

# Shipping and local enterprise in the early eighteenth century

## Evidence from south-west Wales

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The importance of the relationship between shipping activity and local enterprise during the eighteenth century, whilst often inferred in the secondary literature, has received little serious analysis. In the case of Wales, Philip Jenkins's assessment that in the nineteenth century 'the success of rail virtually destroyed coastal shipping operations on which so many local enterprises had depended' points to the wider significance of coastal shipping and related industries in the development of local economies.<sup>1</sup> The lack of research in this area presents a fundamental weakness in the existing historiography on the well-springs of enterprise during the early industrial development of Britain, as the role of shipping, and in particular coastal shipping, was a crucial factor in regional economic development. Recent work by John Armstrong and Malcolm Wanklyn has begun to show how important coastal shipping was to economic development at both the local and national levels, and the aim of this article, by way of a case study, is to provide more detail on this hitherto neglected area of maritime research.<sup>2</sup>

Recent research has suggested that widely accepted estimates of the total size of the British mercantile marine during the eighteenth century, particularly those relating to the size of the coasting fleet, considerably understate the true position and thus the actual levels of maritime activity. An analysis of Admiralty protection registers for 1775/76, undertaken by Robinson, suggests that traditional estimates based on customs records omit about half a million tons of coasting vessels and reveals a domestic coasting fleet (excluding near-continent coasting) of some 4,500 vessels.<sup>3</sup> Robinson's revised figures for vessels engaged in the coal coasting and northern European trades closely match those given by a contemporary naval officer concerned with manning levels in the Royal Navy (and thus the availability of suitably experienced seamen) in 1774.<sup>4</sup> Such findings confirm Simon Ville's view that the overall economic importance of mercantile shipbuilding and ownership in Britain has been substantially underestimated.<sup>5</sup>

Many of the smallest vessels, especially those used for the transshipment of cargoes to shore where no suitable harbour facilities existed, or those lighters, flats or barges which were used for distribution in the immediate locality and which rarely figure in discussions of the economic impact of shipping on the

domestic economy, also went largely unrecorded. The general registration of coastal shipping was not comprehensively carried out prior to the 1786 Act (26 Geo. III, c. 60), and even then the Act only required the registration of vessels over fifteen tons.<sup>6</sup> As a result, official records of the size of the coasting trade ignore this important aspect of maritime activity. A later Act of 1795 allowed for the registration of these types of craft; however, the Act was revoked in 1837.<sup>7</sup>

For Wales, one surviving register of this type has been found. In July 1795, John Gwynne, clerk of the peace in Haverfordwest, compiled a register of vessels on the river Cleddau in pursuance of an Act 'requiring all boats, barges and other vessels of certain descriptions used upon navigable rivers and on Inland navigations to be registered'.<sup>8</sup> This records the names of the registered owners, the masters' names, the type of vessels, the tonnage, the number of men employed, and 'the line and extent of navigation' of each vessel.

Of the forty vessels registered in that year, thirty-seven were described as lighters, one as a boat and two as sloops. Such lighters, usually flat-bottomed barges, were used in lightening or loading and unloading vessels that could not be wharfed, or where harbour facilities were underdeveloped or too small. They were also used for transporting goods in harbour or for short trips within bays and estuaries. Some of the lighters in use during the mid-eighteenth century on the river Exe were ketch-rigged; others had a single mast and a lugsail.<sup>9</sup> All the vessels registered on the Cleddau, with the exception of the *Thomas*, a lighter of twenty-eight tons with a crew of three, employed two men, including the master. The average tonnage was around thirteen tons, with the bulk of the vessels either fourteen or twenty tons with an upper limit of twenty-eight tons. They provided work for eighty-one bargemen, and presumably made a profit for their thirty registered owners.<sup>10</sup>

The most substantial of these was Hugh Barlow, esquire, who owned eight lighters, all of twenty tons, which did the twenty-mile round trip from Cresswell Quay to Milford Haven. The next most substantial owner was John Daniel, shipwright, who had three vessels: two lighters, *Nancy* and *Penny*, and a sloop, the *Swallow*. Each of these vessels was fourteen tons burden and plied the same route as those owned by Barlow. It is probable that for the most part they were engaged in the coal and lime trades. Other owners included a widow, a shopkeeper, a merchant, two Reverends and three farmers.

Reinforcing the suspicion that something is missing from assessments of the coasting fleet is the fact that Robinson's estimates were based on protection registers and, as ship owners in the coasting trades were often lax in insuring cargoes or in securing protection for their crews from press gangs, it is certain that Robinson's figures are an understatement. For example, Robert Morgan, a Carmarthenshire ironmaster and tinsplate manufacturer, did not always insure cargoes shipped from his works and, even at the height of the Seven Years' War, not all the vessels in which he had an interest were covered by letters of protection.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the business correspondence of Sir Thomas Stepney, who was heavily involved in the development of

maritime trade from Llanelli in the 1740s and 1750s, contains no reference to either insurance or letters of protection, despite his interest in a number of vessels engaged in both coasting and European trades.<sup>12</sup>

Such attitudes were not necessarily cavalier: in the well documented case of William Stout of Lancaster, a merchant regularly engaged in coastal shipping between the north-west of England and London between 1688 and 1697 calculated that in a nine-year period his losses due to privateers and other war-related causes (including delay and loss caused by impressment) were negligible.<sup>13</sup> This judgement is supported by Flinn, who found that losses from such causes among colliers in the period 1703–10 were less than 1 per cent, and for the period 1720–50 were lower still.<sup>14</sup> Such risks, as Armstrong has argued, were largely mitigated by British naval superiority, and the fact that some coastal vessels were armed.<sup>15</sup>

