THE PORTBOOKS PROGRAMME

Information for volunteers

An introduction to the project and the source
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The Exchequer Port Books are a unique and invaluable source for studying the coastal trade of England and Wales from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries They record in detail the movements of boats which passed on coastal voyages between domestic ports and havens, naming the operators and boats involved in the trade and describing the cargoes carried Nationally, well over 3 million individual voyages were recorded containing details of different commodities, vessels and merchants for the 123 Customs ports and creeks The Port Books therefore rank as perhaps the most informative source in existence, probably anywhere in the world, for studying internal trade in the pre-industrial period

The potential of such records to shed light on many historical themes is vast, but the analysis of such material to provide sound and systematic historical conclusions would be prohibitively time-consuming if traditional manual methods were used It is for this reason that the use of the coastal Port Books by historians has been limited in the past The comprehensive and faithful computerisation of the records currently being undertaken by the Portbooks Programme will bring about a revolution in their application to historical problems

The Portbooks Programme is based at the University of Wolverhampton and initially began with research into the Gloucester Port Books in 1982 It was recognised that the Port Books for Gloucester were of special interest in that they recorded voyages on the River Severn rather than just along the coast Full computerisation of the records was begun in 1985 with the aim of providing as comprehensive a transcription as possible for the whole period of their existence To this extent, microfilm copies of all extant and reproducible coastal Books were procured from the Public Record Office by 1988 The purpose of this approach was to ensure that the database was capable of satisfying the needs of not only the researchers at the then Polytechnic but also future scholars, the nature of whose enquiries was largely unforeseeable Since 1988 the project has widened into a major programme funded by the *Economic Research Council* and the *Leverhulme Trust* with the aim of examining sample Port Books nationally and undertaking a variety of connected studies New databases have been established of the Port Books for the 24 legal ports and recognised creeks of the wider Bristol Channel, from Mounts' Bay (Penzance) in Cornwall to Milford in Pembrokeshire In addition, sample databases have been set up for the remaining Cornish ports, Exeter, Cardigan, Aberdovey, Chester and Liverpool These discrete databases are concentrating on the period around the end of the seventeenth century for which the records are most detailed and numerous

With the expansion of the Portbooks databases, information will soon be made available about the coastal trade of a significant part of south-west Britain, the inter-regional exchanges of western England and Wales, and the production and consumption of commodities as diverse as agricultural produce, textile manufactures, coal, iron, and imported luxury goods

The Programme aims to expand the techniques and methodology developed in the Gloucester Database for the setting up of a national standard for computerising Port Books Three other main projects are underway the preparation of a guide to the interpretation of coastal Port Books, the compilation of a *Dictionary of traded goods* which appear in the Port Books and other sources, and a substantial examination of the role of Bristol in the trade of the south west and Wales To date, the Gloucester database is complete, containing all 170 Books in their entirety and numbering over 37,500 separate voyages The data so stored describe perhaps 2 million discrete entities of information relating to the movement, organisation and operation of goods traded coastally The database is currently being downloaded onto a networked PC-run platform, and it is expected that a marketable version, using widely compatible SQL software will be available by 1993

An introduction to the documents

Port Books were instituted in 1565 to improve the collection of Customs duties and to assist in the general supervision of trade Overseas Port Books recorded boats trading between domestic and foreign ports, giving details of their movement and cargoes for the purpose of levying duties on imports and exports and the prevention of illegal trading In contrast,

coastal books were kept to check boats passing between the ports of England and Wales, thereby ensuring goods were not carried overseas under pretence of coastwise shipment Both classes of record are now kept by the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London, and number some 20,000 volumes Of these, probably 8,000 relate to the coastal trade

The Coastal Port Books were kept by Customs officials at each of the headports and those lesser havens with sufficient trade to warrant separate records New Books were dispatched to the ports at regular intervals and were returned to the Exchequer to be checked against one another when completed By this means discrepancies and fraudulent practice could be isolated by the Exchequer clerks and appropriate measures taken In most cases the books recorded inward and outward coastal traffic at a particular port over a defined period From 1685 books were issued for the six month period before and after Christmas each year, although this varied between ports and over time

The method by which the Coastal Port Books were compiled was as follows As a vessel was loaded, its cargo was listed by Customs officials and entered into the 'outwards' section of the Book In addition, the merchant or whosoever stood surety for the cargo entered into a bond or handed over other security to guarantee that the cargo would be taken to its professed destination and not exported The master of the vessel was then issued with a *coquet* which documented the transaction On arrival at its destination, the vessel would submit to the inspection of Customs officials there who checked the cargo against the coquet and entered a full description in the 'inwards' section of their own Coastal Port Book The officers would then endorse the coquet or make out a *certificate* to affirm that the cargo had been duly landed On return to the port of lading, this would be submitted as proof that the cargo had been legally transported and not carried abroad, at which the bond could be retrieved Failure to return a certificate without good reason rendered the bond forfeit An identical procedure operated in reverse if, as in most cases, the vessel collected a return cargo at its destination

If the cargo was of sufficiently low value or the risk of overseas export was marginal, additional systems of customs document, other than the coquet, were used On such occasions commodities were permitted to move under *transire*, *letpass*, *sufferance* or *warrant* The record of such transactions was sporadic and varied considerably between ports and over time In some Port Books notification is virtually absent, whilst other havens, particularly those lesser centres where the carriage of largely non-dutiable goods predominated, the record is generally full In addition, it was sometimes the case that 'certificates' attesting to the payment of duty were given for imported overseas items prior to being shipped coastwise

