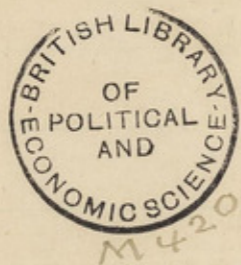


Notes of George H. Dickworth.  
1893 -

Shipwright. sec. 19.

Shipwright. Ship Barge etc. Builders (wood).	1481.
2. Ship Rigger, mast, yard, car Block maker.	372.
3. Sailmaker.	407.
	<u>2260</u>

B 85



R. COLL. 1.

[i]

VA

Name.	Trade.	Page.
W.C. Stradman.	River Thames Barge Builders Trades Union.	1.
George Palmer	Mast Rigger & Stevedore.	8.
Henry Bad Inns.	Shipwrights.	14.
Alfred White Inns	Wooden barge builders.	18.
W. M. Sparks.	Barge & boat builders.	22.
J. Badcock.	Barge & boat builders	26.
Lester & Perkins	Shipwrights.	32.
Watkins & Co.	Boat builders	36.
Coules & Scrutton Smith.	Sailmakers	40.
Warne.	Sails & tarpaulins	44.
W. J. Gibson.	Foreman sailmaker.	47.
Alexander Chambers	Shipwrights Provident Lin	50.
Co	Mast & Blockmaker & Shipsmith	55.
Co	Oar & scull maker	59.
The Royal Riggers.		63.
H. N. Stratton	United R. Thames Ship Caulkers.	43.
Deputation of 5 shipwrights		80.

Barge Builders Trades  
Union.

Founded.

Its province.

Numbers in the Union now.

3  
November 7<sup>th</sup> 1893

1.  
G.H.D.

W.C. Steadman, Secretary to the River Thames  
Barge Builders Trades Union: & member of  
the A.C.C. 49 Rectory Square, E. on  
an introduction from H. Hewllyn-Smith.

Founded. 1872.

There had been another previous to this date called  
'The Provident Barge Builders'.

in 1890. The two amalgamated.

The district commanded by the Union stretches  
from Brentford to Woolwich & includes  
both sides of the river.

There are now 400 Unionists out of a possible  
500 in the trade.

There were a few more members in 1890 at  
the time of the strike when 450 joined  
This then represented the whole trade  
but some were brought in from the  
coast & towns in the East of England  
which has risen the total of possible

Some Non-Union Houses.

96 employers in the Trade.

Wages & Hours.

Overtime.

members. There have never been less than 400 members.

Unionists & Non-unionists do not work together.

The following houses employ Non-Union labour.

- Sam. Williams. 8 men. whose paid £2.2.4 wkly
- Covingtons 4 ... .. 9<sup>d</sup> but as O.T. rate.
- Hope Lighterage Co. 4 ... ..
- Thames steam tug Co. 12 ... ..
- Mack & Miller. 20 - - - - 8<sup>d</sup> an hour.
- Union Lighterage. 12 pay Union Rates but not U. men
- Keeps. 8 ... ..
- Hughes. 8 w<sup>d</sup> some pay 10<sup>d</sup> an hour than submit to the Union.

There are 96 employers in the trade altogether of whom Cory & Son are the largest and employ 40 men.

There is no recognized Board of Arbitration.

Wages. 9<sup>d</sup> hour. or £2.0.6 weekly.

54 hours in the full working week.

All work is Timework: systematic overtime has been abolished.

Overtime is only allowed in emergencies.

The strike in 1890.

Busy & slack seasons.

Work very little shared  
in slack times.

in the 1890 strike the men tried to stipulate that o.t. should be paid at 4¢ per hour raising such a high rate that the masters should find it impossible to employ anyone profitably at this rate. The masters however were so firm that though they got what they wanted in systematic or being abolished yet they had to submit to the overtime rate being 10½¢ an hour as it now stands.

Summer is the busy time for repairing and painting when people like their barges to look fresh & new.

Winter is the slack time for painting but is the busiest for building.

In slack times some men are in full work others half time & others out of work.

This is the case at the present time.

If these men had the choice most of them would consent to work  $\frac{3}{4}$  time in order to keep the others in work.

The young men & the old men are those who suffer when work is slack. Masters will

not keep on young men because when they have few men it is better that these few should be experienced & old men do not work quickly enough.

Men are good at their work until past 60 the work is healthy. There is not so much drinking as there used to be, the majority of the rising generation he said were 7 feet tallers, but some of the men can still manage a good deal. There has certainly been a great improvement in the last 15 years.

There is no shifting in the Trade or out of it a man is supposed to do any part of a barge.

He did not know of a case in a year when a man had tried to find work elsewhere in another line, the men are content with their 10p out of work pay.

Wooden shipbuilders have tried to interfere and to get barge building & there is some feeling in the trade on the subject. The bargebuilders themselves are very strict

Healthy Trade.

Drink.

Shifting.

Interference of shipbuilders.



## Training

Wooden giving way to  
iron barges.

Iron barges.

Admission  
✓

as to keeping out shipbuilders.  
Training is by Apprenticeship for 7 years.  
practically now only the sons of barge-  
builders can get in. The Trade is c-  
dying one. the wages are still good  
& the men wish to restrict their numbers  
as far as possible. Wood on are giving way  
to iron barges.

To get into the society a man must declare  
that he has served his time in London.  
He must produce his indentures.  
An outsider even though a good bargebuilder  
w. not be admitted. The other day they  
refused to allow a Rochester man in.

Iron barges are now made very perfectly, they  
are costly but last a lifetime.

30 years ago an attempt was made to intro-  
duce them but was unsuccessful.

A good iron barge does not want repairing.  
Now there are more of them on the  
river than wooden ones.

There are several types of barges on  
the Thames.

Different kinds of barges.

To make a barge.

- 1. Sailing barges. { Topsail barge. topsail of jib.  
                          { mainsail .. - - without.  
                          { schooner .. looks like a  
                              schooner but has lee board & flat<sup>bottom</sup>  
2. Canal barge. similar to sailing barge but  
                          without sails.  
3. Dumb or swim<sup>headed</sup> barge. without deck.

Lee boards are let down when a barge is tackling  
about to prevent her making lee way and  
also to prevent her running aground.

To make a barge.

- 1. Lay your stocks level.
- 2. make bottom of 3 in deal x 9 fitting very  
tight. between the joints use felt &  
pitch which are tightened together with  
chains.
- 3. Floor laid on top. into which holes are  
made for the tree nails which fix the  
floor to the bottom.
- 4. Swims are put up  
a registered 50 ton barge generally carries  
70 tons.

Rents.

House in Rectory Square.

£34 rent + taxes (10s).

Drum & Washhouse.

comes altogether to 17/6. per week with rate  
& taxes.

Barge building firms do not have sick clubs. not  
does the Union make any provision for  
sickness.

George Palmer, master rigger  
and steward.

Wages & Hours.

Hours.

Seasons.

Nov. 7.

G.H.D.

George Palmer, master rigger & steward. 132  
High Street Poplar.

He does the work for the Shaw Saville  
line & can be seen any time at the  
E. India Dock.

"Everyone pays the Union Rate, there is no  
hope for it."

ie.  
Riggers 8<sup>d</sup> hour, Timework, 1 1/2 hrs. for meals.  
Stewards, 8<sup>d</sup> .. .. 1 hr .. ..

The intervals are from 8.30-9 for breakfast  
9 1-2 for dinner.  
working hours. 7-5. for Riggers.  
Stewards have no breakfast 1/2 hour & take  
their dinner from 12-1 otherwise they  
work the same hours.

Seasons are more frequent since the introduction  
of steam vessels. In old days ships  
would not make agreements to be in

Working day & night.

Irregularity.

P.O. Donald Currie & Brit

India lines employ their own men

a port by a certain day, now steamships do this & try to get everything done in the shortest possible time. Next week for instance he expects to have to work 6 days & nights without stopping, one of his orders has been delayed in Glasgow & he must be at her destination in a given time and cannot spare much time in London. This sort of thing is not infrequent esp in winter when there are a great many spurs of this kind.

Work is very irregular for the men. Summer is the busiest time on the whole. 10 men form his constant staff which at any moment may amount to 120. There is the same jump in every master's faculty for employment, the same is the case all through the trade.

The P.O. & Donald Currie & British India lines have no master stevedores but employ their men directly but they take on & dismiss men just in the same way that master stevedores do.

## Expectations of Regular work.

No shifting.

Trade.

Training

Good men lose about 6 weeks work in the year which they are able to make up from a money point of view in the overtime which they get at other times of the year. Indifferent men cannot expect to get more than 9 months work in the year & even less than that if you count the overtime they make as ~~an~~ extra days work.

