

Centre for Port and Maritime History Annual Conference 2018

13th September, University of Liverpool

Venue: Management School Seminar Room 2

Arrival/registration & refreshments 1030 – 1100

Session One 1100 – 1300

Boat/ship ownership, trade and employment along the lower River Tyne and the Port of Tyne in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Dr Neil Harrison, Northumbria University

‘The most important city’: Liverpool and the Irish revolution

Dr Brian Hanley, University of Edinburgh

Walking through atrocities: The Lives and Legacies of Liverpool 1919 Project

Dr Andy Davies, University of Liverpool

Onshore labour, offshore routeing: designing and maintaining the maritime motorways essential to global trade

Dr Kimberley Peters, University of Liverpool

Lunch 1300-1400 (inc. CPMH Advisory Board Meeting in SR2)

Session Two 1400 - 1530

Dockyard Life and Labour at Bermuda’s Convict Station, 1824-1863

Anna McKay, University of Leicester/National Maritime Museum

Artificer Mobility and Port Town Connections: Apprentices in the Royal Navy 1750-1800

Dr Catherine Beck, University College London

A Passage to Plantation: The ‘Cholera Cloud’ on Shipboard under the Indentured Regime (c. 1860-1915)

Sudip Saha, North-Eastern Hill University, India

Refreshment Break 1530 – 1545

Keynote Lecture 1545 – 1645

Floating fun palaces and stigmatised seafaring warder/carers: where modern diversity can expand
Goffman and Foucault

Dr Jo Stanley, Liverpool John Moores University

Reception – VENUE TBC from 1700

List of Abstracts

Session One

Boat/ship ownership, trade and employment along the lower River Tyne and the Port of Tyne in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Neil Harrison, Senior Lecturer, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne

Abstract

I examine changes in boat/ship ownership, trade and employment on the lower River Tyne and the Port of Tyne between the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This includes an examination of the hostmen, merchants, shipwrights and water tradesmen amongst others. I also examine how the various boats on the Tyne (including colliers, keels, coal boats, chalder boats and wherries) were owned, managed and operated; the interactions between such boats/ships, including for the purposes of trade; and, where relevant, any disputes between the boat/ship owners and others employed to operate their boats/ships.

My overall research is on the legal impact on business, trade/commerce and economic growth on Tyneside, the River Tyne and the Port of Tyne from 1815 to 1939. It is my hypothesis that the creation of the Tyne Improvement Commission (**TIC**) in 1850 and its subsequent actions were a major influence on northeast regional development during this period. As part of my research, I am examining the changes in trade along the River Tyne and through the port of Tyne before and after the creation of the TIC. It is within this context that any changes in the ownership and management of boats/ships on the River Tyne and through the Port of Tyne, and any changes in employment on such boats/ships and any disputes are relevant. An understanding of such changes will assist with a wider understanding of the role of the TIC in northeast regional development during the relevant period.

'The most important city': Liverpool and the Irish revolution

Dr. Brian Hanley (School of History, Classics and Archeology, University of Edinburgh).

Port cities and their workers were key to the Irish republican movement's international operations between 1917-1923. The IRA and its supporters had members in Hamburg and Antwerp, Montreal and St. Johns, New York and New Orleans and Glasgow, Southampton and London's dockland. But Liverpool was perhaps its most important base. It was from Liverpool that leaders such as Eamon de Valera, Patrick McCartan and Harry Boland were spirited away to New York, and through Liverpool that secret communications and arms and equipment sent to Ireland. Merseyside had a large Irish community, a long-standing network of activists, many of them members of the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood and crucially the presence of both on the docks. As IRB activist Paddy Daly recalled 'Liverpool on account of its great port, was the most important city (for) the underground organisation. Almost all the munitions in the other great cities like Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham and Glasgow passed through it.' Daly also claimed that 'nearly all' the activists in Liverpool 'were of working-class origin' many of them dockers or seamen. The majority of these

activities were of necessity clandestine. However during April 1920 Liverpool activists tried to emulate the Irish labour movement by leading strike action in support of republican hunger-strikers. In a city with a strong loyalist tradition this led to a backlash and exposed the limits of republican support in the city. This paper examines the importance of ports to Irish republicans, with a particular focus on Liverpool.

Walking through atrocities: The Lives and Legacies of Liverpool 1919 Project.