In most Port Books inwards and outwards traffic is recorded However, for certain ports, notably Bristol and Swansea and Neath, only outwards voyages are consistently noted, whilst in others, Exeter, for example, internal traffic remains the sole record We are at present uncertain why this practice was adopted, but in the case of Bristol it may have been the result of the sheer size and nature of the inwards trade The trade of such ports can thus only be reconstructed by studying the relevant books for all the principal trading partners

The contents of the books

A typical entry in the Port Books was as follows

Bristol	Prosperity of Bewdley Jno Beale Ind Tho Steward Mr 20 tons Iron & Ironware 20 Tons Pott Clay 2000 Brick 20 pa & trusses Manchr goods & thread 4 pa & trusses Kiddmr Stuff 2 pa 1 hhd wt & 10 Cwt tand
Cert	leather 1 ton red lead 60 Reams paper 2 boxes Candles 6 Doz bags 10 Cwt timber & timbr Stuff 5 Cwt Houshold goods & Wearing Apparll Coqt Dat 23d Do--

The information given falls into these broad categories

The date Most regularly that on which the coquet was issued In some Port Books other dates are given, relating to the date of entry (or unloading) and the certification or return of the endorsed coquet

The name of the boat Variation in the title of ships was common For example, inversion of composite names often occurred the Aaron & John may well be the same as the John & Aaron, and the Samuel & Sarah as the Sarah

The Port e g the Crown of *Bridgwater* This probably relates to the habitual trading place or 'home port' of the vessel mentioned Very occasionally the port refers to the haven where the boat was last laden However, detailed research has confirmed that the link between the port and the residence of the merchant, which has been emphasised previously, is at best tenuous and often very misleading

The master and merchant In many instances the master of the vessel acted as the merchant, especially in the short

haul mineral trade between the South Wales coal ports and the west of England The appearance of separate merchants may indicate the chartering of a vessel for a particular voyage, or who owned the vessel In general it seems that the master was in charge of the ship, while the merchant was responsible for securing the bond

Port of origin (from) and Destination (to) This is fairly self-explanatory In a few rare occasions more than one port is mentioned for a particular voyage

Cargo The items of cargo are described and quantified but not valued Additional information regarding the provenance of certain commodities may also be given It is not clear to what extent ALL goods had to be recorded or only those subject to duty, and it seems that this varied during the period for which the books survive There are certainly some consistent omissions, like lime, sand and manure, for example Other goods such as stone, fish and livestock which habitually passed by transire and letpass, were only sporadically recorded For the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, however, the records seem to be very thorough A wide variety of units of measurement are used, and several thousand different commodities are named

Marginal notes In order to check on the completion of the transaction, Customs officials listed in the margins of the Port Book information such as whether the coquet was endorsed, a certificate granted, received or 'returned' to the port of issue, or indeed whether the voyage was incomplete and thus 'exchequered' (sent for scrutiny to the Remembrancer clerks), or was subject to an Affidavit stating the precise nature of the shipment

It is often difficult to trace the round journeys of one specific boat, but this is not necessarily due to inadequate recording Boats sailing in ballast were not recorded, a given boat did not necessarily keep precisely the same name from journey to journey and it may have had different masters and merchants and be assigned to a different place

The System of Transcription

A selection of coastal Port Books for all the ports of England and Wales for which records survive is gradually being transcribed onto the University mainframe computer In addition to staff and students at the University, many volunteers, some of whom have worked extensively on the Gloucester series, transcribe information from the documents to computer data forms The job of completing the research would simply be impossible without such generous assistance

Volunteers with a particular interest in the trade of a port or group of ports are supplied with copies of Port Books taken from microfilms held by the Programme The information is transcribed onto forms provided, each entry in the Books having a separate form an example is given at the back of these notes

Rules for transcription

A few general points need to be born in mind when transcribing Firstly, information of the same type *must always be entered in the correct place* if it is to be found again For example, when the computer searches for information such as the voyages of a particular merchant, it does so by looking for the string of letters in his name in all the merchant surname and Christian name boxes or *fields* If his name has accidentally been placed in the master's name fields or elsewhere it cannot be retrieved

The consistency of **spelling** is also important If spellings were entered into the database which were inconsistent with the lists kept of all words and names used, the information could not be found again A search of the commodity field for 'WOOLLEN CLOTH' for instance, would not find an entry which had been written wrongly 'WOOLEN CLOTH' To avoid this danger, we have installed a mechanism which automatically checks every word typed in against the permitted vocabulary If a word is misspelled it is rejected and the typists return the form for checking This is very time-consuming if a lot of misspellings have to be corrected.