There is no shifting between riggers & stevedores until the whole of one or other are employed & more are wanted. If you want more riggers & there are none to be found then the Union says you must apply to the stevedores.

1891 was good & so were the years before that. 1892. trade was bad & in 1893 it is worse.

The work of both stevedores & riggers is skilled but there is no system of apprenticeship whatever.

Stevedores are recruited from boys who are given such light work as lowering cargo into a hold by means of a rope. As soon as these boys are strong enough & climb man's

Riggers mostly sailors.

Many accidents.

Duties of a stevedore.

Duties of a Rigger.

wages (6/- per day) & get them, then they take their place among the men.

Riggers are mostly sailors or have been sailors still the best men are those who have been educated to the work on shore & it is not necessary for a man to have been to sea to make a good rigger.

The work is healthy & men are employed up to 70 years of age.

There is considerable danger from accidents but there is no special fund & most of the men are not insured.

(In the United Kingdom have a special Accident & Burial fund).

Duties of a stevedore.

To sling cargo alongside either by land or by water which is then lifted in by steam & to receive it in the hold & stow it away.

Duties of a rigger.

1. To loose dry & bend sails.
2. To take out & put in masts.
3. To bend down & replace topmasts, top gallant masts & halgyards.

The Master's Riggers Association

Rents on the Mackintosh &  
Abbott estates - Bromley.

In Wade Street (Poplar?).

4. To fit & place all standing & running rigging.

Most lines contract for this work & there was very keen competition among the small masters, so keen that at the beginning of this year (1893) the masters decided to found a 'Master's Association' for the mutual benefit & assistance of its members. Now there is very little subcontracting in the trade.

Rents in the Mackintosh & Abbott estates in which Mr. Palmer has lease property.  
12/- per week for 6 rooms & 2 warehouses & small garden 15ft frontage. rooms 10 x 10.  
Landlord paying rates & taxes.  
His center. lives in Wade street 5 rooms & warehouse for 7/- a low rent but then this man does all his own repairs & the rooms are low pitched & old-fashioned & there is no garden to speak of.  
Working men he said want after cottages & good cottage is never unlet, they are difficult to get & the men have preference to take to



Tenements & Cottages.

men do not drink so much as  
they used to do.

Tenements, with them you get more houses on  
one bit of ground. No a higher rent,  
as they are new they are more likely  
to be healthy (Mr P has some property in  
tenements) & sanitary but men would take  
a cottage anyhow in preference.

Said I might come see his men at work any  
day at the Shaw Saville Dock Office, 23  
Dock.

Captain Peters, or Captain Peterbridge would  
give any information at the same office  
on mentioning Mr Palmer's name.

Mr Palmer lived in a good house, was very fond of music  
allowed his daughter-in-law & child to live with  
him, had a working loft at the bottom of a long  
narrow garden, sat down & played a little thing  
of his own on a large American organ & then sang  
'my old Dutch' every verse of it. He had a good  
grapes from a vine over his out house was proud of his  
flowers but you should just see my little house  
down at South end.

James Bond & Sons shipwrights

Wages of.

Shipwrights.

Sparmakers.

Blacksmiths.

Barge builders.

Top sawyer.

Bottom sawyer.

Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>

G. H. D.

James Bond & Sons. Shipwrights. Bond's Wharf  
Orchard Place. E.

They are small men & times are very bad. Mr Bond (father) was out the m however explain all he could.

The following are the men they sometimes employ with the wages paid to each.

Shipwrights. Day work. 8/3 but gen work Piece  
& can earn. 13/-

Sparmakers. Day. 7/- Sometimes Piece. The  
Sparmakers whom they at present employ  
are now on piece work.

Blacksmiths. 6/6. his mate gets 5/- as a  
rule. usually day work.

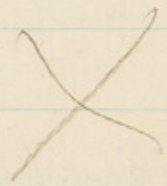
Barge builders (iron). Leading hand 10/6. others  
8/3. per day: nearly all piecework.

Top sawyer. 6/6. } Daywork. Sometimes Piece when  
Bottom sawyer 5/6. }  
the price paid varies with the kind of wood.

Joiners  
Riggers.

Difference bet Joiners & Shipwrights

Spar making dying.



Regularity.

Shifting from yard to yard.

- 6. Joiners. 7/1 day. sometimes P.
- 7. Riggers. Piecework. getting now about £2 each per week but this is unusually high.

Joiners take all work under 2 in thick (such as panellings & mouldings for ships)

Shipwrights take anything thicker in wood ie Decks etc. Very often there is some difficulty in deciding the difference between the work of one & another some jealousy exists.

Spars used to be of wood but now the majority of heavy spars are of iron & sparmaking is a dying industry.

Woods only have one constant man whom they never knock off & he is a watchman, they used to have 12 permanently but times are so bad that they have had to turn all off.

The highest wages Bill they have ever had was for £100 making an average of 80/- per man.

The men chop about from one house to another

Tabletting.

said this was pretty generally done.

Disapprove of the Union.

to where work is they go to other yards, it is nothing against a man to have worked in many places. When he wants a man he goes to the Dock gates where he knows most of the men by sight & picks his man.

10

When an order for barges comes in they usually choose a leading hand & sublet the work to him. This leading hand chooses his own men, he is a man of some authority & they share out the money at the end of the job. The danger in this work is that the money is all paid away before the work is finished, the men know that it must be finished & try to use up all the money & then refuse to go on working without pay. You have to be very careful. The men are not over scrupulous about their agreements.

Men? Bond disapprove of the Union & this way, say work has been driven away from London by them. They make contracts & sublet when the men will, that is the men's look-out, when the Union objects

No shifting employments.

Trade.

No skilled men under 6f.

Handmaking v. healthy.

Drink.

Hours.

then they conform for they are not strong enough to fight.

There is no shifting from one kind of work to another

1891. was more lively but 92 + 93 have both been 'vastly slack.'

All mechanics are apprenticed, you get no skilled men under 6f per day.

The ordinary 5f men probably pick up their duties as best they can.

Handmaking is said to be particularly healthy.

Greyheads of 50 are spoken familiarly of as young Tom Meyes etc.

The men drink pretty hard.

Iron is giving way to wood all round: nearly all iron spars come from Liverpool, but a great deal of iron work is done in London.

His men were making iron clad fenders (ie buffers to hit iron a ship's side) & there was a lot of ash oars made in New York which he told me 'was scarce' had been bought for 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ <sup>d</sup> a foot.

The hours of the men are from 6-8.30  
Oct-to-March men begin at 7. for 9-1 } 9 $\frac{1}{2}$   
same wage. 2.5 } 50%  
6 $\frac{1}{2}$  Sets.

Mr. White, wooden barge builders.

Union wages 9 hours.

Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>

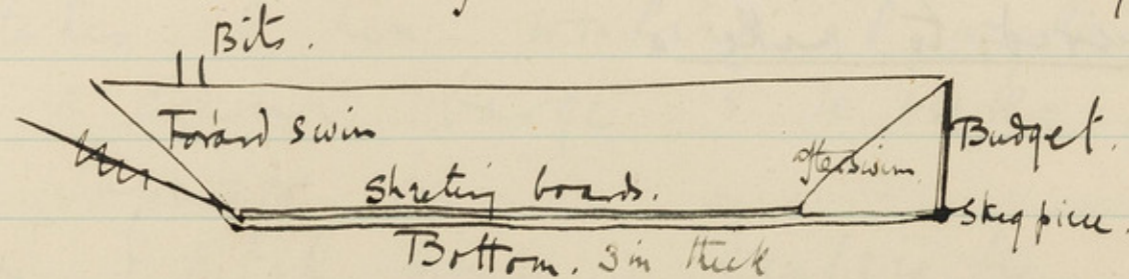
G.H.D.

Mr. White<sup>sons</sup> wooden barge builders. Orchard Place  
Blackwall. E. on an introduction from  
W.C. Steadman.

Perhaps the largest private bargebuilders in  
London.

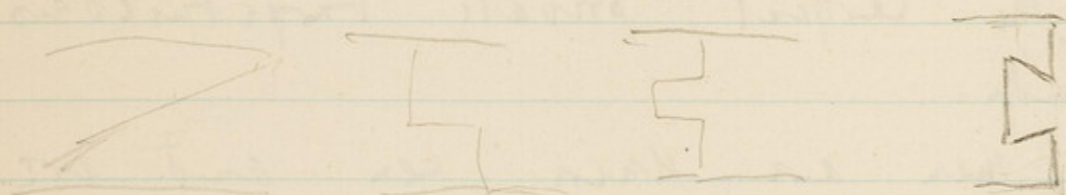
All the men are Union men and are paid  
at the Union rate. They are now working  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  time in order to prevent discharging  
some. All work is daywork & as the  
Father & sons White are practical men  
themselves they know how much each  
man ought to get through in a day &  
they see that he does it.

