



Annual Scottish Maritime History Conference

14 October 2026

Moir Dyer Room, Mitchell Library, North Street, Glasgow

10.25 Introductory remarks, Dr Martin Bellamy, Glasgow Life Museums

10.30 Session 1, Chair: Chair-Professor Niall Mackenzie, University of Strathclyde

Dr Roy Fenton, British Commission for Maritime History

A 14-million pound bubble: the Cardiff tramp ship 'boom' of 1919-1920

Dr David Jenkins, Emeritus Curator, The National Waterfront Museum, Abertawe (Swansea)

Rag and Bones Jones: A Cardiff tramp shipping company - W & C.T. Jones, 1884-1924

11.30 Tea/Coffee

12.00 Session 2, Annual Lecture

Chair: Professor Alan McKinlay, Newcastle Business School

Emeritus Professor of Business History, Anthony Slaven, University of Glasgow

Shipbuilding self-help. Revisiting National Shipbuilders Security Ltd

1.00 Sandwich Lunch

2.00 Session 3 Chair: Professor Faye Hammill, University of Glasgow

Professor Stig Tenold, Norwegian School of Economics, Bergen

Shipping innovation-lessons from history

David Denholm, Independent Scholar

There is nothing hungrier than an empty shipyard

3.00 Tea/Coffee

3.30 Session 4, Chair: Dr Chris Miller, University of Glasgow

Dr Martin Bellamy, Research and Curatorial Manager, Glasgow Life

The Business of Empires: William Burrell's Austro-Hungarian Shipping Interests

Professor Bruce Peter, Glasgow School of Art

Modern Passenger Ships as temporary static accommodation

4.35 Closing Remarks, Professor Ray Stokes, University of Glasgow

The conference remains free to attend. Tea, coffee and a sandwich lunch will be provided. If you wish to attend, please email Dr Martin Bellamy at martin.bellamy@glasgowlife.org.uk before 30 September 2026.

This conference is kindly sponsored by Glasgow Life, Lloyd's Register Foundation, the British Commission for Maritime History, University of Glasgow, the Lind Foundation and the Society for Nautical Research. We thank them for their continuing support and generosity.



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Annual Scottish Maritime History Conference Abstracts

Dr Roy Fenton

A 14-million pound bubble: the Cardiff tramp ship 'boom' of 1919-1920

Despite grievous losses of ships and men, most shipping companies did well during the First World War. Even with vessels on Government requisition, earnings were high, and war risks insurance covered the value of a lost ship. With peace breaking out in November 1918, the wartime level of profitability was expected to continue, and the result was a scramble to raise new capital and order or purchase ships. In Cardiff, between January 1919 and July 1920 no fewer than 130 new shipping companies were floated, seeking to raise a total of £14.5 million in new capital. Building on earlier work by David Morgan, this paper examines how many of these new ventures succeeded in raising sufficient capital for further ships, and how many survived the subsequent recession. Although not confined to Cardiff, the bubble was most marked in this port, and potential reasons for this are explored.

Dr Roy Fenton is an independent researcher and author specialising in powered ships in the dry bulk trades, from screw colliers, through coasters, and ocean-going tramp ships to present-day bulk carriers. He is a member and ex Treasurer of the British Commission for Maritime History and an Editorial Board member of *The Northern Mariner*, *le Marin du Nord*-the quarterly journal of the Canadian Nautical Research Society.

Dr David Jenkins

Rag and Bones Jones: A Cardiff tramp shipping company - W & C.T. Jones, 1884-1924

W & C.T. Jones was founded by two Cardiff rag & bone men, with seafaring advice from Fishguard Maritime Museum. They raised the necessary finance for ships by advertising shares in a Welsh religious periodical. Their tramp ships traded only to the Black Sea, never down to the River Plate. The company found an extra revenue source carrying cattle from Odessa to Malta for a Royal Navy provisioning yard. The firm had a conservative shipbuilding policy, with most ships built to very similar design. The premature demise of the company was caused by the death of the managing director from Tuberculosis in 1920. Nevertheless, W. & C.T. Jones of Cardiff was a very successful tramp shipping company. Every £1 shareholder got £7-12-6d at the final winding up of the company in 1924.

Dr David Jenkins is Emeritus Curator at Swansea Maritime Museum and the author of several books and articles on Welsh shipping lines, including a biography of Sir William Reardon Smith.

