

Annual Scottish Maritime History Conference

Conference Abstracts

Session 1. 1030 am -11.00 am

Jack Abernethy, University of St Andrews and Associate Professor Richard Pennell, University of Melbourne.

'In Pursuit of Pirates: The John Gow Piracy Case? 1730-1731.

Abstract:

On 3 November 1724, a group of mutineers on the *George Galley*, sailing out of Amsterdam, murdered the ship's officers, renamed the vessel *Revenge*, and vested command in a man who would become one of Scotland's most infamous pirates of the so-called 'Golden Age': John Gow. Though Gow's cruise was short-lived, ending with his capture in Orkney and execution in London, he was immortalized by Captain Charles Johnson, Daniel Defoe, and Sir Walter Scott. Nonetheless, there has been little analysis of Gow, the Royal Navy's response to the *Revenge's* cruise or the interaction between the local authorities in Orkney who captured him and the central authorities in London that tried and convicted him. Using archival sources from Amsterdam, London, and Orkney, this paper outlines Gow's piratical cruise, the Navy's response, and the interactions between centre and locality in his capture. It advances the argument that the Royal Navy was limited in its capacity to deal with piracy and that the capture of pirates was still predicated on local actors, even in home waters.

Biographies:

Jack Abernethy is a PhD candidate at the University of St Andrews and his research focuses on Scottish military involvement in the Dutch Revolt, c.1570-1609. In addition to his studies, Jack is the Dutch and Low Countries editor on the *Scotland and Scandinavia and Northern Europe Database (SSNE)* at St Andrews and the book reviews editor for *The Mariner's Mirror*, the international quarterly journal of the Society for Nautical Research. He is more broadly interested in Scottish and English diplomatic, military, and maritime history, as well as Scottish and English migration to Northern Europe in the early modern period.

Richard Pennell completed his BA (in Arabic and Spanish) and his PhD (in Islamic History) at the University of Leeds. Before joining the History Department at the University of Melbourne he taught at the National University of Singapore, at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, at Garyounis University in Benghazi, Libya, and at Bogazici University in Turkey. His most recent books are *Morocco since 1966: A History and Morocco from Empire to Independence*. He edited *Bandits at Sea: A Pirate Reader*.

Dr Catherine Scheybeler, Department of Defence Studies, King's College London

›Transatlantic.Innovation;Naval.shipbuilding.in.Havana.in.the.1730s.and.1740s'

Abstract

The 1730s and 1740s were particularly consequential decades in the development of the ship of the line. While the overall trajectory for these vessels was for increased size, more enduring seaworthiness and greater gun-carrying capacity, their design and the ideas behind them were still fluid and subject to debate. In Spain, where at the time the tactical function of a ship of the line was still being evaluated, the decision was taken to capitalise on the timber of its transatlantic colonies by transferring naval shipbuilding from the Peninsula to Havana where a large state-owned shipyard outside the city limits had begun to be constructed in the 1730s. As part of this development, design innovations then under consideration in the Peninsula had to be communicated and implemented across the Atlantic, a fraught process which encountered many of the complications conventionally associated with inter-state knowledge transfer. This paper, therefore, proposes to analyse the technological development of the ships built for the Spanish navy by Juan de Acosta and the Royal Havana Company in Cuba in the 1730s and 1740s.

Catherine Scheybeler, has a PhD in War Studies from King's College London and specialises in the eighteenth-century Spanish navy. She is a member of the Editorial Board of the international quarterly journal, *The Mariner's Mirror*, the Council of the Society for Nautical Research and Chair of its Maritime Heritage Committee.

Session 2. 12.00 – 1pm

Dr Jo Stanley, Blaydes Maritime Centre, University of Hull.

›Mending.maritime.misery.women's.emotional.labour.in.seafarers'missions.1750-1760'

This paper advances scholarship on maritime intersectionality because it explores the gendered interface between 'home' tenderness and isolation on ships. The focus is on women domestic workers in seafarers' missions acting with extrinsic kindness and thereby enhancing the mental health of the isolated precariat who briefly became mission users. 'How women staff stopped seamen going bonkers' might be a more colloquial title.

The research question is 'What unpaid benefits did post-war female mission employees provide to lonely othered seamen, on and beyond Christian institutions' premises?'

Three microhistories are the basis of this paper. They focus on remote support for a pioneering trans seafarer; the domestic-spiritual labour of Mrs Jennie Kao of London's Custom House (pictured serving tea to seafaring Chinese Christians in her home); and steward John J Mahon, an appreciative alcoholic user of missions. Sources include the Missions to Seafarers archives, newspapers, and genealogical data. In effect, the proposal enhances the current Lloyd's Rewriting Women into Maritime History initiative; ISWAN's work on seafarers' mental wellbeing; and the "Mariners: Religion, Race and Empire in British Ports 1801-1914" project at the University of Bristol, as well as current work on queer maritime life and on seafaring POC (People of Colour).

