

THE EFFECTS UPON THE WORKFORCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE ON THE  
U.K. WATERFRONT

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**ABSTRACT:** *Established U.K. ports have been "protected" by piecemeal governmental intervention. Despite this they have declined.*

*Protecting jobs in the face of labour saving technological change has proved to be an inadequate remedy. It does not solve the problem, it merely defers it. This paper examines aspects of the industry's comparative decline and its effect on the workforce, and suggests that reasons other than labour problems may have been responsible.*

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INTRODUCTION

The port industry worldwide has had a long and often troubled history.

Comparative studies of inter-industry strike-proneness have consistently indicated the high rates of industrial disputes and number of days lost through strikes within the docks (Kerr and Siegel, 1954; Smith et al., 1978).

Research gives some insight into the reasons why the industry has been so strike-prone (May, 1961; Bentley, 1971). Whilst we have comparative data on the incidence of days lost there is a well accepted assumption that similar factors have accounted for the apparently militant attitude of dockworkers throughout the western world.

Even though this assumption may appear reasonable it needs to be questioned, in that it is based on a set of other assumptions such as universal impact of technology, similarity of economic problems on the docks and similarity of experience for dockworkers.

Within the last decade significant organisational changes have been effected within the major ports of the United Kingdom.

This paper examines these changes and the way in which they have affected the industry's labour force.

### The Devlin era

Ports have often been described as the "most inquired into" industry in the U.K. A plethora of Committees such as Shaw, 1920; Maclean, 1931; Forster, 1946; Leggett, 1951; Rochdale, 1962; Devlin, 1965; and Aldington-Jones, 1972 have examined various aspects of port working. But since the 1950's ports have been declining and this has accelerated in the last 10 years.

Much of this decline can be attributed to the fact that ports were originally developed on major river estuaries such as the Clyde, Mersey, Severn and Thames. As Ports expanded to spread their catchment area and meet the growing demands of local industry, shipping lines were prepared to call at a number of ports to load or discharge cargo.

This situation has changed dramatically because of the introduction of the unit load ship, principally the container ship. Because of containerisation, ports need no longer be sited at the nearest point of a cargo's destination or origin, and this has resulted in under-utilisation of facilities for many traditional ports. Studies of the U.K. port industry have consistently referred to the volatile atmosphere surrounding industrial relations within ports and the complex and dramatic changes which have occurred (Simey et al., 1956; Mountfield, 1965; Hill, 1976).

Significant attention has been directed towards the ports (Miller, 1969; Oram, 1970; Jackson, 1973) and particularly the longer term effects of the Devlin Committee's recommendations (Mellish, 1972; Wilson, 1972) focussing upon the decasualisation of an industry traditionally steeped in casualism.<sup>(1)</sup>

Whilst not attempting to deny the obvious influence of decasualisation and its accompanying modernisation programme, other factors within the industry at the time have served to mould the present structure of U.K. ports and the attitudes of those who work within them.

In 1962 the Rochdale Committee<sup>(2)</sup> was established to inquire into almost every activity of the major ports of Great Britain with a view to reviewing their suitability to meet future national needs.

The Rochdale Committee used as its criteria for what constituted a "Major port" as those whose choice:

"... was influenced by the importance to this country of its foreign dry cargo trade and the need to choose ports which would provide us with sufficient evidence on which to put forward proposals to embrace the port industry as a whole".<sup>(3)</sup>

Of the Committee's 140 recommendations only four were directly concerned with labour problems although included amongst these was the issue of decasualisation.<sup>(4)</sup> It was the realisation amongst industry at large that labour may not have been the only

cause of industrial inefficiency which had prompted the Inquiry and this perhaps reflected the mood within the wider ports community throughout the 1960's. (5)

The Devlin Committee, initiated to inquire into the:

"causes of dissension in the industry and other matters affecting efficiency of working"

did not fully examine the wider implications of its subject matter. The Committee's terms of reference appear to have been too narrow in that it:

"was only directed to look at labour relations outside the context of changes to the industry as a whole." (6)

Casualism had persisted throughout the ports industry until the Second World War during which the registration of workers to undertake dockwork within the ports had been introduced. Those registered became eligible to perform such work. This system was superseded in 1947 by the Dock Workers Employment Scheme (The Scheme) whose principal function was to ensure greater regularity of employment for registered dock workers (RDW) and also that adequate numbers of men were available to meet demand. These functions were carried out by jointly controlled dock labour boards at national (NDLB) and local level (LDLB) (7).

Devlin was particularly concerned with the issue of casual employment which had resulted in a multiplicity of small employers and a large casual labour force. His report identified decasualisation as a prerequisite for change and recommended that all RDW's should be employed on a permanent basis by a reduced number of licensed employers (this subsequently became known as Devlin I). A national modernisation committee (NMC) was established to oversee the implementation of the committee's recommendations and there was also the establishment of similar committees at local level (LMC) to discuss new working methods, technological change and regularity in employer/employee relations (Devlin II).

In 1967 the Dock Workers Employment Scheme (8) implemented the Devlin Committee's recommendations and added that all RDW's who could no longer be offered permanent employment be placed in a temporary unattached register (TUR) whilst awaiting permanent placement.

Changes in cargo handling technology in the years immediately following decasualisation resulted in an increase in the TUR in certain scheme ports and an accompanying feeling of dissatisfaction within the workforce as a whole, the chief threat being job insecurity. Through their joint control of the dock labour boards dockworkers refused to accept any form of compulsory redundancy, which they were uniquely placed to resist.

In 1969 the National Joint Council for the Port Transport Industry (NJCI) (9) agreed to the introduction of a National Voluntary Severance Scheme (NVSS) financed by a levy on scheme employers.

This had the effect of reducing the total registered labour force by 23% between 1967 and 1972 - see Figure 1.

The size of the TUR and the conditions attached to those men upon it continued to cause dissension and culminated in a 3½-week national docks strike in 1972, the underlying reason for which being the demand for additional work for RDW's. In July of that year a Committee of Inquiry <sup>(10)</sup> had been set up to consider the industry's problems. In order to promote peace it had recommended a special improved severance scheme for unfit workers aged 55 years and over, the abolition of the TUR and the allocation of those men upon it to permanent employers. As a result of this labour shortages occurred within some ports but were largely off-set by the recruitment of workers to a supplementary register.

The outcome of the Committee of Inquiry (Aldington-Jones so named after its two leading members) effectively guaranteed RDW's security of employment and this became known colloquially as "jobs for life".

