

A WIRRAL ACCOUNT BOOK AND NOTARY'S REGISTER, 1761-90

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Folio E⁽¹⁾ is the last of a series of family and estate account books kept by John Glegg of Irby in Cheshire. It covers the period from 1761 until John's death in May 1768, when it was continued by his son John (1732-1804) until 1790. Many of the entries refer back to Folio D, suggesting a continuous series of estate accounts, but the whereabouts of these earlier volumes is unknown.

The Gleggs⁽²⁾ were substantial landowners in the Wirral and had acquired the lease of the Hundred Court there, so the volume covers a significant estate. By the eighteenth century branches of the family were established at Irby, Caldý Grange and Gayton and the close links that were still maintained between these branches can be clearly observed in the account entries. The book was intelligently kept in John Glegg's own easily legible hand. It is indexed, but sections A-D of this index are lost. The account entries are entered mostly under names of individual tenants, tradesmen and members of the family and are continued at intervals throughout the book. At times the pagination appears erratic, the book has a muddled appearance because of the younger John Glegg's habit of filling in even the smallest gaps in his father's account with details of his own and there is a sharp change in the style of the accounts after 1768 when the detailed earlier accounts are replaced by brief entries, often indicating little more than the amount of a payment or a receipt.

From the entries before 1768, a clear picture of the administration of the Glegg interests emerges. The majority of the entries relate to family lands at Irby, Gayton, Withington and Backford and concern payment of rent, poor lays and other rates and repairs to the buildings. The account of the Reverend John Urmison, who was John Glegg's brother-in-law, is a typical example (p. 5):

⁽¹⁾ Now in the possession of the School of History, University of Liverpool. Page references are to this folio unless otherwise stated.

⁽²⁾ Some details of the Glegg family may be found in R. Stewart-Brown, *The Wapentake of Wirral* (1907) and G. Ormerod, *History of Cheshire*, Vol. II (1882). The family papers appear to be lost.

	Debit	Credit
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
The Reverend John Urmison to J.G. 1762	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
April 3 paid Mr Watkins land tax	0 0 7	
May 20 paid John Edge a poor lea	0 2 6	
July paid Mr Brock land tax	0 0 7	
August 28 paid John Jones a highway ley	0 2 6	
November paid William Birch a poor ley	2 6	
December 7 paid a years old rent to Sir Roger Mostyns Agent	1 0 0	
paid Mr Brock a land tax	0 0 7	

More detail is given in another extract (p. 21):

1762. My Son John Glegg	Debit	Credit
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
A years rent for all the lands in Irby Barnstone and Greasbie which I settled upon him at his marriage which was the 14 of June 1762 at which I promised to give him for them this year clear		100 0 0
paid him.	20 0 0	
2 October. paid him more	20 0 0	
1763. February 2. paid him more	20 0 0	
April 1. for . . . iron filboes and hooks and nails to repair Gates at Irbye		
10s. 0d. for ten bars 5s. 10d. for 3 gates £1 4s. 0d.	1 19 10	
Paid John Williams a Carpenter for 3 days work repairing and hanging 'em		
4s. 6d. Ditto Charles Jackson 4s. 6d. for lead.	0 9 0	
paid Wayley a Mason for repairing the Green coast wall	0 10 6	
June 18. paid my son John Glegg £20 0s. 0d.	20 0 0	
October 9. paid my son John Glegg	20 0 0	

Other entries include accounts of ordinary domestic expenditure on food and household goods. A vast quantity of ale and beer seems to have been consumed, but several of these entries suggest that this was a supply for ships. Mr Edward Bennett's account makes this clear (p. 4):

1761 Mr Edward Bennett Book D folio 561	Debit	Credit
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
June 11 for $\frac{1}{2}$ barrell of beer for the ship Roger and Ann	0 3 0	30 0 0
22 for $\frac{1}{2}$ barrell of ale 16s. 0d./24 for $\frac{1}{2}$ barrell of beer 3s. 0d.	0 19 0	
30 Ditto 3s. 0d./July 6 for 7 half barrells of beer £1 1s. 0d.	1 4 0	
July 21 for 3 half barrells of beer 9s. 0d.	0 9 0	
August 3 for $\frac{1}{2}$ barrell of Ale in my cask and 2 half barrells of beer his cask	0 14 0	
September 3 for $\frac{1}{2}$ barrell of ale to your house	0 8 0	
November 10 Received of Mr Edward Bennett		20 0 0

November 9 to the Roger and Ann 2 half barrells at the Rock house	0 6 0		
14 for 6 half barrells of beer	0 18 0		
November 14 Received a measure of white peas 3s. 6d.	5 1 0	5 1 0	
Ditto. paid	0 3 6	0 3 6	
14 Received of Mr John Glegg the sum of fifty pounds in full of all accounts by me.	50 0 0	50 0 0	

