



Centre for Port and Maritime History

PROGRAMME

30th Anniversary Conference

10 & 11 September 2026

John Foster Building, 80-98 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5UZ

(Room and venue information will be confirmed via email to the address used for registration).



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TRAVEL BURSARIES

The Centre for Port and Maritime History gratefully acknowledges the support of the Society for Nautical Research. Their sponsorship, along with funding from CPMH, allows us to offer small bursaries to help with travel costs for presenters and delegates who do not have institutional funding. Priority will be given to PGRs.

To apply, please email Nick White at n.j.white@ljmu.ac.uk

PROGRAMME

Thursday 10 September

09:30 Registration and refreshments

10:00 Welcome

Andy Davies/Nick White – Co-Directors, Centre for Port and Maritime History

Keynote Address

Stig Tenold, Professor of Economic History at the Department of Economics, NHH (Norwegian School of Economics)

Shipping's environmental challenges — what can we learn from maritime history?

11:00 Break and Refreshments

11:15 Panel One: Archives, Memory and Creative Commemorations

Holger Mohaupt, Liverpool John Moores University

Mobile Archive - From the Mersey in Liverpool to Paddy Fields in Indonesia

Simona Palladino, Liverpool Hope University

The effects on wartime xenophobia and discriminations after several generations: memories of the Arandora Star sinking on 3rd generation Italians in the UK

Sebastian F. Croft, University of Warwick

Bomb Voyage: The USS Indianapolis Disaster in American Cinema, Culture, and Post-War National Memory

12:30 Lunch

13:15 Cedric Loughran

Trinity House

13:45 Break

13:55 Panel Two: Mariners and Merchants – Chair Nick White

Kristy Warren, University of Lincoln

Art, Archives & Affinity: Seeking Bermudian Merchant Mariners

Laura Gillespie, Liverpool John Moores University

Laboring for Freedom: Black Sailors in the Union Navy during the American Civil War

Simon Hill, Honorary Visiting Research Fellow, Liverpool John Moores University

Liverpool's Whaling Industry - A Largely Forgotten Trade

Kay MacGregor, PhD candidate, Liverpool John Moores University

Liverpool's Memory of Slavery and Merchant Flexibility via James Aspinall

Valerie Mock, Research Professor, Suffolk University, Boston, USA and Honorary Visiting Research Fellow, CPMH, Liverpool John Moores University

George and Anne Holt's 1851 Observations on Slavery in the American South

16:05 Break and refreshments

16:25 Ocean Liners and Modern Literature

Faye Hammill, University of Glasgow and **Emily Cuming**, Liverpool John Moores University, will discuss Faye's new book published in CPMH's LUP series, Studies in Port and Maritime History.

17:05 Close

Friday 11 September

9:00 Registration and refreshments

9:15 Panel Three: Maritime Networks and Spatialities

Aanya Agarwal, University of Glasgow

"Fake It Till You Make It": Authentication, Trust, and the Glocalisation of Ceramics at Bandar Abbas (1615–1700 CE)

Sultan Serter, Independent Scholar

Maritime Diplomacy Between Empires: An Analysis of Ottoman–British Relations in Light of Archival Documents

Anne-Sophie Coudray, CIRESC (International Research Centre on Slavery and Post-Slavery), Paris, France

Mobility under Dependency: The Role of Thomas A. Codd in the Regulation of Migration Networks of Azorean and Cape Verdean Seamen in New Bedford (1838–1900)

Valeria Giacomini, Bocconi University, Milan, Italy

Pirelli, Rubber Grades, and the Maritime Logistics of an Interwar Value Chain

10:50 Break and refreshments

11:05 Keynote: Jo Stanley, Honorary Research Fellow at Blaydes Maritime Centre, University of Hull

Beyond the binary of ‘passenger’ or ‘seafarer’: nuancing maritime historiography

11:55 Break

12:00 Panel Four: Port Communities

Hannah Bradbury-Crowther, University of Plymouth

Gendered Labour and the Port Economy: Women Contractors in Early Modern Naval Dockyards

John Maguire, Independent Scholar

Dramatising the Dockside: *Kitty: Queen of the Washhouse* as an Artistic Intervention in Maritime Social History

Siobhan Hayes, Cardiff University

South Wales Dock Communities – title tbc

13:15 Lunch

14:00 Panel Five: Liverpool and the Mersey region: reconstructions and influences

Stephen Roberts, Honorary Research Fellow, Liverpool John Moores University

'Twixt Mersey and Dee and the Irish Sea: Emerging Themes in the Maritime History of Wirral

John Lamb, Independent Scholar

Comparisons between the Lairds of Birkenhead built Confederate Warship CSS Alabama and the Lairds of Birkenhead built submarine Nautilus in Jules Verne's Novel 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas

Ed Farrel, Independent Scholar

Liverpool: A New Illustrated History

Guy Collender, University of Portsmouth

Learning from Liverpool: How the Port of London Authority replicated the successes of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board

15:40 Break and refreshments

15:55 Keynote

Martin Bellamy, Glasgow Life Museums

Burrell, Wokery, and how facts can fight the Culture War

16:55 Mike Stammers Memorial Prize for the best paper by a PGR, thanks and conference close

17:00 Drinks reception and performance by the Liverpool Shanty Choir, Victoria Gallery and Museum

DRAFT

ABSTRACTS

Keynote Lecture

Stig Tenold, NHH - The Norwegian School of Economics, Bergen

Shipping's environmental challenges — what can we learn from maritime history

The shipping industry faces substantial challenges to 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 technological transformations in shipping can provide important lessons for today's owners and policy makers.

Panel One: Archives, Memory and Creative Commemorations

Holger Mohaupt, Liverpool John Moores University

Mobile Archive - From the Mersey in Liverpool to Paddy Fields in Indonesia

Mobile Archive is a creative media project which explores the question of how digital film and immersive media can actively re-contextualise library holdings, providing wider access to library material for communities. The aim is to find new (decolonised) narratives within existing collections. This practice-as-research presentation will focus on collective research and the different creative approaches for project outputs.