Critics of the Devlin reforms point to the fact that whilst it might not be expected that dissension within the dock labour force could have been completely eliminated by decasualisation, in some instances it had actually increased.

There is little doubt many RDW's saw the introduction of voluntary severance schemes (the first was introduced in the Port of London one month after decasualisation in 1967) as a direct threat to their continuing job security, but to suggest that decasualisation and the modernisation programme per se increased RDW's insecurity is misleading. The threat to RDW's job security has been in existence for some time. It was trends underlying the changing methods of dockwork not tackled by Devlin which were to result in the industrial strife of the early 1970's. The Devlin Report had been instigated to examine a specific area of the port industry's activities and had arisen largely as a result of the findings of the earlier Rochdale Committee concerning port labour.

Although the Devlin recommendations had a significant effect upon the industry and the decasualisation debate still continues, the reports' recommendations were overtaken by events.

Running parallel to the very successes of Devlin in the 1960's was another set of events which were to affect the long-term viability of U.K. ports and the real job security of those working in them.

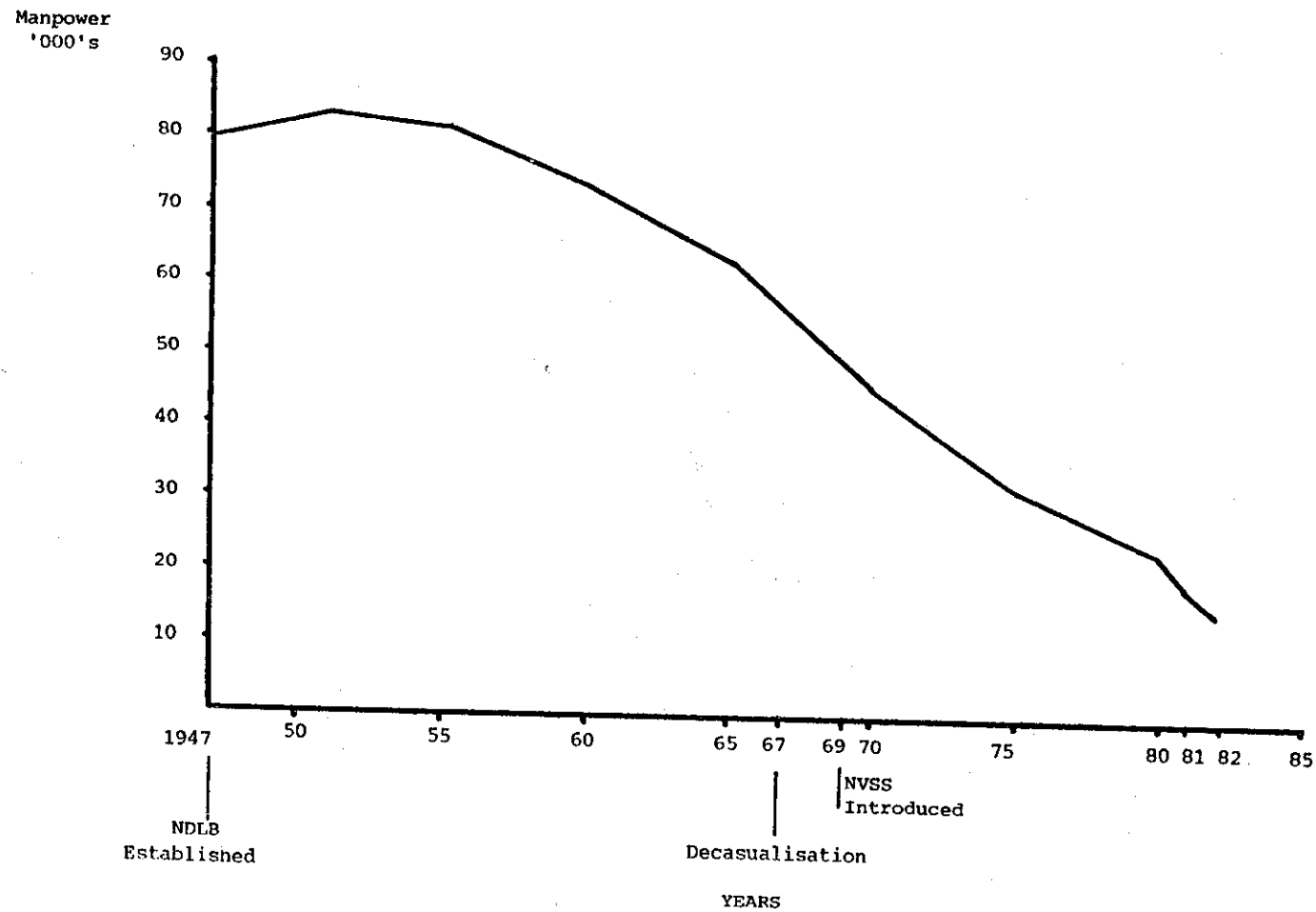
The Devlin Committee failed to take account of and react to world tonnage on order. Shipowners (at the time a powerful lobby in both shipping and shore-based stevedoring activities) had consistently pointed to the lack of foresight within the industry in the years leading up to decasualisation and also to shipowners' views:

"..... from 1967 the shipping industry has continually warned

FIGURE I

U.K. REGISTERED DOCK LABOUR FORCE 1947 - 1982

(Total Register as from year end)



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about the consequences of containerisation and other types of unitisation, but little was done to adjust the register of dock workers to the foreseeable work load." (11)

If such a development as the so-called "container revolution" had occurred within a country whose ports were centrally planned then perhaps the effects of technological change would have been dissipated and a more balanced entry into containerised facilities have been made. The absence of any form of coordinated plan acted against this within the U.K.

In striving to decasualise and condition the industry to a programme of modernisation the Devlin Committee also ignored the failings of the Rochdale Committee to establish a national framework within which dockwork (12) and port development may have been systematically integrated.

The definition of "dockworker" within the Dockworkers (Regulation of Employment) Act 1946 Cl. 6 means:

"..... a person employed in, or in the vicinity of, any port on work in connection with the loading, unloading, movement or storage of cargoes, or work in connection with the preparation of ships of other vessels for the receipt or discharge of cargoes or for leaving port".