They were working at a Dumb barge.



Sticks are first made. then the bottom  
is laid & the joints made fast by pitch

To make a barge.



Time required to make a barge.

Woods used.

& felt which is compressed by chains so that the whole is made watertight. Then the swines are made & lapped together. The sheathing boards are put across the bottom (the bottom planks run longwise) & are made fast to the bottom by the nails (pronounced trunnals). Then the 'leads' are dovetailed into the floor & form a frame for the sides to be nailed to. The <sup>planks for the</sup> sides are rabbited together.

The skeg piece is a long plank running the whole length of a barge's bottom and out at the stern end where it is met by the budget which joins it to the head of the afterswim.

It takes 6 men working 8 weeks to make a common barge & 10 weeks for a Superior one.

Oregon & pitch pines & Sautzig fir is the wood used for making the inside of barges. The bottom & sides are made of English elm. Sides are of oak.

Loda centre for Dumb  
Barges.

Manning a barge.

Seasons & men employed.

because hails hold better in this wood than in any other.

The Bits are the two posts which stick up in the forward part of a barge they are used for making fast by r?

Loda is the centre for Dumb barges which are used for coal chiefly. They are these barges with out a deck, they have gen a small cabin fore & aft or nothing @. a 50 ton barge is managed by one man a 100 ton by 2 men.

If a lighterman sees a barge undermanned he may get on board & work her & then demand payment at her destination; there are some evasions of this rule at night but not many by day.

There is a difference between the register of the Board of Trade & that of barge builders in the B of T. would put down a 70 ton barge (according to barge builders) as a 50 ton one, so he said.

In busy times they employ 25-30 men and 20 when things are slack.



Winter busiest.

Day & Piece work.

Iron superseding wood. Iron costs  $\frac{1}{3}$  more lasts  
much longer.

Canal boats.

Repairing on the  
foreshore.

Hours.

Drink. Health

Winter is the busiest time for now barges  
are wanted to take coal about  
Day work prevails throughout the trade except  
for apprentices who may work on Piece.  
There is some subletting in small houses but  
it is not general, sublet work is always  
piecework.

Iron work on the other hand which is rusting wooden  
barges is all piecework and is done at so  
much the foot of so many rivets.

Monkey boats & canal boats are nearly all built  
on the Ware in Hert's; there are none made  
London

91 & 92. were brisk for trade.

93. very quiet since the coal strike.

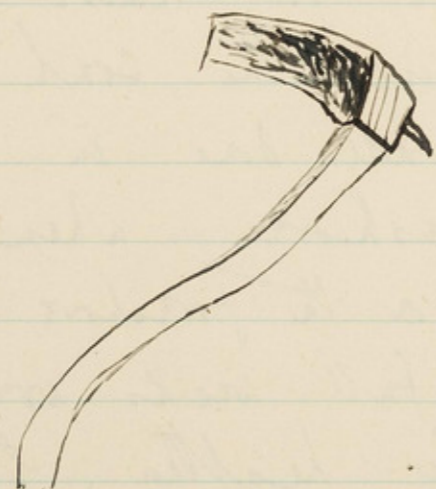
Building work is all done in sheds, repairing  
is on the foreshore when not in dry docks,  
but is generally on the foreshore.

54 hours makes a full weeks work.

The men are very healthy, the amount of  
tea they use has a good effect in  
clearing the chest of bronchitis & the  
pine wood the men say is good for them

Drink.

Accidents.



H35.

They are good workmen any age up to 60 or 65. They drink pretty heavy but are better than they used to be, still there are a good many 'leppers' who will order a little in a bucket 'two hoops up' as the trade phrase goes.

Whale is the top edge of a barge.

at whale is the extra board nailed on it to make it steeper.

In whale is the board running along the top of the studs which separate the in whale from the whale.

Mr White's two sons were v. friendly asked me to come in 10 days to see a barge launched, & we take me round to see Watkin the Boat builders any day I will call again. There is a good deal of danger from the use of edges. No one escapes. They are most excellent tools. The men cut towards themselves. The tool is heavy & if it slips it makes a nasty wound. The union has an accident fund.

Barge & Boat builders.

Wages & Hours.

2 hours notice to quit  
on either side.

Season.

Iron & wood.

54 27.6  
13.6  
6 40.6

Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>

G. A. D.

W. N. Sparks. Barge & Boat builders. 94  
Narrow Street Limehouse.

Barge builders }  
Boat builders } 9d. an hour. for 54 hrs.  
Shipwrights }

Shipwrights get (?) work a piece.  
The men work 9½ hrs. for 5 days.  
+ 6½ - - - on Saturdays when  
the stop at 1.

All work is low work & each man or  
master is subject to a 2 hours notice  
throughout the Trade. This was an arrange-  
ment insisted on by the Union at the  
men's own request.

Summer is busier for repairing though there is  
not much difference here.

Winter for building. There is much less building  
now for iron barges are taking the  
place of wooden.

Regularity.

Shifting

Trade

Skill required

They employ 20 men in the busiest  
15 - - - - - slackest season.

but with most employers there is a greater  
difference between busy & slack seasons.

These men shift from barge building to shipwrighty  
and boat building.

Mr Sparks does shipwrighty for small coasting  
vessels as a rule.

A steady man can expect 46 weeks work in the  
year.

91 & 92. were busy years. before the strike in  
April 91. business was not so brisk as  
after it. There was a rush of orders after the  
enforced closing of the yards for 5 months,  
& the 2 years following were busy to  
make up for lost time.

93 is not so busy, just now things are  
slacker than they have been for 4  
years.

1. Boat builder is the most skillful he is the  
clearest workman
2. Barge builder.
3. Shipwright.

Training.

Subcontracting now rare.

No systematic O.T. since strike.

Healthy.

Drink.

Privileges abol since strike.

Apprenticeship for 7 years, boy beginning at 14 is the most usual: seldom for 5 years.

Subcontracting is now done away with entirely he said; it may go on sub rosa but of this he professed to know very little.

There is now no systematic overtime as there used to be. Since the strike the hours have been limited.

The work is very healthy, it is said that you never see a dead barge builder.

Repairing is done on the foreshore but the men work on clean gravel and not on mud. Mud rakes are used when the tide is falling to stir up the mud & wash it away so that gravel only is left.

The men still drink a good deal but there is more sobriety now than ever there was. 15 years ago men were 'regular devils' they were feared all along the shore & when merry would tar & feather any luckless person they happened to meet.

The men have not altogether gained since

the strike for now they are not allowed to have any.

1. Black or dirt money which was 1/6 for every barge blacked in year. The amount was shared out at the end of the year. perhaps 100 barges were blacked in a year so that there would be 1/6.10 to share at the end of the year.

2. The men may not take any wood away. You can't get the same amount of work out of the men that you were able to get before the strike.

Names of barges in general use.

1. Dumb barge

2. Deck barge. (no sails but has deck & helms the same as a ship).

3. Pailing barge

4. Steam barge

5. Canal barge

1. monkey boat v. narrow for canals.

2. Iron boat or west country river & canal barges made in Bristol Surrey & Oxford.

6. Ware barge for the river sea made in Kent.

## 2 lost Privileges

## Different sorts of Barges

J. Badcock, barge & boat  
builders.

A Union Yard.

Barge builders.

Boat builders

wages  
&  
Hours.

Sailmakers

Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>

G. H. D.

J. Badcock Barge & Boat Builders.

Ironbridge wharf. Blackwall on an intro.  
duction from H.F. Donaldson.

This is professedly a Union yard managed  
by Mr Badcock since the death of his  
father 6 years ago. He was appointed to  
his Father's now gets wages a manager  
at the rate of £3 per week.

Barge builders 9<sup>d</sup> per hour. 10<sup>d</sup> OT.  
Time work.

Boat builders. 10<sup>d</sup> per hour usually Piece work  
54 hours make a full working  
week for these two.

Sailmakers. 9<sup>d</sup> per hour. Piece. very irregular.

No firm does sailmaking entirely they gen.  
combine it with horse clothing, rick cloth  
tarpaulins & sacks. Summer is very  
busy for them & winter is slack.

Seasons for repairing & Building

Boat building

Spring & Summer are the busy times for barge ~~building~~<sup>repairing</sup>, for the weather is then better for caulking, painting & dressing & it is warmer, in winter the men's fingers are often so numb that they cannot get through nearly the same amount of work.

Repairing is gen done on the foreshore or 'Ways' as is the general name for them in the trade.

Building is done more in winter because then men can work under cover & it is not quite so cold.

