

TROZE

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**Thomas Pope Rosevear
of Boscastle:
A North Cornwall merchant
and shipowner in the early
nineteenth century**

By Peter Skidmore

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TROZE

Troze is the journal of the National Maritime Museum Cornwall whose mission is to promote an understanding of small boats and their place in people's lives, and of the maritime history of Cornwall.

'Troze: the sound made by water about the bows of a boat in motion'
From R. Morton Nance, *A Glossary of Cornish Sea Words*

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Peter Skidmore was awarded a PhD by the University of Greenwich in 2009 for his work on the maritime economy of the North West of England in the late eighteenth century. More recently his interests have extended to shipping and trade in the South West region and in particular on the north coast of Cornwall in the early nineteenth century.

Thomas Pope Rosevear of Boscastle: A North Cornwall merchant and shipowner in the early nineteenth century

Peter Skidmore

Introduction Business records for small concerns are rare survivors, particularly for shipping. The records of Thomas Rosevear between 1825 and 1846 reflect the varied life of a merchant and shipper in the small port of Boscastle on the North coast of Cornwall. The records show the challenges in the business life of a merchant, the shipping and shipments, the competitive pressures and, additionally, it sheds light on the lesser known role of a Lloyd's Agent. The records also show how even a tiny port such as Boscastle was well connected through the networks of those who traded from there. After the end of the Napoleonic war there was a boom in shipping and trade in which even the smallest of places gained benefit.



Picture 1: Entrance to Boscastle
Courtesy of the Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall

The Rosevear records are in the form of a journal in which his daily activities encompassing family matters, business dealings and his religious and philanthropic interests are recorded over the period 1825-46.¹ The daily entries are complete for the period 1825-9 but gaps appear from 1830 onwards and the data for the earlier period provides the most substantive basis for further work. This study concentrates on his business interests, particularly those associated with trade and shipping. Rosevear was in partnership with William Sloggatt and the records in the journal provide a valuable basis on which to build a more comprehensive study of their activities to gain an insight into how merchants in North Cornwall operated in the period. Rosevear and Sloggatt were also shipowners with interests in vessels for the coasting trade: a business interest which they operated as a free standing enterprise with vessels often being chartered out when the opportunities arose to do so, while their own goods were carried in vessels owned by others. They also owned two slate mines from which slate was shipped to destinations throughout the South West and to ports in Northern France. Outside of slate they were also involved in shipping grain and manganese and in bringing South Wales coal and Bristol goods to Boscastle. Their vessels when they were out on charter were often used in the raw material trade across the Bristol Channel, a trade in which many vessels owned in North Cornwall were involved. The 'Welsh Fleet,' as it was known, played a key role in industrialisation taking coal from the South Wales mines to Hayle and

Portreath to supply the mine engines and foundries and returning with copper ore for the smelters.² There are many instances of coastal fleets performing a similar role around the British coastline carrying bulk materials including coal, iron ore, salt and china clay a role which John Armstrong described as being ‘essential to industrialisation and urbanisation.’³ The involvement of a tiny port such as Boscastle, and the operations of merchants such as Rosevear and Sloggett are all of great interest. As Gordon Jackson wrote, ‘the smaller the merchant or port, the less we know of its history or importance.’⁴ Jackson went on to point out that small ports cannot be measured simply in their terms of their output or in ‘their difference from, or competition with, major commercial ports’ but it is their role in the whole network of ports that is key, ‘acting as servers for larger ports in many different ways.’⁵ This is shown in the journal through the merchant networks and the shipping connections between Boscastle, Tintagel and many other ports. The final aspect revealed is the role of Rosevear and Sloggett as Lloyd’s Agents, a role to which they were appointed in 1826, the journal recording the duties they performed and the frustrations they encountered. This is valuable information as there is little written about the workings of Lloyd’s agents who were an essential part of the scene in many ports.

Studies of other Cornish merchants in the period allow their activities to be set in context with the general commercial environment that existed in the region at the time. Martin Wilcox’s work on Zephaniah Job, a merchant in the tiny fishing port of Polperro, who traded in the late eighteenth century, showed a similar diversity of interests and shared their interest in the grain trade, although Job operated on a much grander scale with interests in the overseas trade and appointment as a government contractor. Job also developed a growing interest in finance and investment and finally moved into banking.⁶ Another merchant enterprise, Harvey & Co., of Hayle, has also been researched and reported on by Edmund Vale in his published work on the history of the company.⁷ Harveys were a large commercial firm of mine merchants with interests in a wide range of commodities including coal, timber, building materials and grain in addition to being leading manufacturers of pumps and engines. An 1847 trade directory lists them as millers, engineers, iron and coal merchants, shipbuilders, shipowners, ironmongers, wholesale grocers, tea dealers, general merchants and ropemakers, an impressive list of capabilities.⁸ Rosevear and Sloggatt were suppliers to Harveys, providing slate from their quarries and oats. Ownership or access to shipping was essential for mine merchants as many supplies came from outside of the region, many from South Wales and Bristol, and the roads were of a poor standard.

It was against this background that the partnership traded from ‘The Bridge’ in Boscastle, which was the business centre for the quay and their principal shipping point. They also shipped slate from Tintagel. The quarries they owned, the Bowithick quarry in the Trebarwith valley, referred to in the journal as North Delabole (now a Cornwall Council waste disposal site) and the West Quarry, which was one of the many cliff quarries on the coast between Trebarwith and Tintagel, were closer to Tintagel. The shipments were principally of scantle, a small roofing slate, although commons and rags, larger slates sold at a lower price, often made up the cargoes. The grain shipped from the River Camel, from Wadebridge, Padstow and Rock, mainly originated from arable land in the parishes of St Minver and St Kew and the oats they shipped were supplied by Samuel Brown in Bude.⁹



Picture 2: Tintagel
Courtesy of the Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall

Unfortunately the commercial information in the journal is sparse and details of their transactions and terms of business were acquired principally from letters in the archive of Harvey & Co. relating to their purchases of slate and oats. The Harvey & Co archive contains outgoing letter books from 1791 although there are no corresponding incoming letters until 1829.¹⁰ There are also details of a single transaction with Christopher Ellis in Hayle in the Ellis archive.¹¹

Rosevear visited clients in Hayle and others in the vicinity, usually every Spring. The partnership also had customers in Portreath, a small port used to supply the mining industry around Camborne and Redruth, and in Truro and Penzance, where they traded with William Tyacke, a merchant in Marazion.¹² The journal informs us that Rosevear's wife, Letitia, was born in Bodriggy near Hayle and he often used Hayle as a base and combined his business trips with social visits. There are also records of journeys to North and East Devon, Somerset and Dorset to promote sales, although these were more infrequent.¹³

Shipping Activities

Rosevear's journal notes the shipping activity in the local ports in which he had interests although it was not recorded when he was away from Boscastle. There are, however, occasional records of vessels loading or unloading their goods if they happened to be in a port where Rosevear was visiting at the time.

