

REPORT ON THE COYSH FAMILY OF DEVONSHIRE

Name Changes QUASH-QOYSH - COYSH-COISH.

Without exception all the Coish personel in our files came from South Devon , in the area between Newton Abbott/Teignmouth and Exeter. In their long association with seafaring and trade they are typical of the many South devon families of the 17-19th centuries and the changes in occupational seafaring trades are in some ways a mirror of changes in the Devonshire economy throughout this period. As far as tracing genealogical details are concerned I would advise you to concentrate on the parishes in the region I mentioned above. Unlike many of the Devonshire families, there never seems to have been many branches of the Coish family and thus it should not be difficult to trace their descent. We note that between circa 1700 and circa 1760 the name disappears from Devonshire commerical and shipping records. This is not surprising for it was a time of considerable decline and depression in trade.

1. ANDREW(QUASH) of Exeter. fl 1680s
A merchant . available data as follows.
1685. 28 October imported Spanish bar iron into Exeter from Bilboa on a Barnstaple(North Devon) ship^{1/2}/
4-november. Imported more iron on another north devon ship
- 1686 12 January Imported iron and Saffron from Bilboa on the Plough capt Withal.
5 March. exported 300 bushels of salt to Newfoundland on the Canary Merchant capt Vennard.
8 April imported iron from Bilboa on the Biscay Arms.
8 September. imported iron from Bilboa on the Sarah and Elizabeth
10 September. Imported iron from Bilboa on the Hopewell.
30 October . Imported Iron, pitch and wool from Bilboa on the Speedwell ,of Barnstaple.

COMMENTS

Andrew Quash was an unusual Exeter merchant in that he seems to have specialised in the Bilboa Iron trade with a lesser venture to Newfoundland. Most of the Exeter merchants were engaged in the cloth export trade but he seems to have held apart from them. He was not as far as I can see a ship owner, for all of these vessels carried goods for other merchants as well. I have no idea where he was actually born but it was probably in the Teignmouth-Newton Abbott area of Devonshire.

2. HANNAH(QOYSH) of Exeter.fl 1699

above.

Almost certainly widow of the

1699 march. Imported 13 hundredweight of iron from Rotterdam.

Comments.

the 17th and 18th centuries were in some respects more "liberated" than even our own times. Men tended to die quite young and their widows would often continue the business.

3 JOHN(the first) of Bishopsteignton.

1709. Married at Stoke in Teignhead(between Teignmouth and Torquay) in South Devon.

Nothing is known of this man whose name was spelt

as COYSH.

JOHN (two) of Ringmore(near Teignmouth)./
born 1786 died 1856.

Relationship between him and the Coysh'es below

is unclear.

JOHN(3)

1810 John, son of John(coish) was baptised at Townstall(part of Dartmouth. see below.

JOHNS ENGAGED IN TRADE

JOHN(a) (of BOVEY TRACEY) .S_outh Devonshire.

1770. Born.

1790. "Header" on the Dartmouth banking vessel Unity. In September was discharged at Fermews in Newfoundland.

Comments

a header was the man responsible for cutting the throat of the codfish . It was a relatively unskilled job given to "youngsters", men of little or no prior experience in the fishery. "Bankers" were vessels which fished deep sea on the Grand Banks. He never appears agin in the Dartmouth muster rolls although of,course he could have signed on one of the vessels owned in Teignmouth up the coast. However it is probable that upon his discharged in Newfoundland he worked as a servant for a year or two for either one of the local planters or indeed his merchant.

JOHN(b) of South Devon. exact parish kn unknown.

1821. appointed to command the CAPLIN a banker of Teignmouth. 44 tons burthen and owned by Thomas Row a Teignmouth merchant who operated out of St Johns

1821 27 October. At the end of the fishing season sailed from St Johns to Teignmouth with cargo of 129 quintals of "core" fish. Core fish were those which had been caught and heavily salted but not sun dried. they were apparently very popular eating in the local West Country areas which were connected with Newfoundland.

JOHN(b) continued

1823. Commander of the MIRIAM brig 44 tons and 8 men. Owned by Messrs Wise Baker and Howard of Newton Abbott. Another Banking vessel.

