

## FROM WARASH TO WEST AFRICA: THE VOYAGE OF THE MARY ANNE



Were Hampshire people involved in slave trading expeditions? Certainly the Hampshire ports were not involved to anything like the same extent as London, Bristol and Liverpool, but the surviving port books for Portsmouth record that, between 1699 and 1713, eight ships left Portsmouth for Africa. Some of these had started from London, and called at Portsmouth to collect additional goods for sale on the African coast, such as cloth and shoes, iron and pewter, or amber beads and tea.

In some cases we know a little about the subsequent voyages of these ships, which generally followed the standard pattern of taking cloth, metal, weapons and luxury goods from Britain to Africa, bartering the goods there in return for slaves, taking the slaves to the West Indies and returning with sugar, rum and other local products for sale in Britain.

For instance, the *Three Crowns* of London left Portsmouth in Jan 1710 with four bales of perpetuannas, a hard-wearing West Country cloth, in addition to cargo loaded in London, and went on to take 200 slaves to Nevis; the *Isle of Wight* left Portsmouth in 1713, and delivered 123 slaves to Barbados the next year.

In most cases, local involvement in these ships was probably limited, although local merchants may have provided some of the goods loaded at Portsmouth, while some were brought overland from London. We do, however, know of one expedition with a significant amount of local involvement – and we only know about it because it went so badly wrong that it resulted in a court case.

The voyage of the *Mary Anne* of Warsash, at the mouth of the River Hamble, was planned by a consortium headed by a local merchant William Pafford, and Peter Hawkesworth. They chose as the captain another local man, Israel Brown of Titchfield. Although they are likely to have known him already, their choice was an unlucky one: as Nigel Tattersfield points out in his book *The Forgotten Trade*, which contains a fuller account of the voyage, Brown had an idiosyncratic approach to trading on the Guinea Coast.

The *Mary Anne* left Portsmouth on 24 August 1700, with a great variety of objects, many of them second-hand. They included 16 dozen pendants, 12 dozen small looking-glasses, 30 dozen pewter spoons, 80 gross of tobacco pipes, 25 dozen horn combs, four barrels of gunpowder, 2000 needles, 12 dozen fish hooks and 20 scimitars.

The ship reached the northern Guinea coast in November after a slow voyage by way of Tenerife and the Cape Verde Islands. What really happened on the African coast will probably never be known, but according to the account of William Harris, the first mate, in a witness statement (not the most reliable or impartial of sources), things soon started to go wrong.

The captain, Harris claimed, went ashore and stole seven men and a woman from the African traders, and then imprisoned a factor of the Royal African Company who had probably come on board to remonstrate with him. Further down the coast he turned to imprisoning the African traders who came on board, with the intention of carrying them off as slaves, and shot some of those who tried to escape. He offered to ransom some kidnapped Africans – but those who brought the ransom found themselves being captured as well.

After the crew and the human cargo had endured the experience of the 'middle passage' across the Atlantic, the *Mary Anne* reached the West Indies. The crew were under instructions to sell the slaves at Jamaica, but they stopped at Nevis, two weeks before Jamaica would have been reached, and all the slaves were sold there.

John May, the man in charge of the sale, refused to return to the ship, and presumably also refused to hand over the proceeds, which makes it unlikely that Brown would have been able to buy any sugar as cargo for the return voyage.

The Mary Anne's homeward voyage was disrupted by contrary winds, which forced her into Castlehaven in Ireland in June 1701. Here the crew demanded that the Mayor arrest Brown for failing to pay their wages. Eventually everyone apart from William Harris was paid; Harris reacted by making a deposition recording the events of the voyage, before the Mayor of Cork.

Brown was to face a charge of piracy, which carries the death penalty, but he escaped conviction and continued his maritime career: in 1718 he was the master of another ship which delivered 327 slaves to Barbados.

So, can anything be discovered at Hampshire Record Office about the voyage of the Mary Anne? There do not, unfortunately, appear to be any documents among the Record Office's holdings directly referring to the voyage. A search of the catalogue, however, reveals wills of several individuals named William Pafford and Peter Hawkesworth, mainly from the area around The Solent between Southampton and Portsmouth, all or most of whom were probably related. Two wills in particular seem likely to be those of the men involved in this voyage.

William Pafford of Grange, Rowner, made his will in 1694, but presumably lived for quite some years afterwards, as it was not proved until 1712. He described himself in the will as a yeoman – generally used to refer to a farmer on his own account. He was evidently a man of some substance, leaving a legacy of £600 and some lands at Rowner to his daughter Mary Pafford, and the rest of his estate, together with two guns, a pair of pistols and all his books, to his son John Pafford. One of the executors he appointed in the will was Peter Hawksworth, husband of William's sister Mary – which may account for their decision to go into partnership in the slave trading venture.

1712B/50

Peter Hawkesworth or Hawksworth of Titchfield made his will on 10 Dec 1703 and it was proved one year and four days later. This will demonstrates a link with William Pafford, as it mentions that William owed him £800 secured by a mortgage. The will refers to Hawkesworth's two farms, Brownwich and Locks Farm in Titchfield, and also land at Upham. He describes himself as a gentleman – a somewhat nebulous term, but probably implying he would not have had to work with his hands.

Preserved with Peter Hawkesworth's will is an inventory of his goods compiled after his death. With the exception of one line, there is no indication in it that Hawkesworth was anything other than a typical gentleman-farmer. It lists a considerable number of livestock, including six cows at Meon, 23 ewes at Little Brownwich, 131 sheep and over 30 hogs at Great Brownwich, and 20 cows or bullocks with 93 sheep at Locks Farm. There was also evidently arable farming on his farms: at Great Brownwich there were two haystacks valued at £25, and at Locks Farm he had barley, hay, oats and wheat either in the barns or in the fields valued at almost £50. Altogether his farming stock, household goods and the debts owing to him were valued at a total of £2596 7s 2d.

The inventory gives a room-by-room list of the contents of Peter Hawkesworth's house, which was evidently suited to the needs of a large household: there were two beds in the lodging chamber (which also contained plate valued at £40) and a total of five beds in four other chambers, as well as four beds in the men's chamber; in the hall he had four tables, eight stools and twelve chairs, as well as a looking glass (one of at least three in the house), and there were books valued at £10 in his closet. In the parlour there were 18 chairs, three tables and a couch (and, somewhat incongruously, a parcel of clover seed and a tub and a bag of turnip seed).

The list of the contents of the parlour includes one more entry: “Six mapps One draught [drawing] of a Shipp One globe” – valued at a total of £1 10s. Could these be a tantalising clue to Hawkesworth’s – and Pafford’s – brief involvement in the transatlantic trade?

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There is no evidence that Pafford and Hawkesworth played any further part in the slave trade. They were, perhaps, among the numerous merchants who decided to experiment in this very different form of cargo after the Royal African Company’s monopoly had been ended, but who found that slave trading was a risky undertaking for newcomers.



A sketch of a peaceful scene on the River Hamble, a little over a century after the voyage of the Mary Anne

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