It is important that writing should be clear (always in block capitals) and in pencil so corrections can be made Spaces between the words should be readily apparent to the typists 'PORTWINE', for example, would effectively be an incorrect spelling of 'PORT WINE' You should also take care to distinguish between figures which the typists can misread, such as the letter 'O' and the number nought (done conventionally by diagonally crossing the number), 1 and I, 2 and Z, 5 and S and 7 and Y

If you are using **abbreviations**, as in the case of Ports, Christian names and Boats, you should be sure that they are exactly right It is vital that an approved code should be used and that similar codes for different words should not be confused The code lists need to be consulted regularly if mistakes are not to be made in this way they are the easiest to make and most difficult to remedy Some mistakes are unavoidable, and some can be corrected later, but accuracy, consistency and clarity are important virtues when working with computers

Occasionally, the original entry is illegible, and the accurate information cannot be put in its field In these

cases, put three crosses 'XXX' (N B there must be three per field) This can be searched for at a later date and sometimes corrected from the originals at the Public Record Office If no information is given at all to put in a particular field, for example if a space is left blank in the document or if a class of information such as the home port of a boat is not given, you should mark this by putting '- - -' (again, three dashes must be used)

If you have any serious problems, make a note on a separate list of points to be checked

The Fields and their Contents

The following descriptions of the field contents on the transcription form should tell you everything you might need to know about how to tackle particular problems Since these descriptions tend to be rather long-winded, a summary is given at the end, which you can detach and keep by you

N B These notes are designed to account for all eventualities In the great majority of instances, transcription will be quite straightforward once you have become accustomed to the basic principles

PRO Ref

It is vitally important for sorting that each entry should have a unique reference number This is based on the catalogues at the Public Record Office within class E190 The first six figures, e g 1256/06, identify the actual volume The next two, after the second slash, identify the individual folio (i e the leaf, front and back, or two pages as we would reckon them in a modern book), and the last two figures the entry on the folio The volume number is to be found clearly written on the front cover of the Book, the folio number has been written at the bottom of each sheet on your copy, and the entry numbers have been written in the left-hand margin **Remember that the computer needs telling there is a nought in a box, do not just leave a blank** For example, the reference to the sixteenth voyage on folio eight of volume 937/6 would be written 0937/06/08/16 In such cases the 0 should be crossed

I/O or Inward/outward

This gives information about whether the voyage is coming into or going out from the port. In the original, this is not stated for each individual entry, but it is clear from the section of the book in which the entry appears Enter I, not 1, for Inward and O for Outward You must read the headings at the fronts of each section of the books to check which they refer to

Coquet Date

Before 1752 dates were usually expressed in terms of years beginning on 25 March (the Julian Calendar) not 1 January as we express them now You therefore need to be careful in reading dates Old-style dates need to be converted to modern-style For dates from 1 January to 25 March add one year, so 17 January 1655 becomes 17/01/1656 Note that the scribes sometimes use '8ber' (October), '9ber' (November), and '10ber' or even 'X'ber' (December) Use modern conventions - 08 means August, and 10 means October; translate 'uity' as 30

If a second date is given for a particular entry, make sure that the one that goes in this box is that of the original coquet, and not a later date The coquet date can be recognised either by the fact that it is called such in the document (e 'Coqt dated') or failing that because it is always the earliest of any dates given for an entry (with a few minor exceptions relating to parts of the cargo) In outward journeys, the coquet date is assumed to be the date when the ship left port If a transire or letpass is used instead of a coquet, the date should be entered in the Coquet Date field in exactly the same way If this is undated, for instance if the record says just 'per transire', put dashes in the date field '- - / - - / - - - - ' Second or third dates relating to an entry are noted separately, as described below

Boat

There are two ways in which boat names may be entered on the forms according to your own preference These are by writing the name in full or by using a standard code If you write the boat name in full, you must modernise the spelling of names in accordance with the list provided Each character should be written in a separate box of the boat field If the boat has two names, like 'Thomas and Benjamin' (often abbreviated to 'Thos & Benj' in the books), write them with spaces and a plus sign between them THOMAS + BENJAMIN

The alternative method of entering boat names is to use standard abbreviations, which will save you and the typists time if you feel you can easily remember them You may wish to use the abbreviations for names which appear frequently and the full version for those which are less familiar The abbreviations consist of standard three or five letter codes given in the enclosed list. The general assumption to help you remember the codes is to use the initial letter plus the next two consonants For example, the code for the 'Peter' is PTR, and the 'Prosperity', PRS There are however a few important variants to avoid duplication For example, Exchange becomes EXH to prevent confusion with Excellent EXC Delight is abbreviated as DLH to distinguish it from Diligence, DLG

In the case of compound names, 'Thomas and James' for example, adopt the above procedure for the first name

(i e the three letter code in the ordinary way), then use the initial letter plus the following consonant of the given second name Hence, Royal Oak becomes RYLOK, Samuel and Sarah, SMLSR, for triple names treat the first word normally then use the initials, e g New Royal Oak, NEWRO Again some variants have to be used to avoid duplication Thus John and Mary remains JHNMR, but John and Margaret becomes JHNMG The coding is nearly self-consistent and easy to use with a little practice so that the code lists seem unnecessary That is the time when a wrong coding creeps in so easily, we have in the past confused Charles (CHA) and Christopher (CHR) for instance

If you have a new name please write it in full, with modernised spelling For example, if you were to come across the 'Owner's Happey Dilight' you should write OWNERS HAPPY DELIGHT

Port

Ports and towns are always written in abbreviated forms Codes are three letters only for towns, but are allocated by the same method as boat names, above, i e the first letter and the next two consonants of the modern spelling, unless this causes duplication Thus Droitwich is DRT, but Dartmouth is DRM Ports beginning with the letter 'B', however, cause some confusion Bridgwater is coded as BRW, Bridgnorth as BRI, Brosely as BRO, Broad Oak as BRD, Bristol as BRS and Brighton as BRG A full list of codes is provided If you find a new port, leave the field blank and write the full version next to the allotted space on the form Put '---' if the port of origin is not given and 'XXX', of course, if it is illegible

Merchant's Christian Name

The merchant's name may appear as the first or second name in the Port Book but is generally recognised by the suffix 'Mer', 'Merch', 'Mercht', 'Mt' (etc) or 'Ind' (for indenturer) Christian names are always abbreviated to three letter codes on the same principle to that of Boats and Ports Thus, George is GRG, William, WLL and Nicholas, NCH Codes are provided Only the codes may be used, but there are very few names and they should be easy to remember If you find a new name, leave the field blank and write the name in brackets next to it.