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there was a thriving coastal shipping market in south-west Wales. To be a successful entrepreneur, however, it was necessary to engage in a variety of interrelated activities, as the market was too small to allow the type of specialisation which marked the industrial revolution, and the fear of failure led businessmen to spread their risks over a number of enterprises. On the supply side, a shortage of personal capital in the region and low levels of locally available investment funds, combined with limited access to outside sources of investment, led to the widespread use of mortgages and partnerships as financing methods.<sup>16</sup> Such partnerships often resulted in diversification. Flinn has argued that the diversity of interests exhibited by those engaged in industry during the period was itself a result of poor communications, which hindered the development of large, centralised and specialised undertakings.<sup>17</sup>

The development of a transport infrastructure to secure effective communications and freight links, both within and beyond the region, was an issue of vital importance for enterprise during the period. It is not surprising to find that many entrepreneurs contributed directly to the improvement of the transport infrastructure, and were often engaged in some type of shipping as an essential adjunct to their business. The important role of those engaged in coastal shipping is an aspect of the economic history of the region that has received little attention.<sup>18</sup> This article focuses on the activities of one such entrepreneur, Zachary Bevan, who engaged in a range of shipping operations in south-west Wales in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, providing a clear example of this multi-faceted type of undertaking.

Zachary Bevan was a farmer and merchant in the estuarine community of Laugharne, Carmarthenshire.<sup>19</sup> Between 1689 and 1714 his business accounts reveal that he regularly participated in maritime trade. During this period, records of such activity exist for eighteen different vessels ranging in size from a small ferryboat to the 100 ton *Yarmouth*. In addition Bevan held shares in at least five of these vessels, although the largest share that he held in any one vessel was no more than one-quarter. In order to place the evidence of Bevan's involvement in shipping within the context of his mercantile activity, a brief outline of his circumstances is necessary.

Although little is known of Zachary Bevan's origins, it seems that his grandfather was a glover by trade and his father a relatively prosperous farmer, who in 1674 was able to give Zachary a malthouse and some land on the occasion of his marriage.<sup>20</sup> By the time of his death in 1715 Zachary Bevan occupied a large house, consisting of at least thirteen rooms and a brewhouse. In addition he owned three farms. The extent of his success can be gauged from the fact that included among the inventoried goods for these three farms were forty-seven cows, six bulls, sixteen oxen, twelve young cattle, nine mares, two sucking colts, two two-year-old colts, one three-year-old colt, pigs of all sorts to the value of £39, two sheep, seventy-eight wethers and rams, sixty-nine ewes, one heifer, six old horses, one horse, one waggon, three carts, three long carts, three tipping carts, two drags, four pairs of harrows, five ploughs, three pairs of traces, a brewing furnace, 200 bushels of barley, 11,000 strikes<sup>21</sup> of oats, and thirty-six bushels of wheat. Listed separately are £300 6s 11d in 'good debts', £357 in cash and one-sixteenth of a vessel, the *Susannah*, valued at £19.<sup>22</sup> The total value of the inventory was £1,068 6s 2d.

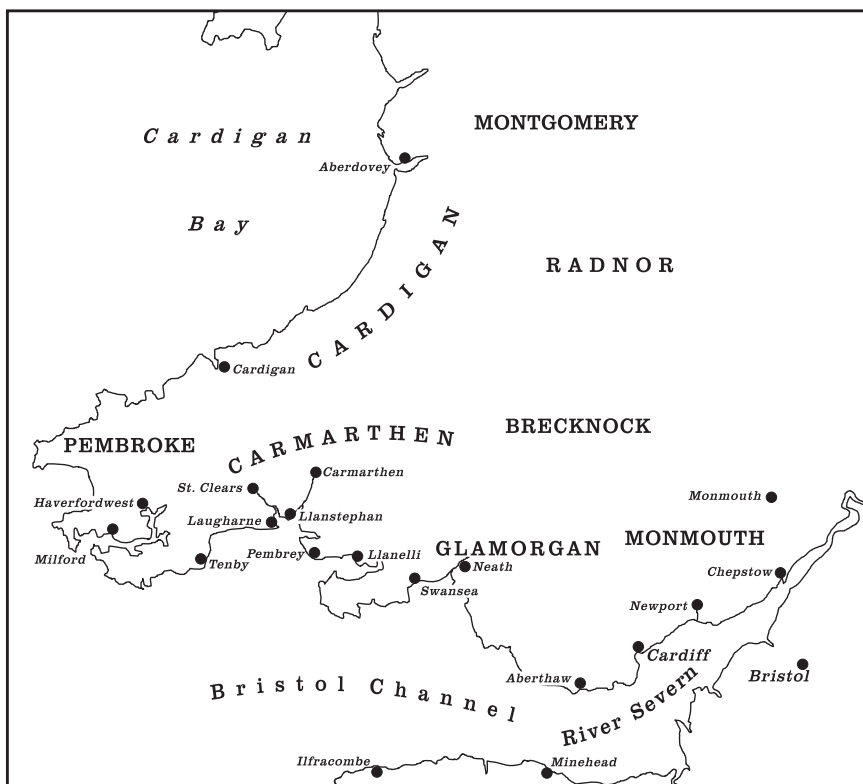
However, this inventory almost certainly understates Bevan's true wealth by a considerable margin. It is very likely that he disposed of a substantial amount of his assets prior to his death in the form of settlements on his children. Certainly during the course of his business career he owned more than is allowed for in the residual estate recorded in the probate inventory.<sup>23</sup> During the period covered by Bevan's accounts, in addition to his direct involvement in farming, he was also involved in the buying and selling of grain, and in shipping coal, salt, tobacco and malt. He was part owner of a number of vessels, he quarried, burnt and supplied lime, lent and borrowed money, advanced shop goods on credit, acted as pawnbroker and engaged in building.

