

TROZE

The Online Journal of the National Maritime Museum Cornwall www.nmmc.co.uk

Falmouth Pilots of the Early Nineteenth Century

By Tim Knight

December 2019

Volume 8 Number 1

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*

Editorial Board

Editor

Dr. Lesley Trotter, Honorary Research Fellow, Institute of Cornish Studies,
University of Exeter
Dr. Helen Doe, Centre for Maritime Historical Studies, University of Exeter (Chairman)
Captain George Hogg RN, National Maritime Museum Cornwall
Dr Alston Kennerley, University of Plymouth
Tony Pawlyn, Head of Library, National Maritime Museum Cornwall
Dr Gary Tregidga, Institute of Cornish Studies, University of Exeter
Dr Nigel Rigby, National Maritime Museum
Dr Martin Wilcox, Maritime Historical Studies Centre, University of Hull

We welcome article submissions on any aspect relating to our mission.

Please contact the editor at troze@nmmc.co.uk or
National Maritime Museum Cornwall
Discovery Quay
Falmouth
Cornwall
TR11 3QY
United Kingdom

© National Maritime Museum Cornwall and Tim Knight

Tim Knight

Tim Knight is a retired Engineer and manager living in north Wales with an active interest in family history since the 1901 census was available online. Tim's research into his Cornwall ancestors led to uncovering a wealth of records relating to Falmouth Pilots. His interest in family history also led to a virtual tour of the coast of the island of Ireland to record the location of all the 19th Century Coastguard stations. His spare time is spent learning coding, volunteering for a couple of local charities, and with his children and grandchildren.

Falmouth Pilots of the Late Nineteenth Century

Tim Knight

Introduction

Over the centuries, when masters of ships sailed through unfamiliar waters, they regularly engaged the services of local seafarers to act as pilot and provide guidance on how to navigate their passage safely. In Cornwall such skilled knowledge of the treacherous coast had long been sought and pilots were in great demand by both commercial and naval vessels.¹ Before 1809, as a ship approached land, anyone who was at sea and willing to sell his services as a pilot to the ship's master could board the ship and provide information relating to tides, currents, underwater hazards and so on; even taking control of the ship, if the master chose. However, these seafarers, often fishermen, were not licensed or regulated, and consequently the ship's master was not always in receipt of the correct advice. Some men gained a reputation for being knowledgeable and reliable, and would be sought out by mariners seeking the best help they could find. Concerns remained, however, as to the competency of some pilots and in 1809 national regulations were introduced to license pilots. This article looks at the pilots in Falmouth, which, as a naturally deep-water port and the first and last port of call for shipping into the Channel, was increasingly busy with shipping.

Pilots have had limited coverage by historians, with exception of Bristol and Bristol Channel pilots, and much of the attention has been on the pilot cutters, known for their speed under sail. Hignett provided an overview across the centuries, while Frank Argall and Ralph Bird looked specifically at the Falmouth pilot cutters. The pilots of the Isles of Scilly were examined by Jenkins and later by Sara Powell. More recently, Dr Tri Tran examined the nineteenth century pilotage acts.² This article looks at the careers of the first licensed pilots in Falmouth and the information that can be derived from a range of sources such as the records relating to pilotage held at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall and in the London Metropolitan Archives. Within these there are snapshots of the events dealt with by the Sub-Commissioners of Pilotage in Falmouth in the second half of the nineteenth century and the Pilotage Committee of Trinity House for the whole of the century.³

The records contain transcription errors but careful linking of names and dates can help to identify where the errors are and what the correct name or date should be. The identification of errors in the records was only possible by collating all of the apparent facts and allocating them to individuals and vessels in a database. In triangulating the data with more from the Registers

¹ Helen Doe, Alston Kennerley and Philip Payton, 'Introduction to Eighteenth Century Cornwall' in Philip Payton, Alston Kennerley, and Helen Doe (eds.), *The Maritime History of Cornwall* (University of Exeter Press, 2014), p. 139.

² H. M. Hignett, 'An Outline History of Marine Pilotage in Britain,' *Journal of Navigation*, Vol. 31, Issue 3 (September 1978), pp. 453-464; Harry Hignett, *21 Centuries of Marine Pilotage: The History of United Kingdom Maritime Pilots Association*. (The United Kingdom Maritime Pilots Association, London, 2012); Frank Argall and Ralph Bird, 'Falmouth Pilot Cutters, 1800-1900', *The Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (1978), pp. 9-12; A. Jenkins, *Gigs and Cutters of the Isles of Scilly*, (Isles of Scilly Gig Racing Committee, 1975); Tom Cunliffe, *Pilot Cutters Under Sail: Pilots and Pilotage in Britain and Northern Europe*, (Seaforth, 2013); Sara Powell, 'The Pilots and Pilot Cutters of the Isles of Scilly, 1800-1900', unpublished paper. With grateful thanks to the author; Tri Tran, 'Maritime Pilotage Acts of the Nineteenth Century', *The Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (2003), pp. 31-50.

³ London Metropolitan Archives (LMA): Records of the Corporation of Trinity House; National Maritime Museum Cornwall (NMMC): Records of Falmouth Sub-Commissioners of Pilotage.

of Shipping, crew lists, contemporary newspapers and genealogical data researched for each person, it was possible to identify cases where either an individual event or fact had been attributed to the wrong person, or more than one person, or the person to whom it was attributed was not known. Most of these anomalies have been resolved but there are still some unresolved. With so many primary sources, a structured approach to collating the facts was undertaken. This required detailed assessment of each fact from each source to ensure that it was being correctly attributed to the right individual. Genealogical and contemporary newspaper sources built the bigger picture for each person and family. From all of this a database of Falmouth Pilots has been created.⁴

Regulation of Pilotage Prior to the Act of 1808

Piloting arrangements in Britain had been in place for hundreds of years prior to the 1808 Act of Parliament. Royal Charters had been granted to various maritime guilds or fraternities, including that of Trinity House of Deptford Strond.⁵ Because it is the only Trinity House with authority throughout the United Kingdom resulting from its responsibilities for lighthouses, it is commonly known today simply as Trinity House and this name will be used here. It was however, one of several bodies around Britain responsible for defining and controlling maritime activities, including pilotage, within their ports; the others being the Trinity Houses of Dover, Deal, and the Isle of Thanet (within the group of Cinque Ports), Hull, Newcastle and Leith. The first Act of Parliament relating to pilotage in 1716 'delineated the Cinque Ports pilotage district' and provided them with statutory powers not available to other pilotage organisations.⁶ There followed a number of other pilotage Acts broadening the scope of ports and associated guilds that received the backing of law; for example: Liverpool (1765), Boston (1774), Swansea (1791), Hull (1800) and Bristol (1807). However, all of these Acts transferred the custom and practice of pilotage existing at each of the ports into statute; they did not formalise pilotage at any ports where there was no existing pilot organisation.⁷

The Board of Trade

In the House of Commons in July 1802 George Rose, a member of the Board of Trade, introduced a Bill 'For the better Regulation of Pilots and Piloting Vessels navigating the British Seas' to extend arrangements for pilots and pilotage to other ports around the country.⁸ Despite a second reading, it got no further and Rose, now Vice-President of the Board of Trade, brought another Bill to the House in June 1805 for the regulation of pilots.⁹ This did not succeed either and Rose resigned in 1806, but his successor at the Board

⁴ Falmouth Pilot Database was created with details from the Trinity House records and Falmouth pilots records plus crew lists, Ancestry and other genealogical sources.

