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ABSTRACTS

Session One

Emily BUCHNEA: (Nottingham, UK): *Barrels & Broadsheets: Trade & Trust in the Liverpool-New York Merchant Community, 1763-1833*

This paper will introduce the wider research project and present a range of trends and themes identified from the primary quantitative and qualitative research completed to date. The larger research project examines the Liverpool-New York merchant community within the context of an Atlantic community and economy during the period 1763-1833. Examining the Liverpool - New York trading community after the close of the Seven Years' War until the beginning of the large-scale cotton trade provides an excellent perspective on aspects such as the transition from colonial to post-colonial Anglo-American commercial activity and how mercantile communities across the Atlantic coped with the many wars and credit crises of this period.

Research conducted for this project thus far has pinpointed both the major players operating in the Liverpool-New York trade and the primary commodities being imported into Liverpool from New York by using commercial newspapers, custom house records, chamber of commerce records, custom bills of entry and similar documents. Further to this, letter books and account books used in conjunction with quantitative figures that illustrate trade frequency and market fluctuation will allow inspection of merchant business relationships against of background of both economic stability and instability. This paper will therefore illustrate what has been found using these sources and provide explanation and context for these findings.

Tim CARTER (Greenwich, UK): *The Ship Captain's Medical Guide (SCMG) 1868-1914*

The translation of onshore medical knowledge and practice into a format suitable for use by ship's masters provides insights about medicine and about the maritime sector. The authorisation of a single official source of guidance for the British merchant fleet, the SCMG, in 1868 and its 22 editions since then means that its recommendations can be mapped against both cultural change and a developing knowledge base on causation, diagnosis and treatment of disease. This forms the basis for a separate study.

The first edition in 1868 was a commercially produced book, but its author had also played a major part in the policy decisions that led to its authorisation. As a priced publication that all ships had to carry there was continuing strife about its costs and profit margins between the Marine Department, ship owners and the copyright holders. This became acute each time changes or enlargement were required.. The Department purchased the copyright in 1910 and thereafter it became an official government publication. These interactions are documented in National Archive files. The convenience of adopting a commercial solution to meet an administrative need and the problems that subsequently arise are both current and recurrent themes in government. This case study provides insights about the process as well as showing the parts played by different interest groups in the maritime sector and health professions. It will be illustrated using the changes to guidance that were needed as the understanding of the causes of infectious disease increased in the late nineteenth century as examples.

Victoria CULKIN (Hull, UK): *Certification in the British Merchant Service*

In 1850 compulsory certification was introduced to Masters and Officers of the Merchant Service. Five years prior to this had been the introduction of voluntary certification. Before the system was introduced there was concern over the quality and skill of officers, and the repeal of the Navigation Acts, combined with employment of foreign seafarers, only succeeded in worsening perceptions of the issue. This doctoral project (in its early stages) focuses particularly on the masters and mates of the British merchant service. Their certification poses a number of research questions. Some of these are industry-specific, while others offer scope for comparison with other sectors. Three themes will be addressed: (1) Entry to the Profession: Preparation and Education for the Sea; (2) Ascending the Career Ladder: Certification in the Merchant Service; and (3) Professionalization 1850-1906.

One of the main aims of this is to establish the success of the system, which entails ascertaining how to measure 'success'. Considering wreck reports, disciplinary records, Board of Trade miscellaneous papers and nautical school records, the aim is to consider whether officers in the Merchant Navy became professionals. Changes to and development of the system of certification will also hint at a general overall level of success. Although this thesis focuses on the deck officers of the merchant service it touches on far broader themes during the Victorian period. The thesis will also examine education, professionalization and reform from a broader vantage point to provide a context in which to locate seafarers - all were important factors in the 'Victorian' outlook but they are very understudied in relation to the seafaring profession. This will hopefully add to our understanding of the seafarer and his ever changing position in Victorian society.

Session Two

Tony CHAMBERLAIN (Exeter, UK): *Royal Naval stokers – the lowest of the low? A challenge to the perceived social hierarchy of stokers during the coal-firing era*

The integration of large numbers of stokers into the Navy during the coal-firing era challenged the social hierarchy of the lower-deck. Nonetheless, the historiography of the lower-deck has primarily concerned itself with the life of the naval 'bluejacket' or seaman - a man valued for his stoicism under harsh conditions, his loyalty and tradition for the service and his steadfastness and heroism in action. By contrast, naval stokers are caricatured as physically strong, but coarse and uneducated men, with a reputation of being the worst disciplined of all the lower-deck. One historian noted that 'only the existence of stokers prevented seamen from being on the lowest rung of the lower-deck's perceived status hierarchy', while another declared that boiler room stokers were 'the lowest form of shipboard life'. Moreover, senior naval officers sympathized with these views, with one observing that 'the stokers are still the weakest link in the chain of naval discipline'. Notwithstanding the general lack of interest shown by historians towards stokers, these sentiments are invariably presented without any supporting evidence, thereby exacerbating the stokers' already poor status.