Throughout his career Bevan was active as a grain merchant, and the following abstracts from the accounts for the year 1690 show the size and extent of his grain-dealing activities.<sup>24</sup> During the course of the year Bevan expended £1,023 on oats, corn, wheat, peas, beans and barley. Of this total, approximately £360 was for malt, £395 for wheat, corn and barley, £194 for oats and £69 for peas and beans.<sup>25</sup> These purchases are represented by forty-six separate transactions over the period January to October, eighteen transactions for malt, fifteen for oats, twelve for wheat, corn and barley, and five for peas and beans.<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that not all the transactions recorded in the accounts represent full payment; a high proportion of the remainder were part payments or payments on account which were not resolved by the end of the year, thus the figures understate the true level of Bevan's purchases. During the course of the year this side of Bevan's business involved dealings with at least twenty-two individuals. Some of the produce was delivered to Laugharne by sea: one of the purchases of malt is recorded as aboard Thomas Smith's ketch and another of wheat delivered aboard the *Dove* of Aberthaw.

Nor was this the only business in which Bevan engaged in the course of that year. There are entries in his accounts detailing the purchase of timber for building construction, while others record various interests, including the

purchase of pig iron, flax, rice, hemp and brass pans, the lending of money and even one instance of pawning a silver tankard. There are also entries concerned with freights and related shipping costs. During the same period Bevan had an interest in forty-three bags of cut tobacco that had been shipped aboard the *Elinor and Jane* and a payment of £20 is recorded on account of a parcel of leaf tobacco. Two entries in the accounts for 1690 concern Bevan's interest in the ship *Factor*. These record Bevan paying £60 'towards repairing, paying men's wages and victualling' and that he had paid £10 for his quarter part of £40 stock for the use of the same ship.<sup>27</sup> It would seem likely therefore that Bevan held a quarter share of this vessel.

Bevan's business activities depended to a large extent on the ability to move bulky goods regularly and reliably at reasonable cost. This meant involvement in the ownership, chartering or freighting of vessels, and Bevan employed all three methods. At the most basic level, Bevan would have needed regular use of ferryboats and lighters to conduct local business, such as freighting grain to local markets such as Carmarthen and Haverfordwest, or bringing coal from nearby collieries for use in lime kilns. Bevan's accounts



**Figure 1** South Wales and the Bristol Channel in the eighteenth century. With thanks to Lindsay Hurlow and Artworks Ltd

show that some of the malt that he received at his malthouse in 1697 came from Carmarthen, Llanstephan and Cardigan, and it seems likely that some of it arrived in small craft. Such craft were indispensable for the loading or unloading of larger cargoes and there is evidence contained in his accounts showing his part in such activities. Early in 1714 Bevan was involved in commissioning a new ferryboat, then on the stocks at Laugharne, in which he had a quarter share.<sup>28</sup> He regularly used small craft for taking produce to market, and he did this both on his own account and for third parties. Surviving accounts for third parties record his charges for boat hire. An account dated February 1698, for example, details, among other entries, cash paid to Bevan for boat hire to Carmarthen with a shipment of barley and in a separate transaction for several parcels of corn to the same destination.<sup>29</sup>

Entries made in 1699 and 1709 record 'culm', which is small anthracite coal, used principally for lime burning, being shipped to Amroth, near Tenby, on Bevan's account and this was most likely transported in a coastal lighter.<sup>30</sup> The 'culm book' which Bevan refers to in his accounts (but which has unfortunately not survived) hints that this aspect of his involvement in the business of coastal distribution was sufficiently large to warrant keeping a separate account.<sup>31</sup> Records of coal shipped from the nearby Pembrey colliery to the local markets in the period immediately following Bevan's death in 1714 show that there was considerable activity in the area, confirming the impression of the general utility of these types of small craft.<sup>32</sup> From a recent analysis of the Pembrey colliery records it can be seen that there were thirty-nine local lighters calling for coal during the period 1714–21. These carried small cargoes ranging from around five to twenty tons from Pembrey to Carmarthen and St Clears, and this type of craft accounted for 21 per cent of all vessels, out of a total sample of 554, calling at this colliery during the period.<sup>33</sup> Some of these lighters were owned and sailed by the same people and some individuals owned more than one lighter. The use of these types of craft on the river Towy was noted by Leland in the 1530s, and their utility was such that it remained common practice until the very last days of shipping on the river.<sup>34</sup> Given the relatively underdeveloped condition of the majority of ports in the region during the eighteenth century, and bearing in mind that large vessels were often loaded offshore where they could moor in deeper water, a good many of these small craft must have been built.

In addition the Pembrey colliery shipping records reveal that there were local lighters owned by four members of the Bevan family: John, Thomas David, William and Thomas; and that two others, Benjamin and James, were masters of local lighters. Further, several Bevan's are recorded as customers for this coal, including Richard, Benjamin, Arthur, James and William. Benjamin and James were Zachary's brothers, Arthur his son. Other evidence strongly suggestive of the social and economic linkages provided by involvement in this type of trade can be found in the Laugharne Corporation minute books for the years 1711–15.<sup>35</sup> During this period Zachary, James, John, Benjamin, William and Arthur Bevan are all recorded as having been admitted as burgesses; in addition William Bevan served as town clerk in 1711, James

Bevan as parish overseer in 1712 and Benjamin Bevan as ‘Portreeve’ (chief magistrate) in 1714 and 1715. It is clear that within the immediate locality, through his contacts with farmers, merchants and coastal shippers, Zachary Bevan had access to a wide network of small businesses and market intelligence. However, when we look more closely Bevan’s involvement in shipping, we can see that he was also part of a much wider information network.