45-6  
Boat building has no particular season, after heavy weather ships lose their boats & put in for new ones but heavy weather may be any time of the year. The Trade has practically left London it is cheaper to get them from Harwich & Ipswich where wages are lower & to pay to 10/- to have them towed to London than to try to make them yourself, besides you get not only a cheaper but a better boat for your money.



## Overtime in Summer.

## Shifting

## Cost of making a Barge.

## Iron & Wood.

He employs 15 bargebuilders regularly though out the year. In summer they work overtime for 3 mths perhaps plus OT in each week for 12 weeks. He does not much like to take on new men even if new men were to be had, & they are not for all have full work in summer.

(cf Union Rules against OT.!).

There is no shifting except from Boat-repairing to Bargebuilding. His Boat-repairer gets 10<sup>d</sup> an hour. The men do not mind his shifting as they know how much better a workman he is than any of themselves. £400 to £500 is the price that is generally paid for the best wooden barge of from 130 to 150 tons.

Of this £100 is the labour bill for 5 men working 12 weeks.

Iron barges are rapidly taking the place of wooden since the strike in 1890.

Iron barges are built by Boilermakers at piecework rates.

An iron barge of 130 or 140 tons cost £600

they are better & last longer, the large coal firms which used to use wood have all gone in for ~~wood~~ iron barges as they are now not so very much more expensive than wooden. The men have to thank themselves for this loss of trade occasioned by their insisting on higher wages.

- 91. trade was good.
- 92. not so bad.
- 93. very rough year: no work going.

Apprentices learn the Trade for 7 years. There is no limit to the number of Apprentices at least the Union he made is four & Mr. Badcock employs 9. & there are only 15 barge builders. He has taken an apprentice fairly since the strike.

A man of 50 or 55 with a good character would be taken on easily but after 55 it would begin to be difficult though he employs one old chap of 65 who has not lost any time this year until today & one man of 60 is the best workman he has. Drink is very much better than it used to be

Trade.



Age of capacity.

Drink.

A much better class of  
men now.

Houses men live in.

Rents.

Bargebuilders labourers.

30 years ago there wd not be a full blown  
barge builder who did not go out on the  
booze 3 days in the week & then work  
day & night to make up his money.

The class of men now is altogether different &  
very much better thanks to better edu-  
-cation & no such a thing as the whole  
gang going on the drink from one year  
has not been heard of for 25 years.

The men live in the neighbourhood

The house rents are 12 to 13/.

One man takes  $\frac{1}{2}$  a house. They are enclosed  
houses divided into a lower & upper floor

The best rooms would be 14 ft x 15.

The houses having a frontage of 15 ft.

There are a great many tenements or Buildings  
about but he never knew of a man who  
lived in one though they must suit  
the requirements of the working man because  
they are nearly always well filled.

Barge builders labourers are used to shift the  
barges & stir the foreshore so ways  
when the tide is ebbing so as to make

a clean Bottom. This is not so necessary on the river when the vessels & tugs make a wash but must always be done here which is on Bow Creek.

Caulkers. always work on piece at so much per 100 ft than are very few in London. they have gone out along with wooden ships of which there are none or very few built in London. The man they employ is an odd man who comes when wanted he prob. does not make more than £1 per wk all the year round.

2 of the labourers are permanent the rest are taken on as wanted.

Hours. 6-5 every day exc Sat.  
6-1 Saturdays.  
1 1/2 hours for meals. but 2 hrs allowed if overtime is worked.

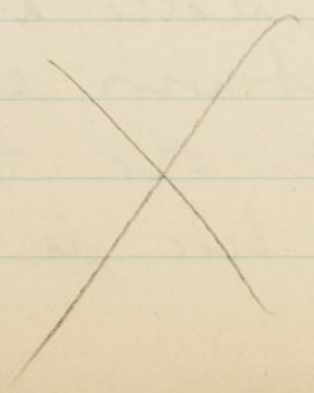
When one man is ill each workman in the yard pays up if. Sick man must produce D<sup>r</sup> certificate if more than one are ill then 6<sup>d</sup> is the sub. from each for each sick one.

Caulkers.

No more wooden ships.

Hours.

Lock club.

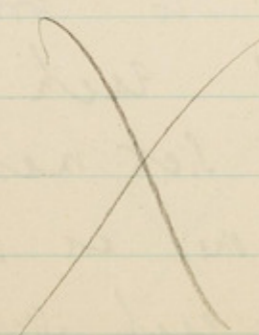


Leather & Parkins. shipwrights.

Wages.

Hours.

When working on ships.



Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>

G.H.D.

Man. Leister & Parkins. Shipwrights, etc etc.  
Works. Royal Albert. Dry Dock.  
Office 11. London St. near Fenchurch St.  
Station. men introduced from H.F. Da.  
alder.

Shipwrights. 7/- per day. 54 hrs full week.

Joiners 7/-

They also employ Engineers, Boiler-makers, Plumbers  
& tinsmiths & will make a full return of  
wages & hours for each man.

Hours. 6 - 5 for 5 days.

5 1/2 hrs on Saturdays.

When working on board ship the full days  
work lasts from 7-5: ships officers  
are so lazy about getting up when in  
dock that they find it impossible to  
put men in to do the work before  
7 o'clock.

Winter is the busy time when there is more

Seasons.

Irregularity of work.

Shifting from house to house.

Trade.

bad weather & fogs are about & collisions occur.  
(there were 5 in the last fortnight in  
the Thames & things are busy in consequence).

They are slack in the summer & fine weather.

They employ from 12 to 120 men shipwrights  
& so on through the whole of their works.

In a general way there are more ship-  
wrights in London than there is work for  
there a good man gets  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the year  
in full work taking everything together.

Second rate men are casuals, taken on when wanted  
when they want men the foreman is to be  
to take none on & he generally applies  
to the Union.

There is a good deal of shifting from shop to  
shop, one house is often busy while a-  
-nother is slack. The men know as well  
as the masters what ships are coming  
in & where they are likely to go to  
& go accordingly to the different yards.

It was pretty good freights were not so low  
as they are now & owners were not com-  
pelled to economise in repairs & so on.

Apprenticeship for 5 years.

Very little subcontracting now.

Strength of Unions.

Limit of capacity.

Duties of shipwrights.

of Joiners.

other possible way.

92. Trade was falling.

93. very bad.

Joiners & Shipwrights must be apprenticed to a master shipwright for 5 years.

There is very little subcontracting if any in London. The Prod here works of their own & employ their own men but only a few as a rule the work is done through a contractor or Dry Dock proprietor.

Joiners & Shipwrights have separate Unions.

The Shipwrights in London are not very strong nor are the Joiners but the iron ship builders & boiler makers are very strong.

Shipwrights is pretty rough work: they have some men of 60 but a man is not really good for much after 50 or 55 when he begins to lose his nerve & cannot go crawling about the beam & spar of a ship.

They are employed to do the heavier <sup>wood</sup> work on a ship & are engaged in Dry Docking & making stages for painting or repairing.

Joiners do the lighter woodwork in the cabins etc.

Job work.

London is for repairing

New work elsewhere.

Drink.

Wood rain.

they are supposed not to work wood more than 1/2 inches thick.

Roughly speaking joiners work inside & shipwrights outside a ship.

Some work is done job work is laying a deck.

The Landa trade is chiefly repairing work,

there is a great deal of overtime for steam ships are due at certain dates & must be ready so men must work after night day.

New work is chiefly on the Clyde, Tees, Wear Tyne, Belfast (3 big yards). in London is new work etc for Govt & that is chiefly iron work.

Shipwrights & joiners are a very respectable class as a whole.

There is no sick club in the firm.

A great many accidents men as a rule belong to Friendly societies (Oddfellows etc).

Employers are not liable unless it can be proved to be the fault of themselves or their foreman.

Wood is going way to iron, tendency even to have decks made of iron.



Mr. Watkins & Co. Yacht & Boat builders

Wages.

Hours.

Season.

Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>

G. H. W.

Mr. Watkins & Co. L<sup>d</sup>. Boat builders. on an intro.  
Letter from Mr. White. Orchard yard  
Blackwall. They also build yachts.

Yacht &  
Boat builders } earn 7/- per day as a standing wage.

The full week is 54 hours.

Most of the work is done on Piecework  
& this is general throughout the Trade.

The men always count to earn a minimum  
of 7/- when working a full day. When  
a job is finished there is always a  
plus to be divided equally among all  
those employed on the job.

Hours. 6 AM to 5 PM 1½ hrs for meals.

6 — 1 on Saturdays ½ hr for breakfast.

Spring is the busiest time for pleasure boats &  
yachts.

For ship's boats there is a demand all the  
year round.

October to Xmas is the slackest season.

Irregularity of employment.

Shifting.

To make a ship's boat.

Trade.