By 1969, due to the increasing use of containers by non-dock workers employed in cargo consolidation and groupage operations the inadequacy of the definition of "dockworkers and dockwork" was becoming apparent particularly as the term "in the vicinity of" had been the subject of several earlier investigations none of which had successfully established its exact definition. A committee chaired by Peter Bristow Q.C., sponsored by the Department of Employment and comprised of equal employer and trade union representation re-examined the definition of dockwork as it applied to London and recommended the extension of the ports limits to a "corridor" five miles either side of the River Thames in which RDW's would have sole cargo handling rights. Strong opposition followed the committee's recommendation and after the 1970 general election the issue lapsed; trade unions were reluctant to attempt to redefine dockwork within the scheme under a Conservative government as it could have resulted in the complete abolition of the scheme due to pressure from others within the wider transport industry unsympathetic to registered dockworkers.

The idea of a container corridor derived from the longshore agreements of the U.S.A., but the proposed U.K. version applied to all dockwork not just containers and this met with stiff opposition from established operators.

This led to a situation in the early 1970's whereby a casually oriented workforce had been placed on a permanent footing and perceived as one of the longer term results of modernisation the atrophy of their traditional working province through the introduction of new technology and a corresponding reduction in

demand for traditional dock skills.

The absence of a "National Plan"

The National Ports Council (NPC) was established by the Harbours Act 1964 and arose as a statutory body charged with securing the improvement and efficiency of the harbours of Great Britain. It was also charged with producing a National Ports plan but because it was in effect an "advisory" alternative to the National Ports Authority (NPA) envisaged by Rochdale<sup>(13)</sup> which was rejected by Government, no plan as such was implemented although an interim plan was published in 1965 and a progress report in 1969.

A white paper "The Re-organisation of the Ports" CMND 3903, published in 1969, set out the conclusions reached by the Labour Government and the policy it wished to pursue which included inter alia, the setting up of a National Ports Authority, the function of which would encompass strategic planning including large scale capital investment, the selection of particular ports for development and the relation of national port development to the rest of the economy, co-operation in the forming of a national transport plan and regional port authorities incorporating all ports in the country. A ports Bill laid before Parliament was abandoned as a result of the 1970 general election.

The NPC performed valuable work and built up a reputation for its statistical information and forecasting. It was the means by which ministerial decisions were evaluated and advised upon by government and industry. In late 1981 the NPC, for policy reasons, was "wound-up" by order of the Secretary of State for Transport.

Critics of the NPC, and there are many, consistently pointed to its failure to put many of its desirable recommendations into practice and also its failure (because of its diluted powers as opposed to the authority the NPA may have enjoyed) to view the industry in its widest sense when evaluating for ministerial approval port development schemes. U.K. government policy towards the financing of port development is still based largely upon Rochdale who recommended that ports should be seen as commercial entities and not receive governmental assistance.

The net effect of such a policy is to demand that ports should be able to generate sufficient revenue to cover their costs. This obviously acts as a deterrent to the development of port industrial complexes where associated benefits may outweigh initial investment criteria.

If the putative National Ports Authority envisaged by Rochdale had been successfully implemented this may have resulted in a more rational development of port facilities in the national interest instead of the wasteful and costly piecemeal developments of the last decade. It could be argued that the industry's concern with labour problems, though justifiable at the time,



laid the foundations via Devlin for the RDW's future insecurity.

The contemporary effects of the Devlin reforms on the dock labour force may be seen from the perspective not of which ports acceded to decasualisation (and so dock labour scheme membership) but rather which ports did not and why.

The criteria used to exclude ports from the scheme was originally founded on whether they handled cargo "as a service" or whether the operations were confined to one employer handling his own goods, and secondly, if accession to the scheme would guarantee regularity of employment for the labour force. It was further argued that strong reasons were required to change the status of a port, traffic volumes not being one of them.

Of thirteen ports subsequently considered for addition to the scheme, only Portsmouth on the South coast was classified as coming within the criteria for scheme membership and was recommended to group itself with Southampton the major scheme port in that area. The port of Portsmouth immediately offered permanent employment to its hitherto casual workforce which changed its classification, and so enabled it to avoid scheme membership.

Exclusion from the dock labour scheme is important. Non-inclusion means ports have a distinct economic advantage in that they do not have to pay the scheme levy. It has been estimated that the difference in port charges between scheme and non-scheme ports can be as high as 16%.

Many smaller ports, such as Felixstowe, because of their exemption from the levy <sup>(14)</sup> and the constraints scheme membership imposed (it is claimed that it inhibits the ability to balance manpower) coupled with in many instances a more flexible workforce <sup>(15)</sup> found themselves with the opportunity to proceed with port developments previously considered undesirable.

Rapid expansion of port facilities within the U.K. proceeded with scant regard for national requirements and has resulted in several far reaching effects. Principal amongst them is the duplication of facilities, particularly containerised facilities, the growth of the non-scheme sector, and the resultant lessening of job opportunities for RDW's within scheme ports.

Adding to the threat to RDW's jobs within scheme ports which arguably would have occurred to a certain extent anyway, due to rapid mechanisation, were the changes in traffic patterns due to, inter alia, the international oil crisis of the early 1970's and its effects on shipping, making diversions from northern European routes extremely costly; the growth of multinational container consortia and their adoption of a combined U.K./northern European itinerary which favoured south-east coast port operations; U.K. membership of the E.E.C.; and the

increase in traffic, particularly RoRo, between south and east coast ports and the mainland of northern Europe (the "container corridor"). See figures 2 and 3.

The economics of containerised shipping operations have developed to a point where "mother" vessels may choose only one or two European ports of call to load/discharge cargoes from surrounding countries. The U.K. as a result may act simply as a "feeder" for these vessels via such purpose built non-scheme east coast ports as Felixstowe, Harwich and Dover. Such operations negate the importance of a traditional hinterland, particularly as the container may be "stuffed" or "stripped" ashore whilst the vessel is seaborne, being transported by road or rail to the port offering the shortest or most economical sea leg to the ultimate continental loading port. The Ports of London, Liverpool, Glasgow and Manchester are examples of scheme ports which, faced with certain geographical disadvantages, additional port costs in the form of levies, interest on loans for under utilised facilities, punitive severance costs and wage bills for a dock labour force for whom they may not have any work (see figure 4), have found themselves in severe financial difficulties.<sup>(16)</sup>