1823. 29 November. At the end of the season took a cargo of core fish from St Johns to Teignmouth.

1825 . appointed to command the DOVE schooner of 104 tons and 10 men owned by Wise Baker and Howard.

1826 10 March. ~~New~~ Arrived at Oporto from Teignmouth probably to take on salt for the Newfoundland fishery.

1826 28 Mar.. Arrived At Figuera(where she loaded the salt

1827 26 April. Arrived at St Johns Newfoundland from Guernsey in the Channel Islands.

5 May. sailed from St Johns to Figuera with 1145 quintals fish on consignment by messrs Whiteway and Mudge of Torquay and St Johns. From there she would have sailed, salt-laden ,back to Newfoundland.

22 June. Arrived St Johns from Figuera with salt and fruit.

December. Sailed from St Johns to Liverpool with 1478 quintals of fish.

1828. Same vessel.

14 May. Arrived from Teignmouth at St Johns and then sailed on a fishing voyage.

1829. 14 May arrived at St Johns from Teignmouth and sailed on a fishing voyage

1830 June. arrived At St Johns from teignmouth and sailed on a fishing voyage.

1831 17 May. Arrived at St Johns from Figuera with a cargo of salt.

31 May Cleared from St Johns for Gibraltar with 1700 quintals of fish.

There is then a gap in our current records(whitch will soon be rectified).

1836 Commander of the LIBERTY. owned by Messrs William Boden and Company of Teignmouth. another Banking vessel.

November. Cleared St Johns to Figuera with 1300 quintals of fish for his owner.

1837 June Arrived St Johns from Teignmouth with a cargo of potatoes ,canvas etc for his owner.

November Sailed from St Johns to Oporto with 1400 quintals of fish for his owner.

WE THEN lose track of him, not because he drops out of the trade but because our records have not yet been brought up to date for this period.

1850. CAPTAIN JOHN is said to be living in Shaldon Devonshire. Shaldon is a small town just accross a narrow estuary from Teignmouth.

1861 Capt John owns 32/64 of the schooner MARGERET 100 tons burthen, registered in Teignmouth. This vessel may have been in the Newfoundland trade but would have spent most of her time in the Mediterranean fruit trade.

COMMENTS.

John Coish was one of a rapidly dwindling band of Banking skipper who continued to fish until almost the end of the West of England-Newfoundland migratory fishery in the 1840s. Given that Thomas and Samuel below were almost certainly relatives, this family represent very well the last days of the old direct West Country connection.

4. WILLIAM of South Devon.

Ship captain and small trader in the Newfoundland fishery. fl c 1759-1790.

1759 April. Commander of the ANN of Bristol. 35 tons and 6 man crew. voyage from Bristol to Newfoundland.

29 December=. Arrived at Bristol from Newfoundland.

1764 March. Commander of the gRAMPUS of Dartmouth. arrived at Dartmouth from Figuera with a cargo of salt.

After this he seems to have given up seafaring temporarily and engaged in fishing -probably as what was known as a BYE BOAT KEEPER. Bye boat keepers were fishermen who owned boats and usually "plantations" in Newfoundland, but themselves travelled out annually as passengers from England or Ireland.

1771. At St Johns Newfoundland were he signed a petition concerning customs fees and called himself a "trader".

From this he went back to shipping but this time in his own vessels.

1775 Commanded the JOANNA & NANCY brig 90 tons and 9 men which he had recently purchased from a Teignmouth shipowner.

April. voyage from Teignmouth to St Johns Newfoundland. Then the American Revolutionary War brooke out and William Coish evidently decided dthat the risks of capture in the Newfoundland trade were too high. He turned to the English coasting trade and, apparently repmained in this for the rest of his career.

1778 Vessels said to have been engaged in the coastal trades between Teignmouth, Liverpool and Cork in Ireland.

1780-1790 The vessel continues on the books of LLOYDS REGISTRY but not further information can be found. It is quite possible that she was sold or lost years beefore 1790 for Lloyds Registry cannot always be trusted for this period.

5. ROBERT(1) of Newton Abbott, Devonshire.

BORN 1749-50.