Bevan’s involvement in shipping was wide-ranging and complex. From the accounts it is possible to see that he was involved in some way with at least seventeen different vessels in the period between 1689 and 1714. While the evidence is mostly partial in nature (for it is rare to have details of vessel type, tonnage, home port, value, etc.), taken together it provides a picture of the size and extent of Bevan’s engagement in shipping activities and associated businesses. The nature of these interests can be categorised in the following way: vessels for which there is evidence of *part ownership*, vessels suggesting Bevan’s *coasting and near European contacts*, and vessels connected with his *trade in tobacco*.

Vessels in the first category consist of the *Ann and Sarah*, which Bevan had paid three men for rigging in 1691,<sup>36</sup> the *Carolina Merchant*, for which he paid wages due to a mariner’s widow in 1699,<sup>37</sup> and the *Tenby Merchant*, for which he paid the remainder of a mariner’s wages due from a voyage to Holland, including a payment for thirteen days’ work on the vessel prior to sailing from Tenby in 1701.<sup>38</sup> There was also the *Susannah*, in which Bevan held a one-sixteenth share, and the *Factor*, of Milford. The latter, built in 1690 and for which at various times he paid for repairs, ship’s stock wages and victualling,<sup>39</sup> was a vessel in which his interest continued until 1701.<sup>40</sup> Finally in this category were the *Hopewell*, a brigantine,<sup>41</sup> for which he paid for provisions in 1691,<sup>42</sup> and the barque<sup>43</sup> *Beginning*, of Neath, in which he was involved in the disposal of a half share in 1694.<sup>44</sup>

The second category of vessels encompasses the *Speedwell*, of Northam, Devon, on board which Bevan shipped corn and other goods from Laugharne to Kinsale in Ireland in 1700,<sup>45</sup> and the ketch *Diligence*, for which he kept a record for the year 1692 listing seven voyages.<sup>46</sup> A ketch was a general trading vessel with main and mizzen masts, fore-and-aft rigged, the mizzen with or without topsail. The ketch, of all coasting traders of this period, was probably the most capable so far as its rig was concerned.<sup>47</sup> The voyages made by the *Diligence* were mostly from Laugharne to Irish ports such as Dublin, Waterford and Youghall, but also included a voyage to France, and one to Liverpool for a cargo of salt. From these records it appears that the vessel was freighted both on Bevan’s own account and also for third parties.<sup>48</sup> Other vessels engaged in Bevan’s grain trade were the *William and Alice*, of Kinsale, aboard which he freighted barley and wheat in 1692,<sup>49</sup> and the *Truelove*, of Ilfracombe, in which he freighted in the same year corn from Laugharne to Dublin, and then salt from Cheshire to Tenby. On the latter occasion Bevan undertook to pay the master of the *Truelove* 4d per winchester in freight and one-third of the port charges for the corn and salt.<sup>50</sup> Lastly in this category there was the *Owners Adventure*, which Bevan used to freight butter in 1700.<sup>51</sup> In

connection with his regional business contacts, it should be noted that both the *Speedwell* and the *Truelove* were Devon vessels with Devon masters.

The final category of vessels in which Bevan was involved was those engaged in the transatlantic tobacco trade, and these included the *Elinor and Jane*, a barque, on board which he shipped tobacco in April 1689 and for which vessel he paid a mariner for services in July 1690.<sup>52</sup> These were not Bevan's only transactions concerning this vessel, as in the following September he was involved in a dispute concerning the provenance of a cargo of salt brought from Saint-Nazaire to Tenby aboard the *Elinor and Jane*.<sup>53</sup> In 1692 Bevan was involved in providing a cargo for the *Sara and Susannah* on her voyage from Bristol to Virginia. This vessel was to return to Caldy with a cargo of 'good leafe tobbaeco'<sup>54</sup> and Bevan paid £61 17s 6d in full for insurance on the ship.<sup>55</sup> In May 1693 he was engaged in shipping two tons of tobacco from Virginia aboard the *Hester*, the shipper being the brother of one of his local business partners.<sup>56</sup> Another vessel in which Bevan had dealings in this trade was the 100 ton *Yarmouth*. In August 1692 he bought a quarter share of this vessel from the widow of a mariner in Bideford, north Devon. The *Yarmouth's* last voyage prior to the sale had been from Virginia.<sup>57</sup> Some of the stores from the *Yarmouth* were used in refitting another vessel in the tobacco trade in which Bevan was concerned, namely the 'pink', *Katherine*. A pink was a sailing ship with a narrow stern, originally small and flat-bottomed. A painting by Edward William Cooke from 1855 entitled 'Beaching a pink in heavy weather at Scheveningen' shows a broad, flat-bottomed Dutch fishing vessel, suitable for beaching, with a single mast, fore-and-aft rigged, in the manner of a sloop.<sup>58</sup> Bevan had a quarter share in the *Katherine*, and he was also in partnership with one of the other shareholders of the *Katherine*, in an unnamed ketch of which he owned a third.

The following account, drawn up in July 1692, shows details of the annual costs for each vessel.<sup>59</sup>

Item:

To [one-third] of disbursements on Ketches, cargo & provisions	£186.
To [one-quarter, ditto] for ye Pinke	£182. 9. 11d.
To [one-quarter] of ye Pinkes charges for mens wages	£ 44. 6. ½d.
To [one-quarter] of bills drawn and gunary	£ 33. 5. 2d.
To [one-third] of £140 drawn for acct of Ketch	£ 46. 13. 4d.
To [one-quarter] charge on pilotage of ye Pinke carrying downe . . . tobacco	£ 5. 9. 2d.