⁵ Formally titled 'The Master Wardens and Assistants of the Guild Fraternity or Brotherhood of the Most Glorious and Undivided Trinity and of Saint Clement in the Parish of Deptford Strond in the County of Kent' History of Trinity House. Trinity House. <https://www.trinityhouse.co.uk/about-us/history-of-trinity-house> Accessed 22 October 2017.

⁶ Harry Hignett, *21 Centuries of Marine Pilotage: The History of United Kingdom Maritime Pilots Association*. London, (The United Kingdom Maritime Pilots Association, 2012), p. 16.

⁷ Hignett, *21 Centuries of Marine Pilotage*, p. 16.

⁸ Parliamentary Archives. HC Deb 02 July 1802 vol 5 cc718-9. *HANSARD 1803-2005*.

http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1802/jul/02/minutes#S1V0005P0_18020702_HOC_1 Accessed 22 October 2017; The History of Parliament Trust 1964-2017. ROSE, George (1744-1818), of Cuffnells, Hants. *The History of Parliament*. <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/> Accessed 22 October 2017.

⁹ Parliamentary Archives. HC Deb 29 June 1805 vol 5 c702. *HANSARD 1803-2005*.

http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1805/jun/29/minutes - S1V0005P0_18050629_HOC_1 Accessed 22 October 2017.

of Trade, Lord Temple, continued the pressure for action citing the risk to commercial interests of the loss of property and life ‘in consequence of the business of pilotage being frequently undertaken by persons unlicensed, ignorant, and unskilful’.¹⁰ This bill also failed to complete the journey onto statute and the task fell to George Rose, who had again been appointed as Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and in February 1808:

Mr Rose, in moving for leave to bring in this Bill, said, he was desirous of stating to the House the necessity that arose for some new regulations relative to the pilotage of vessels navigating the British seas. It originated from two causes, the safety of ships themselves and also the health of his Majesty's subjects on shore. There were no regularly licensed Pilots to navigate vessels between the South Foreland and the Isle of Wight, and this had occasioned the loss of many ships, lives, and cargoes. Not less than five East Indiamen had been lost within these few years within the points he had stated, owing entirely to the negligence of Pilots. In those places where there was no Corporation to regulate and license Pilots, it was proposed to give power to the Trinity House to appoint certain persons, who were capable of piloting vessels, within certain limits, to the exclusion of all others... At present the persons who acted as Pilots were generally such obscure individuals, that it was almost impracticable to know where they were to be found, and when found, impossible to make them understand their duty. Upon these grounds he moved for leave to bring in a Bill for the better regulating of Pilots for piloting vessels, navigating the British seas.¹¹

Introducing these bills during the extensive wars with France may have been a factor in the delay, but another factor may have been the vested interests of the existing pilotage bodies. As a result, it took six years to get parliament to agree to extend compulsory pilotage around Britain. Included in the Act was the extension of the pilot's role to assist in protecting the public from disease brought to the country by merchant ships, by notifying the need for quarantine.¹²

Cinque Port Pilots and Trinity House of Deptford Strond

George Rose's speech specifically picked out the coast from the South Foreland, a point just to the east of Dover, to the Isle of Wight. The Cinque Ports comprised the towns of Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich, and had been granted a charter by King Henry VIII in 1515.¹³ The arrangements and administration of pilotage within these towns, ports and associated ‘limb’ ports came under the Trinity House of Dover, Deal, and the Isle of Thanet. The latter term and ‘Cinque Ports’ are both used interchangeably but refer to the same area, pilots and arrangements. Prior to the 1808 Act there were positions for 120 Cinque Ports pilots, appointed and regulated by the Court of Lodemanage of the Trinity House of Dover, Deal, and the Isle of Thanet. Most of the more junior (Lower Book) pilots were

¹⁰ The History of Parliament Trust 1964-2017. TEMPLE NUGENT GRENVILLE (afterwards TEMPLE NUGENT BRYDGES CHANDOS GRENVILLE), Richard, Earl Temple (1776-1839), of Stowe, Bucks. and Avington Park, Hants. The History of Parliament. <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/temple-nugent-grenville-%28afterwards-temple-nugent-brydges-chandos-grenville> Accessed 22 October 2017; Parliamentary Archives. HC Deb 15 July 1806 vol 7 cc1146-7. HANSARD 1803-2005. http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1806/jul/15/pilots-bill#S1V0007P0_18060715_HOC_9 Accessed 22 October 2017.

¹¹ *Kentish Weekly Post or Canterbury Journal*, 1 March 1808.

¹² Tran, ‘Maritime Pilotage Acts’, p. 31.

¹³ Cinque Ports Pilots Part I. *The Dover Historian*, July 26, 2014. <https://doverhistorian.com/2014/07/26/cinque-ports-pilots-part-i/> Accessed 10 July 2019. Note: Rye was also once Cinque Port until silted up.

based in Margate and Ramsgate while the senior (Upper Book) pilots were based at Deal and Dover from where they had first sight, and therefore first choice, of the merchant ships heading for the Thames and Medway Rivers.¹⁴

The key point is that all of these pilots were licensed to bring ships from wherever they were boarded into the Thames and Medway. They were not licensed to take ships in the other direction. Once they arrived at the ship's destination within the Thames or Medway estuaries, the pilots had to make their way home by land, or take their chances as a passenger on a ship leaving to travel south past the Downs, hoping to hail a boat to take them to shore.

