

# **ARGONAUTA**



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# **ARGONAUTA**

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# Editorial

by Isabel Campbell / Colleen McKee



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Welcome readers to the autumn 2017 issue. We thank Chris Madsen for his service to the Society and to Canadian maritime history. We hope that Chris will remain active in the Society in the coming years as his input has always been lively and forced us to think hard about our goals.

Newly proclaimed President, Richard Gimblett highlights the need for greater membership engagement in the Society and in Council matters in his President's Corner. His report includes a description of the highly successful conference in Halifax which he organized and which included an audience of over fifty people for three packed days of papers. Congratulations, Rich, on organizing another great conference and also on taking the chief executive post once again. Readers will also note the minutes from the Executive Council and the AGM held in August in Halifax at the conference. Please read these over carefully and address any concerns to Executive members.

We'd like to highlight Sam McLean's piece, entitled, "The Hudson's Bay Company Ships' Logs Proposal". Rich Gimblett, and Paul Adamthwaite, the Society's webmaster (and past President), among others wholeheartedly endorse Sam's imaginative and innovative proposal. We ask all members to read his proposal carefully. This proposal has the potential to revitalize the Society, to provide needed employment to Aboriginal scholars, and to be one of many key measures taken to further Truth and Reconciliation goals. We offer Sam our full endorsement and hope our membership will do the same as he embarks on this long term, ambitious plan.

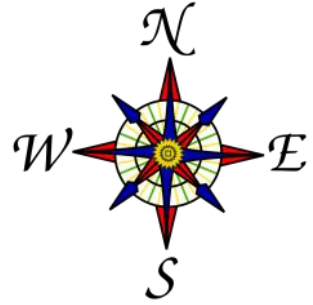
We draw your attention to Alston Kennerly's "Merchant Ship Command: Literature, Licensing, Learning." This scholarly article draws upon a host of secondary and primary sources and includes discussion of Kennerly's own experiences at sea. Joel Zimmel has kindly sent us his new book announcement on *Betrayal of Trust* and on his award-winning *Scapegoat*, while Chris Bell has sent us a detailed description of his book, *Churchill and the Dardanelles*. We welcome these contributions which further the Society's goals for encouraging understanding of maritime history. Congratulations to these distinguished authors on these achievements.

We rely upon members and others to send us their contributions. We welcome you to the Society and hope you will find it an encouraging spot to discuss your ideas and to promote your work. Finally, we'd like to especially thank Kip Scoville who not only produces *Argonauta*, but also runs the Society's Facebook and Twitter accounts. We encourage you to contact Kip with time-sensitive announcements such as forthcoming lectures, archival and museum displays, and other matters suitable for those media. His e-mail is [kscoville@cnrs-scrn.org](mailto:kscoville@cnrs-scrn.org). Thanks, Kip, for all you do for us.

Fair winds, Isabel and Colleen

# President's Corner

by Richard Gimblett



It is a great honour to be addressing you from this Corner once again, although I have to admit it also is with mixed feelings. For those of you who were not at the August AGM in Halifax, when it came around to the time for elections, we found ourselves in the somewhat embarrassing situation of having no one willing to stand for the position of President, and I accepted a nomination from the floor only to preclude a constitutional crisis. Having done the job before, I am able to delude myself that it's not all that hard; perhaps more to the point, I must bear some of the responsibility for the senior Executive having failed at succession planning in these last years; and on the subject of responsibility, I have in mind as well the thoughts of our previous President in his parting Corner on the subject of the journal (with my move into the Presidency requiring that I shift out of Chair of the Editorial Board, Dr Roger Sarty will be taking my place in that position).

Those readers who were at the AGM will recall my immediate thoughts were on the side of doom and gloom — that a Society which cannot see to its own succession must be in a rather bad way, and that we needed to undertake a root-and-branch review of our purpose and methods of operating, and that if nothing satisfactory could be worked out, we should be prepared to shut the Society down if need be. I wasn't able to launch into that review as quickly as I had hoped (having had to take a “time out” for personal reasons that are now resolved), and indeed upon my enforced reflection I see that it is just as well we did not act in haste. For other than the “little” problem of executive succession, we are in a good place. The conference associated with the AGM was really quite successful, with some 50 persons in attendance for three very full days of great discussion on a wide range of interesting presentations, drawing in many new and familiar faces, and highlighting the location of the Naval Museum of Halifax as a marvellous heritage resource. As for the journal, the problems with timely publication are real, but the explanations put forward by Editor Bill Glover are valid. The team of Glover, Faye Kert, and Walter Lewis have a good plan for future development (contingent of course upon a continuing supply of content), and the shift to an on-line open access format (while maintaining a print version) has exciting possibilities. The revitalization of the publication in which you most likely are reading this Corner (Argonauta) under the team of Isabel Campbell, Colleen McKee, and Kip Scoville, is an exciting example of the possibilities for growth into the digital space. And our membership itself is healthy: in an age of declining numbers amongst comparable societies, our levels have stabilized and indeed taken a bit of an upturn, importantly including a young and energetic cohort with many great thoughts for our rejuvenation.