The total numbers of entries and clearances recorded in the period 1825-9 was 198. Of these 71 were incoming, and 127 were outgoing.¹⁴ The records are mainly for the ports of Boscastle, Tintagel Wadebridge, Padstow and Rock.¹⁵ In addition there were five records of shipping activity noted by Rosevear on his travels. These included the sloop *George Canning* loading copper ore at Devoran, a port on a tributary of the Fal, after delivering a cargo of slate and the sloop *Samuel and Mary* clearing Bude bound for Truro with a cargo of oats for Mr Steven's hotel which 'alas was never more heard of'; the vessel never arrived and no account is given of its fate.¹⁶ Two vessels, the *Fanny* and the *Penally*, were recorded as unloading slate at Penzance, and the *Eleanor* and the *Affo* were recorded unloading oats and barley at Hayle.¹⁷

All the local entries were for Boscastle. Figure 1 shows the ports from which cargoes were received and the number of consignments from each.

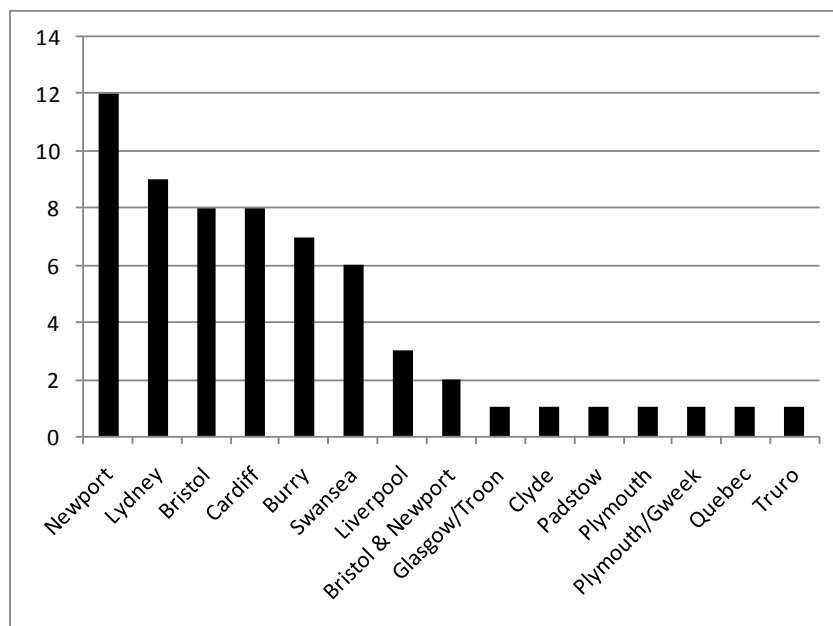


Figure 1: Boscastle entries by port of origin in the period 1825-9
Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Rosevear Boscastle Journal

Coal from South Wales dominated the incoming trade and the Bristol trade represented the next highest overall volume in which the cargoes were described as ‘Bristol Goods’ for which Rosevear and Sloggatt had a dedicated warehouse at Boscastle. The composition of these Bristol cargoes is not identified in the journal but an indication of the composition can be gained from surviving Bristol port books which are extant until 1790. An example of a cargo that might have been carried by the Rosevear and Sloggatt vessels is that carried by the *Peggy* of Padstow, master Thomas Burrows, which cleared Bristol for Padstow on 23 February 1790. The vessel had an extensive range of local and imported goods on its manifest which included nails, glass, molasses, refined sugar, lead, linen, earthenware, train oil, starch, rum, raspberry brandy, hard soap, tobacco, snuff and salt.¹⁸ Here is evidence of the important part played by the coastal trade in redistributing ‘foreign products from their point of importation to their final destination’.¹⁹ Bristol as a major port, had received raw materials from the West Indies and elsewhere and had distributed them, both raw and refined, around the Bristol Channel and further afield via the coastal trade network since the seventeenth century.²⁰ Cargoes received from other coastal ports included salt from Liverpool and limestone from Plymouth. There was also one shipment of timber from Quebec which is the only record of Rosevear and Sloggatt importing timber from overseas although this was common practice with a ready market for timber in the mines for which a drawback of the duty could be claimed. There was a regular trade between the coast of North Cornwall and Quebec in the early nineteenth century in which vessels took emigrants out and brought timber back as return cargoes.²¹

The clearances were more widely distributed across the local ports with 55 per cent from Boscastle, 30 per cent from Tintagel and 11 per cent from Wadebridge, Padstow or Rock. Boscastle had the most varied outgoing trade in which slate and manganese were the principal components. The clearances from Tintagel were all of slate and those from the Wadebridge, Padstow and Rock were all of grain. A chart of the number of consignments of each commodity cleared from Boscastle is included as Figure 2.