Professor Anthony Slaven

Shipbuilding self-help. Revisiting National Shipbuilders Security Ltd

Tony Slaven is Emeritus Professor of Business History and formerly Director of the Centre of Business History in Scotland, University of Glasgow. He was the founding treasurer and secretary of the Association of Business Historians and founding president of the European Business History Association, and a past president of the Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders in Scotland. He has published widely on business, banking and shipbuilding history.

Professor Stig Tenold

Shipping innovation-lessons from history

The shipping industry faces substantial challenges to modernise and reach the International Maritime Organisation's goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. How can maritime history inform the discussions and strategies towards this ambitious aim? Knowledge about previous innovations and technological transformations in shipping can provide important lessons for shipowners and policy makers. This presentation looks at historical innovations and shipping, pointing out some commonalities.

Stig Tenold is professor of economic history at NHH-The Norwegian School of Economics, in Bergen. He has published extensively on modern maritime history, including an Open Access book, *Norwegian shipping in the 20th century*. He is also involved in current shipping, as chair of a foundation that owns one of Norway's oldest shipping companies, Mowinckel.

David Denholm

There is nothing hungrier than an empty shipyard

This presentation looks at building ships speculatively and the relationship between yards, owners and managers leading on to dedicated ship management. Case studies, not necessarily in order, include the relationship between Anderson Rodger and Sterling (the Glenlee), Denholm and the Grangemouth Dockyard Company (the Treeparks), Scottish Ore Carriers (Lithgows, Connell, Denholm and Clarksons) and a glimpse into Naess and Denholm Ship Management.

David Denholm, served for 16 years in the Black Watch before joining the Denholm Group as an IT Corporate Communications Manager. Initially he was appointed from the Trades House of Glasgow as an independent Trustee to the Clyde Maritime Trust which ran The Tall Ship Glenlee and is currently Secretary to The Tall Ship Glenlee Trust.

Dr Martin Bellamy

The Business of Empires: William Burrell's Austro-Hungarian Shipping Interests

On 21 May 1879 the Glasgow shipowner William Burrell sailed into the port of Fiume (Rijeka) aboard his new steamer Hungarian and was greeted by the town band playing God Save the Queen. The Hungarian government had invested heavily in Fiume to rival Trieste and desperately needed to attract trade. William Burrell was a small-time shipowner trading between Glasgow and the Mediterranean and seized on this new opportunity. After being feted for several days, he left with a partnership deal with the logistics entrepreneur Gottfried Schenker and a healthy subsidy from the Hungarian government. Schenker and Burrell quickly established the Adria Steamship Company and invested heavily in new ships. In 1881 the company was restructured to create the first steamship line under the Hungarian flag, but with Burrell still managing the fleet. His son William took on the business in 1885, and after being appointed consul, he greatly promoted Austro-Hungarian commercial and cultural links in Glasgow. In 1895, Burrell and Schenker entered into a new partnership to create the Austro-Americana Line. Again, they tapped into government subsidies. The new line was intended to capitalise on the growing demand for cotton in Austria-Hungary and established a service between Trieste and North America. Schenker provided the logistical support and Burrell the shipping expertise.

Dr Martin Bellamy originally trained as a naval architect and worked at Harland & Wolff, Belfast before gaining a PhD in history at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of several books and articles on cultural aspects of shipping and shipbuilding, including *The Golden Years of the Anchor Line* (2011) and *William Burrell: A Collector's Life* (2022). He is the Research and Curatorial Manager at Glasgow Museums.

Professor Bruce Peter

Modern Passenger Ships as temporary static accommodation

Focusing on the period since the late-1980s, during which time the need for temporary urban accommodation for refugees and attendees of major sporting and political events has increased and the number of large passenger ships has also grown. This presentation examines the short-term usage of ro-pax (roll-on/roll-off-passenger) overnight ferries and luxury cruise ships as floating hotels and hostels. It investigates the design characteristics of the diversities of vessels employed, the locations and types of usages to which they have been put and the reasons why they have been needed to provide short-term solutions to urgent accommodation requirements including the factors affecting changing relationships between vessels, ports and cities. Case studies concern the chartering of ferries by Swedish municipalities to house refugees from the Middle East and the contrasting use of cruise ships to host sponsors and wealthy visitors to the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. A third concerns the use of ferries as police hostels during major international summits and in the wake of the Catalan independence referendum in 2017. The presentation forms a chapter in a forthcoming book on Liminal Urbanism, edited by Gihan Karunaratne and published by Routledge.

Bruce Peter is Professor of Design History at The Glasgow School of Art. He has written extensively on the design and operation of modern merchant ships and is a contributor to the international shipping industry publisher, Shippax.