Over the next little while, I will be working with Council to explore our options, with the intent to bring to you in the January issue of Argonauta a plan for discussion and comment. Your input is vital — I got some measure of it at the conference and AGM, but that was only a small sampling of what I am certain is a wealth of ideas and possibilities to contribute that you all must have.

I still believe we need to review our purpose and methods of operation. But I no longer see the situation as one of doom and gloom. There just remains that “little” problem of ownership. It is not a criticism to observe that most members probably are quite happy to be on the receiving end of the many benefits provided by the Society. But I need your active engagement if we are going to chart a successful passage into the future.

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We encourage you to join us on facebook and twitter where we post links to interesting articles and announcements from around the internet. Our social media channels are where you will find time sensitive notices that are not suitable for publishing here in the *Argonauta*.

# The Hudson's Bay Company Ships' Logs Proposal

by Sam McLean

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At the recent Annual General Meeting in Halifax, I proposed that the Society launch a new project, which would focus on the Hudson's Bay Company and the transcription of ships' logs to create a new open-access online research tool. This article serves to expand on those remarks and to report on progress that has occurred since that August meeting.

During his recently completed tenure as President of the Society, Chris Madsen repeatedly raised the question of the nature of the CNRS and its relationship with *The Northern Mariner*, *Argonauta* and the annual conference. During these discussions, it has become clear that the Society must offer more in order to attract new members, to grow its audience and, most importantly, to survive. There are numerous options of what the CNRS could do to become that concept of "more". For example, Chris's idea of creating local groups that meet much more frequently and hold local events is a good one and has the potential to drive local membership growth. Other possibilities are hamstrung by geographic reality, perceptions of academic discussions, and the economic realities that are dramatically changing how individuals and institutions access journals and participate in academic or learned societies. The HBC Ships' Logs Project is designed to further develop the Society; it is especially suited to geographically separated centres of effort. It also should appeal to a larger audience, drawing them to the CNRS website and potentially growing our membership.

The internet is already very important for the creation of historical research tools and projects. Some projects, like the Old Weather Project (<https://www.oldweather.org/>), create new ways to look at historical data, and provide new ways to be able to extract information for analysis. Other projects, such as the Naval Biography Project (<http://www.navylist.org/>), harvest the information from many diverse archival documents to create indexed lists, such as lists of ships or officers, for research. Both of these approaches make the information contained in documents easier to access.

This project will have an approach similar to that of the Old Weather Project. The fundamental core of the project will be the transcription of Hudson's Bay Company ships' logs. These logs are housed at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, part of Archives Manitoba. The transcribed logs will be uploaded into a relational database, and a website will be created to provide access to these documents. First, this project will allow for a sizeable cache of underused documents to be easily available to researchers. Second, transcription in addition to scanning microfiche will allow for a much wider variety of approaches to interrogating those logs. Further, creating a relational database would allow for integration with other projects (both by the Society and other organizations). Importantly, this project will also allow researchers to closely reproduce the original documents in digital form, as well as to locate them in the archives. I have had preliminary discussions with Maureen Dolyniuk, Keeper of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, who is enthusiastic about this project. Although the Archives are currently limited in their spare capacity, they will make the many existing microfilm reels of ships' logs available to this project via Interlibrary Loan.

The Hudson's Bay Company logs have been chosen because they are from a period of Canadian history that needs greater study. This project will also provide important vectors for discussing Aboriginal history and for the inclusion of Aboriginal voices. One part of the plan is to apply for funds so that undergraduates from Aboriginal communities can be involved in the transcription phase of the project and be paid for their work. In addition, we will engage with existing Aboriginal history projects to find ways to collaborate, cross-promote, and provide context to the records in the database. Second, the project helps to re-establish the Society as a national rather than regional organization by promoting a topic of national importance. Third, the Hudson's Bay Company is a non-naval subject. Criticism that the CNRS and *The Northern Mariner* have had a recent bias towards naval history is valid, and this project will complement the efforts to rectify those deficiencies. Fourth, this kind of project will provide opportunities for the Society to collaborate with other organizations, academics and with the public at large.