Using primary and secondary sources, this paper will challenge the traditional view of stokers in history and re-appraise their standing within the naval social hierarchy during the heyday of the coal-firing era. The paper will separate the facts from the myths and examine how naval and social prejudice, together with historical misrepresentation, created a tradition by which stokers are viewed in history as second-class naval citizens .

Stephen COBB (King's College, London, UK): *Design for a 'hunter-killer'. The Admiralty's Camperdown Committee of 1902 and the Mauretania*

At the start of the 20th century, the issue of subsidies to British steamers was under constant review by several government departments. A Select Committee considered it in 1901-02. The Admiralty constituted its own confidential committee under the Earl of Camperdown in May 1902, which took evidence from Admiralty staff, shipbuilding industry representatives, and several chairmen of prominent shipping companies. The Admiralty had been subsidising steamship companies since 1887, with a view to using fast liners as armed merchant cruisers in time of war. In return for subsidy ('subvention') it required specific design features both to render the ships less vulnerable, and to support an armament of 6" guns kept available for them. In 1902, it was in process of re-negotiating the agreements with the shipping companies - Cunard, White Star, P&O and others - for the third time. At that time, the fastest ships on the Atlantic were German, while the Morgan Combine had absorbed the White Star Line, and cast its eyes at Cunard. For the Admiralty, the issue was to keep sufficient ships under British registry so as to guarantee their availability for the Royal Navy, and for these ships to be fast enough to catch and destroy their enemies. The Camperdown Committee took evidence to consider whether such ships could be built and operated economically, with or without subsidy. The result was *Mauretania* and *Lusitania*. Most writing has concentrated on the benefit to Cunard of the Government subsidy. This paper will examine the deliberations of, and evidence to, the Committee, the Admiralty's perspective, and what advantage it gained from the contract with Cunard.

Session Three

Eva Maria STOLBERG (Essen, Germany): *Discovering the sea through 'Pacific Empires'. A comparative analysis of Russian & British maritime expeditions to the North Pacific in the eighteenth century*

The eighteenth century saw Russia's emergence as a European empire. In the era of enlightenment the exploration of Siberia and the Russian Far East moved forward and finally the East Siberian coast was used as a springboard to colonising Alaska, i.e. "Russian America". Simultaneously Tsarist Russia, a landlocked empire, built up its navy and the navy administration in St. Petersburg began to think "global", i.e. it was recognised that modern empire-building as an international contest could not be based alone on a landlocked territory, but on the access to the seas. My paper discusses the Russian maritime exploration of the Pacific Ocean as a case study for Russia's maritime mental maps. What significance did the vision of "Ocean" have for Russians in the eighteenth century? The Ocean was a metaphor for mercantile prosperity, and especially the Pacific was viewed as the "Sea of the Future". Russian enlighteners called the Pacific "the Great Ocean" and were curious about the "Great Land" (bolshaya zemlya) behind it, i.e. North America. Jane Samson and Alan Frost have correctly argued that "Pacific Empires" were built by discovery and colonisation in the 18th century. My paper is part of my research on the Pacific thereby combining maritime history with imperial and colonial history. The eighteenth century saw the British expansion through the vast North American continent and the Russian expansion through Siberia. There were a lot of similarities in this colonising process (the network of forts, the fur trade). Charting the North Pacific became a goal of Russian maritime activities from the famous Bering expedition in the 1740s. Russians sought the Northeast passage, Britons the Northwest passage, with the North Pacific becoming a maritime obsession for both nations. My paper compares the Bering expedition with the James Cook voyage, thereby elaborating the motives, the organisation and the outcome of this ambitious endeavours. I will show that both expeditions were vital for Russia's claim to the coastal lands from Eastern Siberia to Alaska and for the British claim to the coastal land from (later British) Columbia to Alaska. The North Pacific was in the eighteenth century a maritime frontier between Russia and Britain.

Joan PRICE (Exeter, UK): *Exploration, collection, collection classification and publication of the scientific work done on HMS Endeavour*

Captain Cook's first voyage around the world brought back an unbelievable wealth of natural history specimens – previously unknown to science. Whilst some scientific work on HMS *Endeavour* was undertaken by James Cook, the biological work was done by the team financed by Joseph Banks. The Swedish botanist, Daniel Solander, thus became the first person employed as a scientist. This paper initially examines the scientific input of James Cook, as his decisions affected everyone on board, before illustrating how Daniel Solander was ideally suited for the work he had to do. It uses the journals, correspondence and a sample of the scientific records from the voyage, in order to examine how the natural history specimens were collected, preserved, described according to the Linnaean system and any new species were finally classified. It considers how the methods pioneered by Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt in Siberia, were modified by Linnaeus when botanizing alone in Lapland and then adapted for a long voyage into the unknown. The practices used by the scientific party will be considered, together with their effects on both botany and the culture of museums. It outlines how the voyage influenced Joseph Banks throughout his long and influential life and considers why he never published the great Florelegium that he had planned. Finally it will try to determine why such a competent and industrious naturalist as Daniel Solander published very little in his own name, and why changes in taxonomy resulted in him being forgotten for nearly two hundred years.