There is a great variation in the number of men employed. Here they employ 150 down to 30 men.

In busy times there is great difficulty in getting good workmen but in slack there are a very great many out of employment. This irregularity is general among all boat-builders, only 30 men are constant throughout the year, naturally the better men. Boat men he said can average 9 months in the year - otherwise they go without work.

There is much shifting from yard to yard, you go where the work is.

3 men on a ship's boat would make it in less than a fortnight - in fact if you ordered one on Monday boat could have it on Saturday without much difficulty.

91 very good season

92. was very inferior but not nearly so bad as 93

Skill.

Trades Union.

Apprenticeship.

Age of capacity.

Drink.

Racing craft not made  
in London.

There is great skill required the work is fine & must be clean, it is not to be compared with barge building, you might as well ask whether it required more skill to build a carriage or a coster's barrow.

The Trades Union is very strong & compels the master to pay the worse man just as much as the better.

7 years Apprenticeship is general.

There are plenty of good men past 60 for it is simple light work & does not require great physical strength.

There is no trouble from drinking & there has been great improvement in this respect though boat builders were never as bad as bargebuilders & shipwrights.

There is very little (really none he said) racing boat building in London but there is plenty ~~above~~<sup>up</sup> the river & also a little at Putney (?); but racing skiffs are cannot be said to be made below New Bridge.

Clincher built boats.

Carvel boats.

Diagonals.

There are 3 kinds of boats built in India.

1. The clincher generally called clincher built boats. These are made of overlapping beams clinched together by copper nails. For these boats the boat is built first & the frame is added afterwards. Most pleasure & ships boats are built in this way. it is the cheapest form of boat building.
2. Carvel boats are the stronger boats (i.e. those built for small launches) in which the frame is first made & then the ribs are nailed on.
3. Diagonal boats, which are built like carvel boats but they are more carefully made water tight. they have a double frame made of two lots of beams running diagonally to one another. The P.O. life boats (at least there) are made in this way.

Mr. Wat Rins refused to give full wages returns or to say anything particular as to regularity of employment.

Men Coombs & Scotton sailmakers.

Wages.

Seasons.

Sailing ships get new sails in  
the outports.

Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>

J. H. D.

Men Coombs & Scotton sailmakers. on an intro-  
duction from Mr Coombs partner in Messrs  
Lester & Perkins (see above).  
18 Billiter Street & West India Dock R<sup>d</sup>

Sailmaking is now in a very bad way: steamships  
have very few & are then very little.  
A good sailmaker used to get an average of  
30f. throughout the year, but during the  
last 2 years they have not made  
nearly so much.

Nearly all the work is Piece & 54 hours  
constitutes a full working week.  
Autumn & Spring are the busy seasons &  
used to be for in Autumn there are  
the ships who put out for the West  
Indian & Australian Xmas trade &  
get there in time for the Christmas  
markets.

Summer is the slack time.  
All the sailing ships that there are nearly

Regularity of employment.

Shifting.

Trade

Skilled work.

go to the outports, they do not come to London is for steamships.

Some lines employ 8 or 10 men regularly  
Mr. Carter J. used to have 12 men constantly  
at work & 30 in busy times. These  
numbers only have been employed the  
last 2 years.

If a good man is lucky he can get into one  
of the great steamship lines & have  
regular work but a good man outside  
cannot expect to get more than 8 months  
in the year.

There is some shifting to packing centers in  
the summer but not very much. Sailmakers  
have had to take to sack tarpaulin &  
covermaking which used to be a separate  
Business was made by sailmakers  
but more at Rochester than in London.

84 was a very good year

91. great deal better than now.

93. very bad.

The work is distinctly skilled work: no women  
are employed & a little machinery.

Apprenticeship.

Respectable lot of men.

To make a sail.

The Union.

Apprenticeship is the rule. Boys come to serve 3 or 4 years at boys wages then they are put on piecework & get half the Book price & then  $\frac{3}{4}$  the price until the 7 years are out.

They are a very respectable lot of men & good workers until very old age. Though the sitting down working posture tends to contract the chest.

All sea men at the work, tarred covers are made by women but sail cloth is too stiff you get your cloth in 'Bolts' of canvas the foremen cut it out according to the size of the sail & give it to men to sew. The mere sewing is not hard but skill is needed to put in the bolt. - rope - a bolt rope is a softer rope which is sewn round the edge of a sail.

The Union is very strong & has power in all the English ports. London men do not travel: Scotsmen come here. They know in the trade is a  
? even

Decaying industry.

Gangs to make a sail.

No overtime worked.

Union House. 2 Apprentices are allowed to each  
loft.

It is a decaying industry.

Gangs of men work at one sail. 3 or 4 at  
a large one & 2 for a small one & the  
money is shared equally at the completion  
of a job. The men now get from 30¢ to  
nothing.

There is no overtime partly owing to the Union  
which insists on so high a wage for OT  
& also because trade is so very slack  
that there is no temptation to work OT.



Smith, Sails & tarpaulins.

History.

Wages & hours.

Probably not yet  
reached lowest point.

November 26<sup>th</sup>

G.H.D.

Mr. Smith, sail & tarpaulin maker, in the  
E. 9 dock road, nearly opposite to the  
Poplar parish church: on an introduc-  
-tion from Mr Badcock. (see above)

Mr. Smith had been foreman in the sail  
loft to the Shaw Saville but seeing  
that trade was decreasing rapidly he  
left & set up tarpaulin, barge sail  
making. So did his two brothers  
who were also in the sailmaking  
like & had served their time as  
sailmakers

Sailmakers work 54 hours in the full week  
earning 6/- as day money &  
0/- on Piece.

But work is very irregular & things have  
probably not yet quite reached  
their lowest point.

In old times you would see 3 or 4  
ships from Calcutta 3 deep in the

London has ceased to  
be a centre & port of transshipment.

London men look very little  
ahead.

Effect of a dry season

Docks now there is nothing: not that  
Trade has left London but the con-  
ditions have changed iron & steam  
have taken the place of wood &  
sails.

London is not now so much of a centre, it is  
no longer a port of transshipment.  
For instance Millwall used to be full of  
ships transshipping cargoes of Swedish  
matches but during the Dock strike  
these went straight from Sweden to  
Antwerp & have not returned here  
now that things are quiet again.  
This might have been foreseen, and  
sailmakers might try now to take up  
other things as - he implied - they did in  
in other parts of the country but  
London people look very little ahead.  
Mr. Smith employs women to make tarpaulins &  
bag covers & the patent coverings that  
you have over carts  
This year has been very quiet owing  
to the fine weather so that things have

Good balances bad.

His shop.

not needed covering & Mr. Smith has had  
up his mind to a very poor year as  
most of his earnings come from letting  
out coverings to bargeowners: but  
he said, there are always compensations  
somewhere or other, the dry year  
caused scarcity of hay, hay must  
be imported, it comes in barges & is  
arriving now & must be covered so  
that there is a tremendous demand.

He keeps a shop containing, whips (the main  
lots come from Norway), saddles,  
tarpaulin jackets, sailcloth ropes  
& footballs. His workshop is some  
way off. He disapproves of living in  
Londra for his children & is going to  
move to the country.

He gave wages of a good average week.

Warne, Sailmaker.

The 'Yellows' & 'Blues'  
Unions.

Numbers in Trade

Average earnings.

Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>

G. H. D.

Mr. Warne, former sailmaker to the Shaw Saville Line at their sail loft in the East-India Dock, near the gate as you enter on the left.

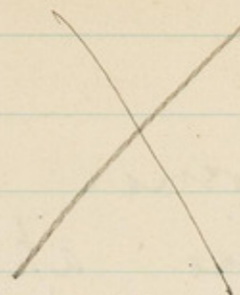
He had been 45 years a sailmaker & belongs to the Union known as the 'Yellows' which is opposed to the 'Blues'.

The Yellows admit any who come from either London or the country while the 'Blues' confine themselves to those apprenticed in London.

The whole body of sailmakers in London used to be 1000 or more, now they are perhaps not more than 400.

There is very little work to be had, the average earnings of the whole body of men in the trade would not work out at an average of 25/- per week very possibly less.

Irregularity.



Alternatives

Warning to Unions not  
to set too high a price.

Piecework v Day.

Work is very irregular; you may have one job or 4 in a week & must travel from shop to shop to seek it a man thinks himself lucky to get a job lasting two consecutive weeks and very lucky for one of 5 consecutive weeks.

In a full week a sailmaker earns £2<sup>00</sup> on Piece work.

Some men have taken to tarpaulin & sack making but this is not now men's work.

The union had a chance of making a price for sackmaking a trade for which sailmakers are competent, but they set too high a price (i.e. 7<sup>d</sup> per sack) & would not allow of men's accepting 7<sup>d</sup>.