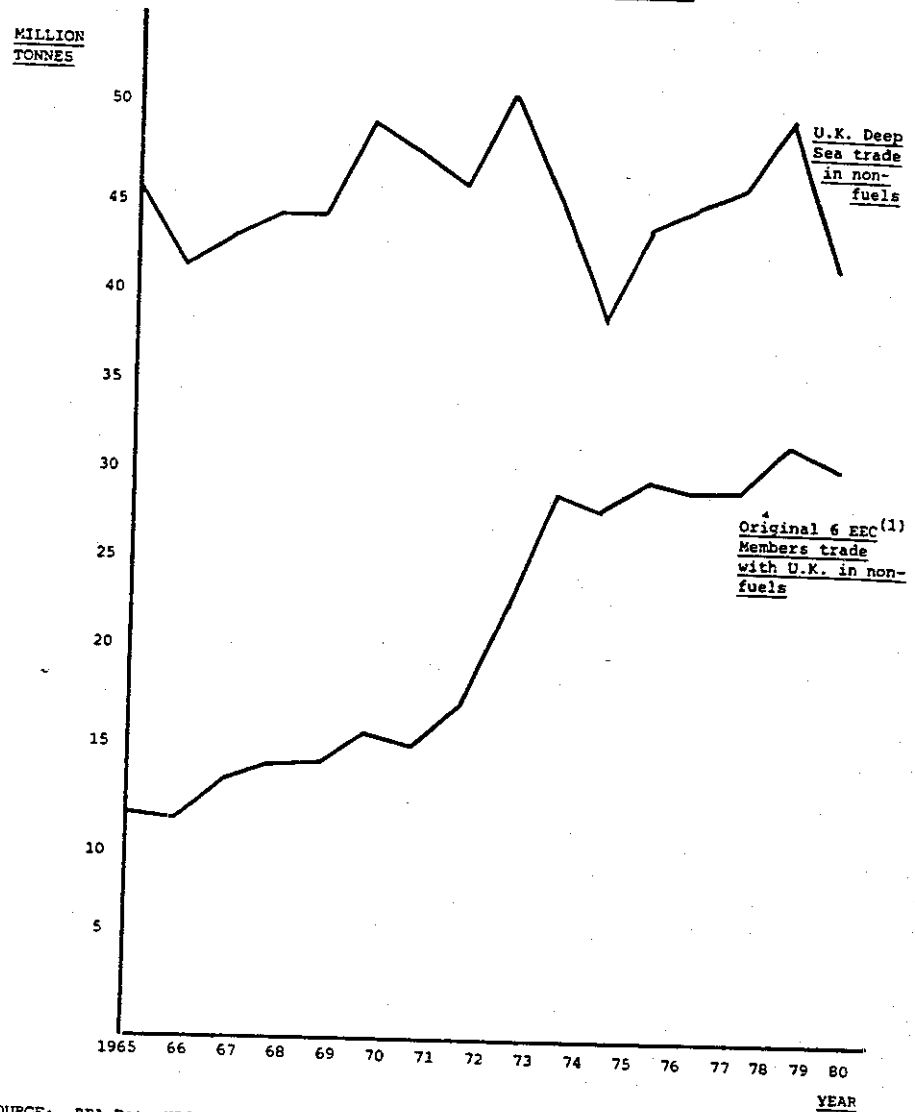
Additionally, the terms of the Aldington-Jones agreement resulted not only in the securing of RDW's jobs but in the continuing preservation of those jobs. Many cargo handling companies within scheme ports have found themselves in the unacceptable position within recent years of having successfully reduced their own dock labour force by way of severance payments and natural wastage techniques only to find themselves re-allocated with large numbers of workers from other companies within their dock labour board area, such as RDW's from private stevedoring activities of established shipping lines divesting themselves of loss making subsidiaries.

This strategy has been particularly iniquitous to port authorities which as a result of Devlin's proposals had been encouraged to undertake the direct employment of registered labour. Due to their often strategic position such port employers become increasingly the "employer of last resort".

The effects of these events upon the dock labour force has been critical. The relative demise of scheme ports has seen even greater efforts by port employers to achieve productivity and reduce their payrolls if only to retain existing traffic levels. Against this, scheme port employers have found themselves confronted by a dock labour force who naturally see the situation as one of decreasing job opportunities for themselves, the trade unions arguing that the non-scheme ports, by not contributing to the costs faced by traditional scheme ports, have been given an artificial stimulus, contributing to the industry's national overmanning and scheme workers' general insecurity.

FIGURE 2

U.K. Imports and Exports (non fuels) with the  
Original 6 EEC Members 1965-1980  
Compared with U.K. Deep Sea trade (non fuels)



SOURCE: BPA Data NPC Data

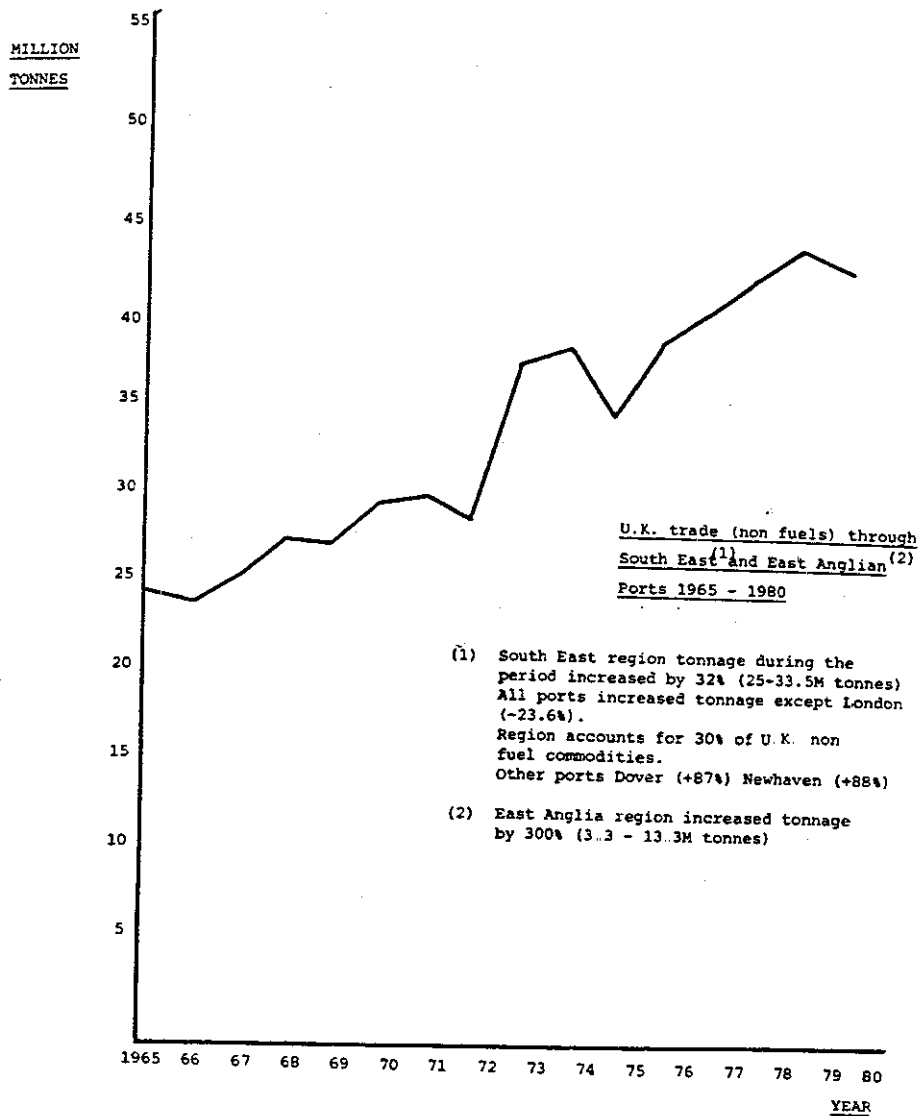
Computed data from various Port Authority's Annual Reports.