The 1732 Pilotage Act brought into statute the practice of Trinity House licensing pilots to bring ships through the North Channel between Orfordness and London Bridge in both directions and from London Bridge to the Downs.¹⁵ This meant that merchant shipping coming into the Thames and Medway estuaries, as far as London Bridge would be lawfully piloted by Cinque Port pilots if they arrived from the south, and by Trinity House pilots if they arrived from the north. For the outward journeys, only Trinity House pilots were licensed. The Act clarified the extent of authority for both these Trinity Houses.¹⁶

Exemptions to Pilotage

All of the Acts of Parliament relating to pilots and pilotage only concerned commercial shipping, both British and foreign-registered. British-registered ships carrying cargo between British ports (coasters), or to and from northern European ports, and smaller vessels sailing further afield were exempt. The exact details of which ports and what tonnage were exempt varied from time to time. There were treaties of reciprocity in force from time to time; ships plying between British ports and other countries' ports were exempt where the other country afforded the same privilege to British-registered ships. The Acts did not apply to his (and later her) Majesty's ships either. This exempted the Royal Navy but also packet ships of the Post Master General.¹⁷ This was of particular note to Falmouth, a packet port.

Despite the exemptions the demand for pilots, particularly from the Royal Navy, which tended to sail in convoy to and from the Downs to the Thames and Medway estuaries, at times created problems for commercial shipping. Some pilots continued without becoming licensed, focusing their work on the Royal Navy whose ships were free to choose whoever they wished to advise them. An example at Falmouth was James Lowry (1748-1811), father of Bennett Lowry (1775-1852) licensed pilot. James was referred to as 'King's Pilot' when his widow applied for a pilot's widow's pension. This was declined but she was put on the casualty list, providing her with 8 shillings per month as 'as compensation to his family, on account of his good character and services'.¹⁸

Royal Navy ships' masters were considered competent to sail in any waters and in and out of any port unaided, but many chose to seek the help of local pilots, whether licensed or not, if they felt the need. A significant

¹⁴ Tran, 'Maritime Pilotage Acts', pp. 31-32.

¹⁵ Danby Pickering, *The Statutes at Large from the Magna Charta [to the End of the Eleventh Parliament of Great Britain, Anno 1761 Continued to 1806]*, (London, 1806).
https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=uxJSAAAAYAAJ&dq=1732+pilotage+act&source=gbs_navlinks_s
Accessed 24 October 2017.

¹⁶ However, a note in the Pilotage Minutes (18 p. 74 Vol.1) dated 8 November 1809 states that the Corporation's South Channel Pilots who were qualified for bringing ships and vessels for London up from the Downs could do so provided there be no Cinque Port Pilot in charge. see LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes.

¹⁷ Tran, 'Maritime Pilotage Acts', p. 32.

¹⁸ LMA: MS30174 Trinity House of Deptford Strond. Registers of Pilots' Licences (outports), 1808-46 & 1810-76. 1809. pp. 102-115.

amount of work for Cinque Port pilots arose from Royal Navy ships. When the Admiralty requested a pilot from Trinity House for one of their ships (whether it was sailing into the North Sea or English Channel), their 'request' had to be met and there are Pilotage Committee minutes relating to pilots being held to account for refusing the 'request'. If a merchant ship sailed into port without a pilot, the master was called to account for why he had done so and sometimes had to pay pilotage anyway, whereas any Royal Navy, packet or coast guard vessel could come and go as the master pleased. Thus, while many Royal Navy masters chose to take a pilot, they were not forced to nor held to account for not doing so.¹⁹

The 1808 Act

The 1808 Pilotage Act received Royal Assent on the 25 June 1808. The Act specified the criteria necessary to apply to become a Trinity House pilot: applicants must have served as a mate on a square-rigged vessel for at least three years, or as master in command of a square-rigged vessel for one year, or been employed in the pilot service of Trinity House for seven years, or as an apprentice on a pilot vessel licensed under the Act for five years. Pilots acting for less than three years were not able to pilot vessels drawing more than 14 feet (creating the distinction between First and Second Class Pilots).

The Act enabled Trinity House to appoint Sub-Commissioners of Pilotage to examine persons to act as pilots at ports 'wherever Corporation of Trinity House think requisite'. It is this section that enabled compulsory pilotage to be applied to other ports, excepting that they were not allowed to act within any district having separate jurisdiction (Cinque Ports, Bristol, Liverpool etc). The ports that the Corporation of Trinity House thought requisite to bring within the scope of the Act were known as 'outports'.

Pilots appointed under the Act were required to pay a fee of three guineas per annum to Trinity House and execute a bond in a penal sum not exceeding £100. This was a significant sum especially for a young pilot, but it also recognised the lucrative nature of piloting in a busy port. The intention was put into a fund to pay for the cost of damage to ships by careless pilots, but there is no evidence, in Falmouth, of this sum being paid although pilots were penalised. Each licence was to have a description of the pilot on the back for ship's masters to examine and confirm that the person presenting themselves as pilot was the person duly appointed to act. On being licensed on 22 December 1808 as First Class Pilot, Licence Number 1, Henry Vincent of Falmouth was described as aged 35, 5 feet 9 inches in height with a fresh complexion and having short black hair.²⁰ Additionally, pilots were excluded from keeping public houses. There had been problems on the Thames with unscrupulous landlords and drunken pilots.²¹ Offences against revenue laws would result in their dismissal or suspension and this related to smuggling as pilots had the opportunity to access and remove goods for which duty was payable before the vessel reached customs houses. Situated by the entrance and exit to the English Channel there was plenty of opportunity for smuggling for those based in Cornwall.²² William Bolitho was dismissed for smuggling, and when Richard Benney was going through the licensing process in 1890 he had to demonstrate that his interest in a shop selling tea and tobacco had passed to his mother-in-law.²³ Pilots were excluded from

¹⁹ Geo III Cap. CIV, An act for the better regulation of pilots, and of the pilotage of ships and vessels navigating the British seas. 25th June 1808; LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes 1809-1904.

²⁰ Falmouth Pilot Database.

²¹ Tran, 'Maritime Pilotage Acts', p. 33.

²² Huw Bowen, 'Privilege and Profit: Commanders of East Indiamen as Private Traders, Entrepreneurs and Smugglers 1760 to 1815', *International Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2007), pp. 43-88.

²³ NMMC: Bartlett Library: Falmouth Sub-Commissioners Minutes, 1890.

offering their services unless their licence (and their pilotage flag) was in their possession.