At this price masters could not afford it & the work was given to women and is now for ever lost to men. Unions should be careful & take such things into consideration.

All work is on piece & Mr. Warner was in

Time & Piece work.

Casual work.

No remedy for it.

how

favour of Piece as against Daywork for  
he said that a P. the old man had  
anyhow a chance of being taken on and  
earning something whereas Daywork  
employers naturally always picked at  
the younger men & did not give old men  
a chance.

The men are paid by the <sup>job</sup> [hour] & you need  
not keep on a man for a whole day but  
only keep him until his job is finished.

The work is casual & Mr. Warner could think  
of no remedy for it and trade is de-  
-caying so that ultimately it will be  
its own remedy. He again mentioned  
how careful men should be not to set  
too high a price on their work saying  
it was better to have 9 months work at  
a rather lower rate than 6 months at a  
higher one.

He was in favour of arbitration in trade disputes  
and that a check should be given to  
the tremendous unemployment everywhere that  
went on.

Gibson, Shipwrights Provident  
Union

Founded.

Membership.

The Associated Shipwrights

November 16<sup>th</sup>

G. H. D.

Mr Gibson, 102 Gough Street Poplar.  
Secretary to the 'Shipwrights Provident  
Union of the Port of London'

They have most influence between London  
Bridge & Gravesend.

Founded. 1824.

1378 members on their books at the end of  
the last quarter (Sep). most of them  
being sound financial members.  
of these about 60 are abroad or in  
other towns in England & 100 are  
sea going members.

150 to 200 belong to another society they  
are mostly members who once be-  
longed to this Union and form what  
is called the Associated Society  
of Shipwrights led by one Wilkie  
the Secretary of the Shipwrights  
Society at Newcastle.

Total number in London

Unionists & Non U. Do not although  
they may work together

U<sup>c</sup>

Relations bet masters  
& men.

Hours of work.

In London altogether he would say there are about 1600 shipwrights. Unionists & Non U do not work together as a matter of fact though there is a special resolution in the rules allowing it; this was passed so that unionists might get into the same shops as non U & bring pressure on them to join.

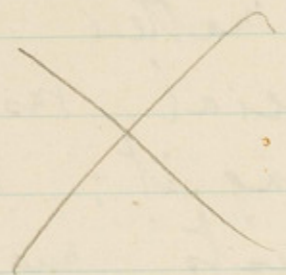
The relations between employers & employed are good: employers are as a rule practical men & the managers always are. Disputes are mostly amicably arranged otherwise recourse must be had to the Judge for there are no boards of Arbitration & the Society is not affiliated to the Trades Council.

Hours of work are from day light till dark in winter and from 6.30 - 5 in summer. The days are divided into quarters, halves, 3 quarters & whole days. No man may work for less than a quarter of a day if he gets a job at all.



Wd rather not give information  
as to wages.

Majority Piecework.



Seasons

Overtime

Casual work.

Shifting.

He said he would rather not give the earnings of the men or say how long they were good for work.

The majority of the work is Piecework very few are dayworkers. They have a Price list & this is rigidly kept to. 6 days make a week's work.

As a rule they are busiest in winter but of late years they have been very slack both in summer & winter

91. was nothing to boast of and 92 & 93 were very bad.

Overtime is not much worked, it is only occasional when required & that now is very seldom.

Most of the work is casual: when a job must be done quickly then a great number of men are taken on, if not then a few men are allowed to make a longer job of it. Now it is harder than ever to get a job to do.

The men shift to where the work is, it is no

uncommon thing to have 3 or 4 jobs in one week, you must follow your work from house to house.

There are a great many small master shipwrights which are known in the Trade as floating builders, these are men who have no dry dock of their own but who work on the ship as she is moored to their quay in the river or even in mid-stream.

The men do not take up any alternative trades, in reality they ought to be able to get & are capable of doing all the rivetting & iron work about a ship. Joiners do the work up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick & shipwrights claim all work above that thickness & generally get it but there are sometimes collisions between the two.

Apprentices must be legally bound for 7 years to get into the Society you must be able to shew your indentures but need not exhibit any direct proof of skill.

Very small masters.

No alternative trade.

Shipwrights & Joiners.

Apprentices.

Conditions of membership.

Drink

Sons of Phoenix

Rents

The men are a sober lot and teetotalism is progressing. Temperance lectures and the blue ribbon crusade of a few years ago, he said, had done even more than education by Board schools. But Board Schools & Union had undoubtedly helped the men a great deal.

The Sons of the Phoenix a Temperance benefit Soc. was another great reason, here you paid a very small amount & you were able to get £20 or £22 at death provided you were a teetotaler.

Rents in Croydon S.E.  
10/- to 13/- for 6 or 7 rooms.  
inclusion of a nice back room & another  
back room with a copper.  
11 x 12 ft. was the size of the parlour.  
passage 3 ft.  
11 x 15 ft. size of upper front room.

Mr. Gibson said he wd arrange for a meeting of  
men with me & let me know when.

Alexander Chambers. Mast &  
Blockmaker.

Wages.

Mast & Blockmaker's Union.

Very little work now.

November 21.

S.H.D.

Alexander Chambers. 59. Church Street  
Rotherhithe. Mast & Blockmaker (wood)  
& shipsmith (iron).

He employs from 12 men in busy times to 4 in slack, and the variation he would say is at the same ratio throughout the trade.

7/- per day is the Trades Union price. Some of the work is piece but this system is not worked here.

The Mast & Blockmaker's Union is not very powerful about 80 men belong - in fact the whole trade - Mr. Chambers although saying the Union was not very powerful yet complained of it being tyrannical. There used to be a west Indian trade which made a busy season from August to December. Ships (sailing) used to make two voyages in the year used to start off on their second voyage in November & Dec.

No particular season.

Regularity.

Some companies do their own work.

Shifting.

Now there is no particular season, there is only one sailing vessel in the West Indian Trade. The Chambers used at one time to do all this work (49(?) ships). There is a little work for ships to Australia but this also is being cut up.

Things, he said, can hardly go lower than they are at present.

One or two days work a week is all that the men can expect and for a good man 8 mths work in the year is the outside he can expect to get.

Some of the big steamship lines do their work themselves: i.e. they have a few permanent men who are turned on to any job that comes to hand. But the rule is to employ a master separate to get men & see to the work.

Masts & blocks are made by the same men: they are made in the workshops & then sent down to the ship.

The men shift to where the work is, from one house to another. Very often one house is busy while

Encroachment of Shipwrights.

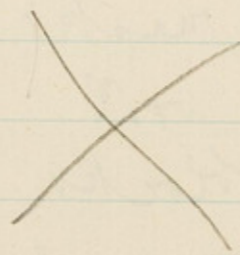
29

No alternative trade.

Trade.

Skilled work.

Chip money



Hours of work.

Shipwrights now do nearly all the mast & Block work; this is unfair, they should keep to their own. They even will not let mast & Blockmakers work with them.

The men have no alternative trade.

72-80. were good years.

91 was much better than the present time

93 was bad.

In 83 Mr C did a business of over £2000 in 91 this fell to £1200 & is less now.

Scotchmen send up blocks cut by machinery so cheaply that the London trade has been completely cut up.

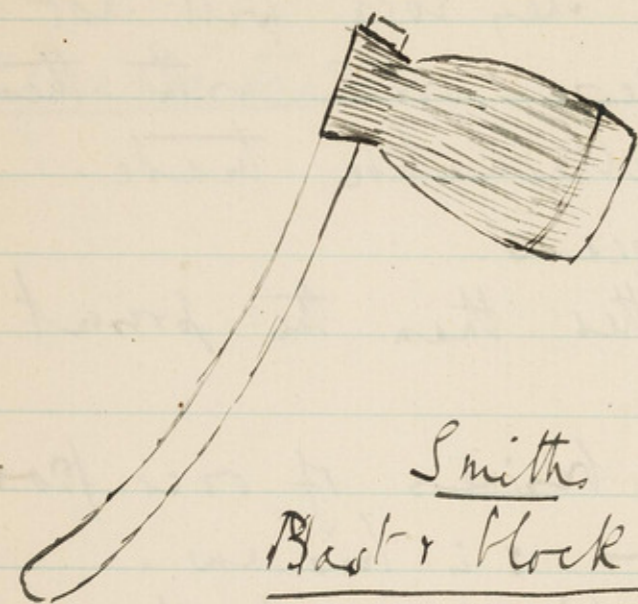
The work is skilled & a man must be specially trained. Apprenticeship for 7 years is the usual way of learning.

It is very healthy work

The men get Chip money which comes about 1/- a day.