(1) France Luxembourg Netherlands  
 Germany Italy Belgium

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FIGURE 3

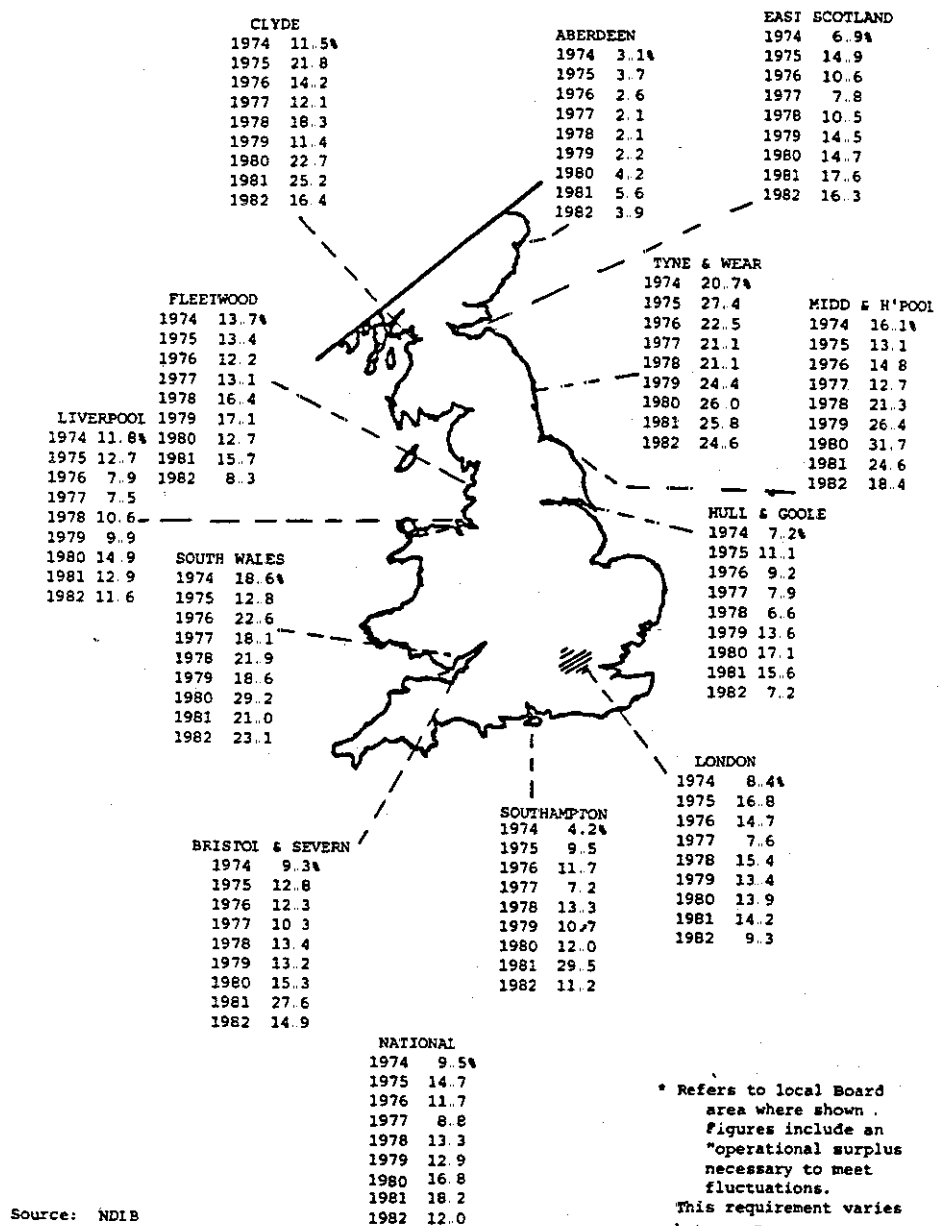
U.K. Trade through S.E. and E. Anglian Ports 1965-1980



SOURCE: As figure 2

FIGURE 4

Average Daily Surplus of Registered Dock Workers  
by Area on a selective geographical basis 1974-1982 \*



Source: NDIB

Devlin has been criticised for failing to anticipate the growth of the non-scheme sector and equally the effect this growth was to have upon RDW's in scheme ports. But as stated above, the consideration of such events was largely beyond the committee's terms of reference. Of equal importance was the failing within the industry to produce a coordinated ports plan.

#### Contemporary Perspective

Ports were once the focus of U.K. industrial relations because of their centrality to its overseas trade, balance of payments and export strategy. Other issues such as unemployment and inflation more crucial to governmental economic policies have displaced ports from the centre of the industrial relations stage and public attention, but they remain a critical part of U.K. economy.

The changes recommended by Devlin accorded with the Donovan Commissions objectives of introducing regularity into industrial relations in an industry notorious for custom and practice and ad hoc working systems.