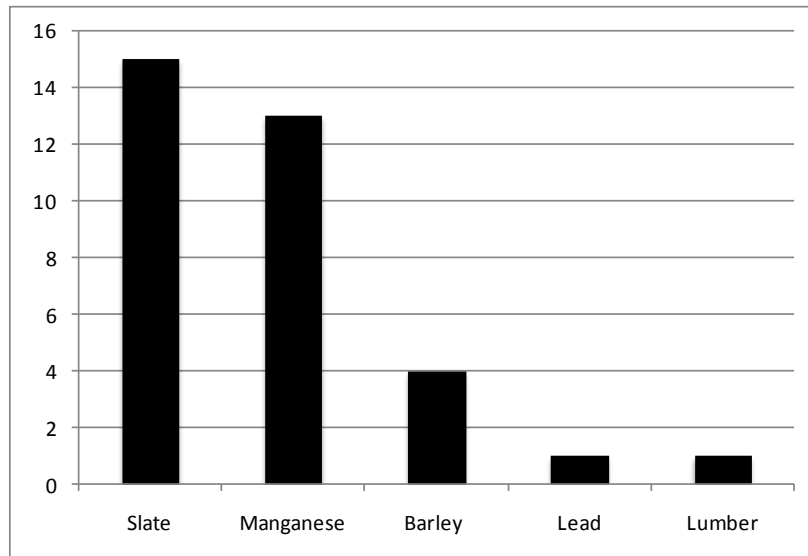


Figure 2: Cargoes dispatched from Boscastle 1825-29
 Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Rosevear Boscastle Journal

The shipments of manganese were equally divided between Liverpool and Glasgow where it was used in glass manufacturing. The consignments of barley lumber and lead all went to Bristol. Manganese was mined locally and one mine for which records have survived was in Llaneast, some 12 miles from Boscastle, within easy carting distance of the port.²² Charts of the destinations and number of consignments of slate shipped from Boscastle and Tintagel are included as Figures 3 and 4 and show the extent of the customer base served by the partnership in the South West and elsewhere including ports on the north coast of France. That such a tiny place as Tintagel should be shipping slate to France indicates the value of the slate trade and the well connected nature of such a small port.²³

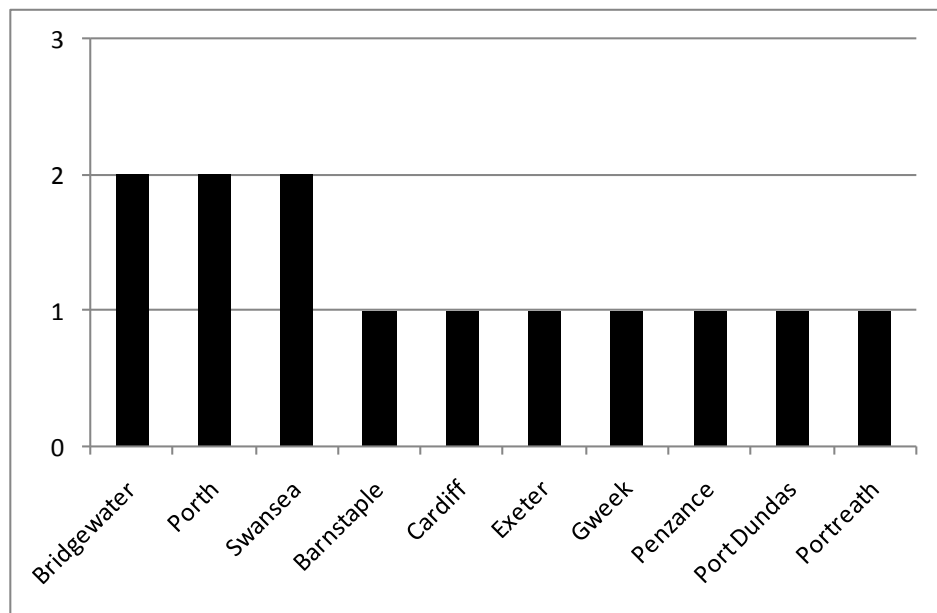


Figure 3: Destination ports of clearances with slate from Boscastle 1825-29
 Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Rosevear Boscastle Journal

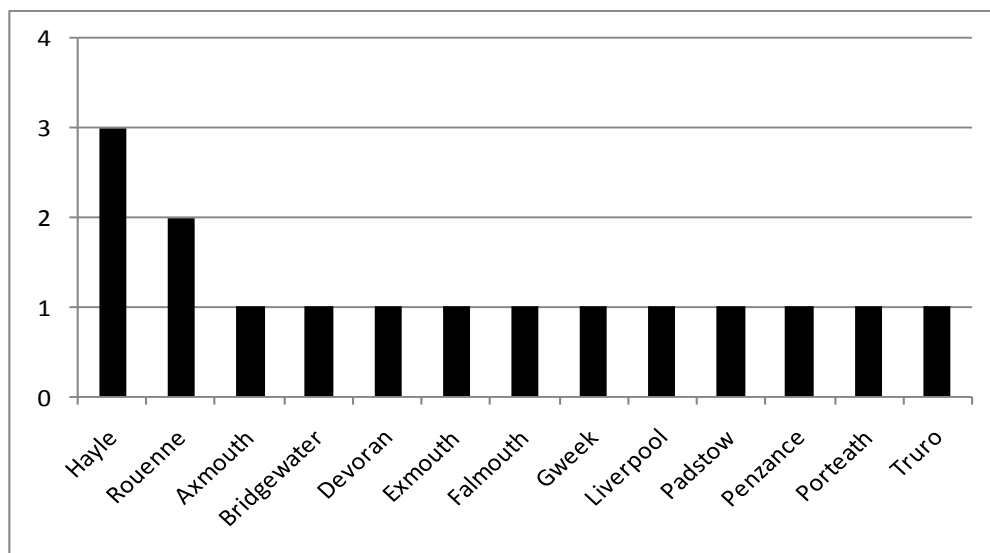


Figure 4: Destination ports of clearances with slate from Tintagel 1825-29
Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Rosevear Boscastle Journal

Destinations were not specified for the shipments of grain from the River Camel except for two consignments of barley which were sent from Padstow to the brewery of Williams & Co., in Bath. Samuel Worden, who was often present at the loading of the vessels on the Camel, was almost certainly one of the suppliers of grain. He was the tenant of Tresungers, a large farm with a distinguished farmhouse building, in the parish of St Endellion, and the owner of a tenement in Chapel Amble in the parish of St Kew.²⁴