Dr. Andrew Davies (University of Liverpool)

This paper reflects on a community research project on the 1919 race riots that took place in Liverpool. One key output of this project was a walking tour led by project participants retracing the events of 1919 in Liverpool, particularly the route taken by Charles Wotton, a Bermudan sailor, as he was chased by a mob who eventually murdered him by throwing him into one of the city's docks. Contrasting what was, in 1919, Liverpool's 'Black Town' with its current guise as the rapidly gentrifying 'Baltic Quarter' provoked a number of responses from both project participants and members of the public on the tour. The paper considers the utility of using a walking tour to remember racist violence and the histories of the 'colour bar' and the opportunities that such practices offer for reconstructing forgotten pasts.

Onshore labour, offshore routeing: designing and maintaining the maritime motorways essential to global trade

Dr. Kimberley Peters, University of Liverpool

In recent years scholars have unpacked the significance of the container, container and bulk ships and intermodal transportation as essential to the globalised web of connections that move goods from A to B (Birtchnell et al., 2015; Heins, 2016; Martin, 2010). In this surficial reading of the world economy (Martin, 2011), technologies and materialities are defined as the essential components that keep things moving in flat connections across the globe. Yet this ignores fundamental role of routeing – of maritime motorways, or invisible infrastructures (Peters, 2016) – that *underscore* contemporary logistics. The routeing of containers and container and bulk vessels is essential to the safety and security of global trade, yet such routeing never just happens. Routes are designed, and maintained. This paper traces the transnational formulation and operation of routeing measures for deep-draught-shipping, revealing the hidden labour forces that have, and continue to, ensure the global logistics flows vital to society and the economy. Accordingly, whilst much labour in global shipping is argued to be 'hidden' (George, 2012) this paper sheds light on an onshore labour force that is also obscured in the story of how things move offshore, around our world.

Session Two

Dockyard Life and Labour at Bermuda's Convict Station, 1824-1863.

Anna McKay, third year collaborative doctoral student at the University of Leicester and the National Maritime Museum.

Situated in the North Atlantic, Bermuda became an important part of Britain's imperial defence system in the aftermath of the American Revolution. However, an inadequate supply of labour was one of the greatest threats to the island's development. Officials relied on various forms of free and unfree labour, from contracted and enslaved men to prisoners of war. The construction of the Dockyard was greatly enhanced in 1824 by the arrival of convicts. With no barracks or prisons to house them on the island, convicts were instead confined on board prison hulks moored in the camber. In Britain, condemned men were selected for the voyage based on their strength and fitness; when they reached Bermuda, they were put to work quarrying limestone, constructing administrative buildings and restructuring the dockyard. From 1824 to 1863 Bermuda was home to thousands of male convicts sentenced by British and Irish courts to transportation. The life of these convicts was harsh. The heat of the sun was strong, and the climate subtropical; disease spread like wildfire, and poor ventilation on board the hulks led to frequent outbreaks of yellow fever. Of the 9000 convicts sent to Bermuda, close to 2000 died. At night, prison hulks could become scenes of drunkenness; insubordination and escape attempts occurred frequently. No recent study of the imperial arm of British prison hulks exists; this paper's key objective, therefore, will be to bring about a better understanding of the life and labour of the condemned men sent to Bermuda's convict station.

Artificer mobility and port town connections: Apprentices in the Royal Navy 1750-1800

Dr Catherine Beck, University College London

This paper uses the employment records of the royal navy and dockyards to illustrate the degree shipwrights, carpenters, riggers and caulkers moved in their careers, and the potential scope of the networks and port-town connections underpinning their mobility. Employment in the yards relied on an intricate system of recommendations which extended down through the yard hierarchy and out into the networks of workers and their families. In the six major naval dockyards in 1778, the geographic distribution of the yards where men served their apprenticeships suggests that not all moves were motivated by Navy Board orders. Men moved from neighbouring merchant yards as well as from yards across the Atlantic and Mediterranean. Some served time at sea aboard naval ships while others travelled along shipping routes from their home parishes to apprentice in port towns like Aberdeen or Liverpool before moving to naval yards. Involuntary mobility at the hands of the Navy Board did not preclude the creation of networks which men and women could utilise for entry and promotion within the dockyards and the sea service. The mobility of artificers, coupled with their access to the stable centres of connection in the dockyards, facilitated wider-ranging networks than would be possible in a less mobile service, and causes us to reconsider the agency granted to workers by their maritime labour.