The unique charges of job preservation and to a lesser extent job control afforded to RDW's by the dock labour scheme have proven to be of limited use against factors such as underemployment, and are a classic example of the law of unintended consequences. It was the threat of underemployment' (brought about by changes in cargo handling technology and traffic patterns) coupled with irregularity of employment and earnings (as witnessed by the high rates of daily surplus labour - see figure 4) which strengthened RDW's resistance to change and this has assisted in fostering a trouble free and efficient image for non-scheme ports and so assisted their expansion.

Within the past few years massive retrenchment exercises have been undertaken in scheme ports particularly London and Liverpool and these have only been possible through Government aid to provide

- i) sufficient funds to enable enhanced voluntary severance payments to be offered to encourage men to leave the industry, and
  - ii) to provide sufficient cash flow to enable the two ports to remain financially viable during the transitional period.
- This aid has been subject to certain conditions not least that the ports achieved profitability. As an example Liverpool reduced its total registered labour force by 52% between 1980 and 1983 and in the first half of 1983 achieved a small trading profit of £3.5m (\$5.7m) for the first time since the mid 1970's.

Government aid to selected ports has not been without criticism from other scheme ports faced with similar problems. In particular, the enhanced voluntary severance payments offered have had the effect of raising the "price" of voluntary severance throughout the industry. More importantly, the development of specialised facilities and the retraining of RDW's to accept

greater flexibility of roles coupled with changes in working practises has been necessary. It is evident that the port industry in U.K. has been in relative decline, but more efficient or streamlined operations within what were "major ports" are beginning to take effect.

Events begun in the 1960's are not yet over. The threat to RDW's jobs remains. Although container traffic worldwide has been growing at an annual growth rate of 15% since the 1960's, figures released by the National Ports Council in 1978 showed that on average U.K. container berths were only operating at 60% of their capacity, moreover, similar berths on the west coast were employed only in the range of 30 - 54% of what their operators judged to be operationally possible when they were constructed.

Latest figures do little to dispel the gloom, with container berths utilised at 55 - 60% but again showing marked regional variations, as low as 30%, particularly in the south west, Welsh and north west ports.

By comparison East Anglia container berth utilisation has passed 70%.

Traffic over U.K. unitised berths is forecast to increase by 41% within the next five years. This implies a further substantial loss in traffic from conventional berths where a 29% reduction is anticipated. Such a substantial reduction will further affect the two major traditional ports of London and Liverpool which together account for most of this type of traffic, in addition to employing 40% of the registered workforce.

The effect of the new system can be seen where trade is now moving through a port like Dover which is the largest unit load port in terms of tonnage. Dover increased throughput from 1.6m tonnes in 1969 to 5.8m tonnes in 1979, an annual growth rate of 13.5%.

The attempts by government to protect the "established" industry during the 1960's is a classic example of how piecemeal intervention can fail, for in "securing" jobs by legislation they effectively sounded the RDW's death knell. Featherbedding cannot survive competition and technological change. Any attempt is to resort to Canute economics - of trying to stem the tide in the face of the inevitable.

What has happened, and is still happening in U.K. ports, is not unique to ports. Parallels may be drawn with similarly protected industries throughout the world. The end result is predictable.

What makes the port study interesting is that it was the labour force in the "scheme" ports which was "protected". This was, ironically, a recipe for disaster, not only for the scheme ports, but for the workers attached to them, since

traffic simply moved to non-scheme ports.

What will decide the long term future for RDW's within scheme ports are shippers decisions which are still made largely on the basis of the economics of getting goods to market - which shipping company to use and availability of sailings, not port preference.

#### Conclusion

A reduced level of recruitment has resulted in the maintenance of a high average age (44.72 years 1978-1982) despite a 58% reduction in the registered labour force over the last five years.

There has been a continuing trend toward estuarial development of specialised facilities and the retraining of registered dockworkers to accept greater flexibility of roles.

The trend continues. For example, a recent proposal to develop Falmouth in Cornwall into a major non-scheme port is reminiscent of previous years, encouraging new development at the expense of uneconomic existing ports and enterprises.

The failings within the industry during and immediately following the Devlin era are only now being fully realised. Although Devlin introduced reform and legislation aimed at protecting the jobs of dockworkers, experience since has consistently highlighted the fallacy of seeking to protect jobs by legislation whilst the removal of jobs from the confines of scheme ports arose from fundamental economic and technological changes outside the established industry's control.



Footnotes

## 1. The Devlin Committee produced three Reports:

- (i) "First Report of the Committee of Inquiry into certain matters concerning the Port Transport Industry" (Report into wage dispute of N.J.C.), HMSO, London 1964, CMND 2523.
- (ii) "Final Report of the Committee of Inquiry into certain matters concerning the Port Transport Industry" (Report into decasualisation and causes of dissension), HMSO, London, 1965, CMND 2734.
- (iii) "Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the wage structure and level of pay for dock workers," HMSO, London, 1966, CMND 3104.

## 2. "Report of Committee of Inquiry into Major Ports of Great Britain". A report presented to Parliament by the Minister of Transport. September 1962, CMND 1824.

## 3. This effectively meant those ports handling over one million tons of foreign cargo, excluding petroleum, per annum and produced a list of fifteen ports:

London	Newcastle	Newport	Glasgow
Southampton	Middlesborough	Cardiff	Grangemouth
Bristol	Hull	Swansea	Leith
	Immingham	Liverpool	
		Manchester	

In 1965 the "Rochdale 15" accounted for approximately 80% of U.K. total foreign non fuel trade. In 1974 this had fallen to approximately 67% and in 1979 stood at a little under 60%.

e.g. Liverpool:	1965	1974	1979
	<u>14,845</u>	<u>9,578</u>	<u>8,922 000's tonnes respectively</u>

As % of 1965: (65%) (60%)

Source: National Ports Council Data.  
Mersey Docks & Harbour Board Annual Report 1965  
Mersey Docks and Harbour Company Annual Reports 1974; 1979.

## 4. Rochdale op.cit., Ch.25-28, pp. 128/153. See also "Summary of recommendations" in work cited p. 226, paras 381/404, 410/415, 422, 416/425.

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5. See "The turn-around time of ships in port", United Nations document ST/ECA/97, 1967, para. 46 contained in Evans, A.A., Technical and Social Changes in the World's Ports, International Labour Office, 1971, p. 95.
6. Wilson, D.F., Dockers, the impact of industrial change Fontana, 1972, p. 304.
7. See Appendix I
8. Prior to 1967 the employment of RDW's in Britain was regulated by the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Scheme 1947 as varied 1960 and 1961. The Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) (Amendments) Order 1967 No. 1252 was passed in August 1967 and from September of that year all available dock workers were placed in the employment of registered employers.  
  
