

Pigott's 1830 Directory says:

The port of Wareham was formerly considerable; but, owing to the shallowness of the shore and the retreat of the sea, it is nearly choaked (*sic*). The quay lies on the south side of the town; but the trade is very inconsiderable, except in the article of pipe-clay, of which vast quantities are obtained from the clay-pits round the town, upwards of 10,000 tons are annually shipped for various English ports, and thence forwarded to numerous potteries, including those in Staffordshire.

In the 1950s one could still get an impression of the view that could have been had from the quay when the meadows flooded.

This table from [medievalandtudorships.org](http://medievalandtudorships.org) shows that, though the port had silted up by the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there were still shipowners in the town; probably these were the Masters of the ships:

Modern Name of Ship	Shipname	Firstname	Namesink	Surname	PlaceName	Country	PlaceName	Country	Tonnage	Year start	Source reference
Wareham	Crayer of Warham	Richard		Byle	Sandwich	England	unknown	unknown	1400	E101/42/5 n76	
Wareham	George	Matthew		Cheke	unknown	unknown	Topsham	England	1411	ECA 12HIV m 5	
Wareham	Faucon	Thomas		Waket			Normandy	France	1417	Routuli Normandie. p. 326	
Wareham	Marie	William		Colyn			Normandy	France	1417	Routuli Normandie. p. 327	
Wareham	Mary	Thomas		Ewayn	unknown	unknown	Topsham	England	1418	ECA 5HIV m.7d	
Wareham	Trinite	John		Bayly	unknown	unknown	Topsham	England	1446	ECA 2a-25HVI m.2	
Wareham	James	Thomas		Haute	Poole	England	unknown	unknown	1466	E122/119/8 m.1	
Wareham	Mary	William		Neuborih	Poole	England	unknown	unknown	1466	E122/119/7	
Wareham	Mar'	Peter		Marche	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1467	E122/119/9	
Wareham	Mary	William		Newburgh	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1468	E122/119/9	
Wareham	George	Thomas		Hawte	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1468	E122/119/9	
Wareham	Mary	William		Neborough	Poole	England	unknown	unknown	1468	E122/119/9	
Wareham	George	Thomas		Hayte	Poole	England	unknown	unknown	1468	E122/119/9	
Wareham	James	John		Hayte	Poole	England	unknown	unknown	1472	E122/119/12 m.5d	
Wareham	Mary	Walter		Horyte	unknown	unknown	Topsham	England	1473	ECA 13-14EIV m.4d	
Wareham	Nicolas	Arnold		Marchall	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1478	E122/119/16	
Wareham	Nicolas	Arnold		Marschal	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1479	E122/119/16	
Wareham	Nic'	Arnold		Marchall	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1479	E122/119/16	
Wareham	Margarete	John		Monday	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1479	E122/119/16	
Wareham	Nic'	Arnold		Marchall	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1479	E122/119/16	
Wareham	Mar'	William		Pryker	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1479	E122/119/16	
Wareham	Mar'	William		Pryker	Poole	England	unknown	unknown	1479	E122/119/16	
Wareham	Mare	Vincent		Corn	unknown	unknown	Poole	England	1540	E122/207/5 F.2r	
Wareham	Mare	Vincent		Corne	Poole	England	unknown	unknown	1540	E122/207/5 f.2r	
Wareham	George	George		Graston	Poole	England	Perfmouth	England	3	1566	E190/864/8 f.8v
Wareham	John	George		Graston	Chichester	England	Poole	England	4	1566	E190/864/8 f.11r
Wareham	John	William		Chatoke	Poole	England	Southampton	England	5	1567	E190/864/10 f.21r
Wareham	Mare	Richard		Trewe	Southampton	England	Purbeck	England	7	1569	E190/814/7 f.6v
Wareham	John	George		Griston	Poole	England	Southampton	England	3	1575	E190/814/10 f.13r; E190/865/7 f.2r
Wareham	Grace of God	Henry		Pypat	Poole	England	Exeter	England	6	1578	E190/865/8 f.1v
Wareham	Grace Dei	Henry		Pippatt	Poole	England	Dartmouth	England	6	1579	E190/931/9 f.3r

An article in The Northern Echo about Early Coal Mining 1100 - 1500, dated 27 June 2008, includes the sentence 'in 1291, 80 quarters of coal were sent to Corfe Castle in Dorset from Newcastle'. Elsewhere someone has surmised that this cargo could have been landed near Middlebere - at that time quite a bit nearer Corfe. It would have more likely been discharged at Wareham and moved to Corfe by horse and cart.

As Pigott says, pipe-clay (aka ball-clay) was shipped from the port, probably for transshipment at Poole. This trade continued until 1844 when Pike Bros open their new wharf at Ridge. Pike had two known tugs, the *Frome* and the *Allen*, the second built at Ridge. They may have started out with an earlier tug, reputed to have come from Sweden, which they called *Purbeck*. Pike also had a fleet of wooden barges, also built at Ridge. A number were requisitioned in the Second World War and two could still be seen on the Ridge shipways in the 40s and early 50s. The Thames spritsail barges in the left hand picture below were capable of making quite long coastal passages, crewed only by two men and a boy.



**Steam Tug *Frome* (of 1888) and Thames barges**  
(Courtesy Purbeck Mineral and Mining Museum)

**Launching motor tug *Allen* at Ridge 1932**  
(Source David Asprey)

There is however circumstantial evidence that other cargo was shipped from Wareham. In 1749 Poole was complaining about corn, pipe clay, tobacco(?) and other merchandise being lightered from Wareham and transhipped in the Wareham Channel, thus avoiding paying dues.

The buildings on the quay would have not escaped destruction during the Great Fire of Wareham in 1762. What is now the Old Granary was re-built soon after and had various owners, notably Oakley Bros grain merchants of Poole, for most of the second half of the 19th century. No one would have gone to the expense of putting up such a substantial building, unless there was grain to fill it. Again this could have been barged to Poole, though the Thames barges might still have made it to the quay and from there around the coast and to the near-Continent. In 1771 there were two quays at the port, Town Quay and Hayter's Quay. Other Directories show that there were two coal and salt merchants 'on the quay' and one butter factor, who was also the owner of the passage boat. All of these trades may have ceased to be waterborne after the completion of the Southampton and Dorchester railway in 1848.

Documents in the Dorset History Centre at Dorchester include:

D/RWR: T306 Leases for coal wharf near Wareham Quay 1759-1772

D/RWR: T504, E107 Two letters on stone for Ramsgate Pier being shipped through Wareham 1771

DC/WAB/111/13 Wareham, quay dues 1773

D/PIT: E92 Wareham Docks(?) Bill including schedule of tolls 1849 (a year after the railway started)

There is also:

D/RWR: T239 Provision in a Wareham deed for £50 to be adventured in the Dolphin of Bristol sailing to Newfoundland for summer fishing 1671