Edward Bennett⁽³⁾

However, the book was also used in a more unusual way—as the Register of a notary public—and records transactions of a legal nature. For example, John Glegg entered amounts due to him for drawing up legal documents. He seems to have done quite well in the summer of 1766 when Thomas Johnson wished to sell some property. The entry reads as follows (p. 92):

	£	s.	d.
Thomas Johnson Glazer 1766			
June 7 for drawing advertisement for sale of lands in Willison and fee attorney		3	4
Paid the printer for the first advertisement 4s. 6d.			
Ditto the Second time 3s. 6d. Ditto the 3rd time 3s. 6d.		11	6
July 1 Attending the Sale Day at Mr Balls of the Bull		6	8
2 Draw another advertisement for sale of other land and fee 3s. 6d. to be on Tuesday the 5th of August to be advertised 3 times 11s. 6d. there being no sale the first time		3	6
August 5 Attending the 2nd Sale Day		0	11 6
Postage of six newspapers with advertisements in and letter to advertise		0	6 8
August 28 Advertising 3rd time and drawing a deed		0	11 6
for attending the sale August 29 1766		0	6 8
Received £3 2s. 4d.		3	2 4

Glegg also entered the fees for his frequent County Court appearances and drew up deeds, as in March 1763 (p. 66):

1763	John Glegg of Gayton Esquire to John Glegg from Book D. folio 473 for drawing Lease and Release from Thomas	} £1 8s. 6d.
March	Brown to Mr Glegg and assignment of his £1 1s. 0d. tenement Parchment and stamps 7s. 6d.	

Many of the Notarial entries have a definite naval ring about them, as on 8 July 1763 (p. 70) when he dealt with "John Smith of Hoolse, marriner, styled John Smith the first" who "had about 6 months pay due to him from the *Laurel* when he was removed to the *Bedford* which was in June 1762. She went to Newfoundland (and he) was wounded on board her. He re-

⁽³⁾ Autograph signature.

ceived all pay due in the *Bedford*. Sent to Mr Abraham Harman Shadteams, London.”

Glegg can also be found paying out wages and plunder-money of dead seamen to their widows and next of kin⁽⁴⁾:

1764 Margaret Welden now Jones mother of John Welden on board the April 5 *Entripide* at taking the *Havanna* he received the first payment of the plunder money £2 17s. 9d.

However, the most interesting of the notarial entries are the 62 Acts of Protest which are interspersed among the accounts and other entries in the book. Although the notary was technically an official of the ecclesiastical courts, by the eighteenth century his functions were largely secular. The most important of his duties was the noting and protest of foreign bills of exchange in case of non-acceptance or non-payment, but he also prepared ships' protests and protests relating to naval matters.⁽⁵⁾ John Glegg's notarial work was mainly concerned with these naval and mercantile matters.

On the arrival of a ship in its port of destination it was the custom of the master to cause a note of protest to be made and to sign it in the presence of a notary. It was supposed to contain some particulars of the voyage, the name of the vessel and the master, its ports of departure and destination, time of departure, the nature of its cargo and the date of arrival. When the ship or cargo was lost or damaged the notary took the facts from the logbook and the master, and sometimes some members of the crew, signed it. Notes of protest were also entered when any extraordinary accident took place or if the ship put into a port other than its stated destination or turned back to the port from which it had sailed.

There was no precise form generally adopted for these documents, although Brooke could lay down precedents of form in the mid-nineteenth century. However, the document has two basic parts—a statement of the details of the voyage and the protest by the appearer and the notary against the accident or cause of injury and against all loss or damage caused as a result. This is the usual form of protest note, but there were other forms for specific purposes—for instance, for detention or demurrage, for misconduct by captain or crew, for the unseaworthiness of vessels or for failure to fulfil loading contracts. All of these

⁽⁴⁾ Part of the offensive movement against Spain in the Seven Years' War took the form of an attack on Spanish colonies. In 1762 the British fleet under Sir George Pocock and the Earl of Albemarle successfully invested Havana and wrung great sums from the Church and City as prize of war, or plunder, which was then shared among those taking part in the investment.

⁽⁵⁾ R. Brooke, *A treatise on the office and practice of a notary of England* (1839), chapter iii, has further details.

different types of protest can be found in Glegg's Register. The notarial instrument itself was signed by the notary and the master and kept by the master, but the notary was obliged to keep a Register of the protests he issued. John Glegg entered a copy of each of them in Folio E and had them signed by the master.

The Acts of Protest, with one exception, are all written in the same hand as the main body of the early accounts and are all signed by John Glegg, the Captain and, occasionally, by one or more members of the crew. They follow the same form—a statement of the details of the journey followed by the protest and the captain's renunciation of responsibility for the accident or misfortune.