Decolonisation has become an important global debate in libraries and archives, the term "decolonisation" itself is subject to various definitions, and it embraces several different, but related, aims. In the context of this project, we would describe our work more as 'decolonial practice'.

Background

The research collective ARIS has explored the relationship of immersive film and well-being in previous projects creating immersive archives of coastal stories from the East Coast of Scotland and taking them into marginalized communities. For their project 'Mobile Coast' they worked with the national Scottish Respite Centre and MS patients using head-mounted displays to transmit their stories.

The idea for MOBILE ARCHIVE originated in the Liverpool Maritime Museum Archive and its unique collection of 19th century photograph albums. Ralph Brocklebank of the Brocklebank shipping company in Liverpool, collected images of cityscapes, street-life and rural landscapes, while on a grand tour of Europe and Asia, around 1860.

Mobile Archive is a cross-disciplinary partnership between Liverpool John Moore University, the Centre for Port and Maritime History, the Museum of Soil and Agriculture in Bogor, Indonesia, the University of Multimedia Nusantara in Jakarta and Liverpool Maritime Museum Archive.

Simona Palladino, Liverpool Hope University

The effects on wartime xenophobia and discriminations after several generations: memories of the Arandora Star sinking on 3rd generation Italians in the UK

The sinking of the Arandora Star on the 2nd of July 1940, torpedoed by a German U-boat in the Atlantic, remains a lesser-known event in Second World War history. The Blue Star Line's SS Arandora Star was a First Class cruise liner, built in 1927 by Cammell Laird & Company Ltd, in Birkenhead. When the War broke out, the Arandora was placed at the disposal of the British government and was

ordered to carry German, Austrian and Italian internees from Liverpool to Canada. The morning after the departure, 100 miles northwest of Ireland, the Arandora was torpedoed. She sank, carrying many people with her – approximately 805 men. The tragedy generated public debates. However, narratives of the sinking may have been repressed or held back, therefore, over 80 years later records are still incomplete. Nevertheless, descendants of victims are concerned with giving meaning to what happened.

My research focuses on the human consequences of the war and the long-term effects of these experiences, transmitted across generations (Palladino, 2022; 2024; 2026 forthcoming). With the aim of informing the heritage of the tragedy and raising awareness of impact of xenophobia and discrimination on individuals and communities, I conducted a 15 minutes documentary, titled The Arandora Star Sinking. The film, recently published on The Conversation (Palladino, 2026a) captures memories of the incident from the perspective of a descendant of the victims. It's a video-interview with a third generation Italian based in Liverpool, whose grandfather was interned and perished on the Arandora Star.

Sebastian F. Croft, University of Warwick

Bomb Voyage: The USS Indianapolis Disaster in American Cinema, Culture, and Post-War National Memory

Following on from its 80th anniversary last year, my paper shall analyse the representation of the USS Indianapolis disaster in Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*, a topic which has surprisingly received less than adequate scholarly analysis despite the film's cult-status. Consequently, this has hindered a deeper understanding and critical exploration of the multiple intriguing facets attached to this maritime tragedy, with the most notable (given the recent onset of multiple conflicts involving nuclear nations such as Russia, Israel, and Iran) being the complicated place it occupies in relation to America's atomic bombing of Hiroshima. As I shall argue, via the critically acclaimed "Indianapolis speech" (during which the character Quint (Robert Shaw) delivers a harrowing account of the sinking of the Indianapolis during the Second World War), *Jaws* provides fertile ground for further reflections on the broader implications and significances associated with dredging the Indianapolis story from history to Hollywood, not merely in terms of how this constitutes a symbolic rite of passage which introduces this lesser-known maritime disaster into mainstream America's collective consciousness, but how it both challenges and revises the nation's orthodox Hiroshima narrative (that such an act was morally justifiable because it saved American lives) by exposing how the bombing victimized not only the Japanese but Americans themselves. This paper shall also explore the legacy of the Indianapolis, looking at the various other films which engaged with its fascinating story and its recent "Anglicisation" in the form of the West End hit play *The Shark is Broken*, co-written by Robert's own son, Ian, who not only reprises his father's role as Quint in the production but duly pays homage by delivering a full rendition of the Indianapolis speech, reaffirming the role of generational identity in the symbolic memory culture of the Indianapolis that *Jaws* initiated some 50 years prior.

Cedric Loughran

Trinity House

Panel Two: Mariners and Merchants

Kristy Warren

Art, Archives & Affinity: Seeking Bermudian Merchant Mariners

This presentation considers the use of art to provide deeper connections with archival fragments concerning two Bermudian Merchant Mariners with Liverpool links: Charles Wotten¹ and JW DeShield. It does this via two examples that emerged from the BA/Leverhulme Funded 'Seeking Charles Wotton' project, through which I collaborated and engaged with a range of individuals and organisations, both during and after the research. The first example is an 'artistic intervention' developed in collaboration with Liverpool-based Bermudian artist Ami Zanders, which was used in workshops held in that city and Bermuda. This was further developed for 'A' Level students in collaboration with project researcher Jaylen Simons, history teacher Lucy Capes and students at Hackney B Six in London. The second example concerns digital artwork by Liverpoolian artist Sumuyya Khader in response to archival images of Mr Wotten and Rev. DeShield. Perspectives of all those involved will be considered (with students' voices being represented by a sample).

Laura Gillespie, Liverpool John Moores University

Laboring for Freedom: Black Sailors in the Union Navy during the American Civil War

This paper explores how Black sailors, some of whom were seen as "contraband" of war, used labor as a means to fight for freedom and political rights during the American Civil War. The Black population of the South acted on anti-slavery convictions learned during their time in bondage by carrying out self-emancipatory actions and running away in massive numbers when the war began. Grounded in their experiences of slavery, formerly enslaved people forged new lives in freedom behind Union Navy lines. Boarding Union vessels and laboring for the Union cause was one of the most explicitly political acts that formerly enslaved people could perform; removing their labor from the Confederate war effort and dedicating it to the Union was the ultimate form of revolt against their former enslavers, and a decisive demonstration of agency that they hoped would be a part of their lives moving forward. The development of a distinct, African American politics emerged at a regional level in many parts of the South at this time and ultimately at a national level in the final few years of the war. This paper argues that through their laboring efforts on behalf of the Union cause, Black sailors practiced politics and fought for their freedom in a way that was progressive, radical, and revolutionary.