This will not be a small project, indeed it is designed to be a large, multi-year project. Discussions have commenced with the Archives of Manitoba which holds the records, and with Prof. Michael Dove of the University of Western Ontario. Professor Dove is a member of the Society, and has been published in *The Northern Mariner* on a number of occasions. In 2000 he was awarded the Gerry Panting Award for New Scholars. His current major research project is on the Hudson's Bay Company and its ships. Other discussions are ongoing, and this project will certainly be built upon collaboration with several partners.

The timeline for this project is based around the following phases:

Phase I: Creation of primary relationships with partner organizations and the first application for funds. Also the establishment of the initial parameters of this project in terms of how many and which logs will be scanned and transcribed. This phase will continue through to January 2018.

Phase II: Primary project design, to begin January 2018. This will include designing the database and the first, offline methods for transcribing documents. This phase will also include the application for funds through Youth Canada Works to create student positions for this project and applications for Government of Canada grants for historical/cultural projects, amongst others.

Phase III: Main Research Phase, to begin Summer 2018. If funding is secured, this will include digitizing the ships' logs which already exist on microfilm. These scans will be provided to Archives Manitoba for use on their website. This period will also include the development of the database and website. The Government of Canada has grants specifically for projects like this, so it is likely that funding will be available for this portion of the project as well. Members of the CNRS, including me, have the requisite skills and experience to implement this project, but depending on grants and other factors, the Society also might create paid opportunities. It is planned that the online research tool would go live in January 2019.

Phase IV: Long-Term Development and Research Phase, to begin once the website is made live. This phase will continue as long as the website is live. The tasks will consist



of continued transcription, but more importantly the continued development of the front-end to allow researchers to access the data in more diverse ways. One example would replicate how the Old Weather Project allows visitors to their site to aid in transcribing data. It would also be important to continue development alongside additional potential projects involving other documents. This phase would also include applications for funding to expand the project.

For those who are interested in participating in this project, or who have questions or feedback, please email me at [sam.mclean@cnrs-scrn.org](mailto:sam.mclean@cnrs-scrn.org)

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# Merchant Ship Command: Literature, Licensing, Learning<sup>1</sup>

by Alston Kennerley

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*Command is an ever-present aspect of merchant seafaring life, exercised by ships' appointed masters, and experienced by all subordinates aboard ships. Following an introduction which offers definitions and points out the difficulty in pinning down the essence of command, the subject is approached first through the observations of various maritime writers which illustrate some of the many different contexts in which command has been exercised. The second section addresses the assessment of "fitness for purpose" before and after the introduction of compulsory examination for certificates of competency as master. The final section offers a selection of the author's experiences, as a subordinate, of shipmasters in command. Concluding, there is no easy way to sum up what comprises command, but there are certainly many aspects which have been present in all periods of history.*

Command situations are to be found in many walks of life, from the comparatively mundane to those of national import. Everyone has some experience of being subjected to the command of others and there can be few people who at some stage in their lives do not find themselves having to exercise command at least in a small way. A person may achieve a certain level of command by appointment, default, election, or by usurpation; those holding a level of command may lose it by being undermined, by dismissal, or through resignation. There are many situations in which a person is simultaneously in command and under command, where an ability to move between the roles is developed. The inverse of command might be obedience or subservience.<sup>2</sup> That the word and its derivations have long been in daily usage is evidence that command is a commonplace in human society. However, its most significant connotation is with military and pseudo-military situations. Such is the omniscience expected of those in command at sea, that there can be no simple definition; indeed, explanations are likely to be incomplete or lengthy. It is relatively easy to identify particular facets of command, yet peculiarly difficult to pin down its fundamental nature or kernel.

The root of the word "command" provides a little insight into the heart of merchant ship command. Deriving from the late Latin "com", meaning with, together, completely, and "mandare", meaning entrust, we have a phrase which peculiarly reflects the relationship of the master (captain) of a merchant ship to the owners of the ship, the owners of the cargo, the crew and passengers, and even the legal context prevailing: "completely entrust".<sup>3</sup> It is also a phrase which can serve to remind us that there is a perennial dimension to the nature of command. Knowledge advances; aspects of maritime law, international relations, language, science and technology change, but the essence of command aboard the ship that carried St. Paul to Rome is the same as that of today aboard the *Queen Mary II*.<sup>4</sup> As with the law of the carriage of goods by sea, the kernel of command and the categories of knowledge and experience which must be

brought to bear are constants which apply in any age. Command is also a constant across the total range of vessels that comprises merchant shipping at any time. This ranges from harbour and coastal vessels with minimal crews, in some cases only the master and one other seaman, to the miniature city of the passenger liner with a diverse crew in excess of 1000 seafarers.