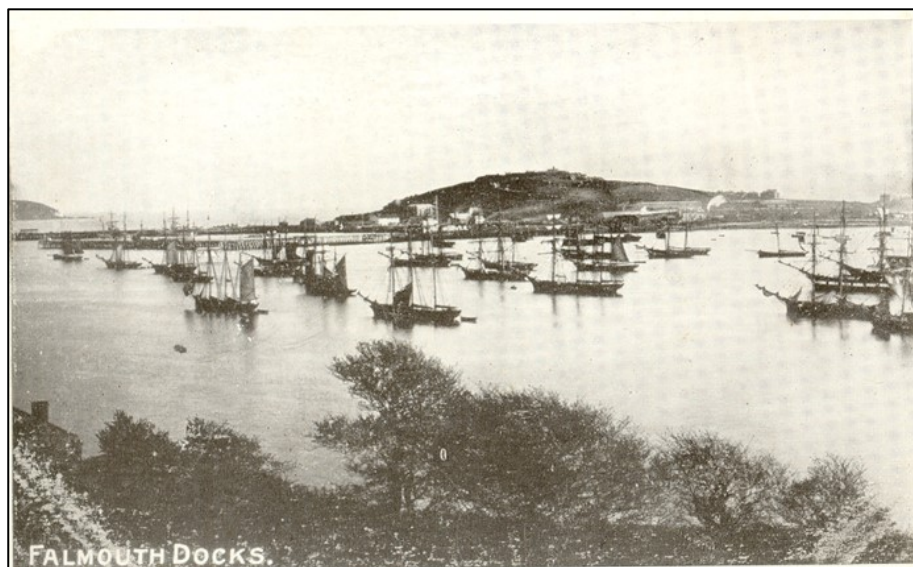


Figure 1: Falmouth Docks

Source: Helen Doe

Pilot Vessels

Vessels used in the Pilot Service were required to have black sides and a white-painted upper strake next the gunwale. They were to fly a vane or flag, half red and half white in horizontal stripes of which uppermost shall be white. This was the official signal that the vessel was a licensed pilot vessel. The name of the principal pilot was required to be painted in broad white letters on her stern and on each bow such number in the licence of such principal pilot.²⁴ This resulted in many Falmouth vessels simply being named after the most senior pilot serving where he was also owner or part-owner. The requirement to display the port letter and vessel licence number on the sails was brought in later in the nineteenth century. Also, later in the century, when the most senior pilot left the vessel through death or retirement, it was the case that the next most senior pilot would have his licence number changed to match that of the vessel.²⁵

The pilot vessels were specially made and Falmouth boats were mainly built in Flushing by Trethowan family. These cutters were built for speed and for handling in almost all sea conditions, thus giving them the ability to act in 'lucrative rescue and salvage operations'.²⁶ On board they carried a fifteen foot clinker-built boarding punt. Boats were relatively costly items, one belonging to a Mr Salt, a pilot of Polruan, was described as a 'large sloop-sail boat' with a value of £80.²⁷ The cost of the boat was shared between families and it is suggested that later nineteenth century marriages between families in Falmouth assisted in keeping pilot boats, and licences, within a close circle of six families: Chard, Collins, Andrew, Vincent, Bickford and Green.²⁸ The first cohort of licensed pilots in 1808 shows this with Lowry, Vincent, Dash,

²⁴ Tran, 'Maritime Pilotage Acts', p. 41; An Act for the better Regulation of Pilots and of the Pilotage of Ships and Vessels navigating the British Seas, 25 June 1808.

²⁵ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes, 1809-1904. See case of Harry Vincent and James Andrew in 1857 whose licences were altered.

²⁶ Frank Argall and Ralph Bird, 'Falmouth Pilot Cutters, 1800-1900', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 1978, Vol. 64, No. 1 pp. 9-12.

²⁷ Royal Cornwall Gazette, 27 January 1810.

²⁸ Argall and Bird, 'Falmouth Pilot Cutters', pp. 10-11.

Jenkins, Barker and Collins families and some evidence of intermarriage.²⁹ Similarly in Fowey, four of the first appointed pilots came from the Salt family, two from the Johns family and two from the Dunn family. All three families continued to provide pilots throughout the century.³⁰



Figure 2: Falmouth Pilot Cutter No 10

Source: Author

Any other boat not licensed as a pilot vessel but carrying a pilot, was required to exhibit a pilot flag to distinguish that he had a pilot on board. This latter point applied to fishing and similar vessels that a pilot may have used or even worked on while in search of vessels seeking such assistance, or on any vessel used by a pilot to return to shore after he had piloted a vessel within or from his licensed district. For this reason, every pilot had to have his own flag, which he would ask the ship's master to have hoisted once he had control. This meant that if a Second Class Pilot boarded a 'first class' ship, any First Class Pilot within reach could more readily determine that there was an opportunity to supersede a Second Class Pilot. This was the cause of many pilot disputes over the years.³¹

Annual Renewal

Pilot's licences had to be renewed in January every year and the Sub-Commissioners responsible for a district had to send a list of the names and residence of those whose licences had been renewed to Trinity House. A list of licensed pilots also had to be sent to the Commissioners of Customs for display in London and at local Customs Houses.

As Tran remarked, the 1808 Act was a landmark and created professional opportunities for a younger generation and made pilotage a firm career option. The compulsory licensing of pilots preceded the eventual compulsory licensing of masters and mates by nearly fifty years.³²

²⁹ Falmouth Pilot database.

³⁰ *London Gazette*, 16332, 9 January 1810.

³¹ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes 1809-1904; NMMC Bartlett Library: Falmouth Sub-Commissioners Minutes.

³² Tran, 'Maritime Pilotage Acts', p. 33; The Mercantile Marine Act 1850, 13 7 14 Vict., c93, came into force on 1 January 1851.

Compulsory Pilotage at Falmouth

The process for selecting exactly which ports were to become outports within the scope of the 1808 Act is not known but as has already been stated, the process of extending compulsory pilotage was started as much as six years before Assent. It is therefore considered likely that ship owners, mariners and merchants alike would have had plenty of time to lobby Trinity House and their Member of Parliament to have their port in, or out, of scope. However, an 1809 Digest of the Pilots Act provides the names and, in some cases, the residences of all pilots licensed under the Act.³³ It includes Yarmouth Harbour Pilots and the three newly created Districts of Portsmouth and Cowes, Plymouth and Falmouth.³⁴

Before compulsory pilotage could be applied at a particular port, a number of preparatory steps were necessary. These included the appointment of Sub-Commissioners, the examination and appointment of suitable men as pilots, and then some time to enable the new arrangements, including bye-laws, to be implemented.