A Passage to Plantation: The 'Cholera Cloud' on Shipboard under the Indentured Regime

Sudip Saha, North-Eastern Hill University, India

The paper makes an attempt to uncover the contested claims on the prevalence of cholera in the ship journey while bringing labourers to work in the tea plantations of Assam. Towards making a nuanced history of the impoverished migrants poor, I find how the possibility of growing tea as a global commodity in the frontier of colonial North-East India transformed the lives of the plantation labourer into the "plethora of pathogens". In fact, the files and correspondences stored in the archives do not give details of how cholera used to be endemic on the shipboard, a point of the prolonged contestation between the agents of the labourer and Assam planters. Interestingly, the reflection of such a state of ignorance in locating the vector of cholera also buried the opinions of the medical attendants who were often accompanied with the labourers on the ship. The deliberation of the documents dug from the archives is again questioned by the testimonies of the "experienced" bureaucrats who while working for the colonial establishment did not negotiate with the understanding of the concept of "medical". A careful and balanced study of the collected sources thus helps to make an inference that the interest of empire did seldom appreciate the scientific aspects of medical discovery.

The paper, at another level, also tries to deconstruct the view, which was reflected widely in the reports of the immigration department, of the labourers as the "racial other" for the causation of cholera. It questions the perspective and methodology of such literature by pointing out that the presence of the labouring population neither in the ship journey nor in the plantations was in the homogenous form. I, therefore, find it necessary to examine critically how such differences were conceived and categorized by the colonisers as the "other" during the cholera epidemic.

Keynote Lecture

Floating fun palaces and stigmatised seafaring warder/carer: where modern diversity can expand Goffman and Foucault

Erving Goffman (1961) understood 'total institutions' to include ships. This meant that passenger-facing seafaring labourers were positioned as warders, carers, hosts and informal trainers. Michel Foucault recognised the floating jail/opportunity as a heterotopia where the othered could happen (1971). This was usefully extended by Stallybrass and White (1986) to understand that such a liminal situation (like Midsummer's Eve's carnivalesque misrule) offered the possibility of the low temporarily becoming high. A maritime example would be that on a voyage the elite socialite passenger is strait-jacketed by seasickness while the experienced (say black, queer, female) seafarer triumphs, erect and able.

In that waterborne vehicle which is part of the hospitality, rather than the transport, industry those in warder/carer roles necessarily seek to 'get the jump' (Crang, 1994) over the inmate/consumer. Managing the transaction is a delicate matter for the performer because, unlike an asylum or police training college, the paying customer needs to be pleased: they provide the additional wage (the tip) and has to be induced to provide repeat custom.

These sociologists did not discuss the social identities of the paid servants in these shifting marginal spaces. They did not comment on the difference that it made if the warder/carer was female, black and minority ethnic, or non-heterosexual.

However, in Europe there has been over 40 years of activism around civil rights for marginalised groups. Now an almost hegemonic advocacy of inclusivity exists. A result of this new climate is that we can apply all the new knowledge about the embracing diversity in the workplaces in general to those earlier sociological understandings of voyages as vehicular interregnums and exceptional opportunities.

This paper uses knowledge gained from oral history research with recent and current seafarers to suggest that today's polyglot cruise ships can be seen as sites where hospitality workers with formerly stigmatised identities have informally learned to get the jump – to gain power over their wealthier white inmates and thus somewhat reverse the old systemic imbalance. As members of a necessarily tolerant, 24:7, mutually dependent and exceptionally collegial community, which can include people of 50 different nationalities, such maritime personnel also take diversity for granted, circumspectly.

That climate of acceptance – coinciding with a time when 'carees in transit' are positioned to accept the othered and to reconsider old rules - implicitly conveys to the guest that diversity can be embraced. Thus the voyage can function as informal training site where the maritime labourer is an educator. Such hosts also gain personally by temporarily being in the dominant position over the caree/inmate. A voyage can thus be an opportunity for gaining enduring insight and a transformative vision of a potentially more just new world. This sort of residential mobile work period can broaden minds – and future lives.

Dr Jo Stanley FRHistS is a writer, consultant and broadcaster on the cultural history of seafarers, especially minorities. She is Senior Visiting Research Fellow at LJMU and Honorary Research Fellow at University of Hull's Maritime Historical Studies Centre. Her latest book is *Women and the Royal Navy* (2017).