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Devonport Building a Purposed Community: Who lived in Plymouth Dock?

Stevenson, Kim

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The inhabitants of Plymouth Dock were mainly those working in or for the Royal Navy together with their families and the businesses supplying them, living alongside retired and invalided-out seamen of all ranks. By 1733, in its third decade of existence, the new town had over 3,000 residents with new buildings— commercial properties and dwelling houses- springing up almost daily. By 1780 the population had swelled to 10-12,000 equalling that of Plymouth and by the 1820s it had increased tenfold to 34,000 overtaking Plymouth by a third.



Royal Oak rebuilt at Plymouth Dock 1741, third rate ship of the line, 70 guns

In June 1758, the wages delivered by HMS Devonshire for payment of Dock employees was 60,000 guineas

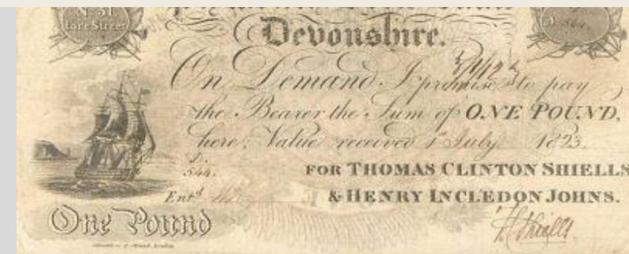
On 8 March 1749, Paul Michael was convicted and sentenced to transportation to the Caribbean and Americas for theft of a silver hanger (to hand a sword from) and cane from William Taylor, a jeweller and silver smith of Plymouth Dock. Other local jewellers included James Dunsford and George Banks underlining Devonport's early wealth.

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A well-off community?

The job of Master Caulker, in the gift of the Admiralty, carried a salary of 150 guineas per annum. Similar or higher paid roles included Clerk to the Ropeyard, Master Ropemaker and Porter to the Dockyard as shown in this Table of Salaries for Plymouth Dock in 1780 from the Parliamentary Register. Caulkers plugged gaps in wooden ships with oakum mixing it with tar to make them watertight. Who picked over and supplied the oakum?

A. 1780. DEBATES. 261		
Plymouth.		
John Lloyd, clerk of cheque		200
Peter Robinfon, 1st master attendant		200
James Smith, 2d. master attendant		200
Established the 9th April, 1756.		
John Henslow, master shipwright		200
Philip Justice, storekeeper		200
Ralph Paine, clerk of the survey		200
Martin Ware, 1st assistant to master shipwright		100
Thomas Pollard, 2d. assistant to ditto		100
Established the 19th December, 1755.		
Samuel Mansfield, master caulker		100
Robert Mawbray, surgeon		100
Salary increased the 24th June, 1729.		
Robert Dutton, boatswain		80
William Andrews, purveyor		50
James Young, clerk of the rope yard		100
John Lingee, mater rope maker		100
The salaries of the officers of this yard, were increased the 2d. March, 1756.		
No. 14.	CHARLES MIDDLETON, J. WILLIAMS, EDMUND HUNT, GEORGE MARSH, T. BRETT.	



At the start of the 1800s, businesses based in Plymouth Dock included a number of local banks: Glencross, Hodge and Norman (1804) later the Naval and Commercial Bank; Messrs Shiells and Johns; also Messrs Husband and Sons.

The former Goude's Hotel, renamed the Royal Devonport Hotel in 1824, and the King's Arms Hotel were owned by Mrs Goude, in the late 1820s she erected an Assembly Room for balls and concerts at the back of the Kings Arms Hotel.



HMS Achilles capturing a French ship in 1758. Back in Plymouth Dock, after the crew had been paid, local traders were invited on board to sell their wares. The crew were also given 2 days liberty to go onshore and enjoy themselves – adding to the profits of many Landlords in Plymouth Dock!!



Prof Kim Stevenson
Kim.Stevenson@plymouth.ac.uk