Merchant's Surname

This should be spelled exactly as given in the original Resist the temptation to standardise spelling This can be done for sorting purposes by the computer without altering the original If the merchant is denoted 'sen' or 'jun' leave a single square and put 'S' or 'J' respectively in the next square, e g 'OAKES J' If the name is a company, for example 'Wallington and Co', write 'WALLINGTON +CO' Similarly, if the name is 'Pennington and Son', write 'PENNINGTON +SON' Note, there should be a space only after the name itself

In the very rare circumstances of two merchants being mentioned, the name of the second merchant should be put in the Miscellanea field and the Othname fields (see below) In a few books the merchant's occupation and town of residence are stated These are also noted in the Miscellanea field (see below)

Master's Christian Name

This should be entered in exactly the same way as the Merchant's Christian name, above This should be checked by making sure that the full name is followed by 'Master', 'Mast', 'Ma', 'M~', 'Mter', though in some cases the abbreviations used make this difficult. Where the master and merchant are the same do not enter 'himself', 'he', 'ditto' (or 'do'), 'idem' or 'eodem' as the port books often do but enter the full name again If you do not, a list of all the masters produced by the computer will either have a lot of blanks, as though many voyages had no merchant at all, or a very long entry under 'himself', which is not very informative¹ To note the fact that you have made this artificial alteration to the information, write 'HIM' in the Miscellanea field (see below) This enables separation of cases where it is possible the merchant and master were different people with the same name This is quite possible in merchant families who made continuous use of the same Christian name, such as the Beales of Bewdley who had a John in every generation

Master's Surname

See Merchant's Surname and Master's Christian Name above

From

This box should contain the name of the port of departure for a voyage The three letter town codes should be used (see Port above), Check for consistency between the O/I and the from and to boxes, as this is a common place for errors If you have entered 'O' correctly the journey must ALWAYS go from the port to which the Book belongs If 'I' is entered ships must ALWAYS be going to the named port.

To

This should be coded as in 'From', above The few entries in which more than one port is mentioned, should be written consecutively For example, a voyage to Cardiff, Newport and Bristol should be transcribed as 'CRDNWPBRS' Please do not put spaces or other dividing marks between the codes Some confusion can occur when the Books record 'ditto' (or 'do') as the port of destination This invariably refers to the last mentioned port Thus, for example the Crown of Bridgwater from Swansea to 'do' would be travelling to Bridgwater This is a notable feature of the south Wales coal ports, where entries are commonly in list form

Margin

This field should contain a one-letter code to indicate the type of note which often appears in the margins next to particular entries in the port books These seem to have served the purpose of recording that certifications had been received for outward traffic or that endorsed coquets or certificates had been dispatched for inward traffic The most frequently occurring marginal marks and the codes for them are given below If one does not appear, you should note this positively by writing a dash If two marks are given, use two squares

Certificate, Certified, Cert, Cer	'C'
Returned, Ret, R	'R'
Granted, Gra, Gr	'G'
Nothing written	'-'
Illegible	'X'

Two other marks occur on very rare occasions and are not transcribed literally Instead the following devices have been employed Please do not confuse these with the more frequent marks above.

'O' written in the margin	'Q'
'X'	'Z'

Often these marks are indicated by a note in the original document, usually at the top of the margin For instance, some Books have columns which state 'Dates of Certs Returned' or 'Dates of Certs Granted' with accompanying dates These should be written as 'CR' and 'CG' In addition, the margin may contain other precise information, such as 'Cert Ret from Bristoll' In such cases the appropriate letter or letters should be noted in the Margin field, and the fuller description in the Miscellanea field (see below)

On occasions it will be indicated in the margin that a journey was made not by coquet but per transire, warrant, sufferance, let pass or very rarely affidavit all subtly different types of custom arrangement These too should be noted by a code in this field, as shown below If two marginal marks appear next to a particular entry, use the second square of the field

Let Pass		'L'
Transire		'T'
Sufferance	'S'	
Warrant	'W'	
Bond	'B'	
Affidavit	'A'	

If you come across a new marginal mark, please write this in full next to the box

Other Date

In some Port Books dates appear in addition to the date of the coquet concerned These should be noted in the same style as the Coquet Date above and placed in the Otherdate field If an additional date should occur, this should be put in the Miscellanea field (see below), in the form, 'OTHDATE' and the date in modern style, for example, 'OTHDATE 07/09/1636'

Some confusion can occur between the various dates if care is not taken In general, a chronological order should be maintained with the earliest date put in the Coquet Date field and normally distinguished by the phrase 'per Coqt' (see above) The next date in sequence should go in the Otherdate field and the last, if it should occur, in the Miscellanea field