1773. Crewman on the Dartmouth banking vessel JOHN. made a voyage to Newfoundland fishing.

1774. Crewman on the Dartmouth banker HØACDOWN . voyage to the Grand Banks.

Both of these vessels were owned by the firm o Newman and Company of Dartmouth. (the present manufacturers of Newman's Port etc).

We then have a gap for a few years during the American Revolution. One may safely assume that he continued at sea, and with the rest of the West Countrymen of that era faced the hazards of capture and imprisonment by the Americans, French or Spznish. Indeed it is quite possible that a young seamen of his type would have been pressed into the royal navy. However after the war he appears back in our records, now as a ship captain.

1784. Commander of the PROSPEROUS of Dartmouth.

28 March. Voyage from Dartmouth to Newfoundland

June. news of her arrival at Newfoundland.

1785. Commander of the Betsey 60 tons, ten men owned by Messrs Drews and Griffin of Dartmouth. This firm owned Banking vessels and had a small supply trade at Fermews on the "Southern Shore". They became insolvent around 1789.

November. news of her arrival at Torbay in Devonshire from Newfoundland. This vessel was almost certainly a "Banker".

1786 appointed to command the Britannia 70 tons 9 men, owned by Messrs Farley and Company of Newton Abbott. another banking vessel.

25 February. Sailed from Dartmouth for Waterford and Newfoundland. The call at Waterford was not unusual. "Bankers" were the primary means of transporting passengers out to Newfoundland and Waterford was the main assembly point for Irish planters and servants intending for the Newfoundland fishing. It was also the centre for supplies of salt beef and to a lesser extent pork.

24 March. Sailed from Waterford for Newfoundland

August. News of her arrival in Newfoundland.

17 87 appointed to command the NEPTUNE of Teignmouth. 7 0 tons 12 men. Another banking vessel.

February. sailed from Teignmouth to Newfoundland

July=. Arrived at St Jonns Newfoundland and sailed on a banking voyage.

December. Arrived home at Dartmouth from Newfoundland.

ROBERT(1) continued

1788 Appointed to command the ELIZABETH & CLARE of Teignmouth 114 tons 12 men. owned by Puddicombe of Teignmouth.

March. Sailed from Teignmouth to Newfoundland on a fishing voyage.

1789. March. Sailed from Teignmouth to St Johns on a fishing voyage.

August. At St Johns. taken up by the Governor to transport 100 convicts back to England. These men and women were mainly Irish transportees who had been sent from Britain to the West Indies. However the vessel they were on made a very long and bad voyage across the Atlantic and its command, in desperation landed them at Bay Bulls where they caused a frightful panic amongst the local population.

December. Arrived At Portsmouth where the passengers were discharged into a Royal Navy hulk. That must have been quite a voyage for captain Coish and his crew.

We then here nothing more of Captain Coysh for three years. He certainly commanded no more ships during this time. However this is not surprising for the Newfoundland trade suffered a tremendous slump due primarily to over-expansion in 1788-9 and it did not really begin to recover until 1792-3. However he seems to have continued in the Newfoundland trade probably as a mate for (see below) when he again obtained a ship he was hired at St Johns.

1793 November. At St Johns appointed to command of the NEPTUNE of Dartmouth(his old vessel).

1794 4 January Same vessel. arrived at Torbay Devonshire from Newfoundland.

August. Appointed commander of the CATHERINE of Exeter. A Brig. voyage from Exeter to the Mediterranean. From there she sailed to Newfoundland, probably with salt from Trepani in Sicily.

OCTOBER. News of arrival at Newfoundland.

There is no record of his activities during 1795.

1796 commander of the NEPTUNE of Exeter 118 tons 8 men and armed with a small cannon for self defence.

(by this time England is at war with France once again. the vessel was owned by Joseph Saunders, a general ship owner of Exeter.

February---sailed from Exeter to the Mediterranean.

May News of her arrival at Leghorn(Italy.) She would have taken out a cargo of Devonshire cloth.

ROBERT(1) continued.

1796. July. News of her arrival at Naples from Leghorn.

November. News of her arrival at Gibraltar from Newfoundland. Thus once again she must have been chartered by one of the Newfoundland merchants to bring out Sicilian salt.