Work in Summer is from 6-5. and from 7-5 in winter. & until one o'clock on Saturdays.

½ hr is allowed for breakfast at 8 & another ?



Mastmakers axe.

Smiths  
Bast & Block labourers

Rents

The men are good workmen up to 60 & past.  
They are careful men as a body & there has been  
a great improvement in them: the class  
of houses they live in is better than it used  
to be.

It is a decidedly decreasing trade  
The men work with the heavy mastmakers axe.  
A good smith gets 7/- per day: men who  
are not so good 6/-  
Labourers who clear up the chips & grind  
the tools get 4/-

Men live all around near factory.  
6 roomed cottages generally 10/- 11/- occupied  
by 2 families  
consisting of parlour, kitchen & wash house,  
front & back bedroom & small room. back bedr  
in back parlour. (9 x 12 ft).  
In Albion & Adam streets the rents are about  
9/- for 6<sup>(3)</sup> rooms.

Coe master oarsmen.

Not > 30 journeymen in  
London.

Foreign competition

Nov. 22nd

S. H. D.

Mr Coe : small master barge oar & scull  
makes. Railway avenue Rotherhithe  
man introduction from Mr Chambers.

Said he had received a form from Mr Booth but  
he was in such a very small way that  
he had not thought it worth while  
answering.

He makes barges chiefly & a few skulls,  
for wharves. The fine work for racing  
boats is done by Ayling who works for  
the universities & higher up the river.

There are not more than 30 men in the  
trade & all these masters are small men.  
of these he mentioned. Ayling a employ  
6 men. Marks 2. Leggett 2. Morris 2

The Trade is failing owing to foreign com-  
-petition -

Barge oars which are of fir come from  
from Sweden ready finished; they used  
to come rough hewn; now they have



steam power & saws near the forests themselves  
send them ready for use.

Ask oars in the same way come from New  
York are sold in London to large buyers  
at 32<sup>d</sup> per foot & at rather higher price  
to smaller men.

Small master barge men treat discreetly with the  
captains of vessels they do not come to  
the London market & scales as they used  
to do.

Winter is the busy time for barge oars, there  
are more coal barges about & more  
heavy work is done than in the  
summer.

Life boat oars are made of pine

Racing oars of spruce.

One young man can make 10 pairs of  
oars in a week. His average in a  
full week would be 8 pairs.

An old man (i.e. one of 54 - good workman &  
actually in the shop) working from 6 to 5  
every day in the week can make 6  
pairs.

Competition abroad.

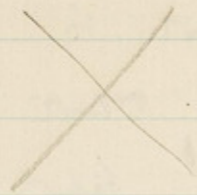
oars makers

Seasons.

Capacity of work.

Very hard work.

All Piecework.



Cost of making a pair of sculls.

said he knew of oars selling now  
at 2/6. 10ft long. wh. is the  
price of the labour here.

Undercutting among masters.

Atkins work.

The work is very hard you must try to  
make a living

All work is Piecework.

The average pay for a pair of oars is 4/-  
no one would say 7/- was a fair price but  
that can be done. He gets 12/6 for a pair  
of sculls or skiff oars. & it costs him  
for the deal 4/6.

leather 1/- to 1/6.

Sawing 4d.

paint varnish & copper 6d.

labour 4/- = 10/4 to 10/10.

so that there is not much profit for him  
self.

The small masters have warred against  
one another & cut prices lower & lower &  
finally have themselves been undercut  
for good by foreign competition.

Atkins who does fine work & has the best  
workmen get 25/- a pair; but then he  
is a specialist & his trade is not half  
so big now as it used to be.

The men work what time they like: the majority he would say got 2 or 3 months work in the year.

His house in Railway Avenue - Rotherhithe was 10/- for 6 rooms, small room, kitchen & washhouse. no garden & small yard. Downstairs room (wh he measured) was 12ft 6 x 12.

Other houses near were let in twos or threes i.e. 1 party takes the house & then has 2 or 3 lodgers.

Four rooms were let for 7/6 or 8/-.

Rents.

The Loyal United Riggers.

The meeting.

November 30<sup>th</sup>

G. H. D.

The Loyal London United Riggers Association

A special meeting called by their secretary  
Mr Paterson Lind (private address Trafalgar  
Hotel - Leaman St. at the Blue Post  
Tavern in the West India Dock Road.

About 40 or 50 men came to the meeting &  
were very attentive during the discussions  
of the questions on the Trades Union form.  
The President, Treasurer & secretary were  
also there seated at one table facing the  
audience & I was given another.

They wore a bright blue broad ribbon  
round their necks & reaching down below  
their waists; at the bottom of it - wh.  
came to a point - there was a small silver  
star.

The proceedings were opened by the President -  
all standing up with their hats off  
while he read a sort of solemn prayer

Opening prayer.

Founded.

Memberships.

(exc that there was nothing religious about it or mention of the deity) adjuring all there to remember they were assembled to consider the common weal & not the special claim of an individual, trusting that they would not quarrel, but behave as brethren & support the authority of the chair.

This the president read out from a well thumbed printed paper pasted on to a wooden tablet - like the college grace tablet at the university - exc that this shut up like a book. He knew it & nearly by heart but not quite.

Then the meeting was declared open.

The Assoc was founded in 1853 - The President said it was the only assoc in the Port (apparently they do not recognize the Millers Union)

They claim authority from London Bridge to Gravesend is the Port of London.

200 members now belong to the society, the

Unionists compared with Non U.

Do not work together

Relations with masters good.

The Master's Riggers Assoc.

lowest membership they have ever had.

In 1873 & 74 (good years) they had as many as 420 members.

About 70 men are Non Unionists which is rather overstating than understating their number very few of these are practical riggers they are mostly sailors who take to rigging work & do the easy part & small jobs eg. bending & unbending sails & leave the heavy work to riggers proper because they are incapable of it.

Unionists & Non Unionists may not work together at Rigging work unless the non unionists belong bona fide ships crew.

The relations between master & men are now very friendly & always have been: there are even some master riggers members of the association.

They spoke of the Master's Rigging Assoc laughingly & said that certainly not more than 1 master belonged to it.

When there are differences the Union tries to adjust them, they go to the masters

## Hours.

8½ hours  
6 days  
51 hours

## Timework usually.

## Wages.

## Overtime regulations

as the masters come to them: both things have happened

7-5 for 6 days are the working hours including ½ hour for meals which are paid for (there was some difference of opinion here, as or 2 men said they were not paid for meals but got paid an hour exclusion of meals, but this was over-ruled by the chairman).

The work is usually time work but the masters some times arrange a job at a given price with their men & are allowed to 10.50 by the Union.

Wages are £16 for the week or 6/- per day. The men are engaged by the day & receive their money every evening. If they begin work at 9 AM then they only get 5/- (rule 16).

Overtime is provided for in rule 17. at 1/- an hour after 5 o'clock & double time on Sundays, Xmas day & Good Friday with further regulations with respect to all night work (vide rule 17).

Stresses of work.

Age of capacity.

Every man is a Casual lab.

Expectation of work in a year.

When ships have to be finished the men must work night & day. Now that time is so important an element in shipping business; work must be done to suit a particular tide.

If a man is an active labourer he can be taken on at any age. but the work gets nerve especially on a frosty morning when the masts & ropes are covered with frost & ice.

Every man in this industry is a Casual lab. - unless other is hardly an exception to this rule. Practically nobody has regular work. 26 weeks out of the 52 is the average of work that men have got this year. Some would be very thankful to have had a week. (There was some dissent here, apparently the President was either putting the average of work too low or the pride of the men would not pleased to have it stated in public how poor they were probably there were several who



Alterations.

Telegraph wires?

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Season.

OH jobs.

Shifting.

could get more than this but I think it was true of a great number)

Some have got work on the Tower Bridge this year, others do steeple jacking,

some go to sea and are paid so much for the run: some put up lightning conductors

(The lightning conductors on the House of Parliament was put up by a rigger).

The men are fitted for & would take anything in the nature of gear work.

The busy season used to be the woolsales but there are not a sufficiency of wool-ships now to give much employment.

The men have a regular place of call to which the employers come & pick their men

There are no branches in the rigging work but when riggers are on a ship they will help in the stores and clean a ship down.

The men go to where they can get work; you may work for a new employer every day of the week.

Men used to serve their time 7 years formerly.

## Training

## Admission to Society

## Duties of a Rigger

## No remedies

in Rigging lofts; of these there are only 2 or 3 left in London & there are no Apprentices.

Any man who is a good seaman (he must have served 4 years on a sailing ship as an able seaman to be considered fit) may be elected to the Society. This is an extension of the rules because formerly only Apprentices were admitted.

The duty of a Rigger is to

Take a ship from the Builders' hands,

Spur that ship.