Please note that you may on very rare occasions encounter other dates attached to individual items of cargo These describe the payment of duties and subsidies and when the goods were first imported into the country As these refer to previous transactions, they should be entered in the appropriate cargo field (see below) and not in the date fields

Other Christian Name and Other Surname

In a number of books several individuals are named in addition to the merchant and master These names should be written in the OthChris and OtherSurname fields in exactly the same way as the merchants' and masters' names above If the names exceed in number the two extra spaces supplied on the form, write them in the space below and sketch the boxes around them to show where they belong

Miscellanea

This field contains various pieces of irregular information which cannot be incorporated in the other fields This information may consist of a quotation direct from the manuscript in some instances, for example, 'SUNK WITH ALL HANDS DROWNED', or with slight adaptation, for example in relating special information about the status in customs of a particular item of the cargo, 'EARTHENWARE BY LICENCE DATED 07/03/1720', where the original reference may have mentioned as part of the cargo description, 'two hogsheads earthenware by licence dated 7th March 1719'

Several classes of more standard information may be placed in this field in addition to those above Care should be taken always to ensure that these pieces of information are inserted when they apply to a particular voyage

1 The most regularly occurring and most important miscellaneous notes are those relating to wool coquets Since wool was usually given a separate coquet and entry in the Port Books from the rest of the cargo carried with it, we need to be able to associate the two references in the computer This is very useful, for instance, in counting voyages over a particular period, when one wishes to exclude what are effectively second coquets for the same voyage Where you find a cargo which is carrying wool, and nothing else, look to see if one of the nearby entries is for the same boat and master going on the same journey If this is the case you should make a note to this effect in the Miscellanea field of BOTH forms On the form relating to the wool coquet itself you should write the word 'REST' and the folio and entry number of the form on which the remainder of the cargo can be found, for example 'REST 09/12' On the form relating to the main cargo you should write the word 'WOOL' and the folio and entry number of the form on which the associated wool cargo is written, for example 'WOOL 09/10'

2 In a few cases, different types of cargo travelled under separate types of Customs document and were given more than one entry a coquet and a transire for example Like the wool coquet, this practice noted as two separate entries what in fact amounted to one voyage When this happens you should write on the form relating to the transire the word 'COQUET' in the Miscellanea field and the appropriate folio and entry number, for example 'COQUET 06/31' On the form for the coquet the word 'TRANSIRE' should be entered with the folio and entry number as above 'TRANSIRE 07/01' A similar system operates when a letpass, warrant or sufferance cargo is carried in duplication

3 Where the master and merchant are specifically stated as being the same person (see Master's Christian name above), enter 'HIM'

4 In some Port Books the burthen tonnage of the vessel is given for each voyage, this should be entered as for example 'BURTHEN 30 TON'

5 Where the merchant of the voyage has his occupation and/or place of residence stated, as in some of the early books, this should be entered 'MERCHANT = MERCER OF WORCESTER' for example, or 'MERCHANT = OF NEWPORT' If an occupation or place is given for someone other than the merchant, this should be noted in the same fashion 'MASTER = OF GLOUCESTER' or 'OTHER = PLUMBER OF DERBY'

Check

This field is to indicate when a record is completed without omissions due to illegibility and has been checked for accuracy by someone other than the person who transcribed it. This will eventually be filled with a 'C' to confirm it has been checked at the University, though this close checking is likely to be a slow process In normal circumstances, this field would be filled in only at the University, but if you work in a group which has transcribers checking one another's work, you may feel confident enough to fill in the 'C' yourself on those forms which have been checked

Cargo

The descriptions of cargoes given in the port books are exceptionally detailed and of immense historical value, but sometimes require a little juggling to be reorganised into a format standard enough for the computer to manipulate successfully Several examples of the type of rearrangement which is necessary are given on a sample form at the back of the notes The format consists of having one line on the form for each separable item of cargo, and four fields in each line containing, respectively, the quantity of the goods concerned, the measure or unit used to describe them, a description of the type of goods or commodity itself, and finally occasional subsidiary information, for example about the way the goods are packed, their origin, the fact that they are being returned unused, or details of the merchants involved in their initial importation This fourth field does not in fact appear as a column on the form, since it is needed only infrequently, it is instead notified by writing a semi-colon at the end of the third field to indicate to the typists that further information belongs in the next field No coding is used for the cargoes, but a few abbreviations are employed for ease of transcription Standard forms of units of measurement and commodities are provided Generally, there is very little alteration of the original record except in modernising spelling The contents of the cargo fields are as follows

Quantity

This field contains the numerals used to describe the commodity These should all be in the form of arabic

numerals, so modernise Roman numerals, and convert from word numbers Please do not use commas to separate thousands as the computer will not accept these For example, write 10000 not 10,000 Fractions should be expressed as decimals, by far the most usual of which is 1/2, which should be written as '0 5' Take care when decimalizing that you are converting a number and not a word for a container such as a half hogshead or a half case '6 half hogsheads' should be written as '6 I HALFHHD', while '6 and a half hogsheads' or '6 1/2 hogsheads' should be written as '6 5 I HHD' In most instances it is incorrect to translate words such as dozen and gross into numbers, since these, like the Baker's dozen, were not always equal to 12 or 144 Instead, '1 dozen chairs' should be written in the three cargo fields as '1 I DOZ I CHAIRS' Only convert such words to numbers if there is a second number or unit of measurement which makes the intended number more likely to have been standard For example, it is correct to convert 'three dozen gross of pipes' to '36 I GROSS I PIPES' More judgment needs to be used in interpreting the words 'hund' or 'C', which may refer to 100 or to 1 CWT, or to some other measure In these instances our rule is to follow the original and put 'HUND' or 'C' in the measure field For instance 1 Quarter Hund Deals would be transcribed as 0 25 I HUND I DEALS This is used throughout unless there is no doubt that a number was intended, as in the example '2C bundles iron bars', which is likely to mean '200 I BUNDLE I IRON BARS'