An entry in Bevan's accounts for 1692 records that one of the other partners had been charged £219 17s 10d for a quarter part of 'fitting ye *Katherine* Pinke and cargo'.<sup>60</sup> Thus it would appear that the total value of the *Katherine* at the time, including cargo, was about £800. The *Katherine's* involvement in the tobacco trade is confirmed by an earlier entry in Bevan's accounts made in February 1692 recording that Sir Hugh Owen, a local landowner, and partner in the vessel, was due 753 bags of tobacco for 'his proportion . . . last voyage in ye Katherin Pinke'.<sup>61</sup> Two separate accounts confirm

the level of the total wage cost, £177 4s 2d, of running the *Katherine* in this trade for a year.<sup>62</sup> As the total running costs as recorded in this account for the unnamed ketch are in the same order as those of the *Katherine*, it would appear unlikely that this vessel was the forty-ton ketch *Diligence* in which Bevan had some involvement. From the charges for gunnery it would appear that at least one of these vessels was armed. Further, Bevan's interest in the *Katherine* continued until at least 1701, by which time he was owner of a third share.<sup>63</sup>

Bevan's dealings in the tobacco trade and the association of local gentry with it was not a new feature of Welsh commercial enterprise. When the Virginia Company of London sought nationwide support for its activities in 1609, much of the money was drawn from the London merchant and craft companies, many of which had Welsh members. When the company launched its new programme of expansion in 1618, opportunities for speculation and employment in Virginia proliferated. In 1619 Sir Thomas Myddleton (a family based in Denbighshire) and Alderman Robert Johnson applied for a plantation on which to settle tobacco-growing colonists. It has been argued that, although it is not known how many of the colonists were from Wales, at the very least some of the colonists who departed for the James river were from amongst Myddleton's many dependants, with a selection drawn from the London Welsh community.<sup>64</sup> Although on a much smaller scale, Bevan's tobacco, coal and general shipping activity in his immediate vicinity mirrors the successful developments of the Lowther family between 1660 and 1760 at the port of Whitehaven.<sup>65</sup>

Owing to the comprehensive refit of the *Katherine* undertaken by Bevan at Laugharne in the winter of 1692 a good deal more information on this vessel has survived. A document drawn up by Bevan lists the cost of all labour and materials used in her refit, the total being £402 17s 2d.<sup>66</sup> An analysis of the account of the refit provides a valuable insight into the amount of materials and labour involved in what must have been a fairly regular procedure for those involved in ship owning, and a regular source of income for those in the shipwrighting trades. Assuming that Bevan would not have spent more on the refit than the value of the vessel, it is possible to approximate the tonnage of the *Katherine*. Existing work on per-ton cost for vessels built locally in this period suggests that the cost of new build would have been in the region of £5–£6 per ton.<sup>67</sup> This figure also fits well with the per-ton contract cost of naval sloops for the period 1702–13 of £5 12s 6d.<sup>68</sup> Thus it is likely that the *Katherine* was at least in the range 80–100 tons for the refit to have been cost-efficient, a figure which is consistent with the known size of at least one other of Bevan's vessels, the *Yarmouth*.<sup>69</sup> This would have made the *Katherine* one of the largest of local vessels at that time.<sup>70</sup>

The refit appears to have taken about two and a half months to complete. During this period it provided employment for varying lengths of time for forty to fifty individuals. An abstract from the account for the labour involved in the refit is reproduced in the appendix. From an analysis of this it possible to see that the work involved was split into four categories: work paid at a daily rate, work paid for on an occasional basis, work paid for from outside

the immediate region and settled against notes of hand, and ancillary payments associated with the labour involved in the refit.

The majority of the work carried out at a daily rate appears to have been that of carpenters and wrights, involving over twenty individuals, mostly earning between 2s and 2s 6d per day and most of whom worked forty days or more on the refit.<sup>71</sup> Occasional payments included unrigging and scraping the blocks, rigging, sawing, carrying anchors, moving the ship, digging a dock, coopers' work, refitting and ballasting. Much of the rigging, undertaken by seamen other than members of the crew, was paid at the rate of 1s per day. As this was the same rate paid to the coopers for their work, it would seem that this type of work was relatively skilled. Work done on credit and settled against a note included sail making, rope making and smiths' work. Ancillary labour charges comprised the board and lodging of the crew and other workmen, and refreshments, which formed part of the wage element. It is the presence of the ship's crew in Laugharne, as revealed by these payments, which provides the evidence that the work carried out during this period was in fact a refit and that these costs do not relate to a new build. In addition, the costs in the account of the refit of the payments made to local women for providing board and lodging reveal an important source of income for some members of local coastal communities. The total amount recorded as being given for drinks during the refit was £1 17s 8d. Payments made for diet and lodging totalled £17 9s 7d, divided among three lodging houses, involving accommodation and board for a minimum of ten men.

Owing to the differing ways in which the labour component of the refit is calculated it is not possible to be exact about the total number of man days required to complete the refit. However, the minimum, i.e. those it is possible to abstract, totals 931½ man days. The total cost of labour (excluding drink and diet), comes to £131 19s 0d, which is approximately 33 per cent of the total cost of the refit. So employment opportunities afforded to the local community through the operation of shipping may have constituted a considerable contribution to incomes. In addition it is possible to see some detail about the size and pay of the crew of the *Katherine*. It seems likely that there was a minimum crew comprising master, mate, boatswain, at least two seamen and possibly one apprentice. The boatswain, whose normal earnings appear to have been 11s 3d per week, and the two seamen, whose rate would have been 8s 9d, were all on half pay during the period of the refit. The presence of a boatswain, whose duties combined those of foreman over the crew and craftsman in maintenance duties requiring specific seamen's skill, i.e. rigging, sails, boats and ship's stores, further confirms the size and oceangoing status of the *Katherine*.<sup>72</sup> These wage rates are broadly comparable to those found by Davies for the same period, of 25s a month for an able seaman<sup>73</sup> and 10s to 12s a week for a more experienced hand, e.g. boatswain or mate, which were equivalent to that of a London labourer.<sup>74</sup> From the payments made for board and lodging, it would appear that the master arrived at Laugharne four weeks before the *Katherine* was ready to sail, with the mate arriving one week later.