Although it is possible to point to exceptions, typically the practice of merchant ship command involves a master mariner in command of a single ship. This was certainly the situation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from which the examples in this paper have been drawn. Command is the term often used to embrace the role of merchant ship masters. However, they carry no military rank, despite often being accorded the courtesy title of captain both outside and within the merchant shipping industry. A few liner shipping companies liked to refer to the masters they appointed to command as Commander<sup>5</sup>, and sometimes the senior serving master in a company was given the courtesy title of Commodore. Members of merchant ships' crews have long referred to their commanding officer as "the old man" and even as "father". The term "skipper" has also long been in use in casual conversation particularly to refer to masters of other ships, though of course it is legally the title of the commanding officer of a fishing vessel. But from the late medieval period men in charge of merchant ships have widely been recognised as master mariners,<sup>6</sup> and this was enshrined in the nineteenth century British legislation on the registration of ships and the licensing of masters and mates.<sup>7</sup>

In the modern period, it has been the endorsement at the Custom House, on the written authorization of the shipowner, of the master's name on the ship's certificate of registry, together with production of his certificate of competency as master mariner that establishes him as the legal master of the ship. This is a kind of title deed to his position and authority, for the transaction of business relating to the ship and conferring responsibility for a wide range of duties specified in the merchant shipping acts. There are parallels in the appointment of an Anglican clergyman to the incumbency of a parish. The master has assumed total responsibility for the ship, crew and cargo. He becomes the manager of a mobile industrial unit, employer of its workers with authority for discipline, and the custodian of its cargo. The responsibilities are total and cannot be delegated until such time as he is legally replaced by someone else.

It is increasingly apparent that a merchant ship master by education, training and experience, must develop as a person of many parts, versed in: cargo handling and stowage, collision avoidance, commercial practice, communications, electronics, employment, hydrostatics, magnetism, man management, maritime and international law, medical matters, meteorology, navigation, oceanography, seamanship, ship construction, ship handling, ship propulsion, ship maintenance and repair, ship stability, and shipping business. To these must be added the knowledge and skills required aboard specialised vessels, such as container ships, fish factory ships, gas tankers, train ferries, and so on. The role is no sinecure, and in all periods carries the stresses of commercial pressure for despatch and good out turn, complicated at times by international tensions.

Given the breadth implicit in the foregoing discussion, this paper will be restricted to seeking insights into command in three areas. First, some of the approaches in maritime fiction and autobiographical writing will be explored. Then the contributions of licensing, education and training in preparation for command will be examined, and finally the author's own experience of work under a variety of ship's masters will be used to integrate the themes addressed in the paper.

Intentionally or otherwise command features frequently as an underlying theme in the fictional writing about merchant shipping.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the majority of merchant seafarer autobiographies have come from the hands of ship-masters writing mainly about their years in command. Developing in the early decades of the nineteenth century, maritime fiction had become a significant area of publishing by the end of that century and there has been a steady output throughout the twentieth century. The maritime world was a common theme for short stories to be found in the growing numbers of popular magazines and it was significant amongst the vast output of children's fiction from writers such as Ballantyne, Bullen, Clark Russell, Kingston, Henty, and Jacobs. Similarly, command features in general maritime fiction and narrative writing, which like children's fiction is often rooted in the sea-going experiences of the authors. Some, Conrad, Dana, London, Masefield, Melville, are held in high regard, but there are many others who offer sound insights into the nature of command. If there is a general criticism of the bulk of this writing it is that it tends to be backward looking through the dominance of sailing ship experience, despite the rapid advance of the power-driven vessel. Fortunately, writers in the twentieth century have been concerned with modern merchant shipping though hardly any are yet spoken of in the same breath as Conrad or Melville. Thus, we may turn to de Hartog, Hanley, Hendry ("Shalimar"), McFee, Woodman and others for more modern insights.