Fit her rigging complete both standing & running gear in fact every detail concerning a ship's sails spars & anchors, chains & ropes.

They parbuckle (old term for hoisting wood, masts over ship's side - in case of the Societies rule) or hoist them in a ship's masts in.

They will put in iron masts & spars & fit in iron rigging.

They could suggest no remedies for the straits

'Down all steamers'

Complaints.

in which they found themselves. Steamers don't carry anything like the gear & rigging they used to. Now everything is of iron & iron rigging is much more lasting than hemp. The only thing that could help them would be to 'Down all steamers'

They offer as Benefits.

- 6/ wk for Dicks for Accidents.
- 5 for death of member, nothing for his wife.
- 4 nothing either as Pension or outwork B.P.

They complained of the insufficiency of the B of T surveyors.

Duke of Abercorn a ship went to sea with rotten masts, they let the B of T know & they sent an official who was content with being told by the captain that all was right. The ship went to sea & has never been heard of since.

This very day a man had been working on some wire rigging which gave way with him & he broke his leg.

They asked why a foreign ship in a English port

Shoogangs.

Def: of 'Out Ports'.

Union recognizes depression  
& lowers wages.

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should not be subject to the same rules as an English ship, why she should not be prevented from loading above her load line.

Now English firms make foreign ports their head quarters & fly foreign flags & London has lost a great deal.

The shoogangs of the big Steamship Co are not riggers proper: they are sailors who went a time on shore & are given rigging work. They get fairly regular work at 5/- per day.

The 'out-ports' are any ports in the U.K. not London.

On Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> 1891. The wages for out door rigging work were raised to 7/- by the Union.  
Oct. 1892. They declared that (of their own accord) considering the depression the wages should be reduced again to 6/-

Mr. Lind is very willing to give any further help. He is also secretary to the 'Shipping Federation'.

The meeting ended with another solemn prayer thanking those present for having been unselfish & orderly & then a vote of thanks was passed to me for having come down to see them 'out of working hours'.

United River Thames }  
Ship Caulkers }

GLA  
Jan 4/94

Trade revolutionized.

The Caulker's work.

Caulkers in Iron Trade.

United River Thames Ship Caulkers  
Interview with Mr W. N. Stratton, President,  
65. Morville Road, Addington R. Bow. E.

The change in shipping from wood to iron has revolutionized the trade. The Ship caulkers work on wooden vessels. The decks of steam ships. Their business is to make the seams tight. After the shipwright has planked the sides of the vessel, the caulker caulks them. Threads of oakum are driven between the planks one thread at a time to the number of 4 to 8 according to the thickness of the planks. After this a coat of pitch is applied and followed by a coat of tar to protect the oakum. Decks of vessels are also treated in the same manner; the dark line between the planks forming the deck of a steamer being the oakum covered with tar.

They do work in any other branches. There are caulkers in the iron & other trades, the only common element being that they all make things

Society Established.

All Unionists but 6 (about)

N<sup>o</sup> of Men in Trade.

Unionists & non unionists

Relations with Employers

No boards of Arbitration

Uncertain Hours of Work.

water tight.

The Society was established in 1794.

Practically all but about 6 are unionists. There is no opposition. The Union has about 150 members. Twenty years ago there were between 250 & 300 men engaged in the trade and 200 were in the Society while 70 or 80 were working in opposition.

Unionists & non-unionists do not work together.

The relations with the employers have been very good for some time. Have had no disputes for 10 or 12 years

There are no boards of arbitration or conciliation.

There are no regular hours. Men work when they can get it. Taking it all round a man does not average more than two days a week. They have houses of call where they wait

Used to follow the work to the docks until the Albert Dock was opened. Then found impracticable owing to the ground to be covered.

Re caulking old vessels

Wages.

Age of members.  
Limit of capacity.

for work, one at Poplar and the other at Rotherhithe. Men wait from 8 to 11 and from 1 to 3 after which time there is no likelihood of work. As an example of the irregularity of the work, Mr S. said that he had done no work that week (Thursday night) <sup>and only</sup> 3 days last week and 14 days the week before that. Sometimes a yard may have 20 or 30 men engaged but this is exceptional.

A number of the men are engaged recaulking old vessels. A few American or other foreign vessels may come in and have the copper taken from its bottom & then be re-caulked while accidents may cause work - a vessel arrive with her bows stove in by a collision etc.

Wages are 7/6 per day if engaged by day but nearly all the work is piece. The rates are reckoned so much per 100 feet the amount varying from 3/9 to 17/6 per 100 ft. and depending on the position number of threads to be inserted etc. A price list exists by which rates are fixed.

Members working at the trade vary in age from 25-70 but after reaching 60 years of age a man becomes [shaky]



Mostly elderly men.

No seasons.

Little overtime

Difficulty of obtaining }  
other employment. }

A branch of }  
Shipwrights work }

shaky and can hardly do some kinds of work. The

The men are mostly old men, the majority being over 50. There are very few, if any apprentices entering the trade now. Mr S. has several sons but has not put any of them to the trade.

There are no seasons now. Work is always slack.

Very little overtime. Occasionally a job has to be finished in which <sup>case</sup> the men would work on.

Not a man in the trade is fully employed. A few find other employment. It is very difficult to get; much more difficult than formerly. Twenty years ago Mr S. used to do stavedoring during slack time but could not do so now; the Unions would not permit it.

Trade has no branches: indeed it is a branch of the shipwrights work and in most places these men do the caulking. It is only in London, Yarmouth and Her Majesty's Dock yards that the

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Men constantly shifting

Little training required.

Qualifications for }  
membership.

Society not registered.

Subscription.

caulking is done by a distinct set of men.

The men shift frequently. Consider a week's work right off a long job. Sometimes work at 2 or 3 places in a week.

Very little training is required. A lad is apprenticed to the trade and goes to work with a man. Very few learn now.

Man must be at work at the trade and be able to show that he has served an apprenticeship. Have not had any young men join for 5 or 6 years past.

The Society is not now registered as a Friendly society or Trade Union, the registration having been allowed to lapse and the rules which have not been printed for 25 years have been altered at various times so that the printed book would be misleading, for which cause Mr S. would not give me a copy. The Subscription is nominally 2/- per quarter

which is paid at irregular intervals. Men pay in what they can when at work. The income is not equal to expenditure. The funds which 20 years ago amounted to £1200 or £1300 are now reduced to £300.

The chief benefit is £15 at death. Accident benefit for those injured while at work is also given; it ranges from £3 to £6. They used to assist aged members but have stopped that on account of the low state of the funds.

Mr Shotton is quite different to the ordinary type of Unionist. He was quite frank as to the condition of the Society & trade; has no hope for the future of either. Reckon they will die out in London. Men are gradually adopting other trades as they can. His brother (a caulker) is now a board school keeper. Mr Shotton occupies the upper floor of a six roomed house. His sitting room was well furnished, <sup>large mirror above mantel, harmonium etc</sup> and neither the man nor his surroundings would give any idea that

Benefits.

Personal notes

he was out of work more than half his time.  
On his table was a portrait of Rev Archibald Brown  
& his family and I learnt that Mr S. was a  
member of his Church and a temperance  
man, which probably accounts for the  
good condition of his home.

Wednesday Aug 29<sup>th</sup> 1894.

S.H.D.

Deputation of 5 shipwrights to hear the report  
on the trade read over to them.

This had been previously done to their see Mr.  
Gibson who however did not feel equal to  
the responsibility of having heard what was  
written & asked whether he might refer  
the matter to the Soc & probably bring a  
deputation.

The Deputation consisted of the pres. Sec. and 3  
others. 2 of whom were certainly nearly 50  
years old & 2 over that age & 1 prob. bet 30 & 40.

They heard the report in silence. & though taken  
through it point by point refused to say  
whether they <sup>thought</sup> were true or the reverse.

Asked what good the publication of such facts  
would do them? They would rather they

things were not known whether they were true or not. Refused absolutely to state average earnings or to say whether the report was wrong. Said that it was most unfair to say 50 was the age at which their men began to fail - they had seen men of 80 do a good days work. Themselves were about that age some over. They could still do a good days work; in fact they generally worked with men over 50. In answer to question said very few young men were in the trade at all.

What right had Mr Booth or his employees to go prying into other peoples businesses? Much better to leave other people alone. What right had anyone to write about people without the consent of the people themselves.

The old men of 70 said they did not see how the printing of the report was to be prevented. The President said he would watch for the time when it appeared & would then take steps - going to law was suggested. They refused to say any thing so left

While I'm myself undertook to look up  
the evidence as to the age of feeling  
capacity & to let what I had stated  
remain or make further inquiries to  
get nearer the truth supposing it were untrue

