

# Glamorgan Archives

## ~MARITIME RECORDS~

The Glamorgan Archives hold many records relating to ships and their crews, dating in the main from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cardiff was a boomtown of Victorian Britain. There was a huge demand for Welsh coal from the industrial valleys of Glamorgan, much of which was exported from Cardiff. In 1913 13.7 million tons of cargo was exported from the city, 10.5 million tons of which were coal. An enormous fleet of ships was necessary and many businesses were set up in the heart of Butetown in Cardiff Docks. Congestion from all this trade led to the development of docks at Barry.

### **Docks and Harbours**

Useful sources of information about docks and harbours can be found within the following records.

#### ***Quarter Sessions Records***

**QDP**

The 'Deposited Plans' were deposited from 1792 with the Clerk of the Peace of each county and were drawn up before application to Parliament to build docks or other public works as authorised by a local Act.

Ordnance Survey plans will also be of use. See the *Maps and Plans* leaflet for further details on the series held.

#### ***Porthcawl Harbour Plans***

**UDPC**

Plans for construction of Porthcawl harbour, prepared by London engineer RP Brereton between 1864 and 1866. The new seven-acre dock opened in July 1867. Trading came to an end in 1906. The collection includes an overall plan of the harbour, details of lock gates and breakwater.

#### ***Cardiff and Penarth Docks***

Plans of Cardiff and Penarth Docks 1824-1901

**DDB/4/1-12**

Plans of Cardiff Bute Docks and Penarth Docks, 1888-1970

**DX683/7**

**DXJO**

Letters from Lieutenant F Dornford, dockmaster at Cardiff Docks, to the Marquess of Bute and his agents concerning the increasing use of the docks, rates and regulations, 1841-1845

#### ***Cardiff Bay Development Corporation, 1987-2000***

**DCBDC**

The later development of Cardiff Docks can be traced through the records of Cardiff Bay Development Corporation, which was established in 1987 and disbanded in 2000. The records consist of minutes and reports of the Board and its Committees, corporate plans, valuation reports and consultants' reports, photographic archive showing the Barrage and the work of the Corporation in progress.

#### **Pilotage Records**

Pilot boats were responsible for bringing ships safely into and out of harbour. Pilots were qualified coastal navigators taken onboard a ship at a particular place for the purpose of conducting her into and from a port or through a channel, river or approaches to a port. They had local knowledge of the currents, tides, land and sea-marks. The Record Office holds the records relating to the Barry Pilotage Authority, Cardiff Pilotage Authority and some records relating to the South East Wales Pilotage Authority, the body formed in 1974 on the merger of the Cardiff, Newport and Barry Pilotage Authorities.

***Cardiff Pilotage Authority, 1807-1968***

**DPIL, DX84/1, DX914**

Up until 1861 the port of Cardiff was placed under that of Bristol as far as pilotage was concerned. However, due to the increase in traffic Cardiff was granted a separate Pilotage Board free from Bristol control under The Bristol Channel Pilotage Act in 1861. The original Board consisted of the Mayor of Cardiff and representations of the Town Council, Bute trustees, Penarth Dock Company and Glamorgan Canal Company. It was not until 1880 that the ship-owners and pilots were represented on the Board. The number of pilots reached their maximum in the 1890s with 120 licensed pilots.

The records include minute books, bye-laws, financial records, correspondence, personnel records and photographs. Of particular interest is the register of births, marriages and deaths of Cardiff pilots, 1810-1971 and register of pilots giving dates of birth, marriage, licences, superannuation and deaths of pilots, wives and children's details, 1840s-1970s. The collection also includes some records relating to The Steam Pilot Boat Company and the Bristol Channel Pilots' Association.

***Barry Pilotage Authority, 1889-1974***

**DXSS/1-13, DX892**

A separate Pilotage Board for Barry was constituted in 1889. The Board consisted of 3 directors of Barry Dock and Railway Company, and up to nine additional members comprising ship owners, pilots and a nominee of the Board of Trade. The records include minutes of pilots' meetings, annual statements of account, rules, register of licences, register of apprentices, share certificates and filing.

***Shipping Registers, 1824-1994***

**DRBS/C/1-2**

**Ships and their crews**

The general registration of ships began during the eighteenth century, when all owners of vessels with a deck and a burden of greater than 15 tons were required to register them with the Customs and Excise at their home port. The Record Office holds the records for ships registered in the Port of Cardiff. The registers contain details of:

- dimensions
- ownership and transactions of ownership
- shares and transfers of shares
- history
- ultimate fate of the ship, including transfers to other ports of registry

and are arranged in chronological order of registration. They do not record the movement of the ships. Transfers of ownership are recorded in additional transaction registers for the years 1855-1942. An index to names of ships is held in the office.

