

COALS FROM NEWCASTLE :

TRADE BETWEEN NEWCASTLE AND NORTH NORFOLK 1508 - 1511

By John Wright

In the medieval period Blakeney, Cley and Wiveton together formed one of the larger ports in the country. Not only did the harbour offer some shelter on a difficult coast but there was a major fishing industry and a substantial corn export trade. The changing fortunes of these 'Glaven ports' over the centuries and their relative importance, both nationally and locally, are questions which warrant detailed study. Were the ports really as influential as some have assumed? The settlements were never large and, unlike Lynn and Yarmouth, had no large hinterland served by navigable rivers.

In the national archives there are many references to the Blakeney Haven, with its locally-owned ships large enough to be pressed into the king's service. But few of these references relate to trading activities other than the sale of fish. Apart from shipping lists, there is very little on which to base any statistical assessment of the country's ports – until the recent publication of accounts for coal shipments out of Newcastle during three years in the early 1500s. This article presents in statistical form the entries which relate to the ports in north Norfolk. The content of the accounts is probably 'true' but there is no way of knowing if it represents a complete picture of the visits made by Norfolk ships to Newcastle.

Introduction: the Newcastle Accounts

Surprising as it may seem, one of the earliest sources of detailed information about the maritime trade of Blakeney, and many other East Coast ports, can be found in Newcastle. The material was discovered only in 1978 in an account book of the Chamberlains of Newcastle which covered the period from mid-1508 to mid-1511. The good news is that the account book has been published in full by C.M.Fraser in *The Accounts of the Chamberlains of Newcastle Upon Tyne 1508-11*.¹

The account book lists the Corporation's income and expenditure, and includes entries relating to ships coming into Newcastle for coal. Each entry follows a standard pattern, and includes the name of the ship, its home port and master, a listing of the goods brought in, and the amount of coal taken out. A typical shipping entry reads (in part) as follows:

[for 26 January 1510] *The Mare off Wyffton John Greneway M' applier 5 ton b' 5 chald' barlle. Departit with 20 c' c' 19½d.*

This means that the ship *Mary* of Wiveton, John Greenway master, discharged 5 tons of ballast and 5 chaldrons of barley and left with 20 chaldrons of coal. Duty on the ballast was 19½ d, levied at a flat rate of 12d plus 1½d per ton.

One more example:

[for 18 February 1511] *The Gorge off Wyffton John Stampp M' appliet 6 ton 1 pyp b' 5 c barlle 2 kad heryng. Departit with 25 c' c' 1 c' gryndstones 21½d.*

In this case the *George* of Wiveton, John Stamp master, discharged ballast and barley and also 2 cades of herrings. She left with 25 chaldrons of coal and 1 chaldron of grindstones and paid the appropriate dues for ballast.

The Chamberlains exacted tolls on ships entering the port according to a complicated system of tariffs, depending on home port, the status of the merchant, and the nature of the goods brought in or ballast discharged. A Newcastle owned ship, for instance, went free – provided that the cargo was shipped by a freeman of that port or a freeman of a town enjoying a special relationship with Newcastle. Reduced tolls on coal were payable by ships of certain ports, including most of the larger ones, such as Grimsby, Hull, Yarmouth and Dunwich. The ports in north Norfolk were not among the favoured. There was also a toll on ballast discharged with a lower rate for 'stones' carried as ballast – perhaps the stones could be put to some good use. But for ships which arrived with 'nothing' there is no satisfactory explanation. Presumably they carried merchandise which was not chargeable because it was not offered for sale in Newcastle.

Herein lies a measure of 'bad news' for this is a reminder that the Chamberlains' records were not designed to measure trade and that care must be taken in using them for this purpose.

For this article all the entries for north Norfolk ships have been examined so that the Glaven ports can be compared with others lying between Hunstanton and Mundesley. Ideally Lynn and Yarmouth should be brought into the study as well but the analysis required would take more time and only passing references can be made at present.

Ship Movements

At this time Newcastle was supplying coal to an area stretching from Edinburgh round to Portsmouth and, on the other side of the North Sea, from Amsterdam down to Normandy. The ports sending the most ships were:

Yarmouth	305
Dunwich	207
Boulogne	148
Lynn	104

By comparison, the total from all the ports of north Norfolk was 264, much larger than from Lynn and approaching the total from Yarmouth.

Table 1 shows summary totals for all the north Norfolk ports. Two total figures are given: one for the whole period of the accounts and one for a slightly shorter period of exactly three years. It is the latter figures on which all subsequent tables are based so that (average) annual figures can be easily prepared. It is a pity, though, that in reducing the period from 3 years 2 months to 3 years exactly Cromer loses 10 of its 36 recorded ship movements.