The records of the shipping activities make reference to a total of 32 vessels by name of which seven were identified in the transcriptions of the Padstow shipping registers as being solely or part owned by Rosevear and Sloggatt.²⁵ The vessels and the recorded registration details are shown in Table 1. Five of the vessels were built to their instructions during the period of the study. They were the smacks or sloops, *Affo*, *Valency* and *Penally* built by John Tredwen in Padstow and the *Ferret* and *George Canning* built by Nicholas Lelean in Mevagissey. The other two vessels were the *Jane* built in Penzance and registered in Padstow in 1818 and the *Star* in which a half share was purchased from Richard Thompson, a Stratton gentleman and William Harvey a Launceston banker, in December 1825, the other half being retained by the master of the vessel, John Davey. The shared ownership by small groups was typical for small coasting vessels in British ports in the nineteenth century.²⁶ It was also common practice for the group to include the master of the vessel as a shareholder since it encouraged him to pay attention to keeping costs down and maximising the profitability of the vessel. The transaction for the *Jane* gives an insight into the cost of vessels at this time. Rosevear and Sloggatt paid £275 for the half share in the *Jane* which valued the 53 ton sloop at £550, equivalent to approximately £10 per ton. Prices seem to have risen considerably since Henna and Dunn sold their ships in Mevagissey between 1800 and 1809 at an average of £5 per ton, suggesting that demand had increased.²⁷

Table 1: Vessels in which Rosevear and Sloggatt held shares

Vessel Name	Old Tons	Where Built	When	Padstow Reg Ref	Master	Share ownership (64ths)
Jane	45	Penzance	1818	3/1818	Wivell, Wm.	Wivell, Wm., Boscastle mariner (32)
				36/1825	Knight, Wm.	Sloggatt, Wm., Boscastle merchant (32)
					Heatherington, Wm. (1827)	Knight, Wm., Padstow mariner (64)
						Philip, Wm., Padstow mariner (64), from 5/2/1828
Valency	N/A	Padstow	1825	4/1825	Ballamy, Wm.	Rosevear & Sloggatt (56)
						Ballamy, Wm., mariner (8)
Penally	49	Padstow	1825	35/1825	Gould, Rd.	Rosevear & Sloggatt (64)
					Ballamy, Jno. (1827)	
					Burke, Ph. (1829)	
Ferret	18	Mevagissey	1827	10/1827	Strout, Wm.	Rosevear & Sloggatt (22)
	23	(Lengthened)		6/1828		Strout, Wm., Port Isaac mariner (31)
						Strout, Wm., (snr), Boscastle, merchant (11)
Affo	28	Padstow	1826	11/1826	Ballamy, Jno.	Rosevear & Sloggatt (44)
					Rose, Rd (1827)	Strout, Wm., Port Isaac, mariner (20)
						Rosevear & Sloggatt (64) (1827)
George Canning	64	Mevagissey	1827	9/1827	Wivell, Wm	Rosevear, Thos. (16)
					Ballamy, Jno (1829)	Sloggatt, Wm., (Snr) (16)
						Sloggatt, Wm., (Jnr) (16)
						Wivell, Wm., mariner (16)
Star	53	Padstow	1818	24/1825	Davey, Jno	Davey, Jno., Ashwater mariner (32)
						Thompson, Rd., Stratton gent, (16)
						Harvey, Wm., Lanson, banker (16)
						Rosevear & Sloggatt (32) from RT & WH, 17/12/25
				7/1827	Burt, Fras (1827)	Burt Fras., Padstow mariner (64)

Competitive Pressures

The letters of Harvey & Co to Rosevear and Sloggatt and to other suppliers show the commodities that were traded with the quantities, the price and the terms of payment. They also occasionally contain comments on the quality, market conditions and the shipping arrangements including the freight payments to the masters of the vessels. Rosevear and Sloggatt's trade with Harveys peaked in 1825 when they received sixteen letters. In the following four years there were successively only nine, three, four and three letters, the decline being due in part to reduced demand and in part to loss of their status as sole suppliers of slate which existed for the first two years. As a large business Harvey's were able to use both their size and the availability of other suppliers to advantage in negotiating better terms. Harvey's often reminded Rosevear and Sloggatt of their 'confinement' to them as suppliers when they received more competitive offers and were looking for a response. A letter in August 1825 advised Rosevear and Sloggatt that a Mr Avery, a competitor of theirs in Boscastle, was offering slates at 6d per thousand less than they were charging and hoped that they would make some allowance. A second letter two months later reminded them that they have not done so.²⁸ By mid 1826 the message was getting stronger with Harvey's writing to say that they had been offered 'from a gentleman in your area,' again most likely Mr Avery, Old Delabole scantle at 12s 0d per ton free on board and 4s 0d freight and are told that the order just placed with them should be delivered on the same terms.²⁹ A further complaint later in the following year appears to have brought matters to a head when Rosevear and Sloggatt increased their freight charge to 4s 6d per ton from 3s 6d because of the necessity to pay harbour dues to Avery at Boscastle when the cargo could not be loaded at Tintagel. They are reminded that their neighbour can deliver at 15s 6d per ton freight paid and are advised that they are not prepared to pay more than this and that the cargo they have sent will be kept separate pending their reply, implying that it might be returned if they did not comply.³⁰

Avery's undercutting tactics worked and by 1827 Avery had become the principal supplier of slates to Harveys, although the relationship was not without its difficulties. Late deliveries, slates sent when not required, an unexpected requirement to pay gratuities with the freight to the master and the terms of payment were all issues raised by Harveys.³¹ In a letter in 1828 Harveys complain to Avery that he has drawn on them in three months for two cargoes of slate whereas they are accustomed to a credit of at least six months and sometimes longer, and say, 'we hope you will allow us to alter the date of your draft to six months'.³² Not surprisingly Rosevear and Sloggatt were in the picture again by 1828 but this time alongside others. Robert Bake was one of the new suppliers of Delabole slate who wrote to Harveys from Port Gaverne in 1829 informing them that he was prepared to sell at 11s 6d per ton with 3s 6d per ton freight although his normal price was 12s 0d per ton, saying in his letter 'I cannot permit myself to be undersold'. He also suggests to Harveys that they may be able to come to some arrangement with the captain on the freight charge when the cargo is delivered, adding that he will not give more than 3s 2d per ton for the next shipment.³³ Sadly we learn from an entry in the journal that Robert Bake came to an untimely end early in 1830 when he died after being thrown from his horse 'in a state of intoxication'.³⁴