In conclusion, it is clear from the evidence relating to Bevan's shipping

interests that there were a variety of vessel types and businesses available from the creek at Laugharne, confirming the impression of a thriving market based on maritime activity. By making use of the opportunities afforded by the coastal location of his birthplace, Bevan enhanced his personal wealth and advanced his social status. Indeed, the example he presents closely reflects contemporary opinion on the pretensions to social mobility exhibited by successful members of the mercantile classes and conforms to the delineation of the upwardly mobile contained in Stone's work.<sup>75</sup>

During the course of his career Bevan managed to advance his family's social standing considerably beyond that of their origins as yeoman farmers. His eldest son, Arthur, having been educated for a career in the legal profession, married into a local gentry family and went on to become the Whig county MP between 1727 and 1741.<sup>76</sup> Thus, by the end of his career, Bevan had improved his status to the point where he had effectively become a member of the minor gentry. By the time of his death he had reached a position of considerable prominence in the town of Laugharne and its surroundings.

In addition to Bevan's position within the local business community, he was also a key figure in a much wider business and information network. Among thirty-eight or so individuals with whom he had direct dealings are included a member of the local gentry, merchants, factors, victuallers and master mariners. Geographically this network included contacts on both sides of the Bristol Channel, in Ireland and on the east coast of North America. In addition, Bevan was actively concerned in the construction, management, chartering and disposal of vessels. This involvement worked in Bevan's favour on a number of counts, as it not only helped to ensure that he could trade out of Laugharne without being entirely dependent on the services of unaffiliated masters, but it also provided a mechanism for him to gain market knowledge and business correspondents through the practice of part ownership, whilst at the same time helping to limit the extent of his own exposure to the vagaries of maritime trade.

Laugharne, a sleepy town in a quiet corner of the Carmarthenshire coast, was (and remains) a small community. Largely remembered nowadays for its association with the poet Dylan Thomas, for most of its history it has been a small fishing port and market town, reaching its highest population of about 1,000 people in the early nineteenth century.<sup>77</sup> One of the few descriptions roughly contemporary with Bevan's lifetime notes that 'the town is pretty good, has some small vessels belonging to it [with a] market on Fridays'.<sup>78</sup> A more recent assessment of the level of commercial activity is that, judging by customs and revenue returns, Laugharne must have been a lively port during the early eighteenth century.<sup>79</sup> This picture is confirmed by the evidence presented in this article. During the eighteenth century, men such as Bevan, scattered among the many small coastal communities that lay around the British coastline, played a crucial role in widening and deepening the market economy and consumer choice. Their activities stimulated and maintained the coastal and inland transport infrastructure at the local level, and facilitated the growth of trade and enterprise.

## Appendix

### *Wages paid at a fixed daily rate*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rate per day</i>	<i>Days worked</i>	<i>Work done</i>	<i>Total pay</i>
Thos. William	2s	72	carpenter	£7 04 00
Richard William	2s	72½		£7 05 00
Thos. William's boy	8d	49½		£1 12 08
John William	2s 6d	68½		£9 11 03
George Voyles	2s	66½		£6 13 00
Matthew Thomas	2s	65		£6 10 00
Thos. Sparks	2s	11		£1 02 00
William David	2s	43½		£4 07 00
David Rowland	2s	4½		£0 09 00
John Rowland				
[David Rowland's son]	2s	4½		£0 09 00
Adam Nicholas	2s	4½		£0 09 00
John Collimoore	2s 6d	62		£7 15 00
Thomas Collimoore	2s	65		£6 10 00
Richard Baker	2s	57½	£5 15 00	
Nicholas Hernaman	2s	64	£6 08 00	
Thomas String	1s 6d	28½	£2 02 09	
Henry Langston	6d	65	tending the carpenters	
Richard Reynold	6d	44½		£1 12 06
Marke Auger	1s	1		£0 01 00
Lewis Hugh	1s	4	£0 04 00	

### *Other occasional payments*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period worked</i>	<i>Work done</i>	<i>Total pay</i>
Richard Purphil		unrigging and scraping blocks	£0 04 00
Benjamin Brown			£0 06 08
John Thomas			£0 07 06
John Webb			£0 01 08
Henry Palmer			£0 03 00
6 seamen	26 days	rigging	£1 06 00 <sup>80</sup>
10 men		rigging	£0 10 00
3 men		rigging	£0 07 06
3 seamen	13 days		£0 13 00 <sup>81</sup>
9 men		carrying anchors and moving the ship	
Sawyers		sawing	£0 09 00
2 coopers	26 days		£3 12 06
unknown		digging a dock	£1 06 00 <sup>82</sup>
Josias Stone <sup>83</sup>	2 months	rigging and refitting	£0 11 00
[boatswain]		[half pay]	£2 05 00
Samuel Wallbridge	2 months	ditto	£1 15 00
William Menson	2 months	ditto	£1 15 00
unknown		ballasting the ship	£0 18 00