Simon Hill, Honorary Visiting Research Fellow, Liverpool John Moores University

Liverpool's Whaling Industry - A Largely Forgotten Trade

The port of Liverpool is synonymous with overseas trades such as privateering, trans-Atlantic slavery, free migration across the world, and shipping with Asia. However, an overlooked area of research is Liverpool's ties to the whaling industry. Liverpool's involvement in whaling goes back to the mid-eighteenth century, and extends into the twentieth century. This presentation will survey current knowledge of the subject, and outline areas for future research.

¹ Please note that the different spellings of Wotten's surname reflect records consulted before and during the project.

Kay MacGregor, PhD candidate, Liverpool John Moores University

Liverpool's Memory of Slavery and Merchant Flexibility via James Aspinall

James Aspinall, a member of a prominent Liverpool slave trading family directly connected to the Zong Massacre, came into adulthood between the 1807 and 1833 abolition bills in Britain. He wrote and anonymously published *Liverpool, A Few Years Since* in 1852 in which he provides invaluable insight into the responses from several prominent Liverpool slave merchants to the abolition of slavery. His account corroborates archival evidence showing that Liverpool merchants began diversifying into property and finance in the early 19th century, both insulating them from the financial impact of abolition and accruing new kinds of social capital. With a focus on Aspinall's book and the records of Liverpool insurance companies, these sources are used to evidence Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins' argument that there was a drive towards a 'gentlemanly capitalism' in this period, as capital derived from finance and property was viewed as holding a higher status than capital from trade and manufacture. At the same time, it is apparent that Aspinall, like the wider Liverpool merchant community, sought to denounce the evils of slavery while distancing himself and his family from the practice. While there is no denialism about slavery, there is a distancing by omission and choosing to highlight abolitionists like Roscoe, rather than mention that the considerable wealth Aspinall enjoyed came from the profits of the slave trade.

Valerie Mock, Research Professor, Suffolk University, Boston, USA and Honorary Visiting Research Fellow, CPMH, LJMU

George and Anne Holt's 1851 Observations on Slavery in the American South

In 1851, George Holt, a prominent Liverpool cotton broker, and his daughter, Anne, visited North America for nearly two months and each documented their journey in small diaries that are filled with descriptions and impressions. At this point in Holt's life, he was also a successful entrepreneur in several businesses (railways, banking, insurance, office building, and shipping), an active member of the Town Council (dock, water, and education committees), and a significant contributor of time and money to the Liverpool Community. According to Lee (2024: 166), "he sat at the center of a very influential network of merchants, financiers, and philanthropists."

The impetus for their visit is unclear. It seems that the first part of their journey from Savannah to Baltimore dealt more with his primary business and involved plantation tours and discussions and the second part north of the Mason-Dixon line dealt with his non-business interests, such as educational reform and water management. This presentation focuses on the first part of journey, where 10 years before the American Civil War talks of secession and the perceived economic necessity for slavery were already common. Holts' journals provide unique insights into how abolitionists who attended the same Unitarian Church as William Roscoe, but whose wealth, like many of the Liverpool merchants of the 19th century, depended on slave-created products reacted when they encountered both black domestic servants and those enslaved in the plantation economy.

Panel Three: Maritime Networks & Spatialities

Aanya Agarwal, University of Glasgow

"Fake It Till You Make It": Authentication, Trust, and the Glocalisation of Ceramics at Bandar Abbas (1615–1700 CE)

This paper examines how trust functioned in the counterfeit ceramic economy passing through the Safavid port of Bandar Abbas during the 17th century CE. While existing literature on early modern long-distance trade treats authentication marks — such as the imperial reign marks on Chinese kraak porcelain produced at Jingdezhen — as transparent guarantors of quality, this paper argues that such marks were impersonal trust proxies whose legibility depended entirely on informational asymmetry across long supply chains, and were therefore vulnerable to forgery. Drawing on Trivellato's challenge to Curtin's model of intra-communal trust, and on the material evidence of six ceramic objects held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Asian Art Museum, and the British Museum, the paper traces two related phenomena at Bandar Abbas. First, the production of Gombroon ware (1615–1680 CE): Safavid potters at Kirman and Mashhad substituted fritware for kaolin-based porcelain unavailable within the Safavid realm to produce an imitation of kraak porcelain to cater to the European market. This was a glocalisation that generated a distinct regional commodity exported through the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) and the English East India Company (EIC) networks, as the ceramic acquired the name Gombroon which is the anglicised name of Bandar Abbas. Second, after the Ming collapse of 1644 CE severed the original supply chain, the same Safavid workshops began forging pseudo-Chinese tassel marks on imitation porcelain to deceive European consumers unable to read Chinese script. The paper argues that this shift from licit substitution to active forgery was not a rupture but a logical intensification: both phenomena were enabled by the same port infrastructure at Bandar Abbas and the same informational distance that made cross-cultural trade possible in the first place. The case thus reveals trust in early modern global trade as structurally dependent on material signs rather than personal or communal networks — and therefore as fragile precisely where it appeared most stable.

Sultan Serter, Independent Scholar

Maritime Diplomacy Between Empires: An Analysis of Ottoman–British Relations in Light of Archival Documents

This study aims to analyze maritime diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire and Britain, particularly within the context of the 18th and 19th centuries, through archival documents. The seas were not only trade routes but also critical arenas of power projection, sovereignty struggles, and diplomatic negotiations. In this context, the primary objective of this research is to reveal how the diplomatic language constructed through maritime affairs shaped Ottoman–British relations and how these interactions were connected to broader shifts in the international balance of power.

The research covers diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Britain within the framework of capitulations, trade agreements, port usage, maritime security, and military cooperation. The geographical focus includes the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black Sea regions, where maritime trade and military mobility were most intense. The study also addresses critical turning points such as the 1838 Convention of Balta Limanı and its impact on Ottoman maritime sovereignty.