Rosevear and Sloggatt did not enjoy a similar exclusive arrangement for the supply of oats. There are letters from Harveys to other suppliers in 1825 including suppliers outside the region in Pembrokeshire and Anglesey, two major centres of production, and a merchant in Cardiff who imported oats from Ireland; the extensive supply network implying that a substantial level of demand existed.³⁵ The suppliers within the region, other than Rosevear and Sloggatt, included Edward Hockin of Hartland and his son John, to whom correspondence was addressed to Bude, and T. R. Avery, Rosevear and Sloggatt's competitor in Boscastle. The pricing of oats by the suppliers had to be competitive since Harveys invariably asked their suppliers for quotations before requesting deliveries. The enquiries for oats always asked for the 'weight per Winchester measure,' the higher weight or bulk density being preferred, and also whether the oats were white or black as both were supplied.³⁶ Suppliers were told in no uncertain terms when their prices were too high. Harveys in a letter to Rosevear and Sloggatt in July 1825 said, 'we only expect to hear from you again when you

have it in your power to offer us a cargo on more moderate terms'.³⁷ The situation had changed quickly. Rosevear and Sloggatt had been considered to be competitive earlier in the year when they sold Harveys a consignment of 206 quarters and 5 Winchesters of oats for 21s 0d per quarter for which they were credited with £216 19s 1½d.³⁸ Although Harveys stated the price they were prepared to pay for oats delivered to Hayle, occasionally suppliers offered only a 'free on board' price. This indicated that they did not have a vessel available. An offer by Rosevear and Sloggatt of 24s 0d per quarter 'free on board' in October 1825 was rejected by Harvey & Co. They replied, 'we must decline your offer as we are not likely to procure a vessel here to take the oats'.³⁹

There were occasions when the bargaining position was reversed. On one occasion Harveys urgently needed supplies through an unexpected increase in consumption and wrote to their agent, Mr Oliver, based in Padstow asking him to visit Rosevear and Sloggatt and Mr Edward Hockin of Hartland, to procure a cargo on the best possible terms together with a vessel. Rosevear and Sloggatt were even offered an accompanying cargo of slates as an incentive.⁴⁰ Edward Hockin had previously offered oats at 26s 6d per quarter delivered, but could not find a vessel.⁴¹

The deal in which oats were sold to Christopher Ellis was considered to be a disaster by Rosevear, although this is not fully supported by the Ellis records. The *Eleanor*, of which a Captain Drew was the master, appeared unexpectedly in Hayle when Rosevear was visiting, having been sent without warning by Samuel Brown from Bude. Rosevear comments that he was 'employed all day in attempts to sell- but in vain- it is one of the most perplexing concerns I ever met with'.⁴² The following day, however, he reports that he has sold the cargo to Ellis 'at a very heavy loss.' although the Ellis records show that the cargo, as declared for the payment of harbour dues, was one of 203 quarters and was valued at £239 16s 2d, equivalent to 23s 7½d per quarter.⁴³ Ellis acted as an agent in the transaction for which he claimed expenses for discharge and a 5 per cent commission which reduced the realisation to £225 14s 8d and with further deductions of £17 5s 2d for freight charges the final net price was £208 9s 6d, equivalent to 20s 6½d per quarter which still could hardly be described as being disastrous compared with other deals.⁴⁴ It is not clear, however, if Rosevear received full payment of the amount due. The Ellis record only shows one bill of £82 6s 6d being paid to him directly.

The credit arrangements for grain differed from those for slate. This was highlighted by an invoice from T R Avery, who seemingly was the instigator of many of the contentious commercial issues. An invoice he submitted to Harveys requested payment for a consignment of wheat and barley within thirty days to which he is sent a rather curt reply saying that two months is the standard credit period in the trade and that they will be accepting their bill 'at a not shorter date than two months'.⁴⁵ The issue was also raised by Edward Hockin through a bill he submitted requesting half to be paid in 30 days and the remainder in 60 days to which Harveys replied 'we hope it will not cause much inconvenience if we draw the bill for the total amount in 60 days as we now consider 60 days almost as cash in this neighbourhood'.⁴⁶ This compares with credit terms of six months seen in the slate trade just two months earlier.

There was occasional return trade between Harveys and Rosevear and Sloggatt. Rosevear and Sloggatt ordered fabricated items including pumps for a drainage scheme at the quarry and a number of agricultural items including a chaff machine were delivered, although on one occasion Harveys were unable to meet a request for iron plough parts, not having manufactured such parts before and presumably not prepared to make a small quantity specially for one order.⁴⁷ A consignment of 50 to 60 Norwegian balks is also offered at 2s 1½d per foot which is said to have been requested by Mr Rosevear on a recent visit, no doubt with supplies to the mines in mind.⁴⁸

All of these varied activities show the need for merchants such as Rosevear and Sloggatt to remain flexible. They were operating at the time when shipowning, and vessel management were being integrated into the merchants' activities, a process that had been advancing from the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ Vessel ownership and management eliminated the

uncertainty of finding a suitable vessel and gave the merchant more control over the shipment of products.⁵⁰ This trend is most clearly seen in the records of Henley & Sons of London between 1770 and 1830 who began as coal merchants and gradually become specialised shipowners.⁵¹ Another similarity is in the use of vessels. Henley and Sons made considerable profits from contracting out their vessels, notably as transports during the wars.⁵² While the period of the journal was post war, Rosevear and Sloggatt also utilised their shipping assets. Harveys were offered vessels on a contract basis by Rosevear and Sloggatt for carrying coal between South Wales and Hayle, a trade which peaked in the summer months. In response to an offer made in 1825, Harveys took both their vessels, which at the time would have been the *Jane* and the *Valency*, for the duration of the summer 'at the best freight rate paid to this port.'⁵³ There is also a record of vessels belonging to Rosevear and Sloggatt being involved in trade between Swansea and Hayle in the following year.⁵⁴ Vessels were also offered to Harveys for the transportation of goods on a single voyage basis. In 1825 an offer was made to carry salt from Liverpool, possibly as a return cargo for the vessels carrying manganese to the port, to which Harveys replied that they were not prepared to import salt although a cargo of bricks from Chester was offered as an alternative.⁵⁵