TABLE 1 TRIPS PER HOME PORT

Area	Home Ports (east to west)	Tot trips	Pt May & June 1508	July 1511	3 yr trips (No) 1 July 1508 to 30 June 1511	3 yr trips (%)	Port order
	Mundesley	3		1	2		= 12
	Cromer	36	4	6	26		4
	Beeston	2			2		= 12
	Sheringham	1	1				15
3	TOTAL	42	5	7	30	13.0	
	Cley	24	1	4	19		6
	Wiveton	9			9		7
	Blakeney	25	1	1	23		5
1	TOTALS	58	2	5	51	22.1	
2	WELLS	76	3	4	69	29.9	1
	Holkham	8			8		8
	Burnham	34		2	32		2
	Brancaster	4			4		= 9
4	TOTALS	46		2	44	19.0	
	Titchwell	4			4		= 9
	Thornham	33	2	2	29		3
	Holme	4		1	3		11
	Hunstanton	1			1		14
5	TOTALS	42	2	3	37	16.0	
ALL	TOTALS	264	12	21	231	100.0	
	%	100.0	4.5	8.0	87.5		

Trips are visits to Newcastle (ie in and out movements count as 1 trip).

May/June 1508 and July 1511 are excluded to leave totals covering exactly 3 years.

These **3-year totals** are the basis for all subsequent tables.

only 1 more than Holkham. These figures may well come as a surprise to anyone accustomed to think of the combined Glaven villages as a port of national consequence still at this date. Wells, for example, sent more ships to Newcastle than all three Glaven villages put together – could the Glaven have sent more, or did they have other fish to fry?

In Table 2 the 231 ship movements are presented as monthly figures over the three years: the January total, for example, represents the total for the three months of January 1509, 1510 and 1511. The most obvious feature is the dearth of movements during the 5-month period September to January compared with much higher figures for the rest of the year February to August. This is clearly not dictated by the North Sea weather conditions otherwise September would be a more favoured month than February. Moreover, there is a dip in April and May, leaving a pattern with two peaks: in early Spring and in Summer, with the top figure in June.

This pattern of movement has some consistency over the whole of the north Norfolk coast, but there is one notable difference. The early Spring peak is really only evident in Wells and Blakeney Haven, where 37% of all trips fell in the two months February and March. Conversely, the summer peak of June, July and August occupied 39% of the Wells and Haven trips but 71% for all other ports combined. It is, no doubt, coincidental that the June-August totals for the 5 areas listed in Table 2 vary only between 21 and 24.

Why this particular pattern of movement? The most likely reason is that coal trips had to fit in with the established fishing seasons. At this time ships were not normally designed for one particular trade and the larger boats would have been looking for the most profitable ventures at appropriate times of the year, whether in North Sea fishing or in trading, coastal and foreign, as well as in the multipurpose journeys to Iceland.

In his book on the Lowestoft fishing industry (1550-1750),² David Butcher says that the voyages to the Faroes and Iceland, well-established in the sixteenth century, took place in 'the spring and early summer'. Neville Williams is more specific, saying that the Iceland ships were away for as long as 5 months and returned in July and August.³ On the face of it, this does not seem to offer any explanation of the February-March peak in coal trips. In theory some ships might have called in at Newcastle in order to trade coal northwards on their way to Iceland but there is no evidence to hand for this.

For Lowestoft the most important fishing season was the autumn herring voyage 'lasting from mid/late September to the middle of November'.⁴ It is very likely that the Glaven ports were also engaged in herring fishing, as there is mention of drift nets in many sixteenth-century wills as well as the occasional mention of herrings. The importance of the herring fishery seems to be the most likely reason for the dearth of ships to Newcastle at this time of the year (for all north Norfolk ports only 7% of trips took place during the three months September to November). There was also a mackerel season in Lowestoft, principally in May and June, but this was probably of limited importance in north Norfolk for catches were small and the fish could not be salted but had to be brought ashore and sold as quickly as possible.