The study is based on qualitative research methods, employing historical and document-based analysis. Primary sources include diplomatic correspondence, trade agreements, consular reports,

and maritime records obtained from the Presidential State Archives of Turkey (Ottoman Archives) and British National Archives. These documents are analyzed using content analysis to evaluate diplomatic language, power relations, and strategic priorities. In addition, a comparative historical approach is used to assess both Ottoman and British perspectives.

The findings indicate that Ottoman–British maritime diplomacy was largely shaped by mutual interdependence and asymmetrical power relations. Following the Industrial Revolution, Britain expanded its maritime trade capacity and integrated Ottoman ports into its strategic network, while the Ottoman Empire utilized this relationship as a means of economic revitalization and international legitimacy. Archival documents reveal that Britain increasingly emphasized demands for maritime security and free trade in the Eastern Mediterranean, whereas the Ottoman Empire pursued a more cautious and negotiation-oriented diplomacy to preserve its sovereignty.

Key issues such as anti-piracy measures, the security of maritime trade routes, and the opening of ports to international use created both cooperation and tension between the two states. By the mid-19th century, the Ottoman Empire became increasingly dependent in maritime affairs, while Britain emerged as a dominant regional naval power.

In conclusion, Ottoman–British maritime diplomacy represents a multi-layered process that reflects not only bilateral relations but also transformations in global power dynamics. Archival evidence clearly demonstrates that this diplomatic relationship was shaped by economic interests, military strategies, and struggles over sovereignty. This study contributes to understanding the historical continuity of maritime diplomacy and offers insights into the historical roots of contemporary maritime policies.

Anne-Sophie Coudray, CIRESC (International Research Centre on Slavery and Post-Slavery), Paris, France

Mobility under Dependency: The Role of Thomas A. Codd in the Regulation of Migration Networks of Azorean and Cape Verdean Seamen in New Bedford (1838–1900).

This presentation highlights the central role of migration brokerage networks in shaping the flows of maritime workers between the Azores, Cape Verde, and the United States in the late nineteenth century. Through the study of the career of Thomas Anderson Codd, who held multiple positions as ship broker, commission merchant, deputy U.S. Shipping Commissioner, lawyer, and justice of the peace, it shows how intermediaries combining economic, legal, and maritime functions contributed to making New Bedford a major hub for the migration of mariners from the Azores and Cape Verde to the United States.

The study demonstrates that these networks generated forms of economic and social dependency, particularly through wage retention and recruitment control, within a legal framework that provides limited protection for mariners. However, rather than reflecting a unidirectional logic of exploitation, this system also relied on the strategic use of intermediaries by migrant sailors, who mobilized these maritime brokers as resources to secure their migration projects and long-term settlement in the United States.

Valeria Giacomini, Bocconi University, Milan, Italy

Pirelli, Rubber Grades, and the Maritime Logistics of an Interwar Value Chain

This paper examines the maritime dimension of Pirelli's interwar investments in Southeast Asian rubber plantations, focusing on how transport, port access, and rubber grading shaped the

company's attempt to integrate upstream into the value chain of natural rubber production. In 1920, the Italian tire and cable manufacturer acquired estates in British Malaya and Java, not necessarily to secure full self-sufficiency in raw material supply, but primarily to better understand rubber production, quality formation, and the "true garden costs" behind the prices quoted in Singapore, London, and New York. While existing interpretations of manufacturers' plantation investments tend to emphasize vertical integration as a response to price volatility and supply insecurity, this paper argues that Pirelli's case also reveals the logistical and maritime frictions embedded in commodity chains.

Rubber was not a single commodity but a set of differentiated products (smoked sheets, crêpes, slabs, scraps, remilled rubbers) whose value depended on processing methods, moisture content, cleanliness, packing, and conformity to international standards. These characteristics had direct implications for ocean transport. Pirelli's early specialization in slab rubber, produced with limited estate machinery and valued for its rapid vulcanization and mechanical resistance, eventually became problematic because of its high moisture content, which translated in freight burden. By the 1930s, company reports calculated that Pirelli was de facto paying to ship water from Java to Italy, prompting a debate over whether to shift production toward different types of rubber such as First Latex Crêpe or Standard Smoked Sheet. The eventual conversion to smoked sheet in 1937 reflected not only technical modernization but also a maritime calculation: reducing transport costs, improving packing efficiency, and producing a grade more easily absorbed by global markets.

By tracing rubber from its processing close to the Southeast Asian estates, to shipment through colonial port systems and onward to Pirelli's factories in Italy, the paper shows how maritime logistics shaped industrial strategy. Pirelli's experience demonstrates that upstream integration did not eliminate dependence on intermediaries, ports, brokers, insurers, freight contracts, and imperial shipping infrastructures. Conversely, it exposed the company to the material constraints of moving a tropical agricultural product across long distances. The paper therefore contributes to maritime and business history by showing how shipping costs, commodity form, and port-based grading systems helped determine the organization of interwar global value chains.

Keynote: Jo Stanley, Honorary Research Fellow at Blaydes Maritime Centre, University of Hull

Beyond the binary of 'passenger' or 'seafarer': nuancing maritime historiography

This keynote recommends moving beyond the old polarity that sees a ship's complement as composed of only two sorts of users: those who are paid to sail and those who pay to sail. By recognising the significance of hybridity, commonality, and 'grey areas', historians can make more nuanced investigations of voyages.

The two main additional categories are passengers' servants (such as ladies' maids, valets, and ayahs) and 'working vacationers' (such as beauty concessionaires working on a commission basis, and Gustaf Erikson's premium-paying 'apprentices' on windjammers).

This paper defines the categories. Brief examples of early 20C interactions on British passenger ships are evidenced, based on oral and written documents as well as literature and comical representations. It then discusses the impacts of these different economic and affective nexuses on the culture of the ship as both hierarchical institution (Goffman) with 'warders' and 'inmates') and as heterotopia (Foucault) with 'upset' marginal relationships such as crew acting as paid sex workers like the famous Cunard Casanova.