Rosevear and Sloggatt as Lloyd's Agents

The role of the Lloyd's agent is not well documented although Gibb does shed some light on it.⁵⁶ Rosevear and Sloggatt were advised of their appointment as agents for Lloyd's on 6 January 1826 and the journal thereafter contains a number of reports of their activities in this role. The general committee of Lloyd's adopted the policy of appointing agents to represent all the Lloyd's underwriters in 1811 and by 1829 had appointed over three hundred and fifty at ports in England and Scotland and overseas.⁵⁷ The agents were advised that their duties were 'to send prompt news of arrivals, sailings, casualties and enemy privateers, deal with salvage claims, check the plundering of stranded goods and furnish such precise information as would ensure that only damage properly attaching to the policy was paid for by underwriters'.⁵⁸ There was no remuneration, the appointment was purely honourable and any fees and disbursements had to be obtained from the owners of the vessels or the goods. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that the accounts in the journal are invariably concerned with recovering cargos to keep in safe storage, no doubt with salvage costs in mind, in addition to protecting the interests of the owners and underwriters. In this activity they were often assisted by the Coastguard service which, when it was reformed from the Preventive Water Guard Service in 1822, was given the responsibility to act as Receiver of Wreck, taking charge of everything coming ashore to ensure that all duties were paid.⁵⁹

Rosevear and Sloggatt were offered the appointment as Lloyd's Agents through the rescinding of the appointment of T.R. Avery, their neighbour and competitor in Boscastle, through his misconduct in the handling of a wreck.⁶⁰ In the pursuance of their duties as agents Avery was their main adversary, often intervening to take shipwreck cargo into his own custody to claim the salvage, perhaps motivated to some extent by ill feeling. He had good intelligence and was present on many occasions when vessels came ashore enabling him to be the first to speak to the master to persuade him that he should take control of the cargo. If Avery had obtained the consent of the master of the vessel his claim was supported by the local magistrates at Stratton even if they were against the wishes of the owners and underwriters who had delegated their authority to the Lloyd's agent. It appeared that his motivation, however, was not to steal the cargo, but to gain control to arrange the sale and be awarded salvage costs.

An example was the wreck of the *Elizabeth* of Llanelly, which came ashore at Poundstock on 4 January 1829, where the master refused to give up the cargo to Rosevear and Sloggatt, reportedly 'under Avery's influence.'⁶¹ The journal later reports that part of the cargo seized by Avery, flour owned by Hunter and Coventry, was released to the owners at a hearing before the statutory three magistrates at Stratton, with Avery being awarded £170 costs.⁶² The cargo was not always given up so readily, however, as instanced by the wreck of the *Aera* which came ashore at Sandymouth Cove near the village of Morwenstow on the

coast north of Bude on 11 February 1828. The vessel was on passage to Drogheda with a cargo of hops, seeds and hoops when it foundered and the claim for custody of the hops resulted in a major dispute which was finally settled a year later in the Court of the King's Bench in London. The case was reported by the *Times* and from the report they published and entries in the journal we are able to reconstruct the sequence of events that took place.⁶³

The wreck was attended by a Lieutenant Keys, the commander of the Coastguard, who also held a deputation under the Customs. Keys spoke to the master of the vessel, Captain Philip Atkins Williams, and was asked to do what was necessary to rescue the cargo and to place it under the care of the agents for Lloyds. William Sloggatt junior, the son of William Sloggatt, proceeded to the wreck and with his assistants and the help of the Coastguard boatmen started to unload the vessel when the tide allowed. Their progress, however, was impeded by a crowd of local Morwenstow residents, described by Rosevear as the 'Morwenstow Wreckers' led by a local farmer, William Shearm of Stow House and aided and abetted by T. R. Avery. The crowd became unruly and the boatmen had to draw their swords to quell the disturbance and allow the cargo to be successfully discharged. In the course of transfer of the cargo by cart to safe storage, however, Shearm and Avery forcibly gained control of one of the carts and took part of the cargo of hops to Stow House.

Three days later, on 14 February, Rosevear and Sloggatt were summoned to a meeting of three magistrates at Stratton at which the master of the vessel swore that he had not requested that the cargo should be handed to the Lloyd's agents and revealed that he had signed a letter giving authority to Avery. The magistrates accordingly ordered Rosevear and Sloggatt to deliver up the part cargo of the hops they had successfully warehoused at Bude or it would be seized by warrant the following day and the representatives of the Lloyd's agents fined for interference.⁶⁴ This set in train a series of events which included the presentation of letters to Captain Williams by a representative of the brokers advising that he should comply with the wishes of the underwriters and shippers to give custody to the Lloyd's agent. Bills of lading endorsed to Rosevear and Sloggatt were also presented to William Shearm by a Mr Peppin on behalf of the owners of the cargo, hop merchants Thomas George and James Russell of Southwark. All to no avail, although at one point an offer was made by Shearm to deal with Mr Peppin but not if Rosevear and Sloggatt were involved.⁶⁵