The first step, once a port had been selected by Trinity House for inclusion as an outport, was the appointment of between three and five Sub-Commissioners. A circular letter had been sent by Trinity House, to the Customs House Collectors at the ports selected for the creation of compulsory pilotage districts and the response from those at Falmouth is transcribed below:

Falmouth

Messrs Sam Pellew and John Witter's Return to the Circular Letter.

Sir,

In answer to your letter of the 18th ultimo, we beg to observe that the boatmen and fishermen in general who are numerous at this port and on the adjoining coast, act occasionally as pilots. Their rates of pilotage are arbitrary, generally depending on the circumstances of the case, and vary from a few shillings to 10, 20 or more Guineas; as fit persons to be appointed sub commissioners for the examination those to be licensed, we can recommend

Mr W Payne

Mr John Richards

Masters of Men of War who have left Off the Sea

Mr Stephen Swale Master of Merchant Ship Do

These all reside at Falmouth, the former is Naval Master Attendant at that port and the two latter have no particular occupation.

The Commander of the Revenue Cutter stationed here is seldom at the Port and we conceive inadequate.

We are etc...

Sam Pellew, John Witter, Collectors³⁵

³³ Corporation of Trinity House. *Digest of the Pilots Act. Instructions to Masters of Ships being a Digest of the Provisions, Penalties &c of the Pilots Act Passed in the 48 Geo. 3 Cap 104 ...* (S. Smith, Paternoster-row, Tower-hill, London, 1809) p. 41.

³⁴ The Trinity House digest published in 1810 extended the list of outports to include: Dartmouth, Exeter, Fowey, Harwich, Holyhead, Milford, Newhaven, Penzance, Poole, Scilly, Weymouth and Yarmouth.

³⁵ LMA: MS30193 Lists of pilots already working in outports, 1808. London, 1808, p. 50.

Evidently, this response was to the circular sent out the preceding month, but unfortunately, it does not give the date of the response. The circular could have been sent out any time between July and September because the five Falmouth District Sub-Commissioners had been appointed by 20 October:

Name of Appointed Sub-Commissioner	Residence	Description
Samuel Pellew	Falmouth	Collector of Light Duties
John Whitter	Falmouth	Collector of Light Duties
William Paine	Falmouth	Late Master of His Majesty's Navy
John Richards	Falmouth	Late Master of His Majesty's Navy
Stephen Swale	Falmouth	Late Master of a Merchant Ship

Note: The name Swale in the Trinity House Letter book is a correct transcription but other records show that this was Stephen Sawle, the mariner.

Appointment of the Collector of Light Duties (and later in the nineteenth century, Collector of HM Customs) at an outpost as one of the Sub-Commissioners of Pilotage seems to have been a common occurrence. The work of a Sub-Commissioner was closely allied to the primary role of Collector and enabled him to make use of facilities such as office space, and secretary for the extra role.

The appointment of Sub-Commissioners required each of them to swear an oath that was worded in the Act, to ensure that they were impartial, would not favour any individual and would accept no fee or reward other than that allowed in the bye laws. It is not clear whether they were required to travel to Trinity House in London to swear the oath or if it could be done locally. Although five Sub-Commissioners were appointed, John Richards' tenure lasted a matter of weeks. He resigned the office on 8 December 1808, before any pilots had been appointed. That left four Sub-Commissioners, which was enough to continue the process.

A press announcement in November 1808 from H. Barnicoat, Secretary to the Sub-Commissioners gave notice of 'examinations for pilots' for their district extending from the Dodman to the Land's End.³⁶ The extent of the district in this advertisement is greater than that for which pilots were eventually licensed. The records of Trinity House in respect of the formation of the Falmouth District show that the district was originally intended to run: 'In and out of Falmouth Harbour, St Just, Carrick Road and Helford Sound; along the coast from the Dodman to the Land's End, in and out of Mount's Bay and Penzance; and in and out of all Ports and Places within those Limits'. The extent of the district was reduced on 23 February 1809, making way for the creation of a Penzance District.³⁷

Appointment of Pilots

By the time of the official announcement on 9 March 1809 published in both the *London Gazette* and later in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, the district had been reduced to end at the Lizard, enabling the creation of the Penzance

³⁶ Royal Cornwall Gazette 12 November 1808. H. Barnicoat was also First Clerk to the Collector, and Bonded Warehouse Keeper.

³⁷ LMA: MS30195 Appointments of Sub-Commissioners, 1808. p. 17.

District.³⁸ However, examinations had evidently already taken place and the pilots appointed to the Falmouth District given in Table 1.

Table 1. Pilots listed in the 1809 Compulsory Pilotage Notice

	First Class			Second Class	
1	Henry Vincent	12 December 1808	1	Samuel Lowry Jun	12 December 1808
2	Samuel Lowry	12 December 1808	2	Francis Lowry	1 January 1809
3	John Pasco	12 December 1808	3	Nicholas Jenkins	12 December 1808
4	Richard Trewavas	12 December 1808	4	Joseph Libby	12 December 1808
5	Richard Tonkin	12 December 1808	5	Richard Andrew	12 December 1808
6	Bennet Lowry	12 December 1808	6	William Collins	1 January 1809
7	Isaac Lower	1 January 1809	7	William Fittock	1 January 1809
8	Matthew Jenkins	12 December 1808	8	Henry James	1 January 1809
9	William Dash	12 December 1808	9	John Barker 1 st	1 January 1809
			10	John Barker 2 nd	1 January 1809
			11	Joseph Sanders	1 January 1809
			12	James Barker	1 January 1809
			13	Nicholas Johns	1 January 1809
			14	Henry Williams	1 January 1809
			15	William Warren	2 February 1809
			16	William Bolitho	2 February 1809

Not all who applied received licences and this was notable on the Isles of Scilly where only nine licences were issued for St Mary's. The outcry following this made Trinity House register a further twenty-eight pilots including six from St Agnes and three from Bryher.³⁹

The announcements in the *London Gazette* and the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* were slightly different, the former incorrectly identifying James Pasco and Joseph Levy as pilots. Other sources confirm it was John Pasco and Joseph Libby. The licence date above does not always follow chronologically the licence number. It is assumed that the licences were numbered sequentially by Trinity House but were issued to the individuals and dated when they had presented themselves and paid the relevant amounts. The cost of stamp duty does not appear to have been paid by pilots at this time, but their annual payment of three guineas would have been paid to the Sub-Commissioners as the fee for carrying out the duty of the office.