Alert to intersectionality, this illustrated Powerpoint refers to the part played by race, gender, age, class, and sexual/gender orientation. It concludes that seafarer biographies and passengers' voyage accounts need to be re-read for new ideas of 'work' and 'leisure'. Additionally it recommends that future oral history interviews and self-published seafarer memoirs are shaped with more awareness of hidden dynamics, going far beyond the limiting figures of hero/victim Jack Tar, and hedonist questor Kate Winslet in *Titanic* (1997).

Panel Four: Port Communities

Hannah Bradbury-Crowther, University of Plymouth

Gendered Labour and the Port Economy: Women Contractors in Early Modern Naval Dockyards

This paper examines the role of women as contracted labourers within early modern English dockyards, situating their work within the broader economies of port systems and maritime infrastructure. It argues that women's labour was integral, rather than peripheral, to naval and port systems, structurally embedded within functioning dockyard economies. Yet the contributions of these women remain largely absent from established maritime historiography.

Scholarship on port labour has traditionally focused on formal, male-dominated occupations. However, as this paper highlights, a fundamental category of workers is missing; one that occupied the ambiguous space between domestic, informal and waged labour. Most commonly, widows of dockyard workers, women were contracted across multiple royal dockyards, undertaking essential tasks to ensure production, maintenance and supply were sustained. Their labour was characterised by their adaptability, reliability and cost-effectiveness for the Naval Board. They were also highly valued, and their ability to step into a contractual role with relative ease was mutually beneficial to both dockyard and widow. They operated successfully as integral components of the dockyard workforce.

This paper challenges the outdated notion that ports were male-dominated work environments, demonstrating that officials frequently relied upon the capabilities of a more diverse pool of contractors. It also emphasises the blind spot that these women occupy within the historiography, revealing how systems of labour classification and academic prioritisation have historically obscured their contributions.

Overall, this paper contributes to broader historiographical debates in maritime and port history by foregrounding gender as a central analytical category for understanding labour organisation, economic resilience and institutional dependency in early modern archives.

John Maguire, Independent Scholar

Dramatising the Dockside: *Kitty: Queen of the Washhouse* as an Artistic Intervention in Maritime Social History

In 1832, the global maritime trade routes that established Liverpool as the 'Second City of Empire' also made it the primary gateway for a devastating cholera epidemic. While maritime history often focuses on the growth of the dock estate and economic tonnage, the human cost of living in the 19th-century port city is frequently relegated to the margins of public health records.

This paper presents a critical analysis of the play *Kitty: Queen of the Washhouse* as a form of 'living historiography.' Rather than a traditional dramatic performance, this presentation explores the

methodology of translating maritime archives—specifically those relating to the dockside slums of Denison Street and the arrival of disease via the Irish Sea—into a high-impact public narrative.

The presentation will examine:

- The Port as a Biological Vector: Using the 1832 epidemic to illustrate the tension between Liverpool's maritime commerce and the survival of its migrant population.
- The 'Hidden' Maritime Migrant: Navigating Kitty Wilkinson's identity as an Irish maritime migrant and shipwreck survivor.
- Methodology: How 'artistic representations' of the Victorian waterfront (the grit, damp, and density of the North Docks) engage modern audiences with the grim realities of 19th-century maritime life.

Siobhan Hayes, Cardiff University

South Wales Dock Communities – title tbc

Much has been written about the social history of the South Wales Valleys during the nineteenth century, yet comparatively little attention has been paid to the dock communities of Newport, Cardiff, and Penarth during that period, despite their central role in exporting Welsh iron, steel, and coal throughout the world. Part of a wider research project on dock communities, this paper examines the impact of changing employment legislation on dockworkers, mariners, and their families, arguing that while maritime labour was increasingly regulated, dock work remained largely unprotected into the twentieth century. In practice, legal safeguards for both groups were unevenly applied.

The paper's first focus is on the casual basis of work in the docks, with workers sometimes employed for only one hour at a time, with little job security. On the other hand, if ships needed to be loaded and unloaded in a hurry, dockers might work very long hours in hazardous conditions. Mariners, by contrast, had greater formal protection for the duration of a voyage under legislation specific to merchant shipping and contracts of employment; however, this was frequently ignored once ships were out of sight of land, and penalties for mariners who failed to meet the terms of their contracts could be harsh. Both groups worked in hazardous conditions for relatively little pay and uncertain job security.

The second part of the paper will review how the employment conditions and the limited provision for compensation for either group in cases of injury or death impacted the families of dock workers and mariners. Household survival depended on the labour of women and children, often through poorly paid and insecure work, or by taking lodgers into already overcrowded homes. This paper highlights the gap between legislative intent and practice, and lived experience in Britain's dockside communities.

Panel Five: Liverpool, the Mersey region: reconstructions and influences

Stephen Roberts, Honorary Research Fellow, Liverpool John Moores University

'Twixt Mersey and Dee and the Irish Sea: Emerging Themes in the Maritime History of Wirral

The histories of two of the Northwest's most important ports - Chester and Liverpool - have been intertwined with the history of the Wirral Peninsula. More has been written about Wirral's relationship with Chester than with Liverpool, but neither topic has been adequately researched in its own right and, as yet, there are no integrated or multidisciplinary studies of Wirral's maritime

experience. Developments in local, social and family history, archaeology and historical geography, as well as the growing accessibility of primary sources, are enabling us to research history from the bottom up. When such methods are applied to the study of the history of Wirral, connections to the aforementioned ports and evidence of the influence of the sea on the lives of the people are shown to be far more substantial than was previously supposed.