The Docks and Harbours Act 1966 Part I established a licensing system for employers of dock workers in ports to which the 1967 Scheme applied. The licensing authorities under the 1966 Act are harbour authorities for such ports.
9. See Appendix II
10. See Joint Special Committee on the Port Industry, Interim Report, 25 July 1972.
11. Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom Annual Report 1973, p. 33.  
  
See also: "Merchant Ships completed in leading shipbuilding countries 1964-1974". Lloyds Register Shipbuilding Returns.
12. The Dockworkers (Regulation of Employment) (Amendment) Scheme 1967 S2. (1), "Interpretations & exclusions".
13. See Rochdale Report, 1962, p. 231, para. 661, "final recommendations".
14. In 1982 the NDLEB management levy was 3½% with an additional 10% payable in respect of temporarily unattached workers and non registered labour.

The standard severance levy was increased from 6% to 8% from 2 January 1982 as a condition of the Government loan for the Special Severance Supplement Scheme which applied to men who applied for severance during September and October 1981.

These percentages of standard severance levy included 1% for port funds, and in certain ports with substantial severance requirements higher rates of port fund levy applied.

The total leviable wage bill for 1982 amounted to £156.1m (\$257.5m)\* compared with £165.2m (\$272.5m) in 1981.

The decrease of 5.5% reflects the significant reduction in the number of RDW's during 1982 due to severances. The cost to the industry (i.e. Scheme Ports) was £17,330.745 (\$28,595,729) of which £12,257.110 (\$20,224,231) related to the National Voluntary Severance Scheme.

\* £ = \$1.65.

15. Flexibility of the workforce was given as one of the main reasons why non-scheme ports

"obtained and continued to obtain a greater share of the available trade"

as compared with scheme ports.

See "Survey of Non Scheme Ports and wharves", NPC Preliminary Report, 1972, p. 13.6.j. (ii).

16. As an example in 1982 the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company, the Port of Liverpool's largest employer incurred a trading loss of £9.5M (\$15.6M)\*

Source: MDHC Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1982.

\* £ = \$1.65.

APPENDIX I

THE NATIONAL DOCK LABOUR BOARD (NDLB)

Control of the statutory Dock Labour Scheme is vested in the NDLB which is charged with achieving the objects of the scheme and with its overall administration.

Its functions are to govern the use of dock labour by controlling entry to and discharge from the port registers and to be responsible for training and welfare, including the provision of amenities. Prior to decasualisation, the Board paid dockworkers' wages, holiday pay and national insurance contributions, and subsequently billed employers.

The Board is governed by the principle of joint and equal employer/employee control and consists of a Chairman and Vice Chairman appointed by the Secretary of State for Employment, and twelve other members holding office for two-year periods representing equal numbers from employers and employees. The Board operates through twenty-one local dock labour boards, each comprised of equal numbers of members representing employers and employees.

The control of the National Register is done in consultation with the local Boards through regular reviews of requirements at individual ports. The local Boards are responsible to the National Board for local policy matters and their own administrative processes.

The NDLB is financed by a levy upon registered employers, based on the gross wages of the dockworkers in their employ. The costs of such levies must be passed on indirectly to shipowners and port users and this has resulted in many scheme ports operating at a disadvantage compared with non-scheme ports who are not subject to such costs. Additionally, the scheme itself has been criticized by the General Council of British Shipping who view the costs and functions of the scheme as unnecessary.

At national level the NDLB is administered by a full-time staff under the control of the General Manager who is responsible for implementing policy and day to day administration of the scheme. Each port area grouping is administered by a local manager, responsible to the General Manager, but also with responsibility to the Local Board, and the National Board delegates as many functions as are practicable to local level. The rapid reductions being encountered in the port industry's labour force has meant that measures aimed at reducing the gap between levy income and operating expenditure have been introduced.

Further consideration to achieving such economies without preventing the "effective discharge of the Board's functions" is under discussion.

APPENDIX IITHE NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR THE PORT TRANSPORT INDUSTRY (NJC)

The NJC was established in 1920 as a result of recommendations contained within the Shaw Inquiry Report - the Court of Inquiry into Transport Workers, Chairman: Lord Shaw.

The trade unions already had the National Transport Workers Federation, comprised of several unions within the dock industry which had referred Ernest Bevin's draft scheme for maintenance, a guaranteed weekly wage and registration to the Central Joint Committee on Port Labour, a Whitely type committee formed as a method of reducing conflict between management and labour.

Following the Shaw Inquiry's Report, Ernest Bevin, who was the Union's spokesman at the Inquiry, called a delegate meeting of the Transport Workers Federation, which voted for the report's proposals and appointed a negotiating committee.

The agreement was between the Transport Workers Federation and the Provisional National Council of Port Labour Employers. The unions which affiliated with the National Transport Workers Federation in 1920, when the first agreement was signed with the Provisional National Council for Port Labour Employers, were:

- Amalgamated Union of Engine and Cranemen
- Amalgamated Society of Watermen, Lightermen and Bargemen
- Amalgamated Stevedores' Labour Protection League
- Dock Wharf, Riverside and General Workers Union  
Labour Protection League
- National Amalgamated Union of Enginemen and Firemen
- National Amalgamated Union of Labour
- National Union of General Workers
- Scottish Union of Dock Labourers
- United Order of General Labourers of London
- National Warehouse and General Workers Union
- National Amalgamated Labourers Union

The NJC for Dock Labour, as it was then named, continued until 1945 when a formal written constitution was effected and the National Joint Council for the Port Transport Industry came into being. (The National Association of Port Labour Employers was reconstituted in 1944 as the National Association of Port Employers - NAPE); the other parties to the agreement were:

- Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)
- National Union of General and Municipal Workers (GMWU)
- National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dock Workers  
Union (NASDU)
- Scottish Transport and General Workers Union (STGWU)

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The NASDU membership was terminated in 1954 due to inter-union rivalry, and the Watermen Lightermen, Tugmen and Bargemens Union (WLTBU) became a signatory to joint agreement in 1958, having previously been subject to separately negotiated agreements.