Coal

All 231 ships included in the accounts left Newcastle with coal and therefore ship totals are as shown in Table 2 and the amount of coal moved throughout the year follows the same

TABLE 2 TRIPS PER MONTH

Month (3-year totals)	Area 1 B / C / W	Area 2 Wells	Area 3 Cromer (+)	Area 4 Burnham (+)	Area 5 Thornham (+)	Totals No.	Totals %
Jan	1	1			1	3	1.3
Feb	9	14			2	25	10.8
Mar	10	11	2	5	3	31	13.4
Apr	2	7		5	3	17	7.4
May	2	1	4	7	3	17	7.4
Jun	12	6	10	11	7	46	19.9
Jly	4	7	10	5	10	36	15.6
Aug	8	10	3	5	4	30	13.0
Sep	2			2	1	5	2.1
Oct		3		3		6	2.6
Nov	1	1	1		3	6	2.6
Dec		8		1		9	3.9
TOTALS	51	69	30	44	37	231	100.0
%	22.1	29.9	13.0	19.0	16.0	100.0	

TABLE 3 CORN SHIPMENTS PER MONTH

Month (3-year totals)	Wheat	Barley	Malt	Rye	Total Chaldr	Total %	Barley as % of tot	Trips + corn	Corn per trip
Jan	5.0	49.0			54.0	2.7	91	3	18.0
Feb	9.5	304.5	1.0	10.5	325.5	16.5	94	20	16.3
Mar	6.0	312.0		7.0	325.0	16.5	96	17	19.1
Apr	17.0	200.5	4.0	4.5	226.0	11.4	89	16	14.1
May	3.0	81.0	4.0	5.0	93.0	4.7	87	9	10.3
Jun	37.0	209.0	74.5	30.0	350.0	17.7	60	25	14.0
Jly	31.5	71.5	55.5	34.0	192.5	9.8	37	16	12.0
Aug	17.0	20.5	83.0	24.5	145.0	7.3	14	13	11.2
Sep		2.0	9.5		11.5	0.6	17	3	3.8
Oct	0.5	8.0	25.5	1.0	35.0	1.8	23	4	8.8
Nov		86.0	10.0		96.0	4.9	90	4	24.0
Dec		117.0	2.0	1.0	120.0	6.1	98	8	15.0
TOTALS	126.5	1461.0	269.0	117.5	1974.0	100.0	74	138	14.3
%	6.4	74.0	13.6	6.0	100.0				
Nov/Apr	37.5	1069.0	17.0	23.0	1146.5			68	16.9
% shipment	29.6	73.2	6.3	19.6	58.1			49.3	
May/Oct	89.0	392.0	252.0	94.5	827.5			70	11.8
% shipment	70.4	26.8	93.7	80.4	41.9			50.7	

monthly pattern. Only 12% of the coal left Newcastle during the 5 months September to January, the period when 13% of the trips were made. The total amount of coal shipped out was 3,900 chaldrons – an average of 16.9 chaldrons per ship.

The chaldron is one of many measurements which have varied by time and place until relatively recent times. In 1421 a statute imposed a duty of 2 pence per chaldron on 'sea-coal' which was to be carried in ships called 'keels' loaded with 20 chaldrons each. The chaldron was not defined then but by 1543 it appears to have been 32 bushels, equivalent to one 'wey' or 'tun'. However, records show that the Newcastle chaldron weighed in at 2,000 lb (about 18 cwt) in the 1420s and rose steadily to 53 cwt by 1698, at which time it was equal to 2 London chaldrons.⁵ The chaldron was eventually standardised in the nineteenth century and finally abolished in 1963. The implication seems to be that for practical purposes the Newcastle chaldron in the early 1500s can be taken as approximately one ton.

So where did the coal go? There is nothing in the Newcastle accounts to say where the ships were headed when they left the port. The likelihood is that most of them probably did come back to their home port. But the true picture must be more complicated than that – otherwise London would have been very short of coal. During the 3-year period only 18 London ships called for coal, and other ports on the Thames and along the north coast of Kent sent only another 20. Did other ships, from Dunwich perhaps, or even north Norfolk, take coal to London? Or did London acquire coal from some other coalfield?

Corn

Corn was the most important commodity taken into Newcastle by ship from north Norfolk – indeed, very little else is recorded. Of the 231 ships which called at Newcastle 138 took corn amounting in total to 1,974 chaldrons. Three quarters of this was barley, the rest mostly malt with a little wheat and rye (Table 3). Looking at the distribution throughout the year, the double-peaked pattern is still evident, although the July and August figures are lower than might have been expected and the December figure is rather higher. The September figure is much the lowest, either because the new crop was not ready or perhaps because there was little point in shipping corn out immediately when higher prices might be obtained later on.

The most interesting feature of the Table is that the movement of malt, wheat and rye do not follow the double-peaked barley pattern, but are much more concentrated in the summer peak of June, July and August (especially so for malt). The result is that whereas barley made up over 85% of the corn moved from November through to May, it comprised less than 20% in August and September.