The 62 Acts of Protest recorded in Folio E cover the period 11 February 1762 to 2 February 1768 and concern forty-four ships and fifty captains. Some captains seem to have changed ships during this period, notably William Thomas of Chester who is seen here making two voyages in the ship *Mary* and two in *Bostock*. The documents suggest a number of fairly small ships making regular journeys from the Dee and Mersey to North Wales and Ireland with the occasional vessel making a longer journey to the south coast, London or the Continent. On the whole the ships were fairly small. The largest one mentioned was the *Stanislaus Anglus* bringing timber from Danzig and, as such, was exceptional. Of the regular packets to Ireland and North Wales the largest was *Bostock* at 160 tons; some were very small—about 15 or 20 tons; the average would seem to be between 60 and 70 tons.

The cargoes give a picture of the trade of the area. The incoming goods were chiefly yarn, linen cloth (from Bagillt) and pork from Ireland, copper ore, burnt calamine, oysters, household goods, oats and wheat from North Wales, barley, wheat, flour and malt from places in the south of England, groceries (including flour, sugar, porter and molasses) from London and Bristol, and some continental imports such as timber from the Baltic and "Wenscot boards" from Rotterdam. Many of these items were also being taken out from Chester again. The outgoing commodities included groceries, iron, salt and coal (from Ness Colliery) to North Wales, and groceries, coal, some flax and raw silk to Ireland. There seems to have been a considerable trade in lead which was being taken as far as Bordeaux, Naples and Haver de Grasse (le Havre). The main ports with which these ships were trading were Dublin, Flint, Holywell and Beaumaris, while a few ships were travelling further south and to London.

The ships mentioned had all run into difficulties of some sort near the Dee and Mersey estuaries. A number of ships ran aground at Parkgate or off Helbree island or near Dawpoole. Constant references to the sandbanks occur—a reminder of the difficulties of navigation of the River Dee in the eighteenth century when ships could not approach within twelve miles of Chester and even Parkgate was becoming difficult to reach.⁽⁶⁾ Most of the difficulties were caused by the silting up of the Dee and bad weather conditions. The following extract (p. 112) is a typical example of the difficulties encountered in bad weather:

“November 2 1765. Hugh Edwards Master of the ship or vessel called the *Sea Horse of Blewmorris* [Beaumaris] burthen about 18 tuns appeared before John Glegg Notary Publick in Great Neston and desired an act of protest and said the said vessel was loden [at] Chester with merchants goods, with salt, sugar flour and coles and bound for Blewmorris and that he saild from Chester the 31st of October last and got to Helbree on the same night and the 1st of October [sic] and the wind was blowing very high at the west and the sea run very high and going in to Helbree pool and she su[n]ck in the Pool and on the 1st of October they got her up at Highwater Mark. On searching her they found a hole in her and many of her timbers broken by reason whereof he fears her cargo is damaged.”

John Glegg
Notary Publick⁽⁷⁾

Hugh Edwards

About 50 of the 62 cases were concerned with weather difficulties such as this. Sometimes, as on 14 January 1764 or 14 March 1765, a bad storm could cripple four or five ships on the same day. Small ships could run into difficulties very easily and there are numerous references to split sails, dragged anchors and loose cables. But on 20 July 1763 there was a more serious case—the only time during those years when John Glegg had to record death at sea.

Captain Moses Jenkins of the *Nancy* reported a journey from Greenfield Marsh in Wales which ended in tragedy (p. 72). He recorded that:

“the wind blew so hard that it split the sail into several peeces tho it was a fresh sail. Then he higt her jeb and that also split and after that he high her mainsail to bring her head to the sea and the mainsail gave way and then he let go his anchor with a whole cable at length but that did not bring her too and then he drove upon the sand banks and about 12 the sea run very high and the wind blew a storm and the sea made a highway over her and carryed away the cabbins scuttle and staved in the main hatches covered with a new tarpolin and immediately the said slope sunck, he being then at the pump and the said vessel now lyes on a bank opposite Oldfield or thereabouts and this appearer says his wife and daughter and one of his men are drown[ed].”

Not all the captains were content to blame the weather for their troubles. Sometimes the crews raised problems. David Ferriers,

⁽⁶⁾ See R. Craig, “Some aspects of the trade and shipping of the River Dee in the Eighteenth Century”. *TRANSACTIONS*, Vol. 114.

⁽⁷⁾ Glegg's signature in the margin.

Master of the *Henry and Providence*, for example, protested on 10 December 1767 that (p. 147):

“Michael MacBraid was hired as Mate of the said ship to proceed with her on her said voiage and that the said Mait absconded and was absent from the said ship on the fifth day of this instant and continued absent until the tenth of this instant notwithstanding this appearer requested and desired him to return to the said ship and to mind his business and he still refused and this appearer says he has hired John Bleckellar in his room to proceed on the said voiage as mait thereof.”