At a subsequent meeting of the Stratton Magistrates, called by Avery, to settle the salvage costs, which Avery unsuccessfully applied for Rosevear and Sloggatt to be excluded from, the rights of Avery were further asserted and a claim by Lieutenant Keys and his boatmen for salvage costs of £40 was turned down. At the conclusion of this meeting Rosevear and Sloggatt advised the magistrates that they intended to take the matter to the Admiralty Court, which in the words of Rosevear produced 'an effect not dissimilar to the upsetting of a beehive,' although for reasons not given it was subsequently decided not to proceed in this way.⁶⁶ The advice given by the solicitors of the underwriters was that they had a good case against Avery for not delivering up the hops on demand when presented with the endorsed Bills, although on the matter of Avery forcibly possessing himself of the cargo and the possibility of taking out a monition on the Stratton magistrates to prevent them assessing salvage, the legal advice was not to proceed because the captain's written authority 'was all powerful for Avery'.⁶⁷ Legal opinion therefore existed to support the rights of the master of to assign salvage responsibilities. The eventual outcome in respect of the *Aera's* cargo was that the owners of the cargo, George and Russell, brought an action at the Court of the Kings Bench to recover the value of the hops detained by Avery. The outcome was a convincing victory for the owners. The jury found immediately for the plaintiffs and the judge, Lord Tenterton, declared that 'it was a very clear case.' Notification of the awards made by the Arbitrator was given on 31 October 1829 when the plaintiffs were awarded £280 1s 11½d. The total of costs and expenses of the case to Avery were estimated to be at least £1100, a most expensive enterprise for him which it would appear was influenced to some extent by his resentment of Rosevear and Sloggatt.⁶⁸

Conclusions

This study makes a significant addition to the available knowledge on the contribution of the smaller ports to the process of industrial development in the early nineteenth century, a contribution that has been previously highlighted by Armstrong, Jackson and Ville. The merchants, in this case Rosevear and Sloggatt, clearly had the vision and entrepreneurial qualities to benefit from the situation operating as merchants, shipowners and vessel managers to further their business interests. Their small coasting vessels, some less than 30 tons, worked tirelessly throughout the South West region and beyond, employed in carrying essential materials on behalf of others to support the industrial heartland of the region and together with other vessels providing an outlet for the locally produced slate, manganese and grain. There was also active participation in the trade with Bristol and essential supplies of coal from South Wales brought into Boscastle.

Rosevear also worked hard in promoting sales of their slate travelling extensively to develop business contacts and establish networks both within and outside the region. There is a clear example here of an entrepreneurial spirit, a characteristic of many merchants in the period and instanced particularly by Ville in his work on Henley & Co of Wapping.

Despite the heavy workload involved in managing their business affairs Rosevear and Sloggatt still found time to accept the appointment as Lloyd's agents. Their activities in this role show the complexity that still existed in the assignment of salvage responsibilities in the early nineteenth century, despite all the legislation that was in place. The action of the magistrates in Stratton may have been typical of the general situation or may have been merely a local interpretation. Certainly the case of the *Aera* and all the opinions expressed around it show that the situation was clearly still something of a minefield. It is significant that Rosevear met with Richard Pearce, the Lloyd's agent for Penzance, in one of his visits to Bodriggy during the case of the *Aera*. Pearce was a magistrate himself, and it likely that a different regime operated in Penzance and indeed there may have been many variations on the way salvage was handled across the ports where Lloyd's agents were appointed.⁶⁹ There is clearly room here for further research if documents can be found to support such an enquiry.

The Boscastle Journal proved to be extremely useful as the basis for this study and the information on trade and shipping is only a part of what it contains. The journal contains a wealth of other information that could serve as the basis for studies of other aspects of his life. There are extensive reports of Rosevear's involvement with the Methodist movement in North Cornwall, in which he was particularly active, and many references to his interests in turnpike roads, politics and a number of philanthropic societies.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated the journal is the primary source of the information presented in the study. The original of the journal is held in the archive of the Courtney Library at the Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro. There is also an excellent transcription and summary by Joanna Raymond-Barker and Colin Clark, *A Boscastle Journal: Thomas Pope Rosevear, 1825-46*, (Bruton, 2006).

² H. Doe, 'Cornish Ports, Shipping and Investment in the Nineteenth Century' in H. Doe, A Kennerley, and P Payton, (eds.), *The Maritime History of Cornwall*, (Exeter, forthcoming 2012), 298.

³ J. Armstrong, 'The Significance of Coastal Shipping in British Domestic Transport, 1550-1830', *International Journal of Maritime History* III, no. 2 (1991), 63-94, 71.

⁴ G. Jackson, 'The Significance of Unimportant Ports', *International Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. XIII, No. 2 (December 2001), 1-17, 3.

⁵ G. Jackson, 'The Significance of Unimportant Ports', 9.

⁶ M Willcox, 'Maritime Business in Eighteenth Century Cornwall: Zephaniah Job of Polperro', *Troze*, 2,2.

⁷ See E. Vale, *The Harveys of Hayle*, (Truro, 1966).

⁸ J. Williams, *Commercial Directory of the principal market towns in Cornwall*, (Liverpool, 1847).

⁹ Samuel Brown was a Bude corn merchant, listed in Pigot's 1830 Directory of Cornwall, with whom Rosevear and Sloggatt had an ongoing business relationship.

¹⁰ The Harvey & Co. letter files are held in the Cornwall Record Office, (hereafter CRO). Those applicable to this study are H/2/4 and H/2/5 outgoing letters, 1825-30, and H/1/1.incoming letters 1829.

¹¹ The Ellis archive is in the personal possession of Mr Paul Stephens who kindly provided access for this study.

¹² A Journal entry dated 28 Mar 1826 records the settling of accounts with the Portreath Company and Williams, *Commercial Directory*, (1847) lists William Tyacke of Marazion as a coal and general merchant.

¹³ Joanna Raymond-Barker and Colin Clark include two excellent maps of Rosevear's travels, in *A Boscastle Journal*, xxx and xxxi.

¹⁴ The numbers include recorded loadings and unloadings which did not have corresponding clearances and entries.

¹⁵ The clearances from Tintagel were variously described as being from The Castle, Castle Cove, K A Castle and T Castle. All have been listed under Tintagel for the purpose of this study.

¹⁶ Journal entries dated 12 Jul 1827 and 9 Aug 1828.

¹⁷ Journal entries dated, 23 Mar 1826, 20 Mar 1826 and 30 Jul 1827.

¹⁸ The National Archives, E190, 1293/3/59, Bristol Coastal Out, Christmas 1788 to mid 1789, item 59.

¹⁹ Armstrong, 'The Significance of Coastal Shipping', 73.