Other Shipments

While 138 ships were taking corn to Newcastle, the remaining 93 took no identifiable goods at all. Table 4 shows that 46 of these went in ballast, including 31 with 'stones', and 47 ships declared 'nothing'. If this means that they carried goods not offered for sale in Newcastle then what were these goods and where were they bound? The accounts give no clues to the answer. They do not even suggest that coal quantities were lower for ships which arrived with 'nothing', which seems to argue against the suggestion that other goods remained on board.

TABLE 4 OTHER SHIPMENTS PER MONTH

Month	Nil	Ballast	Stones	Trips	Corn + ballast or stones	Corn + herring	Corn + hemp
Jan				0	1		
Feb	2	3		5	4	6	
Mar	6	5	3	14		1	
Apr		1		1		1	
May	4		4	8			1
Jun	8	1	12	21	2		1
Jly	12	1	7	20	2		1
Aug	11	3	3	17			1
Sep	1		1	2			
Oct	2			2	1		
Nov	1		1	2			
Dec		1		1		1	
TOTALS	47	15	31	93	10	9	4

These 93 trips are those with no goods declared. None combine any measures of nil / ballast / stones. The 93 trips represent 40% of all 231 trips (with the other 60% carrying corn).

22 trips combining corn with ballast/stones, herrings or hemp are **included** in the corn tables elsewhere. In this Table, 1 trip is shown in **both** the corn+ballast and the corn+herring columns as all 3 items were carried.

TABLE 5 TYPE OF SHIPMENT PER PORT

Type	Area 1 B / C / W	Area 2 Wells	Area 3 Cromer (+)	Area 4 Burnham (+)	Area 5 Thornham (+)	Totals No.	Totals %
Nil	22	5	8	8	4	47	20.4
Ballast	5	10				15	6.5
Stones	5	2	22	1	1	31	13.4
N+B+S	32	17	30	9	5	93	40.3
Corn	19	52		35	32	138	59.7
TOTALS	51	69	30	44	37	231	100.0
Corn+ Ballast	3	4			3	10	
Corn + Herrings	5	4				9	
Corn + Hemp					4	4	

The 'Corn +' totals (23) are included in the corn totals (138), but there are only 22 trips as 1 ship carried corn + ballast + herrings and appears twice (once in each relevant row).

Of the 138 ships with corn, 10 also carried some ballast and just a few carried small quantities of herrings or hemp. The herrings were transported in barrels (only 1 recorded) or in *caedes*, being half-sized barrels (40 recorded). Each cade may have contained 600 fish (5 'long hundreds' of 120). The hemp totalled only 60 stone.

A very few goods do not appear in the Table. Apart from the grindstones already mentioned, 1½ weys of salt were shipped out of Newcastle in the *Nicholas* of Burnham, and 1 hogshead of wine and 4 chaldrons of malt were loaded in two Thornham ships. Six ships, none from the Glaven, took a total of 33 chaldrons of maslin (a corn mixture) to Newcastle, and the *Katherine* of Thornham took 8 chaldrons of beans. Is it surprising that the range of goods taken into Newcastle should be so narrow – no cloth, for instance?

Shipments by Area

Table 5 shows that of the five areas of north Norfolk defined for this article, Cromer is the most distinctive. None of its ships took corn; some took 'nothing' while the remainder (two-thirds of the total) took 'stones'. These stones were presumably collected from the beach, which suggests that the Cromer ships probably did operate from Cromer and did not need to use Blakeney Haven. In later centuries colliers are known to have been beached at high tide on some parts of the Norfolk coast and unloaded directly into carts which came down to the beaches through 'cart gaps'. The use of stones as ballast, as well as for buildings, over several centuries may well have had a material effect on the amount of shingle surviving in the Cromer/Sheringham area, and hence on its role as a defence against erosion. Many ships from other ports also took stones, so it would be odd if there really is no trace of these flints anywhere in Newcastle.

From three of the other areas (Thornham, Brancaster and Wells) at least three-quarters of all ships took corn up to Newcastle. For the Haven, however, the proportion was little more than one third, for a large number carried 'nothing'. The Glaven ports are therefore different to the other ports of north Norfolk but the evidence is tantalising – why so little corn and what was taking its place?

Table 6 shows the quantities of corn and coal carried by the ships of the five areas. This further reduces the significance of Blakeney Haven as a corn exporter, for although its ships made up 14% of those from north Norfolk which took corn, they took only 6% of the actual produce. No evidence here of any great export of corn from the Glaven!

Coal quantities are much as expected, as every ship took coal out. However, while The Haven ports, Wells and Cromer took average quantities of 16-17 chaldrons, the Thornham ships took an average of 24 chaldrons and Burnham only 12.