The examples which follow then, are drawn from contemporary diaries, autobiographical recollections and fictional writing. The best of fictional writing has the capacity to approach the elusive kernel of command. With recollections come the problems of memory, intentional or unintentional selection, and bias. Diaries can at times reveal the "feel" of command, though they are more likely to be a record of the day to day practical activity aboard ship. Undoubtedly fictional writing was influential in forming false perceptions ashore about sea life. William McFee, the marine engineer turned author, recognised this distorted understanding of the collective character of merchant ship-masters:

..I call to mind certain conceptions of the sailor-man which my youthful mind gathered from books and relations. He was an honest god-fearing man; slightly superstitious certainly, slightly forcible in his language at times, slightly garrulous....He was just and upright towards all men, never dreamed of making money "on his own", and read prayers aloud on Sunday morning to the assembled seamen...<sup>9</sup>

In reality, as the examples will demonstrate, the character of ship-masters was as diverse as that of any occupational group ashore, though of course there were some common strands, which youths embarking on a sea career soon learned to recognise. The first trip apprentice or cabin boy in every respect is far removed from the elevated position of the master of his first ship yet it is part of his occupational socialisation that he should rapidly gain some understanding of his relationship to the man in command. Jan de Hartog offers this advice:

The first man who had a boy with him was a captain. Captains have not changed since; their vessel is still as flimsy, the sea as perilous and the boy as hopeless....living as he does amongst officers who are not yet captains but think they should have been long ago, the apprentice may easily be

influenced by their talk at the mess room table. It may not even be talk, just raised eyebrows, upcast looks and shrugs of the shoulder. The young sailor will be led to believe that the ship is sailed virtually by the mate....[captains] seem quite content with their hermit's existence, remote and god-like in their double cabin... every captain looks like an old fool and never is. His very presence determines the nature of the community that sails the ship...for every quarrel, every tension...is entered into with the underlying knowledge that... there is always someone to give the final verdict....occasions will be rare in which the apprentice sees his captain in his true light. It may be a gale but then it takes a fairly long time before captains are convinced that there is a gale on....bad captains do not exist, and even the youngest ones are old.<sup>10</sup>

Certainly, even on quite small vessels, masters could be remote figures to ordinary members of the crew though where ships carried apprentices, masters often paid them particular attention, though rarely to the level implied in their indentures. The imposition of physical chastisement was not as prevalent in merchant sailing ships in the nineteenth century as popular understanding imagined though it was not unknown. Captain Jellard in 1856 did not hesitate to record his occasional usage in his journal which he intended his owner to read:

I...gave young Fox [apprentice] a rope's end pretty smartly for the first time and expect it will do him much good as he requires much management.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast the fo'c's'le perception of the unseen master appears to have been by no means uncommon, as Captain Holmes implies:

Her skipper was one of those men who spend much time in seclusion. He went below when we passed Start Point and did not appear on deck again until we had crossed the line.<sup>12</sup>

Melville dramatises the invisibility of the master of the *Pequod* during her run to the whaling grounds, conveying the crew's heightened awareness of the presence of command, concluding with his first sight of his tortured commanding officer:

...Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck...I was struck by the singular posture he maintained...his bone leg steadied in that hole; one arm elevated, and holding by a shroud; Captain Ahab stood erect, looking straight out beyond the ship's ever pitching prow. There was an infinity of fortitude, a determinate, unsunderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of that glance.<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, junior engineers on tramp steamers did not have much interaction with the masters of their ships, but there was enough social contact for McFee to pen a personality sketch in the style of an anatomy dissection:

...I had not then considered him to be a being...for we do not often meet. He is a tall, powerfully built, slow-moving man, strong with the strength of those who live continually at sea....A single glance at the specimen before

us, tells us that we have to deal with a remarkable case of arrested development...we neither find public school education nor inefficiency much in evidence anywhere. On the contrary, education is in a rudimentary condition, though with slightly protuberant mathematical and fictional glands. Inefficiency, too, is quite absent, the organ having but small opportunity to perform its functions. The subject...has been accustomed to a sort of mathematical progression and having to ascertain its whereabouts in the water by "taking the sun". It has been fed chiefly on novels, food which requires no digestive organs. It has a horror of land generally, and should never be looked for "on the rocks". You observe this accumulation of yellow tissue around the heart. The subject is particularly fond of gold, which metal eventually strangles the heart and renders its action ineffective and unreliable....I own I cannot imagine this skipper reading anything aloud to his crew except the riot act....There is a brutal, edge-of-civilization look in his cold blue eye which harmonizes ill with the Brixton address on the letters he sends to his wife....His duties are non-existent, his responsibility enormous...<sup>14</sup>

Conrad takes a similar line in depicting the master of the *Nan-Shan*, who refuses to be diverted from his course across the South China Sea and "calmly" takes his ship through the eye of a typhoon:

Captain McWhirr....having just enough imagination to carry him through each successive day, and no more, he was tranquilly sure of himself; and from the same cause he was not in the least conceited. It is your imaginative superior who is touchy, overbearing, and difficult to please; but every ship commanded by Captain McWhirr was the floating abode of harmony and peace....Jukes [first mate] was uncritically glad to have his captain at hand. It relieved him as though that man had, simply by coming on deck, taken most of the gale's weight upon his shoulders. Such is the prestige, the privilege, and burden of command. Captain McWhirr could expect no relief of that sort from anyone on earth. Such is the loneliness of command.... The hurricane, with its power to madden the seas, to sink ships, to uproot trees, to overturn strong walls, and dash the very birds of the air to the ground, had found this taciturn man in its path, and, doing its utmost, had managed to wring out a few words. Before the renewed wrath of winds swooped on his ship, Captain McWhirr was moved to declare, in a tone of vexation, as it were: 'I wouldn't like to lose her'. He was spared that annoyance.<sup>15</sup>

The implication of the last two examples is that the suggested relative deprivation of the backgrounds of these masters somehow fits them for the routine of merchant ship command, though not perhaps in every circumstance. Certainly, the role of relative deprivation in sea careers has been argued by sociologists in recent years.<sup>16</sup> But there was no preparation for the exercise of man management skills which all masters had to exercise, and for which the only preparation was experience in lower ranks at sea. Often rough and ready, this facet of command could range from ineptitude to subtlety. Jellard again:

I went on deck & found the 2nd mate asleep. It is too bad, I gave him a good rating down.<sup>17</sup>

Second mates in sailing ships were often considered to be only marginally elevated from the fo'c's'le hands. In an identical event the master of R.H. Dana's ship delayed his reaction before attempting a democratic solution:

At seven bells in the morning all hands were called aft, and told that Foster was no longer an officer on board, and that we might choose one of our own number for second mate. The crew...left it to the Captain...[who] proclaimed him in the following manner: "I choose Jim Hall. He's your second mate. All you've got to do is to obey him as you would me; and remember that he is Mr Hall."<sup>18</sup>

To consult the crew was certainly good practice where the ship was in danger of being wrecked, or other situations involving loss of life. To some extent this is implicit in the British requirement for the official logbook to be endorsed by appropriate members of the crew when recording untoward events. Dana records the loss of a man overboard:

We had hardly returned on board with our sad report before an auction was held of the poor man's clothes. The Captain had first, however, called all hands aft and asked them if they were satisfied that everything had been done to save the man, and if they thought was any use in remaining there longer. The crew said that it was in vain for the man did not know how to swim and was very heavily dressed.<sup>19</sup>

These episodes from *Two Years Before the Mast* are in contrast to other episodes depicting a master who drove his crew to the limits and in a rage almost unprovoked resorted to flogging. The contrast between driving and cautious masters is a common theme in maritime literature. Holmes portrays an extreme case of driving:

...Captain Hawkins, a nasty, cantankerous little brute, but as full of pluck as any of the sea dogs of old. He was the hardest driving man I ever knew, both to ship and crew. He was not a nagger, nor bully, nor drinker, but he simply lived to drive....He could not be scared, neither by man nor elements. He would carry main royal and stunsails in a gale, and go below and turn in a unconcernedly as if his ship were in dock....One freezing morning...looking upwards, I saw a peak looming up above the fog.. I yelled to the man at the wheel to put his helm down...she only just came up, for it was blowing a gale, and we could have leapt off her spanker boom on to the berg as we skimmed racing by it. The captain heard the clattering of the stunsails... "What's the matter with those darned sails?" he demanded.... "Look there", I replied, "matter enough, I think". "Umph! Well, set the sails again and keep her on her course", he ordered, as he coolly disappeared down the companion-way to finish his breakfast.<sup>20</sup>

A far more common problem appears to have been the master who had taken to drink and maltreated the crew and presented the mate, assuming he was a sober man, with the problem (in extreme cases) of assuming command. The sanctity of the position

of command is extremely strong and in most cases the mates appear to have put up with considerable abuse and to have “carried” the master until the voyage was completed. Holmes and Bullen:

...her skipper, Captain Bowser,...was the worst man I ever sailed under, a drunken, callous, bullying brute, without nerve or conscience.... upset a bucket of water in his lavatory. Finding the floor awash, he yelled for the mate. “Man the pumps, you darned fool! Can’t you see the ship is sinking?” So the crew worked the pumps all night...<sup>21</sup>