Measure

This field contains the name of the unit used to describe the cargo, such as ton, hogshead, barrel, tierce, runlet, wey, etc, and sometimes a word such as dozen or gross (see Quantity above) The forms of such measures or units is standardised to the singular form and most modern spelling, with a few abbreviations used for the most commonly occurring and longer words such as kilderkin 'KK', rundlet 'RT' and hogshead 'HHD' These are always compounded into one word if an adjective is present along with the noun, so that half hogshead, for example, becomes 'HALFHHD', and small cask becomes 'SMALLCASK' A list of all the standard forms is provided In a few instances the unit of measurement is more precisely described after the commodity, for example '3 chalders coals London measure' and '8 Packs qt 23 tods of wool at 28lb per tod' These should be written as -

'3 I CHLM I COALS'

and

'23 I TOD28 I WOOL, 8 PACK'

Care should be taken in interpreting words such as dozen and gross and also 'C' and 'hund' (see Measure above) Take care as well over the transcription of 'pounds' where it relates to money In other cases the word is transcribed as 'LB', but it is not clear in this instance whether weight or value is meant, and the word 'POUND' should be used at all times If there is no applicable unit of measure because the item of cargo is an object or many objects, use the word 'OF', e g '1 I OF I COPPER STILLS' or '2000 I OF I BRICKS'

Where several units and quantities are given for the same item, these should be separated out into more than one line of cargo '2 hogsheads 3 barrels spanish wine' should thus be written as '2 I HHD I SPANISH WINE', followed on the next line by '3 I BRL I SPANISH WINE' Occasionally it is necessary to put two units of measurement in the same line of cargo description, because we are not certain of the precise measurement of each In this case a '+' should be placed between them, so that 'ten packs and trusses of linen' reads '10 I PACK + TRUSS I LINEN'

If several measures are given of which a more standard equivalent is apparent, you should put this in the Quantity field and note the detail about other containers after the Commodity field, separated by a semi-colon (see below) This is invariably the case with tobacco, for example, 'eight hogsheads one cask tobacco quantity four thousand three hundred thirty eight pounds' should be transcribed '4338 I LB I TOBACCO, 8 HHD 1 CASK' Another common example of the need for this sort of reversal of the textual order is wool, which is described in its packages of various sorts, but also given an equivalent in tods of 28lb ('TOD28') and the three measures, hundredweight, quarters and pounds In this instance, a cargo of '11 Packs 12 Bags English Wooll qt 23 C 1 QR 7 LB' should be transcribed as -

23 I CWT I E WOOL, 11 PACK 12 BAG

1 I QR   I E WOOL, PART OF ABOVE

7 I LB   I E WOOL, PART OF ABOVE

The additional measure is always put after the Commodity and separated by a semi-colon Be especially careful with entries like this to make sure each unit of measurement is put on a different line and that there are spaces between the number and word of the additional measures Please ensure that the phrase 'PART OF ABOVE' is used to denote the same items of cargo

Commodity

The last field contains the name of the commodity being carried, along with subsidiary information about packing, and some more miscellaneous information Standard forms are used for the commodities which consist of modernised spelling but no other alteration, i e write 'led oare' or 'Lede or' as 'LEAD ORE' Never leave out words even if you think they are unnecessary, i e write STONE COAL and SEA COAL, distinguish COAL from COALS and

be very careful to differentiate between CHARCOAL and other similar entries like CHARD COAL which may mean coke (In fact coal is something of a minefield!) Never normalise WOOLLEN to WOOL Abbreviations are used only for the more common and longer terms Anything described as English, for instance, is preceded by the letter 'E' and a space, and British by 'B' and a space, Kidderminster Stuff is abbreviated to 'KID STUFF' and Manchester Ware to 'MAN WARE' The standard forms are listed the enclosed list

If more than one commodity is described in terms of a single measure, or measures, that cannot be definitely assigned to one commodity or another, both are written in the Commodity field separated by a '+' Thus 'six barrels of cider and perry' will become '6 I BRL I CIDER + PERRY' and 'three barrels two casks cider and perry' will become '3 I BRL I CIDER + PERRY' followed by '2 I CASK I CIDER + PERRY' on the next line

If equivalents are given which are more standard than the first stated quantities (as in the examples of tobacco and wool given under Measure above), use those instead Put the first stated quantities, which give useful information about packing, after the commodity itself and a semi-colon to indicate that it really belongs in the fourth cargo field Separate the different numbers and words only with spaces, for example '7 packs one truss English Wool qt 64 todd at Twenty-eight pounds p tod' should be written '64 I TOD28 I E WOOL, 7 PACK 1 TRUSS'