The Ships

Approximately 53 ships made the 231 trips to Newcastle. It is impossible to be precise because so many ships had the same name: at least 9 ships named *Mary* came from the north Norfolk ports. Table 7 (modernised spellings) shows that the Glaven ports had about 17 ships making the total of 51 trips to Newcastle. This total gives the Haven a prominence that has not been evident in previous tables: Wells had 13 ships making 69 trips, and Burnham only 6 making 44 trips.

TABLE 6 SHIPMENTS PER AREA

Shipment	Area 1 B / C / W	Area 2 Wells	Area 3 Cromer +	Area 4 Burnham +	Area 5 Thornham +	Totals
Wheat	9.5	51.0	0	14.0	47.5	122.0
Barley	61.5	507.0	0	269.5	623.0	1461.0
Malt	38.0	110.5	0	45.5	75.0	269.0
Rye	7.0	24.0	0	38.0	48.5	117.5
CORN	116.0	692.5	0	367.0	794.0	1969.5
%	5.9	35.2	0	18.6	40.3	100.0
COAL	872.5	1123.0	511.0	513.0	883.0	3902.5
%	22.4	28.8	13.1	13.1	22.6	100.0
Herring (cade/barrel)	33 c	7 c 1 b				40 c 1 b
Hemp (stone)					60	60

Note that the wheat total of 122 is 4.5 smaller than the 126.5 in Table 3 (a cross-checking failure).

TABLE 7 SHIPS PER PORT

Area	Ship	Port	Trips	Coal range	Notes
1	Anthony	Blakeney	1	22	2 trips made 1 month apart
		Wiveton	1	29	
	Davy	Cley	1	26	
	George I	Cley	4	14 – 19	
	George II	Wiveton	2	25 – 26	
	God's Grace	Cley	1	10	
	Gregory	Cley	1	16	
	Margaret	Cley	2	16	
	Mary I	Blakeney	2	12	
	Mary II	Cley	6	12 – 18	These 2 leave Newcastle on the same day
	Mary III	Wiveton	3	20 – 23	
	Maudlen	Blakeney	1	23	
	Nicholas I	Blakeney	5	14 – 16	No good evidence for fewer than 3 ships
	Nicholas II	Cley	1	13	
	Nicholas III	Wiveton	1	23	
	Saviour	Cley	3	14	
	Trinity	Blakeney	10	15 – 17	Wiveton trips fit the Blakeney pattern
		Wiveton	2	16	
	Valentine	Blakeney	4	20	
TOT	About 17		51		
2	Ann	Wells	7	10 - 18	
	Anthony		1	10	
	Blithe		3	20	
	Christopher		3	16 – 17	
	George		1	14	
	James		5	16 – 22	
	John		5	16 – 18	
	Margaret I		2	24	
	Margaret II		9	12 – 14	
	Mary		8	14 – 18	
	Michael		8	14 – 25	
	Nicholas		10	20	
	Thomas		7	14 – 15	
TOT	About 13		69		

Area	Ship	Port	Trips	Coal range	Notes
3	Blithe I	Mundesley	2	10	
	Blithe II	Cromer	1	20	
	Christopher	Cromer	1	23	
	James I	Beeston	2	16	
	James II	Cromer	8	15 – 17	
	John	Cromer	4	20	
	Mary I	Cromer	3	14	
	Mary II	Cromer	7	17	
	Mary III	Cromer	1	24	
	Trinity	Cromer	1	22	
TOT	About 10		30		
4	Christopher I	Brancaster	2	13	
		Burnham	3	13	
	Christopher II	Holkham	8	15 - 16	
	Nicholas I	Burnham	12	6 – 8	
	Nicholas II	Brancaster	2	10	
	Trinity I	Burnham	5	10 – 12	2 ships avoids trips 7 days apart
	Trinity II	Burnham	12	12 – 14	
TOT	About 6		44		
5	Christopher	Titchwell	4	13	
	George	Holme	1	13	
	John	Thornham	3	30	
	Katherine	Thornham	10	28 – 38	
	Margaret	Holme	1	10	
	Mary I	Holme	1	18	Same ship
		Hunstanton	1	18	
	Mary II	Thornham	16	24	
TOT	About 7		37		
Tots	About 53		231		

Of the 17 ships from the Haven, 4 were from Blakeney, 8 from Cley and 3 from Wiveton, with 2 'shared'. In what sense did these ships 'belong' to each place? It is usually assumed that a ship's home port is the place where the owner lived, but perhaps this should not be taken too literally. Was there never a ship owner living in Langham or Morston, or even Holt? And what about those cases in which ownership was shared? This is not uncommon to judge from sixteenth-century wills for the Glaven villages. On occasions, therefore, a ship's home port might well have been the one from which it usually operated, regardless of the residence of the owner(s).