Jo Stanley, is a creative historian who works with the maritime industry, museums, television, theatre, social media, universities and in the community. Women who went to sea - whose travel transformed their lives forever - are her special area of expertise. She has focussed on the hidden histories of seafarers in her many books, articles, conference papers as well as plays and talks.

Dr Joe Redmayne, University of Newcastle

›Reconstruction.or.restoration.of.the.woman.worker?.Women.in.shipbuilding.and engineering.during.the.First.World.War“;

Abstract:

The paper is split into two parts. The first part outlines Historic England’s ‘Women in Shipbuilding’ project (WiS) and the role I played in scoping potential research outputs relating to women in shipbuilding, ship-repairing, and marine engineering trades during the First World War. Although women’s First World War experiences in munition factories are comparatively well told, there remains a lack of historical attention to the role of women in shipyards. In January 1919, the shipbuilding labour force totalled 266,000 of the insured workforce. Of this total, only 8,800 were women — 3 percent of the total shipbuilding labour force. The gap in the historiography and lack of understanding of women’s experience in shipbuilding, has prompted those involved in the project to think critically about the different experiences of women’s war work, processes of dilution, as well as the legacies of women’s entry into shipyards.

The second part of the presentation is based on a chapter of my PhD research, which exposed how women trade unionists negotiated gendered boundaries in the labour movement immediately after the war with the passage of the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act (August 1919). Particular attention will be paid to women involved in North East branches of the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW) who had previously worked in shipbuilding and engineering trades. Drawing on testimonies of those involved in the NFWW sheds light on women’s protest cycles and repertoires of action during a transition from a wartime to peacetime economy. These protests concentrated on experiences of women’s expulsion from heavy industry, subsequent unemployment, “right to work” campaigns, as well as the Labour Exchanges coercion for women to accept vacancies in traditional ‘unskilled’ prewar occupations. Finally, the presentation will discuss the impact these protests had in challenging common tropes associated with women’s labour during this period. In the wake of the Representation of the People Act (1918) — which transformed citizenship from a gender and class perspective — women’s unemployment brought to the fore debates about the contradiction between the duty and ‘war service’ of subjects versus the democratic rights of citizenship. The North East NFWW maintained that participation was indispensable to full citizenship within civil society and that the British Coalition Government had a moral obligation to accommodate its citizens.

Joe Redmayne is a British social and labour historian. His research deals with British social history in the twentieth century, with a focus on transnationalism, labour movements, and the contentious politics of class. Joe completed his PhD at Newcastle

University in March 2024. He is currently a Research Associate in Newcastle University's Oral History Unit, where he is working on the Women in Shipbuilding partnership project with Historic England (<https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/oral-history/2023/12/13/joe-redmayne-joins-newcastle-universitys-oral-history-unit-and-collective-for-historic-englands-women-in-shipbuilding-project/>).

Session 3. 2.00 pm – 3.00pm

Ian L. Buxton, MBE, BSc, PhD, FRINA, University of Newcastle

›Passenger.Ships;Scottish.and.British.Built;A.Statistical.Analysis".

Abstract

Scotland and the Clyde in particular has long been considered the primary UK shipbuilding region for passenger ships: deep sea, short sea and local vessels. The British Shipbuilding Database of 82,000 ships allows analysis by ship type including tonnage, size, date, builder, machinery, value, fate etc. The passenger ship output by deep sea, short sea and local vessels is analysed from 1850 to 2000, separating out the Clyde from the rest of the UK, with supporting statistics and graphs.

Ian Buxton graduated in naval architecture from Glasgow University and served his apprenticeship at the Denny shipyard on the Clyde. Much of his professional work was associated with computer aided design and maritime economics. He held the position of Reader in Marine Transport in the Department of Marine Technology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne from 1974-2002. He set up and managed the Marine Technology Special Collection at Newcastle University, an archive of shipbuilding and related material and its associated British Shipbuilding Database of 82,000 British built ships. He is currently a Vice President of the World Ship Society, with a lifelong interest in maritime history and writing on ships, shipbuilding and shipbreaking.

Dr Morten Tinning, Copenhagen Business School, Maritime Museum of Denmark.

‘How.to.Take.a.Fire_breathing.Monster.to.Market".

Abstract

The paddle steamer Caledonia, arrived in the outer harbour of Copenhagen on Sunday, 22 May, 1819. It was received by cheering crowds and marked a significant milestone in Danish maritime history. Constructed in Glasgow and acquired in London, it became Denmark's inaugural steamship. Its purpose was to supplant traditional passenger and postal sail-packets on the crucial domestic route connecting the Danish capital to Kiel. This article delves into the public perception of steamships during this era and explores the challenges faced by the vessel's owners as they sought to transform this "fire-breathing monster" into a viable and profitable maritime enterprise.