John Lamb, Independent Scholar

Comparisons between the Lairds of Birkenhead built Confederate Warship CSS Alabama and the Lairds of Birkenhead built submarine Nautilus in Jules Verne's Novel 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas

The French author Jules Verne's classic 1870 novel 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas charts the adventures of Captain Nemo and his submarine Nautilus. Jules Verne only once linked Captain Nemo's origins to a real-life vessel and surprisingly it was to a wooden warship, the American Civil War Confederate commerce raider CSS Alabama. The Alabama was commissioned at Nautilus House, Liverpool, England and built in 1862 under a veil of secrecy at Lairds shipyard of neighbouring Birkenhead. After leaving the River Mersey the Alabama was fitted with armaments on the remote Azores island of Terceira and joined by her captain, Raphael Semmes, a resident of Mobile, Alabama. In a two-year cruise the Alabama sank 64 United States merchant ships and created a major diplomatic rift between Great Britain and the United States. In Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas, the steel plates of the hull (basically the whole visible structure) of the Nautilus are built at Lairds shipyard of Birkenhead (Verne: Laird's of Liverpool) and shipped in a veil of secrecy to a remote island where the submarine is fitted with an armament and finally completed. Nemo, whose motto is Mobilis in Mobile, like Semmes then proceeds to sink shipping worldwide. These striking similarities prompted me to compare Raphael Semmes's memoirs to Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas. The conclusion reached is that the sheer number and preciseness of replicated passages suggests that Verne created the abolitionist Captain Nemo as the satirical alter ego of Raphael Semmes and that Jules Verne deliberately hid this, his greatest literary secret, 'in plain sight'.

Ed Farrel, Independent Scholar

Liverpool: A New Illustrated History: Reconstructing lost Liverpool

Liverpool's history is supported by a vast wealth of past and current cultural assets and activities. Material includes innumerable visual artefacts, written works, archeological studies, academic work and physical artefacts. However, the work that has been produced in this project shows that considerable scope still exists to build new images of lost Liverpool, adding to our cultural assets and our understanding of both the City's past and its heritage environment.

This seventeen-year project has used a combination of art and research to produce over 100 – new and unique - reconstructed landscapes and other views of Liverpool from 1675 to 1939. The work also illustrates the heritage environment and architecture surviving today. Images aim for a wider context and a sense of realism. The project output includes a c.250 page historical narrative which chronologically threads the images together. synthesizing numerous academic works.

In order to build new images, research has included referencing hundreds of public and archived artefacts (maps, prints, newspapers, photographs, videos etc.); a 72-book bibliography fully referenced in the supporting historical narrative; research on the ground; multiple version-controlled revisions and individual or institutional consultation, collaboration and editing.

The work is being used in a number of institutional and art publications. It paves the way for further work and promulgation. Its continuing objectives are to support our diverse City heritage; to add to our physical and cultural assets; to build our community memory and to enable us to enjoy – and learn from - the City's past and its legacies towards the future.

Guy Collender, University of Portsmouth

Learning from Liverpool: How the Port of London Authority replicated the successes of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board

The Port of London was in crisis and its future was in jeopardy at the turn of the twentieth century. Dock companies were engaged in ruinous competition, dredging was neglected, and shipowners were choosing to go elsewhere. This paper explores how politicians, dock administrators and shipowners responded to these difficulties by following the examples of other UK ports, particularly Liverpool. Such a comparative approach is essential when analysing rival ports within a competitive industry, but it is rare within port historiography, which is dominated by studies of individual ports.

This paper shows how the successful development of the docks in Liverpool in the mid and late nineteenth century was used as a blueprint for improvements in the Port of London in the early twentieth century. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Act of 1857 and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (MDHB) that followed largely inspired the Port of London Act of 1908 and the subsequent Port of London Authority (PLA). In both cities, dissatisfaction with existing facilities was followed by legislative action, and the creation of a public trust designed to represent the users of the port and serve the interests of the wider area. These new entities were then able to invest and improve accommodation for ships, thereby increasing trade and the reputations of both of these major ports.

This paper draws upon the extensive and underutilised primary material relating to the MDHB and the PLA from Parliamentary debates and acts, and the Royal Commission on the Port of London (1902). For example, in 1900, Sir Alfred Jones, of shipping firm Elder, Dempster and Company, told the Royal Commission how the despatch of goods for a large ship was 'five times as bad' in London as it was in Liverpool and Bristol. Politicians favoured running the capital's port with representatives 'elected on the Liverpool system'. Before the creation of the PLA, newspapers framed the debate about the capital in terms of unfavourable comparisons with other UK ports, especially Liverpool, Glasgow and Cardiff. Differences between London and these ports also attracted the attention of literary figures, including Joseph Conrad.

Finally, this paper shows the profound and international knock-on effects of developments in Liverpool's docks. The MDHB influenced the PLA, which, in turn, was the model for the Port Authority of New York, which was created in 1921. What happened on the Mersey caused waves on the Thames and also rippled out across the Atlantic.

Keynote - Martin Bellamy, Glasgow Life Museums

Burrell, Wokery, and how facts can fight the Culture War

In May 2024 Nigel Biggar wrote an open letter to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in response to the new Glasgow City of Empire display. He claimed that 'the partisan distortion of the past your display presents is so demonstrably extreme as to be tantamount to a lie'. Among the elements he singles out for attack is a small section interpreting a painting of Queen Victoria's reception at Glasgow's 1888 International Exhibition which included in the crowd William Burrell, shipping magnate and future donor of the Burrell Collection to the city. The interpretation states: William

Burrell exploited his Chinese crews. His business partners exploited enslaved Africans. Biggar argues that this cannot possibly be true and that 'this account of one of Glasgow's greatest public benefactors is slanderous'. This is a claim he amplified in *The Spectator* and further expanded in his new book *The New Dark Age: Why Liberals Must Win the Culture War*. Ironically he cites Bellamy and MacDonald's *William Burrell: A collector's life* to demonstrate the ethical nature of his business, little realising that what we meant by 'business ethics' was exploitation, colonialism and rampant capitalism.

This keynote lecture will explore the historical facts behind the display and demonstrate that it is neither lying nor slanderous. In 1879 Burrell & Son established a new venture with Liverpool shipowner Joseph Hoult to operate a service between Liverpool, Glasgow and Demerara. Over the next twenty years Burrell & Son also operated regular steamship services to Trinidad and Jamaica. Their agents and business partners had all either operated during the era of slavery, apprenticeship and indentured labour, or had inherited their wealth from this exploitation. Several were plantation owners who benefited from the government compensation scheme. In the early twentieth century Burrell & Son restructured to profit from the exploitation of Chinese crews. Burrell ships were noted for their brutality towards Chinese sailors, with numerous deaths resulting from mistreatment, malnourishment and suicide. In 1908 the Chinese crew of Burrell's Strathyre jumped overboard to commit suicide rather than serve another voyage.