Throughout the later 1500s there seem to have been in the Haven about 30-35 ships capable of undertaking trading ventures and major fishing expeditions.⁶ It is likely, therefore, that the 17 ships which called at Newcastle represented about half the local 'fleet'. What were the others doing that they did not need to take part in the coal trade?

The Table shows that there was often some variation in the quantity of coal taken by individual ships. Nevertheless, the range surely gives an indication of the size of the vessels involved. Thornham had 2 of the biggest ships, accounting for its high average coal loading (24 chaldrons on average), while Burnham had 2 of the smallest (12 chaldrons on average). The maximum recorded load is for the *Katherine* of Thornham (38 chaldrons) followed by the *John* of Thornham (30) and the *Anthony* of Blakeney/Wiveton (29). Can these loadings be used to deduce the actual size of individual ships?

The best guide to such information would be near-contemporary customs records listing ship tonnage as well as the amount of coal carried. Although the Blakeney port books start in 1565, those from the period 1587-90 provide the most useful record and have already been published.⁷ In these port books the relationship between the quantity of coal in chaldrons and the size of the ship in tons is remarkably consistent. In 36 trips bringing coal into the Haven, the full range was from 50% (ie 14 chaldrons in the ship *William* of 28 tons) to 75% (15 chaldrons in the *Mary Robert* of Salthouse, 20 tons). However, no less than 29 fell in the range 60-65%, with 13 at 60%, and the average figure is 61%. This could be refined a little by taking the highest chaldron figure from each ship (where 2 or more trips were made) but this only increases the average to 63%.

This chaldron/tonnage relationship is consistent enough to suggest that it could be used to estimate ship tonnage when only the weight of the coal is known - provided, of course, that the size of the chaldron remained unchanged. But the Newcastle chaldron did change over the years and so fewer chaldrons made up a given weight of coal in 1587-90 than in 1508-11. If the chaldron rose steadily (rather than in steps) from 18 cwt in c.1420 to 53 cwt in c.1700, then it would have been 29 cwt in c.1510 and 39 cwt in c.1590. This is a significant difference: 580 cwt of coal, for example, would have measured 20 chaldrons in 1510 and only 15 chaldrons in 1590.

The 60% ratio for 1590 means that a ship of 25 tons could be expected to carry 15 chaldrons of coal. The same ship in 1510 would carry the same weight in the form of 20 chaldrons - a ratio of 80%. Applying this percentage to the chaldron range in Table 7 suggests that the ships carrying coal out of Newcastle were relatively small. The largest ship, *Katherine* of Thornham, would have approached 50 tons, while the next largest (*John* of Thornham and *Anthony* of Blakeney/Wiveton) would have been 35-40 tons. Of the remainder most (42) would have fallen into the range 15-30 tons, and the Glaven ships accord with this general pattern.