The Register of Pilots' Licences (outports) from which this list comes provides additional information, in most cases, about these 25 pilots. It provides their age on appointment, residence, a physical description and their qualification (being the extent of the pilotage district). The age of these pilots seems to have been consistently rounded up to the next year, presumably so that the description on the licence would be relevant a little longer.⁴⁰ Only one pilot did not have his age entered into this register. The youngest pilot at appointment was aged 24 and the oldest was aged 62. Of these pilots, the shortest time acting as a pilot was seven years while three would remain in the service for more than forty years. The final general age-related fact is that one of these pilots died aged 44 while five lived beyond 80, the oldest living until he was 93. A caveat is that, despite best efforts, the date of death of one of the pilots cannot be found, although the rest of his career is documented.

³⁸ *The London Gazette*, 16236, 11 March 1809, pp. 329-330; *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 1 April 1809,

³⁹ Powell, 'The Pilots and Pilot Cutters of the Isles of Scilly'.

⁴⁰ LMA: MS30174 Registers of Pilots' Licences (outports), 1808-46 & 1810-76, 1809. pp. 102-115.

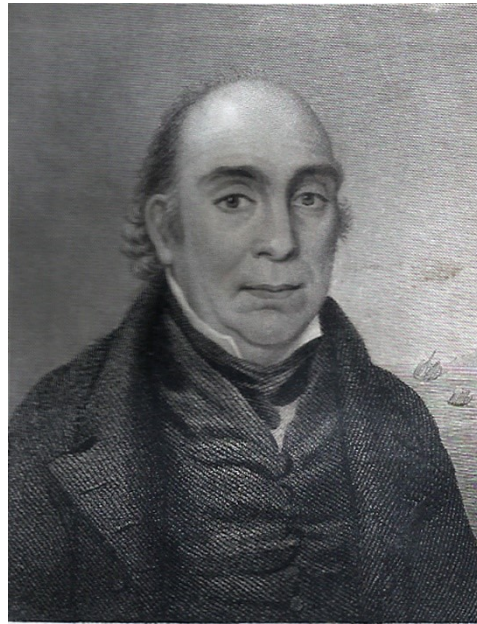


Figure 3: Richard Trewavas
Source: Ian M Wilson

An anomaly regarding these pilots is that Richard Trewavas was licensed for both the Falmouth and Penzance Districts, his qualification being from Dodman to Land's End, and different from every other pilot. Trewavas was born in the parish of Paul, about two miles west of Penzance on 25 November 1750. On being licensed on 22 December 1809 as First Class Pilot, Licence Number 4, Richard's age and physical description were not noted in the records. This may have arisen from his reputation as 'King's Pilot', having been the Royal Navy's preferred pilot for the area. He is also unique amongst pilots in having had his memoirs published, following his death aged 78, on 12 February 1823.⁴¹ The Trinity House records of Richard Trewavas are very sparse and apart from the entry in the Register of Pilots' Licences where his resignation on 15 October 1819 is noted, no other record has been found.⁴²

Genealogical research and the Register of Pilots' Licences also provides some new information about the Falmouth District pilots generally. Seven of them, all Second Class, resided in Coverack, one resided in Mousehole (Richard Trewavas), one in Falmouth (although his family all resided in St Mawes where he was born), and the other 16 resided in St Mawes.⁴³ Thus, from the start of compulsory pilotage, pilots were based in St Mawes and Coverack, not Falmouth. The appointment of pilots residing at Falmouth started to take place quite soon after following recommendation by the Falmouth Sub-Commissioners on 14 February 1810 but is outside the scope of this document, which deals only with those licensed on the first day of compulsory pilotage within the Falmouth District.⁴⁴

The steps necessary to implement compulsory pilotage at Falmouth were almost complete. Trinity House had identified local men who were suitable to be their Sub-Commissioners there. The Sub-Commissioners had examined

⁴¹ Richard Treffry, *Memoirs of Mr. Richard Trewavas, sen. of Mousehole, Cornwall*, (John Mason, London, 1829). Original edition in possession of a descendant.

⁴² Falmouth Pilot Database.

⁴³ *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>; *Cornwall Online Parish Clerks*. <https://www.opc-cornwall.org/>; *Find My Past*. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>.

⁴⁴ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes, 1809-1904. Vol. 1, p. 116.

local men, and submitted the names of those they found suitable to act as pilots to Trinity House from where their licences were issued. All that remained was to announce the new arrangements: the extent of the compulsory pilotage district; the names of the licensed pilots; the rates of pilotage. These were displayed in the Custom House in Falmouth, published in a *Digest of Instructions to Master of Ships* and the practicalities of implementation were published, along with the names of pilots for the Falmouth and Penzance Districts, in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* on 1 April 1809.⁴⁵ This latter item, already mentioned, gave notice that from 24 April 1809 the arrangements would become compulsory. There was a period of grace for those vessels already at sea so that the master would not fall foul of a requirement of which he had no knowledge. Thus, compulsory pilotage started at Falmouth on the 24 April 1809.

Selection of a Trinity Pilot

For ports where there were no formal arrangements for pilotage, anyone was able to present themselves as a person suitable to safely pilot the vessel, either at sea to port-bound ships, or in port to outward-bound ships. It was up to the ship's master, agent or owner to judge whether the person presenting themselves was suitable, or even the best person for the role. It was also for negotiation to decide the fee for the work.

For ports being brought into the formal arrangements of Trinity House under the Pilotage Act, it was up to the Sub-Commissioners of pilotage at the port to recommend those applicants found to have satisfied the criteria for selection, after examination, to Trinity House in London for appointment.⁴⁶ Details of the examination the applicants were subject to at this time have not been found but later records suggest it included very detailed points relative to the course to take given specific wind and tide conditions in order to avoid hazards in certain parts of the coast. Fees for the service were set by the Act removing the need for negotiation.

Choosing to apply to become a pilot was relatively simple as long as the individual was experienced in the local waters and was able to read and write. The choice then was whether to continue with the current role, be it fishing, coasting between ports of Britain and northern Europe or further afield across the oceans, or being tied to the local port district, being accountable to the Sub-Commissioners and obeying the bye-laws of Trinity House. As long as there was a good level of maritime traffic in, out and within the district, the opportunity to be relatively and reliably well paid, and being close to home and family would be a benefit to many men. The opportunity to bring stricken vessels into port and claim salvage was open to all, but local pilots were well placed to take advantage given that their licence gave some warranty as to their knowledge, skill and experience. However, some tried to hedge their bets, such as Stephen Old (1765-1824) from Porthoustock, who was appointed as a Second Class Pilot in March 1812. He was dismissed from the Service after less than a year in March 1813, for having been absent at times on coasting voyages.⁴⁷ On the other hand, there were licensed pilots who worked from fishing vessels, presumably working as an additional hand until pilot work presented itself. This developed in later years in at least two cases where the fishing vessels' role migrated to becoming full-time pilot cutter, and after a long-running dispute, leading to the appointment of the vessels'

⁴⁵ Corporation of Trinity House. *Digest of the Pilots Act. Instructions to Masters of Ships being a Digest of the Provisions, Penalties &c of the Pilots Act Passed in the 48 Geo. 3 Cap 104 ...* (S. Smith, Paternoster-row, Tower-hill, London, 1809. p. 41; *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 1 April 1809.