*Work done on credit and settled against a note*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period worked</i>	<i>Work done</i>	<i>Total pay</i>
Thomas Purphil			£0 05 04
Sailmaker		Sailmaking	£14 12 03
Mr. Willis		Ropemaker	£11 02 00
Gelly John		Smith	£17 06 06
David Hugh		Smith	£1 00 10
Mr. Gundry <sup>84</sup>			£2 02 00

*Ancillary labour charges*

Maude Reynold for seamens diet	£2 08 07
Maude Reynold for seamens diet	£2 19 00
Two Prentices <sup>85</sup> diet 22 weeks at 3s per week each	£6 12 00
Widdow Phillips: four weeks' diet for the (ship's) Master at 3s per week	£0 12 00
Widdow Phillips: diet for the mate three weeks	£0 09 00
Widdow Phillips: diet for three men nine weeks	£4 01 00
Anne Ross for one mans diet	£0 10 00

**Notes**

- 1 P. Jenkins, *A History of Modern Wales, 1536–1990* (1992), p. 22. For merchant shipping in general and coastal shipping in particular for this period see Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (1962), T. S. Willan, *The English Coasting Trade, 1600–1750* (Manchester, 1938) and J. U. Nef, *The Rise of the British Coal Industry II* (1932). Surveys of south-west Wales are contained in B. J. George, 'Pembrokeshire sea-trading before 1900', *Field Studies* 1, 2 (1964), and J. Geraint Jenkins, *Maritime Heritage: the ships and seamen of southern Ceridigion* (Llandyssul, 1982), while recent work in north Wales has begun to reveal the extent and importance of shipping to the economies of coastal Wales. See, for example, A. Eames, *Ships and Seamen of Anglesey, 1558–1918* (Anglesey Antiquarian Society, Llangefni, 1973), and Lewis Lloyd, *Pwllheli, the Port and Market of Llyn* (Caernarvon, 1991). Useful comparisons can be found in G. Jackson, 'Scottish shipping, 1775–1805', in P. L. Cotterell and D. H. Aldcroft (eds), *Shipping, Trade and Commerce* (Leicester, 1981) and J. Mannion, 'Vessels, masters and seafaring: patterns of voyages in Waterford commerce, 1776–71', in W. Nolan and T. P. Power (eds), *Waterford History and Society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1992). For accounts of the coaster trade see P. S. Bagwell and P. Lyth, *Transport in Britain: from canal lock to gridlock* (2002), P. S. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (1974), chapter 3, and these are complemented by J. Armstrong and P. S. Bagwell in their survey of coastal shipping contained in D. H. Aldcroft and M. J. Freeman (eds), *Transport in the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 1983).
- 2 See, for example, J. Armstrong, 'The significance of coastal shipping in British domestic transport, 1550–1830', *International Journal of Maritime History* 3, 2 (1991), M. Wanklyn, 'The impact of water transport facilities on the economies of English river ports, c. 1660–1760', *Economic History Review* 49, 1 (1996), and M. D. Matthews, 'Mercantile shipbuilding activity in south-west Wales, 1740–1829', *Welsh History Review* 19, 3 (1999).
- 3 D. E. Robinson, 'Secret of British power in the age of sail: Admiralty records of the coasting fleet', *American Neptune* 48, 1 (1988), pp. 5–21.
- 4 Bagwell and Lyth, *Transport in Britain*, p. 22.
- 5 S. P. Ville, *English Shipowning during the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 1987), p. 149.
- 6 For the best summary of the complexities of ship registration see Willan, *The English Coasting Trade*, appendix 6.
- 7 J. Geraint Jenkins, *Maritime Heritage* (Llandyssul, 1982), p. 84.
- 8 Pembrokeshire Record Office, PQ/RB.