TABLE 8 TRIPS PER SHIP

Ship	Port	Area	Trips	First date	Last date
Mary II	Thorn	5	16	08.07.20	11.05.22
Nicholas I	Burn	4	12	08.08.09	11.06.28
Trinity II	Burn	4	12	09.04.26	11.06.27
Trinity	Blak/Wive	1	12	08.08.11	11.06.13
Nicholas	Wells	2	10	08.10.23	11.03.28
Katherine	Thorn	5	10	08.07.22	11.06.25
Margaret II	Wive	1	9	09.07.23	11.06.23
Mary	Wells	2	8	08.08.07	11.04.12
Michael	Wells	2	8	08.12.12	11.03.28
James II	Cromer	3	8	08.07.10	10.08.09
Christopher II	Holk	4	8	09.05.12	11.06.17
Mary II	Cromer	3	7	09.05.13	11.06.17
Ann	Wells	2	7	08.11.25	11.06.03
Thomas	Wells	2	7	08.12.12	11.03.28
Mary II	Cley	1	6	09.02.07	09.08.17
Nicholas I	Blak	1	5	10.05.09	11.06.16
James	Wells	2	5	09.02.08	11.06.12
John	Wells	2	5	09.12.18	11.04.03
Trinity I	Burn	4	5	08.08.16	10.10.31
Christopher I	Branc/Burn	4	5	10.03.19	11.07.23
Valentine	Blak	1	4	10.02.16	11.03.14
George I	Cley	1	4	09.06.19	11.06.17
John	Cromer	3	4	08.07.18	10.06.18
Christopher	Titch	5	4	08.07.20	10.01.27
Saviour	Cley	1	3	09.06.22	09.08.16
Mary III	Wive	1	3	09.02.07	10.01.26
Blithe	Wells	2	3	08.07.24	09.08.07
Christopher	Wells	2	3	08.08.08	09.07.28
Mary I	Cromer	3	3	08.07.03	10.07.23
John	Thorn	5	3	10.07.11	11.02.28
Mary I	Blak	1	2	08.08.12	11.06.18
Margaret	Cley	1	2	10.06.08	11.03.28
George II	Wive	1	2	09.02.07	11.02.18
Margaret I	Wells	2	2	08.07.08	09.06.16
Anthony	Blak/Wive	1	2	11.02.20	11.03.21
James I	Beeston	3	2	09.06.15	09.07.10
Blithe I	Mund	3	2	10.05.09	10.07.23
Nicholas II	Branc	4	2	08.07.25	08.10.13
Mary I	Holme/Huns	5	2	11.05.08	11.06.28
Davy	Cley	1	1	11.03.28	
God's Grace	Cley	1	1	08.09.30	
Gregory	Cley	1	1	09.06.16	
Maudlen	Blak	1	1	08.11.11	
Nicholas II	Cley	1	1	09.08.23	
Nicholas III	Wive	1	1	11.04.01	
Anthony	Wells	2	1	10.08.27	
George	Wells	2	1	10.03.13	
Blithe II	Cromer	3	1	10.06.18	
Christopher	Cromer	3	1	10.06.18	
Mary III	Cromer	3	1	11.06.18	
Trinity	Cromer	3	1	09.08.06	
George	Holme	5	1	11.05.09	
Margaret	Holme	5	1	08.07.06	

Is there any independent evidence to support the suggested size of these 'colliers'? As it happens, a shipping list of 1565 not only distinguishes between two groups of ships but also gives their tonnages.⁸ The first group comprises 'ships for Iceland' and includes 13 from the Glaven, all within the range of 50 – 100 tons. The second group (modernised spelling) is headed 'occupied in herring fare, carrying of corn northwards and receiving of coals'. In this list are 27 ships from the Haven spread fairly evenly through the range 10 – 50 tons (with 1 other of only 6 tons). Half of them fall into the 15-30 range suggested for the coal ships of c.1510. This 1565 listing therefore appears to be consistent with the evidence of the Newcastle accounts: only the smaller sea-going ships came for coal, the larger ones capable of making the trip to Iceland or the Baltic concentrated on ventures further afield.

The total of c.17 Haven ships in the Newcastle accounts is rather smaller than the 27 listed for 1565 but there is no need to suppose that every ship of less than 50 tons necessarily went for coal, so the full complement of Haven ships under 50 tons would have been more than 17. For comparison, in 1565 the 40 ships belonging to the Haven was a much larger total than the 14 in Wells and the 2 (small) ships in Burnham - and none were listed for Thornham, Sheringham or Cromer.

Table 8 lists all the north Norfolk ships in order of the frequency of their visits to Newcastle. Over half the ships made only 1, 2 or 3 trips, ie an average of no more than 1 each year. The voyages made by the others were usually well spread over the 3 years, although there are exceptions, such as the *Mary* of Cley which made 6 trips between February and August 1509. Why no more? Perhaps the ship was wrecked: the chances are that all 53 ships did not survive the account period without mishap. In practice, quite a number of visits were made about a month apart, as in the case of the 2 ships which made just 2 trips: the *Anthony* (trips 29 days apart) and the *James* (25 days). The *Saviour* of Cley made 3 visits within 55 days, but strictly speaking these are 3 *departures* from Newcastle, so only 4 passages were made between the 2 dates given in the Table.

The Masters

The 51 trips to Newcastle made by the ships of Blakeney Haven were undertaken by 21 different masters (Table 9). The accounts give no information about these men but it is likely that some of them owned the ship in which they sailed or else belonged to the family which did. The majority of surnames feature in the later maritime records of the sixteenth century, and many of the families became prominent in their communities, but no attempt has been made to put the masters into their genealogical context.