⁴⁶ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 12 November 1808.

⁴⁷ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes, 1809-1904, Vol. 2, p. 198.

masters as pilots.⁴⁸ In Fowey twenty pilots were appointed in 1810 and at least two had other occupations. Richard Poulgrain and John Willcock were well-established local shipbuilders.⁴⁹

Pilot Licences and Classes

The pilot's licence was endorsed each year on renewal. If the description was changed to reflect the natural ageing process, there are no specific mentions of the fact. The description was important to give ships' masters confidence that the person presenting themselves was in fact the person licensed. Surprisingly perhaps, given the importance of the licences, just one has survived for a Falmouth pilot. It is for James Lowry Jnr (1831-1864) who was appointed as a Second Class Pilot at Falmouth on 29 June 1858.⁵⁰ Through all the evidence seen for Falmouth there have been no cases found of someone using a licensed pilot's licence fraudulently. However, there are examples where someone from a licensed pilot vessel had boarded a ship and offered their services, leaving the ship's master to incorrectly assume he was a licensed pilot.⁵¹

When a port was brought within the scope of the 1808 Act as an outpost, the number of First and Second Class Pilots was set following consultation between the local Sub-Commissioners of Pilotage and Trinity House in London, based upon their assessment of the demand from maritime traffic. Once all the vacancies had been filled, it was a case of waiting for a vacancy to arise (through death, resignation, dismissal or retirement) before any new appointments would be made. This would only be varied if the Sub-Commissioners were able to justify a change to the numbers based on traffic in and out of the port.

The distinction between First and Second Class Pilots was set in the Act in that pilots were not licensed to pilot vessels drawing more than fourteen feet unless they had served more than three years. The draught of the vessel restricted the piloting opportunities for Second Class Pilots as long as there was a full complement of First Class Pilots. Promotion to the First Class was strictly on the basis of seniority (as in length of time served) and only when a vacancy arose. This changed in Falmouth in 1870 when any Second Class Pilot having served at least three years could apply to be appointed as a First Class Pilot, something that had been practised amongst the London pilots since the 1850s.⁵²

While there are numerous examples from the 1810s onwards of London pilots seeking replacement of their licence due to loss, perhaps to pickpockets in the street, the Falmouth pilots appear to have been successful in keeping hold of theirs, with Richard Green (1824-1869) being the first to request a replacement for one lost when a six-oared galley [the term used in the minute book] he was returning to shore in was upset at sea on 17 October 1849.⁵³

Apprenticeships

The Act required applicants for a pilot licence to have specific experience, already mentioned. One of the opportunities was for someone having served seven years on a licensed pilot vessel (the existence of this route was seemingly forgotten in Falmouth in later years) or five years as a pilot's apprentice. The pilots in Falmouth had their first apprentice, Joseph Sanders

⁴⁸ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes, 1809-1904, 1832 See case of Elias Warren Chard and John Chard.

⁴⁹ London Gazette, 16332, 9 January 1810; Helen Doe, 'Politics, Property and Family Resources: The Business Strategies of Small Shipbuilders', *Journal of Family and Community History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, (2001), pp. 59-72.

⁵⁰ Cornwall Record Office: AD175/2 Licence, James Lowry junior, of Falmouth. Truro, 1858.

⁵¹ NMMC: Falmouth Pilotage Records.

⁵² LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes. See regular occurrence from the 1850s onwards.

⁵³ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes, 1809-1904, Vol 17, p. 97.

(1795-1829), in 1810. The prerequisites for becoming an apprentice were that the individual had to be examined by the local Sub-Commissioners for suitability, including their literacy and numeracy, and they had to have a qualified pilot willing to provide them with the necessary experience and learning for the next seven years. The seven years indenture seems to have been somewhat flexible in some cases. As far as can be determined, apprenticeships (at least for merchant seamen) were to start when the applicant was 14 and to finish by the time they reached adulthood on their 21st birthday. Some applicants were older than 14 but were allowed to become indentured, it seems, because they had sailed on a pilot cutter or fishing vessel, working as a boy.

Part of the apprenticeship was for him to go to sea to learn to sail square-rigged ships, an essential prerequisite to becoming licensed. Most apprentices returned after their period at sea but some did not and continued their life sailing in the Royal Navy, on coasters and ocean-going ships. Falmouth apprentice pilots went to sea in their third year. In later years it was not unusual for a pilot to have his eldest son as his own apprentice with his second-eldest son apprenticed to another pilot; the second eldest being transferred to his father when the older brother completed his seven years. However, there are also numerous examples where apprentices did not complete their seven years.⁵⁴

Once the apprenticeship period expired, most would work on a pilot vessel as a seaman, waiting for their turn in the list of apprentices for appointment to Second Class Pilot. The longest period a time-served apprentice waited for a vacancy was Charles Hooper Greet (1857-1945) whose apprenticeship ran from 15 January 1872 to 14 January 1879. This was the period of greatest decline of maritime traffic to Falmouth leading to the reduction in income and numbers of pilots and the eventual formation of the Falmouth District Pilot Boat Association in 1887. Greet worked as crew on pilot vessels in Falmouth and applied on at least eleven occasions to become licensed as vacancies arose but in common with the service in other ports, the number of pilots was being reduced further. Greet was eventually appointed as a Second Class Pilot on 26 April 1909, more than thirty years after completing his apprenticeship.

Leaving the service

Like most other seamen in the early part of the nineteenth century, pilots continued to work until they died or were physically incapable of going to sea. The first Falmouth pilot to die was John Tonkin (1765-1815), who had been appointed in 1813. Trinity House had a requirement to provide support for merchant seamen who were infirm and incapable of working, and for their widows and young children when they died through their Relief Fund. The concept of a pension appears to have been restricted to those who served in the armed forces; Chelsea Pensioners and Greenwich Pensioners depending on whether their service had been in the army or navy respectively.

