of total men

Officer sig literacy = 65%

Officers = 30% of total men

Common literate men 1 letter/year

Officers literate 3 letters/year

30,000 mariners

Letters/year = common men [10,500]

+ officers [17,550] = 28,050

Letters/decade = 280,500

Assume

Common man sig literacy = 30%

Common men = 70% of total men

Officer sig literacy = 60%

Officers = 30% of total men

Common literate men 1 letter/year

Officers literate 3 letters/year

30,000 mariners

Letters/year = common men [6,300]

+ officers [16,200] = 22,500

Letters/decade = 225,000

Table 2
Regional Distribution of Sailors

| Region | 1582 | | 1792 | | % Inc |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|-------|----------|
| | N | % | N | % | |
| Northeast | 2180 | 13.5 | 18197 | 20.8 | 835 |
| East Anglia | 2952 | 18.3 | 4820 | 5.5 | 163 |
| Southeast | 1888 | 11.7 | 4347 | 5.0 | 230 |
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Notes: Northeast: Northumberland, Durham, Yorks and Lincs; East Anglia: Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire; Southeast: Essex and Kent; South: Sussex and Hampshire; Southwest: Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Gloucester; Northwest: Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumberland.

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Earle (p.88)

Discussion