***Board of Trade Shipping Enquiries, 1875-1935***

**CLPSCBO/BT/1-261  
PSCBO/52**

The Board of Trade Shipping Enquiries refer to investigations carried out into shipping casualties. The files originate in the Court of Petty Sessions (Magistrate's Court) concerning cases delegated by the Board of Trade under various Merchant Shipping Acts from 1854. The investigations do not all refer to Cardiff registered ships, but were held at the place where it was most convenient for the witnesses to attend, in this case Cardiff City Hall or the Law Courts. The Record Office holds investigation files and printed reports for accidents. The enquiries concerned the loss or presumed loss of vessels registered at Cardiff and at other British ports. Many concerned losses that occurred in the Bristol Channel, but also of ships lost in European and international waters. The files consist of the papers assembled for the inquiry, and include depositions of witnesses and accounts of proceedings in court. The reasons found for shipping accidents range from ship design, bad

discipline to dangerous cargoes. A summary list gives details of the names of the ships involved arranged alphabetically within each year and an approximate location of the place where the accidents occurred. The Record Office also holds an index arranged by name of ship.

### ***Crew Agreements and Official log books, 1863-1913***

***DPROCA/C***

From 1835 onwards, masters of any ships belonging to United Kingdom subjects undertaking a foreign voyage, and masters of any British registered ships of 80 tons or more employed in the coastal trade or fisheries, were required to enter into an agreement with every member of the crew. The document had to be kept on board by the master, completed by him and handed to the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen at the end of the voyage. The Record Office holds crew agreements for Cardiff registered ships, although many of the master mariners and crew in these agreements were not local men. In some cases these men eventually made their homes in Cardiff, whilst others were passing through.

The crew agreements will tell you:

- name of the crew member
- age
- town of birth
- name of the last ship and its port of registration
- date of joining ship
- occupation and wages
- names of apprentices on board
- particulars of discharge, date and place
- signature of crew member
- births, deaths and marriages (if any) on board.

The agreement also bears the dated stamps of consulates in the ports of call on the voyage, enabling the course and the duration of the voyage to be plotted.

The collection of crew agreements also contains a variety of lists, accounts, certificates and some official logbooks. The log books were kept by the Master of the ship and are the official record of the voyage, giving details of any illnesses, deaths, desertions, complaints or events of note.

### ***Holdings***

The Archives hold the complete surviving series of crew agreements for Cardiff registered ships for 1863 to 1913, with the exception of

- a 10% sample of each year selected for permanent preservation at the National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU. A selection was made of records relating to famous ships.
- a further 10% sample held in the National Maritime Museum, Manuscripts Section, Greenwich, London SE10 9NF. This sample consists of all records (minus the random 10% sample for each year held by the PRO), for the years 1861, 1862, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905.
- For crew agreements for the period 1914-1938 and 1951-1976 contact The Maritime History Group, St. John's Memorial University, Newfoundland, Canada, A1C 5S7.
- For crew agreements for the period 1939-1950 and from 1977 to date contact The Registry of Shipping and Seaman, PO Box 420, Cardiff CF24 5XR, email [RSS@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:RSS@mcga.gov.uk)

indexes to the crew agreements are available at the Archives, or at:

<http://www.angelfire.com/de/BobSanders/Site.html>

If you are researching individuals, you may find the following site useful:

<http://www.welshmariners.org.uk/>

***Kara*** **DXGC13**  
Documents relating to the brigantine *Kara*, owned by Charles Crofts Williams of Roath Court, Cardiff, 1838-1844

***Barrett's Ships' Repairers, c.1880-1901*** **DXOS**  
Photographs of the company based at East Bute Docks.

## **Trade and Commerce**

***Cardiff Customs*** **CLMS/4/266**  
Letter book of John Byrd, customs official, 1647/8

Correspondence of Lord Bute referring to trade at Cardiff Docks c.1830s-1870s **DA**

***Cardiff Incorporated Chamber of Commerce, 1866-1965*** **DCOM/C**

The Chamber of Commerce was established in 1866 and incorporated in 1880. The records concern several organisations relating to shipping:

- Cardiff Incorporated Ship-owners Association/Cardiff and Bristol Channel Incorporated Ship-owners Association (established 1875, incorporated 1884)
- Cardiff Institute of Shipbrokers (Incorporated)
- Bristol Channel District Association of Chartered Shipbrokers
- Bristol Channel Association of Shipping and Forwarding Agents/Bristol Channel Branch of Institute of Shipping and Forwarding Agents
- Association of British Chamber of Commerce
- South Wales Coal Exporters Association and Colliery Owners Taxation Committee.

The records include minute books, annual reports, registers of members and a series of photographs, including nineteenth century views of Cardiff and Barry Docks and members of the Chamber of Commerce.

***Cory Brothers and Co. Ltd, 1857-1953*** **DCB**

Richard Cory came from Devon. He was the owner of a small vessel. By 1856 he was joined by his two sons and was trading as shipbrokers, ship owners, coal merchants and exporters. The Company owned its own collieries and it opened coaling stations around the world and depots on all major shipping routes. Records include minute books, deeds and agreements.