Occasionally, it is said that a particular cargo was being returned (because it was faulty), and this should be noted by putting the letter 'R' after the semi-colon in the same way, indicating that it belongs in the fourth cargo field

When additional information is given about the dutiable status of a commodity, or where it is going or coming from, two practices apply If this is a single occurrence applying to one item of cargo, it should be put in the Miscellanea field (see above) because it is of more general interest than its relation to the item of cargo itself, but notify that there is some further information of this sort by putting after the commodity a semi-colon and space and then the word 'MISC'

On very infrequent occasions, some Books specify at great length the nature, status and provenance of the item of cargo, giving precise details of its importation, overseas merchants and delivery In such cases, where there is clearly no room for such voluminous descriptions in the Miscellanea field these must be put after the commodity as above Thus for a voyage completed in 1699, an entry of '12 barrels Span and Port Wine qt 80 Gals duty paid and subsidy secured per Wm Swimmer and Nicho Scandrett 5th April Instant out of the Olive Branch' would be transcribed as -

80 I GAL I SPANISH + PORT WINE, 12 BRL DUTY PAID + SUBSIDY SECURED PER WLL
SWIMMER + NCH SCANDRETT 05/04/1699 OUT OF THE OLIVE BRANCH

On these mercifully rare occasions, both names should also go in the Othername field as above

N B Examples of cargo transcriptions are given on the attached sample form.

When in doubt contact

David Hussey, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Wolverhampton, Castle View, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 3HR
Telephone Wolverhampton (0902) 322333 or 323499 in office hours, or Birmingham (021) 4201393 at any reasonable hour

A SUMMARY OF THE FIELDS AND THEIR CONTENTS

PRO Ref
Unique reference number for the entry in the Port Book consisting of the book number (e 1256/07) followed by a slash, the folio number, followed by another slash, and the entry number e g 1256/07/10/04

I/O
I or O to show whether the voyage was In or Out of the named port.

Coquet Date
The date, following modern calender, with slashes between day, month and year The date should be the date of the coquet rather than any supplementary date that may appear e g 17/03/1699

Boat
The boat name, either in full or in the three or five letter code e g MRG or MARGARET, JHNMR or JOHN + MARY

Port
The place of which the boat is said to be, expressed according to a standard three letter code e g BWD

Merchant's Christian Name
The merchant's Christian name expressed in a standard three letter code or in full e g JHN or JOHN

Merchant's Surname
The merchant's surname expressed as written in the original Jun or Sen written with the letters J or S after the name itself, with a space between e g BEALE J

Master's Christian Name
As for merchant above

Master's Surname
As for merchant above

From
The coastal port from which the boat departed, expressed using the three letter code as above More than one departure point can be put down, with no spaces between e g BRSCHP

To
The coastal port of the boat's destination, expressed as 'From' above

Margin
Marginal marks in the text, expressed in single letter codes (see text) e g C

Other Date
Any second date, i e other than that of the coquet, which may appear in the entry, expressed as date above

Other Christian names and surnames
Names of people other than master and merchant, written as for merchant above

Miscellanea
Various items that cannot be included in other fields (see text)

Cargo quantity
The numbers by which a cargo item is quantified Do not use commas when transcribing units in thousands

Measure and Commodity
The closer description of the cargo These two sets of fields demand substantial reorganisation of the data Read the explanations in the main text above

A Fictitious Example

Please note this is a nightmare of an entry, designed to show you how to deal with all possible eventualities and emphasising some of the worst problems that may arise None of your examples will be as appalling as this

E190/1098/05
folio 4
ninth entry
from the Inward section of the Port of Bridgwater

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>30th August 1699
Out of the Happy Retourne of Bridgwt
Jno Symes M~ & Ind~</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Bristoll</td><td>25 Blocks Tinn qt fourteene Hund wt one
ton iron and iron ware 2000 bricks
16 halfe Barrells Irish Tallow 16 Baskets
Spa. & Portwine paid ye impost and
additional subsidy secured per
chas Hobhouse the sixth day of March 1698
and the eighth August Inst out of the
Triall 1 copper furnace nine chalder coals
London Measure 12 doz crates of bottles 3
gross of pipes one weigh of malt retd 3 packs
and trusses Kiddermstr and Manchtr ware
6 packs trusses and bags narrow Ger linen
fifteen hhd 1 truss two small parcels
tobacco qt 6420lb p~ Cocqt dat.19 Augst 1699</td><td>Cert 21
xber</td></tr>
</table>

Folio 5
second entry
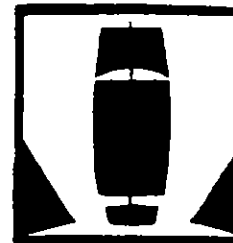Inward section of the Port of Bridgwater

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Ditto Die
Out of the Happy Retourne p~ Dict.
John Symes mast Wll Alloway jun Ind~</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Bristoll</td><td>15 pa. 27 Bag of English Woolle qt. twenty
one C wtt.3 Qtr 6lb per Cocq of the 19th Aug</td><td>Cer Jan~
14th 1699</td></tr>
</table>