The National Council deals with all national issues and bargaining is carried out through it on such matters as minimum wages, the guaranteed working week, attendance money (a payment made each time a man attends a call - (or is excused for a legitimate reason) - but is underemployed), and holiday pay. It acts as the conciliatory machinery for the industry and as a collective spokesman as well as having direct relations with the National Dock Labour Board (NDLB), through the part time Board members, appointed by the Secretary of State for Employment from NJC nominations.

The Joint Council is comprised of equal employer/trade union representation and appoints from its members an Executive Committee convened by Joint Secretaries which meets as necessary and deals with the business of the NJC.

As well as a National Conciliation Committee, local port Joint Committees have been established comprising local NAPE representatives and Union members; these deal with local industrial matters and pass on to the NJC issues which are considered of national importance.

The Local Dock Labour Board, as with the National level Board, is comprised of joint members nominated by the membership of the local Joint Committees.

AGE GROUPS AS PROPORTIONS OF THE WORKERS REGISTER (EXCLUDING SUPPLEMENTARY)

1978 to 1982

(at July of each year)

Age Groups	1978		1979		1980		1981		1982	
	Number of Workers	% of Total	Number of Workers	% of Total	Number of Workers	% of Total	Number of Workers	% of Total	Number of Workers	% of Total
Under 25 years	367	1.28	261	0.98	251	1.03	163	0.79	102	0.6
25 to 29 years	1,414	4.92	1,159	4.36	950	3.89	742	3.60	539	3.3
30 to 34 years	3,332	11.61	2,897	10.90	2,596	10.63	2,067	10.03	1,525	9.3
35 to 39 years	4,270	14.87	3,942	14.84	3,436	14.07	3,074	14.91	2,729	16.7
40 to 44 years	5,067	17.65	4,714	17.74	4,254	17.43	3,620	17.56	3,164	19.3
45 to 49 years	4,654	16.21	4,592	17.28	4,140	16.96	3,756	18.22	3,317	20.2
50 to 54 years	4,550	15.85	4,344	16.35	4,203	17.22	3,648	17.70	2,856	17.4
55 to 59 years	3,702	12.90	3,491	13.14	3,297	13.51	2,772	13.45	1,839	11.2
60 to 64 years	1,352	4.71	1,173	4.41	1,284	5.26	771	3.74	330	2.0
TOTALS	28,708	100.00	26,573	100.00	24,411	100.00	20,613	100.00	16,401	100.00
AVERAGE AGE	44.4		44.7		45.1		45.0		44.4	

Source: NDLB.

**Total Registered Dockworkers Register as from year end 1967-1982**

Difference by  
Area as a  
% 1967-1982.

LOCAL BOARD	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	
TYNE & WASH	969	917	718	612	653	496	492	478	449	411	418	405	408	396	343	332	-65.7
MIDDLESBROUGH & H'POOLS	970	949	873	785	743	930	1,003	916	884	936	1,028	1,015	978	923	769	651	-32.8
HULL & GOOLE	4,383	4,258	3,544	3,126	3,113	2,609	2,435	2,436	2,375	2,292	2,271	2,256	2,203	2,026	1,668	1,525	-65.2
GRIMSBY & IMMINGHAM	1,581	1,611	1,508	1,317	1,322	1,238	1,151	1,168	1,113	1,030	1,053	1,024	1,071	1,010	868	861	-45.5
WASH PORTS	456	442	401	337	300	308	293	273	267	262	249	240	234	229	204	186	-59.2
EAST ANGLIA	255	248	258	257	255	258	263	261	247	245	244	248	248	244	242	242	- 5.0
LONDON	22,791	21,066	18,259	16,573	15,986	12,656	11,586	11,504	9,825	9,251	8,480	8,105	7,106	5,791	4,575	3,790	-81.3
MEDWAY & SWALE	554	539	523	515	497	666	734	724	683	650	667	662	647	596	570	551	- 0.54
SOUTH COAST	1,862	1,890	1,851	1,728	1,843	2,165	2,122	2,427	2,180	2,122	2,052	1,955	1,861	1,798	1,490	1,259	-32.3
PLYMOUTH	95	89	97	84	84	78	77	71	60	69	67	67	66	66	46	46	-51.5
CORNWALL	143	144	162	155	153	136	141	140	133	131	123	120	154	120	118	118	-17.4
BRISTOL & SEVERN	1,869	1,841	1,776	1,468	1,400	1,271	1,391	1,400	1,370	1,368	1,452	1,430	1,313	1,244	800	798	-57.3
SOUTH WALES	1,801	1,788	1,598	1,521	1,534	1,419	1,363	1,413	1,287	1,230	1,176	1,144	1,084	1,149	977	903	-49.8
LIVERPOOL	11,944	12,244	11,439	10,797	10,738	8,728	7,783	7,717	7,546	6,777	6,589	6,195	5,413	4,820	3,605	2,525	-78.8
MANCHESTER	1,957	2,091	1,959	1,861	1,553	1,432	1,234	1,213	1,202	1,171	1,114	1,064	1,011	897	503	297	-84.8
PRESTON	354	358	360	308	275	178	201	200	198	161	161	137	136	30	CLOSED	-	-
FLEETWOOD	191	178	180	178	201	204	236	233	224	217	209	199	162	161	148	107	-43.9
CUMBRIA	108	103	103	86	85	85	76	72	44	47	47	45	45	51	53	53	-50.9
AYRSHIRE WEST SCOTLAND 1982	109	106	100	96	104	82	85	84	66	65	62	66	65	65	51		
CLYDE	2,029	1,925	1,509	1,387	1,239	843	750	769	670	643	639	632	571	571	389	318	-85.1
ABERDEEN	436	427	383	387	365	338	375	375	336	330	328	315	300	277	248	260	-40.3
EAST SCOTLAND	1,304	1,277	1,184	990	888	768	799	780	715	714	739	710	694	644	552	518	-60.2
TOTALS	56,161	54,481	48,785	44,588	43,331	36,888	34,590	34,654	31,884	30,122	29,168	28,034	25,770	21,110	18,215	15,340	-72.7
% Diff. in Total Reg. at Year End	-	- 2.9	- 10.4	- 8.6	- 2.8	-14.8	- 6.2	+ 0.1	- 7.9	- 5.5	- 3.1	-3.8	- 8.0	-10.3	-21.1	-15.8	
Average Daily Surplus											2605	3802	3480	4103	3828	2018	
Surplus Rate as % of Total "Average" Daily Register											(8.8)	(13.1)	(12.9)	(16.8)	(18.2)	(13.0)	

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APPENDIX IV



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