It is worth noting that none of these men were masters of ships in the fleet which went to Iceland in 1533.⁹ Of the 14 ships which returned to the Haven in that year, all were over 50 tons except for 3 which were said to be of 36 tons only:

<i>Anthony</i>	John Day	(owner)	William Carpenter	(master)
<i>George</i>	John King	(owner)	Richard Smith	(master)
<i>Valentine</i>	Widow Holting	(owner)	John Gilbert	(master)

Is John Day's *Anthony* the ship in which Andrew Michelson loaded 29 chaldrons of coal at Newcastle in 1511? It is possible for, according to the formula suggested above, the *Anthony* which left Newcastle would have been of 36 tons. Similarly, the *George* of Wiveton was also one of the larger ships (32-33 tons) which carried coal. On the other hand, the *Valentine* which took 20 chaldrons of coal on 4 occasions was of only about 25

TABLE 9 MASTERS OF BLAKENEY HAVEN SHIPS

First name	Surname	Ship	Port	No. trips	Date of Last visit
John	Acres	Mary	Cley	4	09.07.17
		Anthony	Blakeney (Wiveton)	1	11.03.21
John	Adamson	Nicholas	Blakeney	1	11.06.16
Nicholas	Angell	Mary	Wiveton	2	09.03.13
		Trinity	Wiveton (Blakeney)	2	11.04.02
Alan	Bertis	Mary	Blakeney	1	11.06.18
Richard	Chastney	Gregory	Cley	1	09.06.16
		Margaret	Cley	1	10.06.08
William	Chatter	God's Grace	Cley	1	08.09.30
Thomas	Clark	Mary	Blakeney	1	08.08.12
		Maudlen	Blakeney	1	08.11.11
Thomas	Colting	George	Cley	1	11.06.17
John	Davison	Mary	Cley	2	09.03.11
Nicholas	Flawes	Nicholas	Wiveton	1	11.04.01
James	Gray	Valentine	Blakeney	4	11.03.14
John	Greenway	Mary	Wiveton	1	10.01.26
John	Golding	George	Cley	1	09.08.14
Sanders	Kendall	George	Wiveton	1	09.02.07
Richard	Marley	Nicholas	Cley	1	09.08.23
John	Meek	Saviour	Cley	3	09.08.16
Andrew	Michelson	Anthony	Wiveton (Blakeney)	1	11.02.20
		Margaret	Cley	1	11.03.28
John	Smith	George	Cley	2	09.07.09
		Nicholas	Blakeney	4	10.08.08
Thomas	Smith	Trinity	Blakeney (Wiveton)	10	11.06.13
John	Stamp	George	Wiveton	1	11.02.18
William	Twys	Davy	Cley	1	11.03.28
	21 masters		(17 ships)	51	

In Tables 8 and 9 the structure of the date is: Year Month Day.

tons. The smaller *George* of Cley (24 tons according to the formula) had as master in 1509 a John Smith who may well have been related to Richard Smith, master of John King's *George* in 1533.

Comment

This article is essentially statistical in content, but the listing of named ship masters is a reminder that the tables relate to particular people at a particular time in the nation's history. These men had been born in the 1400s and, unless any master was still a teenager in 1511, all had been born before Columbus reached America. What did they think of this discovery? They could not know that Europe's 'Age of Discovery' had begun. And they probably didn't appreciate as they toiled up and down to Newcastle that the 'Renaissance' was at its height: Leonardo had just painted the Mona Lisa and Michelangelo was painting the Sistine Chapel. Did it make any difference to them when Henry VIII came to the throne in April 1509? They could not have known that before long this would lead to the destruction of Blakeney Friary.

Acknowledgement

With thanks to Chris Barringer who first told me about the Newcastle accounts.

NOTES

- 1 C.M.Fraser (Ed.), *The Accounts of the Chamberlains of Newcastle Upon Tyne 1508-1511*, The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1987.
- 2 David Butcher, *The Ocean's Gift: Fishing in Lowestoft during the Pre-Industrial Era, 1550-1750*, Centre of East Anglian Studies, UEA, 1995. Page 45.
- 3 N.J.Williams, *The Maritime Trade of the East Anglian Ports 1550-1590*, OUP, 1988. Page 89.
- 4 Butcher, 1995. Page 50.
- 5 R.D.Connor, *The Weights and Measures of England*, Science Museum, 1987. Pages 180-2.
- 6 John Wright, 'A Sixteenth-century Victualling List', in *East Anglian Studies: Essays presented to J.C.Barringer*, Norwich, 1995. Page 298.
- 7 B.Cozens-Hardy, 'The Maritime Trade of the Port of Blakeney, which included Cley and Wiveton, 1587 to 1590', in *Norfolk Record Society Vol VIII*, 1936.
- 8 *A Survey of the Ports, Creeks and Landing Places in Norfolk 1565*, Transcript in Norfolk Record Office by the Feltwell Society.
- 9 Letters and Papers of Henry VIII (Foreign and Domestic) for 1533, Vol VI (1380).

John Wright is a retired town planner who has been studying the history of the Blakeney area for the past 20 years.