Transcription Form

PRO Ref   =

I/O   =

Coquet Date =

Boat   =

Port   =

MerChris   =

MerchantSur =

MastChris   =

MasterSur   =

From   =

To   =

Margin   =

Other Date   =

Miscellanea =

Check   =

S2

OthChris   =   OtherSurname=

OthChris   =   OtherSurname=

S3

Quantity	Measure	Commodity

Contd
19

The Portbooks Programme
The Gloucester Port Books, 1575-1765

Database Software

The database was originally constructed using PRIME Information software. The limitations of this system account for the extensive use of abbreviations and the need to put some data in a miscellaneous field.
Since the files were transferred to a microcomputer platform, they have been processed and interrogated using Microsoft FOXPRO 2 5 for MS-DOS. Data is however stored in standard DBF datafile format, and the files themselves are accessible through any industry-standard database management application. In addition, much of the data in the PBMISC miscellaneous field has been extracted and placed in related files. (See below) All fields are treated as character fields in FOXPRO, except where noted in the descriptions below

Database Structure.

PBGLC
This, the central file of the database has eighteen fields, and contains most of the information available for each journey which does not relate to cargo items. It occupies 17Mb, and has an associated index of just under 3Mb. There are 37614 records

PBREF	Unique number given to each port book entry, derived from Public Record Office class numbers and added folio and entry numbers
PBI_O	Single character indicating whether voyage is inward (I) or outward (O)
PBDATE	Date of port book entry, operated as a date field in FOXPRO
PBBOAT	Name of boat, often abbreviated.
PBPORT	Port with which the boat is associated, abbreviated to three letters
PBMERCHRIS	Given name of merchant, often abbreviated.
PBMERSUR	Surname of merchant, recorded in full and with original spelling
PBMSTCHRIS	Given name of master, often abbreviated
PBMASTSUR	Surname of master, recorded in full and with original spelling
PBFROM	Port of departure, abbreviated to three letters
PBTO	Destination, abbreviated to three letters
PBOTHCHRIS	Given names of any additional individuals mentioned, often abbreviated
PBOTHSUR	Surnames of additional individuals, in full with original spelling
PBMISC	Additional information
PBFLAG	No longer used
PBCHECK	No longer used
PBDATE2	Second date if given
PBMARG	Margin marks in original

GOODS
The goods file has five fields containing information given on cargoes. It has 211871 records, takes up 65Mb of space and has a 4Mb index file

PBID	This is the PRO-derived reference number, and is the linking field between GOODS and PBGLC
QTY	The stated quantity of each commodity, contained in a numeric field
MEASURE	The stated measure (eg ton, barrel), often abbreviated
COMMODT	The commodity, in full, with standardised spelling

ADD   Additional information about the cargo where given

BOATS
Expanded versions of the abbreviated boat names (2 fields, 1810 records)
B_CODE   Abbreviated form used to link with PBGLC PBBOAT
B_NAME   Full name of boat

PORTS
Expanded versions of abbreviated port names (2 fields, 271 records)
PORTCODE   Three letter code used in PBGLC PORT, PBGLC FROM and
                     PBGLC TO
PORT   Full name of port.

CHRISNAM
Contains expanded versions of given names (2 fields, 419 records)
NAMCODE   Abbreviation used in PBGLC PBMERCHRIS, PBGLC PBMSTCHRIS
                     and PBGLC PBOTHCHRIS
CHRNAME   Given name in full (standardised spelling)

SURNAMES
Contains standard versions of original surnames (2 fields, 5319 records)
SURCODE   Original spelling contained in PBGLC PBMERSUR,
                     PBGLC PBMASTSUR and PBGLC PBOTHSUR
SURNAME   Standard form of surname

COMMODS
Gives each commodity one of 8 single character classifications (2 fields, 4294 records)
COMMODCODE   Commodity as in GOODS COMMODT
COMMOD   Classification letter

CLASSES
Links classification group to classification letter (2 fields, 9 records)
CLASSCODE   Classification letter used in COMMODS COMMOD
CLASS   Classification group

GLCBUR
Contains burthen figure, usually given for boats operating prior to the 1640s (2 fields, 4227
records)
PBREF   PRO reference number, for linkage with PBGLC.PBREF
PBBURTHEN   Burthen (in tons) in a numeric field.

MERCHEX
Contains additional information provided about merchants in early port books (3 fields, 3508
records)
PBREF   PRO reference number, for linkage with PBGLC PBREF
MEROCC   Stated occupation of merchant (brewer, maltmaker etc)
MERHOM   Given town of merchant.

The Gloucester Port Books, 1575 - 1765.

The following is a table structure definition with listed variables
The data structure recorded here represents the data that we hold and
is slightly at variance with the original documentation

Database Structure:

This database contains five tables in all

Table name: PBGLC

PBREF
PBI_O
PBDATE (Given in the format YYYYMMDD)
PBBOAT
PBPORT
PBMERCHRIS
PBMERSUR
PBMSTCHRIS
PBMSTSUR
PBFROM
PBTO
PBMISC
PBMARG

Table name: GOODS

PBREF
QTY
MEASURE
COMMODT
ADD
GOODSEQ (A goods sequence number)

Table name SURNAMES

SURCODE (Note that SURCODE is the ORIGINAL spelling)
SURNAME

Table name GLCBUR

PBREF
PBBURTHEN

Table name· MERCHADD (As MERCHEX in original guide)

PBREF
MEROCC
MERHOM

As you will be aware, some of the tables listed in the original documentation do not exist in these data There were also approximately 8 records that could not be read from the PBGLC table