The lecture will reflect on how museums, especially those with displays on the British empire, have been drawn into the right-wing culture wars. The Burrell Collection itself has been labelled the 'UK's wokest museum'. I will argue that the best defence is sound historical research. This is a point made by Alan Lester in coming to Kelvingrove's defence. I will also discuss how museums can balance messages about the philanthropic generosity of their benefactors with honesty about where their money came from.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Aanya Agarwal is an Erasmus Mundus scholar in the Master's degree "Global Markets, Local Creativities", as part of which she studied at University of Glasgow and University of Barcelona, and is currently based in the Erasmus University, Rotterdam. Her research interests lie in the intersection of globalisation and heritage, and how local heritage can be globally competitive in contemporary times.

Dr Martin Bellamy originally trained as a naval architect before gaining a PhD in history at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of a number of 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). From 2012-2025 he was editor of *The Mariner's Mirror*, the international journal of the Society for Nautical Research. He is currently the Research and Curatorial Manager for Glasgow Life Museums, with curatorial responsibility for the Burrell Collection.

Dr Guy Collender is a Post Doctoral Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Port Cities and Maritime Cultures at the University of Portsmouth. He works on the Sail to Steam, Carbon to Green research project, which is funded by Lloyd's Register Foundation.

Guy has compared international dock strikes in London (1889) and Australia (1890), and has written about injuries and deaths in UK docks in the early twentieth century. He is currently writing a book

about working-class cultures in the Port of London, c.1880-1939. He completed his PhD on the history of the Port of London, 1900-1939, from Birkbeck, University of London, in 2022.

Sebastian Croft is a history and film researcher from the University of Warwick. Following on from being awarded BA and MA degrees in Film Studies and History and Film from Southampton Solent University and the University of Warwick respectively, he has since then conducted extensive research into representations of the USS Indianapolis disaster in American cinema and national memory, analysing the historical legacies of Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* and the actor Robert Shaw. Along with authoring publications such as *History Bites Back: Confronting the Atomic Leviathan in Jaws* (2017) and *Bomb Voyage: The USS Indianapolis Disaster in American Cinema and National Memory* (2024), Croft is also collaboratively involved with various global military and maritime institutions such as the United States Naval Academy where, in September 2025, he delivered a talk commemorating both the 80th and 50th anniversaries of the Indianapolis disaster and *Jaws* at the prestigious McMullen Naval History Symposium.

Anne-Sophie Coudray is a historian and holds a PhD in Contemporary History from the International Centre for Research on Slavery and Post-Slavery Studies (CIRES) at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, Paris). She completed a doctoral dissertation entitled *Mobility under Dependency: The Role of Thomas A. Codd in the Organisation of Migration Networks of Azorean and Cape Verdean Seamen in New Bedford (1838–1900)*. She specialises in maritime history, migration history, and forced labour in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world. Her most recent publication appeared in the 43rd Yearbook of Women's History, *Women & Ports*, published by Amsterdam University Press, 2025.

Laura Gillespie is a historian of nineteenth and twentieth century US history. She holds a BA, MA, and PhD from Queen's University Belfast. Laura is currently Lecturer in Modern American History at Liverpool John Moores University. Previously, she worked at the University of Hull and Queen's University Belfast.

Laura's current research project is a monograph based on her PhD thesis. This project uses grassroots organizing as a lens to study the development of Black politics within refugee or "contraband" camps during the Civil War and Reconstruction. It argues that the activism of formerly enslaved people within these camps was essential in transforming the national political landscape of the United States in the post-Emancipation era, and resulted in the creation of a distinct African American politics that carries through to this day.

She is also working on a project exploring the Clan Mothers of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's role as political leaders from the 1600s to now. This research uncovers Haudenosaunee historical conventions associated with female governance and explores the ways in which Haudenosaunee women innovatively engaged in diplomacy and politics from their first contact with settler colonists.

Faye Hammill is Professor of English Literature and Canadian Studies at the University of Glasgow, and previously taught at the universities of Strathclyde, Cardiff and Liverpool. Her new book emerges from her AHRC-funded project "Ocean Modern". Among her six earlier monographs are *Modernism's Print Cultures* (2016), with Mark Hussey; *Magazines, Travel, and Middlebrow Culture* (2015), with Michelle Smith; and *Sophistication: A Literary and Cultural History* (2010). She is co-editor of *Modernism/modernity* (2025-29) and a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. She has held roles at maritime heritage organisations including HMS Unicorn, the Tall Ship Glenlee, The Shipyard Trust, and Friends of the TS Queen Mary.

Siobhan Hayes is now indulging her passion for history and heritage in retirement, following a long career in industry. She is currently undertaking a PhD at Cardiff University, researching the impact of nineteenth-century employment law on dockworkers, mariners, and their families in the ports of south-east Wales. In addition to her academic work, Siobhan volunteers with the National Trust at Tredegar House, near Newport.

Simon Hill is currently an honorary visiting research fellow at LJMU, and has previously lectured at the University of Nottingham.

John Lamb was born in 1963 in Birkenhead England and always had a fascination with the River Mersey and the Wirral Peninsula. In 1987 John successfully proposed the replenishment of New Brighton Beach at Fort Perch Rock with 100,000 tons of sand. After retiring as a geography teacher in 2018 John decided to investigate Jules Verne's maritime links with Liverpool and neighbouring Birkenhead, particularly in Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Seas* and the sequel novel *The Mysterious Island*. John's 2025 article in *Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction* provided evidence that Birkenhead and the Mersey is the literary inspiration for three Verne novels. In this paper, we look at the novel that started John's research, Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Seas*.