The initial licencing of pilots in outports meant that many of the most experienced were of an age where they would work for a relatively short period as licensed pilots. Nevertheless, those outport pilots who successfully petitioned Trinity House for a pension received £14 per annum if married and £8 if single. Widow's pensions were £6 per annum. To fund this, every pilot was required to pay Poundage, being 6d in the £ (2.5 per cent). Pensions paid to London pilots was £40 per annum reflecting their higher contributions, from higher earnings.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Falmouth Pilot Database.

⁵⁵ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, very few pilots resigned to follow alternative careers. Some were dismissed for poor performance such as Matthew Jenkins (1749-1833), who was dismissed from the pilot service on 28th March 1816 following a second incidence of grounding a ship.⁵⁶ A charge of being habitually intoxicated seems to have been the deciding factor between suspension, a punishment delivered to many pilots over the years for failing to bring vessels in safely, and dismissal. Matthew was the first, but not the last, pilot to be dismissed from the service at Falmouth for his insobriety. Matthew applied for financial help from Trinity House in November 1826, but despite eight years of service, his petition for relief was declined in light of the circumstances around his dismissal. Another pilot dismissed was William Bolitho (1769-1847) whose career as a pilot was cut short following receipt by the Trinity House Pilotage committee of a letter ‘from the Sub-Commissioners Falmouth stating that the pilot vessel Mary Ann belonging to William Bolitho pilot having been seized by the revenue for smuggling they recommended his immediate dismissal. Resolved accordingly and that notice be put up to that effect in the usual manner’.⁵⁷ He was dismissed from the service on 15 April 1818.⁵⁸

A number of pilots died while on duty, from drowning following an accident of some sort. Pilots operated in all weathers and the high risk was the transference from the cutter to the ship. Physical strength and skill were essential in order to time the move and grab a rope ladder, then climb up the high sides of the ship. On the Isles of Scilly between four and ten pilots were drowned each year.⁵⁹ The first pilot to suffer this fate, on 4 October 1821, was Thomas Benson (1769-1821), a ‘... licensed pilot who, with four other men were drowned by the upsetting of his Boat in a sudden and violent Squall of Wind ...’.⁶⁰ Following this loss, Thomas Benson’s widow was placed on Trinity House’s widow’s pension list while the widows of the boatmen were placed on their Casualty List, providing them with a regular income (usually of eight shillings per month), which was less than the pilot’s widow’s pension.⁶¹

Table 2. Pilots listed in the 1809 Compulsory Pilotage Notice with their lengths of service etc calculated from genealogical and other sources.

Pilot	Age on First Appointment	Age on Promotion to First Class	Years of Service	Reason for Leaving Service	Years of life post-service
Richard Andrew (1781-1861)	27	41	42	Retired	1
John Barker (1772-1865)	36	†	27	Retired	28
John Barker 2 nd (1783-1851)	25	54	39	Retired	3
James Barker (1747-1840)	61	†	8	Retired	22

⁵⁶ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes. London : s.n., 1809-1904, Vol.3, p. 91.

⁵⁷ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes. London : s.n., 1809-1904, Vol. 4, p. 137.

⁵⁸ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes.

⁵⁹ Tran, ‘Maritime Pilotage Acts’, p. 44; Powell, ‘The Pilots and Pilot Cutters of the Isles of Scilly’.

⁶⁰ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes. London : s.n., 1809-1904, Vol. 6, p. 91.

⁶¹ LMA: MS30158 Pilotage Committee Minutes.

William Bolitho (c.1769-1847)	39	47	9	Dismissed	28
William Collins (1771-1848)	37	†	26	Retired	12
William Dash (1753-Not Known)	55	*	17	Retired	Not Known
William Fittock (1774-1826)	34	†	17	Drowned	None
Henry James (1769-1848)	39	†	28	Retired	11
Matthew Jenkins (1749-1833)	59	*	7	Dismissed	17
Nicholas Jenkins (1783-1846)	25	38	37	Died	None
Nicholas Johns (c.1777-1855)	31	†	24	Retired	22
Joseph Libby (1772-1829)	36	54	2	Retired	None
Isaac Lower (1759-1829)	49	*	19	Retired	1
Samuel Lowry (1754-1830)	54	*	12	Retired	9
Bennet Lowry (1775-1852)	33	*	43	Retired	6 months
Samuel Lowry Jun (1785-1865)	23	31	5	Retired	6
Francis Lowry (1782-1826)	26	28	17	Died	None
John Pascoe (1765-1833)	43	*	21	Retired	3
Joseph Sanders (c.1762-1839)	46	†	12	Retired	17
Richard Trewavas (1750-1823)	58	*	1	Resigned	3
Richard Tonkin (1746-1817)	62	*	7	Retired	1
Henry Vincent (1773-1849)	35	*	35	Retired	5
Henry Williams (1781-1850)	27	56	39	Retired	1
William Warren (1764-1839)	44	†	18	Retired	12

* Initial appointment as First Class. † Never appointed to First Class

Conclusion

To understand the role of pilots there must be a sense of time and place; an understanding of how things were arranged and why. That there had been numerous Acts of Parliament and Royal Charters prior to the 1808 Pilotage Act does not change the scope or content of the Act. However, knowing a little about them and how and why they came about should help the reader to better understand how and why compulsory pilotage was implemented at Falmouth.

Within the minute books in London and Falmouth are benign facts that mark the ebb and flow of the careers of individual pilots within the body of those licensed: being accepted as apprentice, appointed as a seaman to a pilot vessel pending a vacancy arising, appointed as Second Class Pilot, appointed as First Class Pilot, and finally retirement. Punctuating this routine progression are other records: criminal proceedings, complaints from ship's masters or agents, complaints from other pilots, or even death at sea. Almost

without exception, these non-routine records are of pilots being disciplined for wrong-doing or mistakes. There are relatively few examples where good deeds or achievements are noted, but perhaps that reflects the nature of the era. Also reflecting the nature of the era is the apparent expectation that men should work until either they are no longer capable or died, whichever comes first. As has been described, this attitude did soften as the years went on with the length of service being taken into account, as well as the age and capability of the pilot, in granting a pension.

Generally, the first cohort of pilots were apparently diligent and hard working. Given that their chosen career involved the transfer from one vessel to another out at sea in any weather and any time of day or night, it is surprising that there were no deaths within this cohort of pilots at sea, although there were many in later years. The average life expectancy for a man born in the latter part of the eighteenth century, which most of this initial cohort were, was around 35. However, this is a Europe-wide average, and there is no granularity enabling comparison with other seafarers. Even the youngest death, aged 44 is higher than the Europe average with more than 70 per cent of the pilots surviving to at least double the Europe average. Therefore, whether the age to which they lived is remarkable or comparable with other local people is a possible topic for more research.