Another Master, Thomas Tompson of the *Good Intent* (p. 83) had to deal with three obstreperous members of his crew. He had on board “nine including himself” and

“he unmored the said vessel intending to proceed on his said voiage with a fair wind and then three of his men to wit John Fenley John Bansley and John Turnbull refused to proceed on the said voiage without he wold hire an other man and then he mored the said ship again at Dawpoole where she now lyes and this appearer says that nine men was his usual complem.”

He was forced to protest against them for

“all losses costs detriments and damages all ready sustained or which shall or may happen to the said ship. . . or her cargo for on account of her not proceed on her voiage to be all had or recovered at time or place as of right shall apear-taine.”

A more unusual incident concerned with an unruly crew is recorded on 16 July 1765 when Englefield Lloyd of the *Venus* (p. 137)

“intimated protested declared and said . . . the said ship being at Parkgate ready to sail on her said voiage the wind being then fair Peter Jackson, John Hart John Edwards Robert Jones Francis Smedley and Charles Moulson came on board the ship or vessel and then and there by force and violence took the said ship or vessel from this appearer and his ships crew and got her under sail and proceeded with her up Chester river and by means and reason thereof hindered and prevented the said appearer and his ship crew from proceeding on his voiage with the said ship and cargoe.”

Sometimes it was not the men's character but their technical proficiency which was deficient and two unreliable pilots are cited, one of whom was George Norman (p. 88). He was taken on board the *Northern Lass* by Captain Robert Hudson in August 1764. Hudson stated that he “desired the pylott to get out the largest Anchor but he refused saying that the Anchor that was got out was sufficient”. The Captain went ashore for the night and came on deck again to find “the vessel nearer shore than when he left her” and reported that “she now makes much water and is damaged”. The captain claimed that

“her being put on shore was occasioned by the fault of the pylott not getting out the big anchor and keeping the men up, for the litle anchor came home when the tyde came about the vessel and tryed to get her of the next tyde it then blowing very fresh at West and then she drove higher on shore.”

Other difficulties are recorded. There was the failure to load the ship on 19 April 1764. Andrew Munro Wilson of the *Swift* reported that his ship

“arrived at Dawpoole on the sixth instant about six in the morning and that no lead has been brought to the said vessel or sloop as yet notwithstanding this appearer applyed to Mr. Thomas Ward of Hadless according to the directions given him at or upon the eleventh instant, who told this appearer that he would load him with all speed but has not sent any lead to the said sloop or vessel as yet.”

He went on to claim demurrage and other costs sustained as a result.

Sometimes the ship itself was inadequate for the conditions it had to meet. In November 1762 the *Judea of Dundalk* sailed from Baggilt to Parkgate “to gett the said vessels lecks stopt”, but on the journey

“the wind being slack, this appearer found he cold not get over the Banks to Parkgate and he brought the vessel to an anchor in deep water. When the Tide fell she took the ground and sanded herself deeply and the next flood she sprung a leeck and the ships crew pumpt her hard and got her free from water and they were going to set sail and by force of the tyde she straned and they cold not free her again from water, and there sunck and now lyes there and this appearer fears shelbe lost.”

Not even in harbour was a ship safe from danger, as is shown by the entry on 12 October 1764, when Antoney Murphey (p. 92) protested that his ship *Mary Ann*

“lyes in Dawpoole road bound for Waxford and while she ly there on Saturday last the ship called the ⁽⁸⁾ Captain Patrick Brown Master lay upon her anchor and broke it about the middle of the shank.”

The whole book appears to be a rare survival. The whereabouts of other Glegg family records is largely unknown, making the book a useful source for the background of that family in the late eighteenth century. The survival of the ship's protests is even more rare. A volume of protest exists in the Kent Record Office and is known to be one of a series from a solicitor's office. There is another, later, protest book in East Sussex and there are many instances of isolated protests. However, the existence of a book of duplicate signed copies of the documents in a family account book of this kind is very unusual. It illustrates well the intermingling of the public and private life of the eighteenth-century gentleman and the way in which he viewed his obligations. Yet, not only its rarity but also its contents make the volume interesting and valuable. Firstly, much detail about the Glegg estates can be gleaned from the accounts, which can be used to supplement existing

⁽⁸⁾ Blank space left for the name of the ship to be inserted later.

knowledge of eighteenth-century estates; secondly, some incidental information can be acquired about an influential Wirral family; and thirdly, the book is an important source for the history of shipping in the Dee estuary. The Acts of Protest, recording the shipping difficulties of the years 1762 to 1768, give the book its real value.