1797 February. news that from Gibraltar she had gone on to Naples and discharged her cargo of fish. She had then gone to Calabria and loaded for Lond but on her voyage home had been taken by a French warship in the Mediterranean. Thus Captain Coysh had his first experience of the hazards of war. He was not alone for almost every Newfoundland and West of England Cal^lptain experienced capture at some time or other in those days. He may well have become a prisoner of war in France for we here nothing further from him for three years.

1800 Appointed to command the MARY & ELIZABETH of Plymouth(Devonshire). 68 tons and 6 men. owned by Robert Fuge. This vessel was not in any way engaged in the Newfoundland trade.

August . AT London. sailed on a voyage to Faro.

1801 March. News that whilst on a voyage from Bristol to Lisbon had been taken by 4 Spanish Privateers.

However the Peace of Amiens was close at hand and this time his captivity(if any) must have been relatively short.

1803 . Appointed to command the SPECULATION of Plymouth. 100 tons and 9 men, owned by Mr Dunsterville.

March. Whilst on a coasting voyage from Ipswich to Liverpool the vessel ran ashore on the Norweigian Coast(whether he was a terrible navigator or it was a terrible storm). The crew survived and were eventually landed at Margate in England.

This, perhaps not surprisingly ended the career of Captain Robert Coish. His career mirrored the changes and rapid decay which occurred in the Newfoundland trade between 1770 and 1800. As a young man he entered the migratory bank fishery at a time when it was expanding rapidly and thus until the late 1780s jobs were plentiful. However the decline in the Newfoundland trade after 1790 forced him out of the fishery. However he was lucky enough in a time of great depression to transfer his talents from commanding a fishing ship to the very different chores of commanding general coastal and foreign going "tramp vessels". Not many Banking skippers were able to do this. His eventful life was typical of the day.

ROBERT (#2) of Dartmouth.

Relationship to the above not clear.

1817. A Shipwright in Dartmouth. had a son Andrew (note similarity with the first Coysh) baptised.

1821 Another son baptised in Dartmouth

1823 now calling himself a Carpenter. had a daughter baptised in Dartmouth.

THOMAS a Devonshire ship captain of the Nineteenth century

1827. Seaman on the VELOCITY, a Newfoundland trader owned by Hunt Roope and Newman of London and Dartmouth who traded in St Johns and on the South coast of Newfoundland.

1834 Commander of the NATIVE of Plymouth. 130 tons burthen, owned by John Eales of Plymouth a merchant who had premises in St Johns and was also engaged in the Bank fishery.

December. Sailed from St Johns to Plymouth with 860 quintals of fish and some train oil.

1837 Same vessel.

June Sailed from St Johns to Torquay in Devonshire with 1300 quintals of fish.

7 September. Arrived at St Johns from Torquay with a cargo of salt and cordage.

25 September. Voyage from St Johns to Sydney Cape Breton for a cargo of household coal.

5 December. Sailed from St Johns to Falmouth England with 1200 quintals of fish. (Falmouth was the Cornish port to which vessels sailed "for orders" when the owner of the cargo was not sure which foreign port it should be eventually dispatched.)

1838 Commander of the Britannia, owner unknown.

August. arrived at St Johns from Greenock in Scotland with a cargo consigned to Messrs Hunters and Company.

October. Cleared from St Johns to Brazil with fish.

20 December advertised as being available at St Johns for charter to any port in the North Atlantic. He then disappears from our records although he may well have continued a seafaring career.

SAMUEL.

The last Coysh in our record series.
1845. Commander of the PROWLER brig 109 tons burthen
owned by Messrs Stabb~~by~~ Row and Holmwood of London,
Torquay and St Johns merchants.

15 July. arrived at St Johns from Cork in
Ireland with a cargo of cut stone consigned to his owners.
(this would have been used in the construction of the
new Roman Catholic Basilica in St Johns).

1 August Sailed from St Johns to Demerara
with a cargo of fish for his owners.

17 October. arrived at St Johns from Sydney
Cape Breton with a cargo of coal for his owners.