Morten Tinning is a museum curator at the Maritime Museum of Denmark in Elsinore and a postdoctoral fellow at Copenhagen Business School (CBS). His current research focuses on maritime history, particularly the transition from sail to steam. His research attempts to combine qualitative and quantitative methodology to shed new light on the historical context of technology and maritime transitions.

Session 4. 3.30 pm – 4-30 pm.

Brian Rice BSc. MSc. FRINA

'The.Adventure.Training.Schooner.Captain.Scott'.

Abstract

The adventure training schooner Captain.Scott was built by Herd & Mackenzie of Buckie in 1971. Her build was funded by the Dulverton Trust, and she was operated by the Loch Eil Trust. She ran nine 26 day courses for 36 young men, generally aged from 16 to 21, from late January to mid-December each year. She was a topgallant yard three-masted schooner built of wood with a rig very similar to the Porthmadog based schooners of the late 19th century. She was the last and almost certainly the largest traditionally built British wooden sailing vessel of the 20th century. She was of 380 tons displacement, 171ft overall, 129ft on the waterline, with a beam of 28ft and a draught of 14ft. She operated exclusively off the west coast of Scotland. I intend to explain why and how the Captain Scott was built, the key personnel involved in her conception, how she was funded, the format of the 37 courses held between October 1971 and December 1975, the outward bound inspired philosophy behind the content of these courses and her ultimate fate. Unfortunately, the scheme closed at the end of 1975 due to financial difficulties and the schooner was eventually sold to Oman and renamed as the Shabab Oman. She had a very successful career as a training vessel for the Royal Navy of Oman until she was decommissioned in 2015 and replaced by a much larger ship rigged vessel of the same name. She is still afloat in Oman. The content of the courses she ran was very much inspired by the Kurt Hahn outward bound philosophy, as exemplified by the numerous Outward Bound Schools that were established in the 1950s and 60s, besides Gordonstoun school itself. There were two features of the Captain Scott scheme that made her unique compared to other similar sail training vessels, such as the well-known Sail Training Association schooners Sir Winston Churchill and Malcolm Miller. Firstly, the courses were 26 days long, not the usual 13 days, and secondly the trainees had to complete three shore expeditions, being landed in remote locations off the west coast of Scotland to climb the mountains with everything they needed on their backs (tents, sleeping bags, food and a primus stove) and be re-embarked at another location three days later. The first expedition was closely monitored by the three qualified Expeditions Officers onboard, but the last course was entirely planned and executed by the trainees themselves.

The talk will be illustrated by a number of high quality photographs of her build at Herd & Mackenzie which reveal that a significant amount of steel was employed in her construction, perhaps explaining her surprisingly long and very active life. Colour photos covering typical aspects of the shore expeditions will also be included. 2

Brian Rice was an 18 year-old trainee on Course No 2 from mid-November to mid-December 1971. He returned as Bosun's Mate for one course in 1973 and sailed on numerous traditional sailing vessels over the next 20 years. He gained an RYA Yachtmaster Ocean Certificate but more importantly, as direct result of sailing on the Captain.Scott he went to Newcastle University and obtained a BSc in Naval Architecture and Shipbuilding in 1979, followed by an MSc in Business Administration from Durham University Business School in 1983. He had a maritime based career starting with

shipbuilding at Appledore Shipbuilders, followed by ship repair, before entering the offshore oil and gas industry. In due course I became a Project Manager for five new build vessels. I am a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects but am now largely retired.

Professor Bruce Peter, Glasgow School of Art

›Modern.Art.onboard.British.Ships?7696s_7696s'}

Abstract

This presentation will introduce a research project supported by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art to investigate the commissioning and installation of modern artworks and sculptures within the interiors of British ships engaged in the trans-Atlantic, colonial and overnight coastal passenger liner services between the mid-1930s and themed-1970s. These commissions formed part of a far wider international cultural competition involving governments and shipping companies in many ship owning (and therefore industrialised) countries which sought to reflect the progressive and culturally appealing faces of their nations through the commissioning of critically acclaimed art to adorn the public realm.

The project builds upon existing major works the researcher carried out since 2006 on the design of the liner Queen Elizabeth 2, on the history of the shipping company Peninsular and Oriental, on the interiors of Danish ships between the 1900s and 1980s and, most recently a major work on the design and making of the interiors of passenger ships built on the River Clyde.

Bruce Peter is Professor of Design History at The Glasgow School of Art. He has written extensively about modern design and architecture in the contexts of travel and leisure. He is the author of several books. Advised on the content of the Victoria and Albert Museum's 2017-2019 exhibition 'Ocean Liners: Speed and Style' and has appeared in various television documentaries.