

## BILL OF LADING DATED 1675

The document is owned by Mr. James Powell of Surrey U.K. Prior to that it was probably owned by the Cadbury family of Abbots Leigh, Bristol U.K. It came into possession of James Powell's mother sometime in the 1950s by way of a garage sale. A number of other memorabilia and collectable items such as old muskets and paintings were also acquired at the same time.

In 1982 Mr. James Powell took possession of his mother's collection and deposited it in the loft of his house. He did not take much interest in the nature of the collection. At one point he nearly threw away the document when he used the frame for one of his own photographs.

Much later he took the document to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich for an explanation of what it was. To his surprise he was treated with some reverence. Museum staff informed Mr. Powell that he was the owner of a document that was quite possibly the oldest existing original bill of lading.

The bill relates to the vessel *London Merchant of London*. Currently the museum is collecting and researching facts about the vessel. To date, researchers have located a portrait of the master and a number of letters that relate to the vessel.

The intent of the Powell family is to allow Greenwich Museum to have custody of the original bill for safe keeping and display. The Powell family will retain ownership of the bill.

The first copy of the original document is now in the possession of Mr James Powell's son, who is my colleague at the WA Maritime Training Centre. The scanned copy you see is just the second copy of the original document.

Regards

Capt. Rajiv Singh  
Lecturer Marine Operations  
WA Maritime Training Centre- Fremantle

Shipped by the grace of God in good order, and well conditioned by me  
John Comyns for the use of R<sup>ts</sup> Messrs J<sup>rs</sup> Matthews Habworthy  
in and upon the good Ship  
called the London ~~Master of London~~  
whereof is Master under God for this present voyage Capt<sup>ain</sup> J<sup>ohn</sup> Hill  
and now riding at anchor in the Port of London and by  
Gods grace bound for London to say the Bales of  
Honey ~~to the side of the Bottom~~.

Being marked and numbered as in the margin, and are to be delivered in the  
like good order and well conditioned at the aforesaid Port of London  
(the danger of the seas only excepted) unto the R<sup>ts</sup> Messrs J<sup>rs</sup> Matthews  
or to his assigns, he or they paying freight for the said goods  
single freight ~~of London~~ ~~comp<sup>any</sup> east~~

with prime and average accustomed. In witness whereof the Ma-  
ster or Purser of the said Ship hath affirmed to three Bills of Lading  
all of this tenor and date, the one of which three Bills being accomplished  
the other two to stand void. And so God send the good Ship to her desi-  
red Port in safety. Amen. Dated in ~~London~~ ~~the 8<sup>th</sup> of November~~ 1675



Shipped by the grace of God in good order, and well conditioned by *Mr*  
*John Cornwallis* for Acctt of ys Rt worshipful *Sir Matthew Holsworthy*  
in and upon the good Ship

called the *London Merchant* of *London*  
where of is Master under God for this present voyage *Capt John Hill*  
and now riding at anchor in the *Port of Smyrna* and by  
Gods grace bound for *London* to pay *100 Bales of*  
*Arras Silks q# rest Bottom*

Being marked and numbered as in the margin, and are to be delivered in the  
like good order and well conditioned at the aforesaid Port of *London*  
(the danger of the Seas only excepted) unto *the Rt worshipful Matthew*  
*Holsworthy* or to his assigned, he or they paying freight for the said goods  
*Single freight at the Lavant Compy rates*

with primage and average accustomed. In witness whereof the Master  
or Purser of the said Ship hath affirmed to three Bills of Lading  
all of this tenor and date, the one of which three Bills being accomplished  
the other two to stand void. And so God send, the good Ship to her  
desired Port in safety. Amen. Dated in *Smyrna November 8th 1675.*