- 9 C. N. Ponsford (ed.), *Shipbuilding on the Exe: the memoranda book of Daniel Bishop Davy (1794–1874) of Topsham, Devon*, Devon and Cornwall Record Society 31, new series (Exeter, 1988), glossary.
- 10 Matthews, 'Mercantile shipbuilding activity in south-west Wales', pp. 406–7.
- 11 M. D. Matthews, 'In pursuit of profit? Local enterprise in south-west Wales in the eighteenth century', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, Swansea (1998), p. 8.
- 12 M. D. Matthews, "'Adventurer of both ship and cargo": Sir Thomas Stepney, businessman and baronet, 1702–78', *Welsh History Review* (forthcoming 2003).
- 13 J. D. Marshall (ed.), *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster, 1665–1752* (Manchester, 1967), p. 119.
- 14 M. W. Flinn, *The History of the British Coal Industry, 1700–1830 II* (Oxford, 1984), p. 174.
- 15 J. Armstrong, 'The significance of coastal shipping in British domestic transport, 1550–1830', *International Journal of Maritime History* 3, 2 (1991), pp. 84–5.
- 16 The issue of financing enterprise in the region is dealt with in more detail in Matthews, 'In pursuit of profit?'
- 17 M. W. Flinn, 'The industrialists', in A. Nathan (ed.), *Silver Renaissance* (1961), p. 60.
- 18 See, however, Matthews, "'Adventurer of both ship and cargo"', and *id.*, 'Wales and France: maritime trade in the eighteenth century', in Y. Lemarchand and C. McWatters (eds), *Mer, navires et gestion : une histoire en chantier* (Nantes, 2001), pp. 119–29.
- 19 For a fuller examination of Bevan's career see Matthews, 'In pursuit of profit?'
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 110–12.
- 21 Elsewhere in Bevan's accounts 'winchester strike', a level measure of volume, equivalent to eight bushels.
- 22 This information is taken from Bevan's probate inventory, National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW) Llywngwair 1178.
- 23 For a discussion of the underrepresentative nature of probate inventories see M. Berg, 'Small producer capitalism', *Business History* 35 (1993), p. 27.
- 24 Extracted from NLW, Llywngwair 1.
- 25 These amounts are approximate, owing to the occasional instances of transactions that were for mixed commodities.
- 26 This total is greater than forty-five, owing to four mixed transactions, three recorded as for malt and oats and one for wheat and peas.
- 27 NLW, Llywngwair 1, entries for 2 and 4 July 1690.
- 28 NLW, Llywngwair 2, entries dated 12 February and 18 May 1714
- 29 NLW, Llywngwair 4, Account between Howell Powell's children and Zachary Bevan.
- 30 NLW, Llywngwair 2.
- 31 NLW, Llywngwair 4, undated entry concerning culm *c.* 1698.
- 32 NLW, Ashburnham, group 1, 5.
- 33 *Ibid.* A full analysis of these colliery shipping accounts is contained in Matthews, 'In pursuit of profit?', appendix 3.
- 34 T. James, 'Shipping and the river Towy: problems of navigation', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 22 (1986), p. 28.
- 35 Carmarthen Record Office (hereafter CRO), Laugharne Corporation minutes.
- 36 NLW, Llywngwair 3, entry for 26 October 1691.
- 37 NLW, Llywngwair 2, entry dated 27 February.
- 38 NLW, Llywngwair 2, entry dated 3 October.
- 39 NLW, Llywngwair 1, entries dated 2 and 4 July 1690.
- 40 NLW, Llywngwair 16834
- 41 A two-masted vessel, with a brig's foremast, square rigged, and a schooner's mainmast, fore-and-aft rigged.
- 42 NLW, Llywngwair 1, entry dated 15 January.
- 43 Barque: a three-masted vessel, square rigged on the foremast and mainmast and fore-and-aft rigged on the mizzen. (Jenkins, *Maritime Heritage*, p. 93.)
- 44 NLW, Llywngwair 16820.
- 45 NLW, Llywngwair 2204.
- 46 NLW, Llywngwair 13492.
- 47 A. Ansted, *A Dictionary of Sea Terms*, third edition (Glasgow, 1985).
- 48 NLW, Llywngwair 3, undated entry for 1692.
- 49 NLW, Llywngwair 3.
- 50 NLW, Llywngwair 13476.
- 51 NLW, Llywngwair 2, entry dated 26 November.

- 52 NLW, Llywngwair 1.  
 53 NLW, Llywngwair 3.  
 54 NLW, Llywngwair 2114  
 55 NLW Llywngwair 3, entry dated 2 August.  
 56 NLW, Llywngwair 13479  
 57 NLW Llywngwair 16834.  
 58 National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.  
 59 NLW, Llywngwair 3, entry of July 1692.  
 60 NLW, Llywngwair 3, entry of January 1692.  
 61 NLW, Llywngwair 3, entry dated February 1692. The actual abbreviation used in the account is indecipherable; however, elsewhere Bevan records shipping tobacco 'by bag'.  
 62 Llywngwair 3, entries of February and July 1692.  
 63 Pembrokeshire County Library, Francis Green MSS, Vol. 16, Wills, folios 222–3  
 64 D. B. Quinn, 'Wales and the West', in *Welsh Society and Nationhood* (Cardiff, 1984), p. 104  
 65 J. V. Beckett, *Coal and Tobacco: the Lowthers and the economic development of west Cumberland, 1660–1760* (Cambridge, 1981).  
 66 NLW, Llywngwair 2062.  
 67 Matthews, 'Mercantile shipbuilding', p. 416.  
 68 *Nautical Chronicle* 18 (1807), pp. 285–6.  
 69 Davies has commented upon this aspect of ship maintenance, and the level of expenditure on the *Katherine* is consistent with the view that she was an oceangoing vessel. See Davies, *English Shipping Industry*, pp. 366–9.  
 70 Matthews, 'Mercantile shipbuilding', p. 410.  
 71 It is likely that most of the men recorded as receiving 2s per day were carpenters, as in the main the employment generated by the refit would necessitate a good deal of carpentry work. Those receiving 2s 6d per day were likely to have been shipwrights. This assumption is based on other evidence of wage differentials between ships' carpenters and shipwrights in south-west Wales in the 1760s.  
 72 Davies, *English Shipping Industry*, p. 112.  
 73 *Ibid.*, p. 114.  
 74 *Ibid.*, p. 151.  
 75 L. Stone, *An Open Elite? England, 1540–1880* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 16–29.  
 76 He married Bridget Vaughan, one of three co-heiresses to the Derllys estate. See D. W. Howell, *Patriarchs and Parasites: the gentry of south-west Wales in the eighteenth century* (Cardiff, 1986), p. 23.  
 77 Mary Curtis, *The Antiquities of Laugharne and Pendine, Carmarthenshire, South Wales* (1871).  
 78 H. Moll, *A New Description of England and Wales* (1724).  
 79 G. Shelton, *Dean Tucker and Eighteenth Century Economic and Political Thought* (1981), p. 2.  
 80 Six men worked a total of twenty-six days, thus their wage rate was 1s per day.  
 81 Three men worked thirteen days in total.  
 82 Two coopers worked twenty-six days in total.  
 83 This and the two subsequent entries refer to men usually employed on the ship. The reference to half pay in these cases indicates what their normal monthly pay would have been when at sea.  
 84 Elsewhere in Bevan's accounts it is recorded that Mr Gundry was paid for ship's stock and expenses, thus it is possible that there is no labour element in this payment.  
 85 There is no specific record of these apprentices receiving any pay during the period of the refit, nor is it known why they needed a diet for twenty-two weeks: it is unlikely that the refit took that long.

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