Lynn BARNES (West Virginia, USA): *Luxury textiles on board an auxiliary yacht of the Gilded Age, 1885-1900*

his paper is based on a study of six leading families in the United States, their mansions and their yachts during 1870-1920. The shared consumption of luxury goods, especially in home décor appears to be transferred to the interiors of their yachts. Their purpose was to enhance and maintain a presentation of status while at sea. The specific use of fine textiles as a status statement is addressed. The luxury yachts were extravagant symbols of the wealth, taste, and social power of their owners and were paraded as a social status statement. The artistry of interiors and textiles were an overt expression of social rank. With the rise of the interior decorator coinciding with the development of the naval architect, luxury yacht interiors became a vital arena for fashionable interior decorum and promotion of the well-being of the family.

The three eras of yachting during the Gilded Age were: schooner-yachts, auxiliary-yachts and steamer yachts. This focus of this paper is the auxiliary-yachts, 1885-1900, and an examination of whether or not the interiors and textiles of mansion drawing rooms were transferred to the main saloons of luxury yachts as a statement of social status. Four specific topics will be addressed: developments in the Gilded Age that gave rise to elite Americans' desire for extravagance in luxurious yacht interiors, the rise of the American parlor as a status prototype, evaluation of the auxiliary activities that supported yachting as a social status statement and the technological advances that promoted luxury yacht, and home interiors.

Session Four

Edward FOX (Exeter, UK): *The literacy of pirates, 1690-1730*

It has been calculated by Marcus Rediker and Peter Earle that the literacy of seamen of the seventeenth and eighteenth century reached levels of about two thirds among foremastmen, and higher amongst officers. These figures, however, are based on analysis of 'signature literacy', a method best used for comparative studies. 'Signature literacy', as a method of calculating the extent of reading and writing skills is not without flaws, and the limitations of the method, specific to seafarers, will be explored. This paper will argue that to understand the meaning and significance of literacy to seafarers, using pirates as a case-study, it is necessary look beyond 'signature literacy', and examine the ways in which reading and writing were used in practice. Pirates demonstrated their ability to read and write in several mundane, and a few surprising ways, utilising their literacy skills in many facets of their work and social lives, but also fearing the written word, both for its potentially divisive effects on their community and for its potential use as evidence against them in the event of their capture and trial. This paper will also explore the concept of collaborative literacy, how it functioned on board ship and ashore, and its significance to a closely-knit group, inhabiting the same physical space, amongst whom levels of literacy varied enormously.

Kathrin ZICKERMAN (IHR, London, UK): *Across the German Sea: Scottish merchant families during the early modern period*

The paper will be based on a research project which I am currently undertaking as Alan Pearsall Fellow (Naval and Maritime History) at the Institute of Historical Research in London. My project analyses the commercial activities and transnational networks of three Scottish merchant families during the early modern period. The Jolly family mainly operated from the Scottish east coast port of Prestonpans, strategically placing family members as factors in other North Sea ports and holding strong links with foreign and local traders abroad. In contrast, the Lyell and Spalding families operated their businesses mainly from Scandinavia, Northern Germany and England. They acquired significant positions within their host societies, yet demonstrably contributed to the process of Scottish commercial exchange. The paper will focus on the nature and extent of some of the mercantile networks of these families as well as their inward and outward investment of capital, based on the rich material held in Danish, English, German, Scottish and Swedish archives. It will thus contribute to our understanding of early modern Scottish trade over several generations and a wide geographical area which encompasses mainly Europe, but also the Americas and Asia. This will allow for a short but fruitful comparison with existing works on the mercantile activities of other (Scottish and Non-Scottish) traders and enhance our knowledge of Baltic and North Sea relations in general.

Ben WHITTAKER (Liverpool, UK): *Changing fortunes: Exploring the history of Liverpool's Canning Dock*

The paper will explore the story of Liverpool's historic Canning Dock area in the context of creating a multimedia interactive at the Merseyside Maritime Museum. The Museum is housed in warehouse D of the grade 2 listed Albert Dock complex, and also comprises the 1765 Canning Graving Docks. This area is close to the site of the original Old Dock which opened in 1715, and is the hub around which Liverpool's ground breaking dock system grew. The paper examines seven key storylines in the life of the area, and argues that the fortunes of the site reflect the wider fortunes of the port and city of Liverpool:

- (1) Creation of the Old Dock in 1715 – the first commercial wet dock;
- (2) Building of the Canning Graving Docks in 1765;
- (3) 1846 & the opening of the Albert Dock;
- (4) The Second World War and the Docks;
- (5) Closure of the South Docks in 1972;
- (6) Regeneration of the site in the 1980s;
- (7) The millennium onwards – at the heart of the city through tourism, leisure & culture.

This story is being brought to life in a multimedia interactive, and the paper will look at the challenges faced and opportunities created in the application of historical source material to such a project. It will highlight the range of source material, from photographs, prints, archive materials, to paintings, posters, and film footage that are being used to create a dynamic portrayal of maritime history.