Kay MacGregor is a PhD candidate at Liverpool John Moores University. They won a competitive scholarship for a funded collaborative doctoral project between LJMU and the Bluecoat Arts Centre. The objective of the project is to investigate the Bluecoat's ties to empire following the formal abolition of the slave trade, through the interrogation of the financial ties of the school's top donors and the way apprenticeship was used to integrate students into systems of colonial extraction.

Kay takes an interdisciplinary approach to history, which is especially useful in Liverpool, a prominent port engaged in both the slave trade and colonial resource extraction. By connecting merchants engaged in such extraction to institutions engaged in science and culture like the Athenaeum and Liverpool's Literary and Philosophical society, Kay's research contends that empire, class, culture, and science can be united into a single coherent lens for historical inquiry. Kay has a forthcoming publication on environmental industrial histories in *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*.

Dr John Maguire is a Liverpool-based working-class writer, researcher, and Creative Director of ArtsGroupie CIC. Awarded a PhD from LJMU for 'Breaking the Class Ceiling,' his practice utilises 'working-classness as method' to subvert extractive institutional capture and reclaim marginalised narratives. As Lead for the Liverpool Irish Festival's History Research Group, he oversees the revitalisation of the Liverpool Irish Famine Trail, focusing on the maritime and social impact of 19th-century migration. His work, including the critically acclaimed *Kitty: Queen of the Washhouse*, translates archival records into immersive, 'living historiography'. Through collaborations with the University of Liverpool, Maguire activates 'community workshops' to transform urban spaces into participatory repositories, engaging over 38,000 people in radical, socially engaged reclamation.

Valerie E. Mock, Ph.D., is an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Port and Maritime History at Liverpool John Moores University. In the 10 years prior to this appointment, she lectured on cruise ships presenting talks on trade that helped shape our global history. Her PhD is in Management with an emphasis on Corporate Social Responsibility and Strategic Management. After retiring from the classroom, she has taught business courses in China, Moldova as a Fulbright scholar and Fulbright Specialist, and Lithuania and conducted leadership workshops in Armenia and Georgia.

Prior to her academic career, Valerie worked 15 years for IBM and was involved in software development including a position on a Vice-President's staff. She also holds an MBA from Emory University, and a BA in anthropology from the University of Chicago.

Valerie's current research focuses on business history in Liverpool and, in particular, the George Holt family, cotton brokers and ship owners, in the 19th century and their contributions to the growth of Liverpool; the impact of religious values held by Liverpool merchants, such as the Unitarians and Quakers, on society; philanthropy and public service of Liverpool merchants during the 19th century; the relationship between Liverpool and North America's Eastern Seaboard commercially and in public service and social affairs during the 19th century; the dichotomy between merchants who supported abolition while profiting from businesses based on slave products like cotton, sugar, and tobacco.

Dr Holger Mohaupt is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at Liverpool School of Art and Creative Industries, his research is focussing on coastal narratives, heritage and immersive storytelling. In the most recent project 'Mobile Coast' he explored the potential of immersive 360 documentary narratives in the context of film and well-being, reaching out to excluded communities. He worked with people living with multiples sclerosis in a respite centre in Scotland.

Dr Simona Palladino is a Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences, at Liverpool Hope University (since 2020) interested in ageing and migration; fellow of Higher Education and a member of the British Society of Gerontology. During her Doctoral Degree at Newcastle University (2019), she conducted an ethnographic research about older migrants' sense of attachment and identification with places, published in her monograph: 'Ageing Migrants' Sense of Home: Experiences of Older Italians in the UK' (Emerald Publishing). She directed the documentary 'Age is Just a Bingo Number' as a project of public engagement, and a few more participatory documentaries: 'Outside Not!'; 'Meulugar'; 'The Arandora Star Sinking1'; 'The Arandora Star Sinking 2'. Simona was a Visiting Fellow at the University of Portsmouth (2011-12) and Université Libre de Bruxelles (2013). She studied her Bachelor's and Master Degree in Psychology, at 'La Sapienza', University of Rome (2004-2011).

Sultan Serter is a multidisciplinary researcher and filmmaker whose work bridges cinema, urban culture, and gender studies. Born in Alanya, Turkey, in 1992, she has developed an educational and artistic path that combines social science, art, and cultural analysis. She is currently pursuing a degree in History at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, where she explores the relationship between modernity, identity, and collective memory. Sultan earned her B.A. in Cinema and Television from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and previously completed a B.A. in Nursing at Ege University. She also holds graduate-level studies in Local Governments and Urban Policies (Marmara University), History of the Republic of Turkey (Sakarya University), Women's Studies (Mersin University), and Maritime Tourism (Dokuz Eylül University). Her broad education allows her to merge the precision of academic research with the creativity of visual storytelling.

Dr Jo Stanley, FRHistS, Assoc RINA, is a creative cultural historian of maritime life, who is particularly interested in sexuality and marginality. A writer and consultant, who has conducted many oral history interviews, she has written the four pathbreaking books about maritime minorities: *Seafaring Women: Through History* (2026); *Women and the Royal Navy* (2017); (with Paul Baker) *Hello Sailor: the Hidden History of Gay Life at Sea* (2003, 2015); and *Bold in her Breeches: Women Pirates Across the Ages* (1995, 1996, 2003). An Honorary Research Fellow at Blaydes Maritime Centre, University of Hull, she is a Scouser with seafaring relatives and is committed to supporting seafarers' mental wellbeing. www.jostanley.biz; <http://genderedseas.blogspot.com>

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 the Open Access book Norwegian shipping in the 20th century. Tenold is also involved in current shipping, as chair of a foundation that owns one of Norway's oldest shipping companies.

Kristy Warren examines the history, remnants and legacies of British colonialism in Bermuda, the wider Caribbean and the United Kingdom. Her research explores colonial institutions, governance, migration, and questions of belonging. Kristy is particularly interested in what the arts, commemoration, and material culture can tell us about these themes. As Senior Lecturer in Black History at the University of Lincoln, she teaches Caribbean, Black British, and British Imperial histories. Kristy also works with heritage and cultural institutions wishing to co-create content reflective of the histories, experiences and desires of marginalised people.

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