²⁰ D. Hussey, 'The Coastal Trade of the Somerset ports in the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth centuries' in A.J. Webb, (ed.) *A Maritime History of Somerset*, 1, (Taunton, 2010).

²¹ P. Payton, *The Cornish Overseas*, (Fowey, 2005), 70-1.

²² CRO, L 172, Lease to the Litcroft Manganese Company for mining manganese in Llaneast on payment of 12s 0d per ton to John King of Lithbridge.

²³ H. Doe, 'The Long Reach of the Small Port: Influences and Connections in Small English Ports in Nineteenth Century' in Schulte Beerbuhl, M., (ed) *Cosmopolitan Networks in Commerce and Society*, *GHIL Bulletin*, 2, (London: German Historical Institute, 2011).

²⁴ Cornwall Record Office (CRO), X1126, J. W. Trevan, *Summary of the parish of St Endellion prior to the year 1834*. Transcription by the Port Isaac Local History Group, (2010).

²⁵ The originals of the Padstow shipping registers are not extant for this period and we are indebted to Grahame Farr for the transcripts which are held in the archive of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

²⁶ R.C. Jarvis, 'Cumberland Shipping in the Eighteenth Century', *C.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, liv, 1955, 226. See also, C.H. Ward-Jackson, *Ships and Shipbuilders of a Westcountry Seaport: Fowey 1786-1939* (Truro, 1986), C.H. Ward Jackson, *Stephens of Fowey: A Portrait of a Cornish Merchant Fleet 1867-1939* (Greenwich: National Maritime Museum, 1980). For an examination of comparative shipownership in England see H Doe, *Enterprising Women and Shipping in the Nineteenth Century*, (Woodbridge, 2009), 73-77.

²⁷ H. Doe, 'Small Shipbuilding Businesses during the Napoleonic Wars: James Dunn of Mevagissey, 1799-1816', (unpublished master's thesis, University of Exeter, 2003), 61.

²⁸ CRO, H/2/4, letters dated 16 Aug 1825 and 22 Oct 1825.

²⁹ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 15 Jun 1826.

³⁰ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 21 Oct 1826.

³¹ CRO, H/2/4, letters dated 6 Apr 1827, 18 May 1827 and 22 May 1827.

³² CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 8 May 1828.

³³ CRO, H/1/1, letter, dated 14 Jul 1829.

³⁴ Journal entry 16 Jan 1830.

³⁵ The supplier in Anglesey was John Treweeke of Amlwch, Hugh Wilson of Cold Blow was the supplier in Pembrokeshire. The imported oats were bought from Robert Thomas in Cardiff who was importing from Youghall in Ireland.

³⁶ The Winchester measure was the Winchester bushel which was the long established volumetric measure for grain defined by a marked container held in the Exchequer in London which equated to an eighth of a quarter. The gallon was one of the subdivisions of the Winchester bushel which when it was defined as equivalent to 10 pounds of water in 1824 made the old Winchester bushel 3 per cent smaller than the new bushel which led to confusion for a period when the new bushel came into use.

³⁷ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 7 Jul 1825.

³⁸ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 25 Feb 1825.

³⁹ CRO, H/2/4, letters dated 22 Oct 1825 and 29 October 1825.

⁴⁰ CRO, H/2/4, letter to Rosevear and Sloggatt, dated 18 Nov 1825.

⁴¹ CRO, H/2/4, letter to Mr James Oliver, dated 18 Nov 1825.

⁴² Journal entry 17 Mar 1826.

⁴³ Journal entry, 18 Mar 1826 and Ellis Ledger Book, No. 5, 1825-33, 96.

⁴⁴ Journal entry, 20 Mar 1826.

⁴⁵ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 14 Apr 1827.

⁴⁶ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 28 Jul 1826.

⁴⁷ CRO, H/2/4, letters dated 25 Feb and 21 Oct 1826.

⁴⁸ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 26 Apr 1825.

⁴⁹ Armstrong, 'The Significance of Coastal Shipping', 90-2.

⁵⁰ Armstrong 'The Significance of Coastal Shipping', 90.

⁵¹ S. Ville, 'The growth of specialisation in English shipowning 1750-1850' *Economic History Review* 2nd ser. XLVI, 4, (1993), 702-22; S. Ville, *English Shipowning during the Industrial Revolution; Michael Henley and Son, London Shipowners 1770-1830* (Manchester, 1987).

⁵² S. Ville, 'The deployment of English merchant shipping: Michael and Joseph Henley of Wapping, ship owners 1775-1830', *Journal of Transport History* 3rd ser., v, 2 (1984), 16.

⁵³ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 11 Jun 1825.

⁵⁴ A shipping list published in the *West Briton* of 31 Mar 1826 showed that the *Valency*, Captain Ballamy, was one of eleven vessels that cleared Swansea for St Ives on 25 Mar 1826. St Ives was the Customs Port for Hayle.

⁵⁵ CRO, H/2/4, letter dated 19 May 1825. The letter also makes reference to the supplier as Mather Parker & Co., Buckley Brickworks, near Hawarden. Buckley in Flintshire was a traditional centre for brick making, from where the bricks were carted to landing places on the River Dee within the Customs port of Chester.

⁵⁶ D.E.W. Gibb, *Lloyd's of London: a study of individualism*, (London, 1972).

⁵⁷ D.E.W. Gibb, *Lloyd's of London*, 93.

⁵⁸ D.E.W. Gibb, *Lloyd's of London*, 93-4.

⁵⁹ C.J. Pearce, *Cornish Wrecking, 1700-1860: Reality and Popular Myth*, (Woodbridge, 2010), 130.

⁶⁰ Journal entry, 3 Dec 1825.

⁶¹ Journal entry, 21 Jan 1829.

⁶² Journal entry, 19 Feb 1829.

⁶³ *Times Digital Archive*, 28 Feb 1829.

⁶⁴ Journal entry, 14 Feb 1828.

⁶⁵ Journal entry, 23 Feb 1828.

⁶⁶ Journal entry, 29 Feb 1828.

⁶⁷ Journal entry, 18 Mar 1828.

⁶⁸ Journal entry, 31 Oct 1829.

⁶⁹ Journal entry, 9 May 1828.