***Evan Thomas, Radcliffe and Co., 1882-1973*** **DETR**

Evan Thomas (of Aberporth) and Henry Radcliffe (of Merthyr Tydfil) founded the Company in 1881. The Company was based at Dock Chambers, Bute Street, Cardiff. At one point the Company had as many as 31 single-ship companies registered in its name. The records include papers relating to the formation of the Company, construction of ships, financial records and family and personal records.

***John Cory and Sons Ltd., 1884-1988***

John Cory, the ship-owner moved to Cardiff from Padstow, Cornwall, in 1872. The Company he established with his family in Cardiff rapidly expanded, and from owning 10 vessels in 1876, the number had grown to 23 by 1898. This side of the business gradually declined, and by 1966 the Company ceased to be a ship-owner, although it continued to operate as a shipbroker and travel agent. The records include memoranda and articles of association, minutes, financial records, partnership and shareholder records.

***Evan Reid Coal Co. Ltd., c 1890-1961***

**DER**

Charles Edward Evans came to Cardiff in 1879 to work for a local ship broking and coal-exporting firm. In 1890 he started his own firm, Charles E. Evans Co., to be reconstituted in 1901 as Evans and Reid Ltd. The Company's main business was the export of coal and the import of pit props, diversifying into general cargoes with the decline of the coal industry after the Second World War. The Company had a network of foreign agents and several branch offices in the United Kingdom. The Head Office was 51 Mountstuart Square, Cardiff, during the period around 1900-1920, and subsequently at Empire House, Mountstuart Square. The collection includes memorandum and articles of association, financial records, sales records, as well as records relating to the Strath Steamship Co. Ltd.

***Reardon Smith Line Ltd., 1902-1985***

**DRSL**

Captain William Reardon Smith established the business of the Reardon Smith Line Ltd. as W.R. Smith and Son Ltd., at 124 Bute Street, Cardiff, and the Instow Steamship Co. Ltd. in 1905 at Cardiff Docks. The Company had many subsidiary and associated companies. The fleet of ships had grown to 39 ships by 1922. The name changed to Reardon Smith Line Ltd. in 1928. The Company continued to expand the fleet up to 1977. It also diversified into the chartering business and oil extraction. In 1985 the group ceased trading and went into liquidation. The collection includes records of the main Company and associated and subsidiary companies. It includes minutes, annual reports, articles of association, financial records, shareholders' records, records of pensions and filing.

***Graig Shipping Co. Ltd./PLC, 1919-1992***

**DGR, DX469**

With associated companies: Idwal Williams and Co., The Glynafon Shipping Co. Ltd., Garth Shipping Co. Ltd., and Lisvane Investment Co. Ltd., Idwal Williams of Cardiff established the Graig Shipping Co. Ltd. in 1919 in conjunction with the directors of two colliery companies, a spark plug manufacturer and a shipping butcher. Many of the companies' records were damaged or destroyed by fire at the Graig Company's offices in Merthyr House, Cardiff Docks in 1945. The collection includes minutes, annual reports, journals, ledgers and shareholding books.

**Welfare**

***Cardiff Society of Sailmakers, 1893-1938***

**CLMS/4/1166**

Founded 1855, disbanded 1938. Records include minute books, financial records, contribution books, rulebooks and correspondence.

***Royal Hamadryad Hospital, 1886-1919***

**BC/HAM**

Built as a seaman's hospital to replace Hamadryad Hospital Ship and also as a memorial to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, The Royal Hamadryad Hospital Cardiff was completed in 1904 and formally opened in 1905. The records include deeds, minutes, subscription papers, accounts, plans and photographs.

***Cardiff Sailor's Home, 1862-1867***

**DXGC283/1**

The Sailors' Home was opened in 1853 in Stuart Street, Cardiff. This copy of the account book includes accounts for receipt of seaman's board money, giving names and ratings of seamen.

## **Royal Navy**

### ***Fonmon Castle Collection***

Naval papers of Captain Oliver J. Jones, 1862-1870. Oliver John Jones (1813-1878) made the Royal Navy his career. These documents allow us to follow his career as Captain in home waters, in the West Indies, and as Commodore in the China seas. He eventually rose to the rank of Rear Admiral. The records include appointments, orders, reports, correspondence, and accounts of experiences.

## **Records held elsewhere**

### ***National Archives***

The holdings of the National Archives include records relating to immigration and emigration by sea; records of the Royal Navy and of the Royal Marines, records of the coastguard and preventative services, and records of merchant seamen.

### ***National Museums and Galleries of Wales***

The maritime collections of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales include a wide variety of items, ranging from a sailmaker's needle, to a full size lifeboat. They hold over 150 ship models of vessels sailing off the coast of Wales during the past two centuries. Their holdings also include the ship portrait collection.