According to my orders I was to report progress to the skipper every morning at his hotel, and next morning I paid him a visit. I found him in bed though it was eleven o’clock, with a bottle of brandy sticking out from under his pillow and quite comfortably drunk.... Every morning I saw the skipper, always in bed and always drunk. Thus three weeks passed away....No sooner had the pilot left us to our own devices than Captain Jones retired to his bunk and there he remained...Hugging a jar of “chain lightening” brandy he never wanted anything...we did reach St John’s, and laid her alongside the wharf....Captain Jones appeared on deck at once and went ashore...about eleven o’clock that night he strolled down and walked calmly over the edge of the wharf where the gangway was not....After much searching we found him and hoisted him out of the mud in which he was embedded to the armpits.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps such extreme cases were more prevalent in sail in the last century before the developments in communication enabled owners to maintain rather closer contact with their ships, but whatever the period discovery of a serious drink problem could often lead to dismissal when the ship reached Britain. Taking to drink could be one reaction to the burden of command. It is a commonality at sea that achieving command can lead to character changes. Many men handle command successfully, but most develop attributes which serve as outlets for the tensions of their position. McFee and Holmes again:

[After a wild youth, Captain McIver] became steadier and steadier....He got command which of course increased his steadiness...hadn’t spent more than a few shillings a month. Didn’t drink, and only smoked because ship chandlers sent him boxes of cigars. Never went ashore except in a home port. Never entertained other captains. For all that he wasn’t a bad skipper....He was a highly nervous man over small matters. Many men in charge are like this. They fuss you to death over details, and are calm and cool in a real crisis.<sup>23</sup>

Captain B. was different [from the elderly mate]. The Merchant Service did not turn out stereotypes. It took young men of the most diverse temperaments and turned them out even more diverse....Our Captain had a lot to put up with on this voyage [long charters, grounding, jettisoning cargo, bunker fire, bad salt meat, damp flour], ....Yet Captain B. took everything quietly with a smile.<sup>24</sup>



Captain James Conning was one of the finest men I was ever privileged to sail under, but all great men have their weaknesses, and his was sail needles. He watched over and hoarded his sail needles as if they were fine gold.<sup>25</sup>

Captain Wm. Day, a nice old fellow, very temperate and proud of it, for he used to fly the IOGT flag as a member of this renowned temperance society, but solaced himself by drinking Florida Water as a pick-me-up....Captain Day was a very careful man, and time being no great object in the West Indies trade... he would heave to in bad weather, saying, "Suppose she was to ship a sea!"<sup>26</sup>

The importance of the ability of a master to draw out the best in his officers is suggested in this observation by Bullen:

...my new skipper...overflowing with benevolence, a sincere Christian an excellent seaman. As if I had been an officer of ripe experience instead of a foremast hand just promoted, made me welcome, spoke to me in man fashion, and told me that he was sure I would do well....And when at last she was ready for sea...the amiable old mate had a serious fall... and I was by force of circumstances compelled to act as chief officer. But this gave me no concern, for the confidence reposed in me by the master, the knowledge that I was not being watched in the hope of fault-finding, helped me marvellously...<sup>27</sup>

McFee points to a subtle quality found in some masters and to the value of the crew knowing that the master understood what it was like to be a member of the fo'c's'le:

We were a happy ship. Captain Williams had a knack of being liked. He had come up the hard way and when he spoke to a sailor he never had any trouble....When Captain Williams returned [after a voyage under a relief master], the effect on us was like a fresh breeze. The uncertainty, the uneasiness and furtiveness, all blew away. Men walked the deck as if they were free spirits and not as if they were going to walk the plank. It is extraordinary how a new personality can change the psychological atmosphere of a ship.<sup>28</sup>

One reason why officers and crew might put up with unreasonable command behaviour was the need for a reference for character and ability, particularly in connection with being examined for certificates of competency. Bullen again:

Upon leaving the *Dartmouth*...I somewhat timidly interviewed the "old man" He was very taciturn, and seldom came into personal contact with the foremast hands, yet...he made his authority so thoroughly felt that the vessel was more perfectly disciplined than any merchant ship I have ever sailed in...he had not spoken a hundred words to me during the voyage of nearly twelve months...he was most gracious towards me. He gave me a really splendid testimonial telling me he had kept his eye on me all the voyage.<sup>29</sup>

As McFee hinted earlier, the financial dimension of command was never far from a master's mind, and there are plenty of stories of the manipulation of the catering account and of hazing crews in the hope of getting them to desert at the next port so the ship could retain their accumulated wages. Bullen records another petty imposition. Unable to secure a second mate's berth with his new certificate, he ships again as AB to New Zealand:

...in Port Lyttleton... one morning my skipper sent for me and told me that a large ship in the harbour was in need of a second mate, and that he had recommended me for the post. But, he added, as I was bettering myself, and as he would have to pay at least 30s per month more for a substitute for me than I was receiving, he could not give me any of my wages....So I went, and lost as hardly earned sum of £10 as I had ever been entitled to in my life.<sup>30</sup>

It is the commercial dimension of command, which more than anything used to regulate a master's relationships with his owners and on which his future employment depended, which is under-represented in the maritime literature. Even in the throes of surviving major storm damage, the cost of loss and damage remained in the front of Captain Jellard's mind, while in port it was all consuming:

Clearing away the wreck [following severe damage in a gale] and bending other sails, I see we have lost £110 worth of canvas, Water Casks and Buckets £2, 2 Pigs £2, Spars £6, Planks and Boards £2, Rope £4, Total £126. At 2 pm hang the Carpenter over the stern; got an eyebolt in the rudder, got a spar across the stern with a chain in the eyebolt and a tackle on each side as a preventer in case the rudder broke off altogether; we can then steer by tackles, if the rudder does not give out below altogether.<sup>31</sup>

Got the news [at Shanghai], no freights, 22 vessels unchartered; most given £2/10/- per ton. What a prospect with a leaky ship!...This affair of frts [freights], Leakage and money. Dollars worth 3/10 I lose 25 per ct [cent] if I spend Dollars here...the exchange is 7/3 to a Dollar, so you actually give a sovereign for 2d 75 cts.... having to heave the vessel down will cost a considerable sum. I put my expenses here at £450....My sailors are sticking on as yet. I am rather fearful of them as wages here are from £6 to £7 per month. I hear every master complains of his sailors...I believe frts will go down to 30/-....Receiving cargo Frts are down today to £2 for London....Sold two tons coal all to lessen Exps [expenses]; also two Galls. Brandy; sold the Gig....<sup>32</sup>

At times the tensions between the practical business of getting a ship safely to port and the commercial imperative can be overwhelming. This involves the age-old problem of the cumulative effect of diverse command responsibilities and excessive fatigue which remains a matter of major concern with bodies like The Nautical Institute and the International Maritime Organisation.<sup>33</sup> This is ably expressed by F.C. Hendry in his story about a ship that had spent a week in the western approaches without sights or landfall:

Captain Bowie suddenly went limp; the mental trials and physical hardships of the last few days had been too much for him; his legs were trembling and from sheer weakness he had to hang on to the poop rail. The temptation to give the tug-boat skipper any price he demanded was overwhelming...he might even get a rest in his room.<sup>34</sup>

Before concluding this section on command in literature, it is relevant draw attention to yet another command role, treating crew illness and injury, again an area well recorded with some remarkable feats of amateur medical care. Captain Jellard had his share:

The man's finger is in an awful state I do not know what to do with it. I have used all the Linseed meal; the bone and sinews are all bare. I am putting Port Wine and sugar to cut off the bad flesh and then a plaster of Basilca to draw it out.<sup>35</sup>

Few writers have much to say about the change in status when eventually given a command, but Conrad knew about it and expressed it in *The Shadow Line*, the story of taking a first command of a sailing ship on a tortured passage from Bangkok to Singapore:

[Captain Ellis] shook hands with me: "Well, there you are, on your own, appointed officially under my responsibility"....My new dignity sat yet so lightly on me that I was not aware that it was I, the Captain....It seemed as if all of a sudden a pair of wings had grown on my shoulders....I have got it. It being the command. It had come about in a way utterly unforeseen in my modest day-dreams...putting my foot on her deck for the first time, I received the feeling of deep physical satisfaction.<sup>36</sup>

Before 1851, when the Mercantile Marine Act, 1850, came into force, there was no compulsory national provision in Britain for licensing merchant ship masters. But this did not mean that there was no assessment of fitness for command. Fitness for purpose is of course a key factor in any appointment. It was a different matter selecting a master for a small coastal vessel with a tiny crew, carrying homogeneous cargoes like coal, ores or grain, on short passages trading between British ports where the owners might more easily maintain contact, from selecting someone to take charge of a large world trader, a crew size to match, perhaps carrying passengers and a valuable general cargo, on a voyage lasting a year or more, where commercial success leaned heavily on the all-round ability of the master. Whatever the context, knowledge, experience, ability and the opinion of master under whom the applicant had previously served, were important considerations. But the ability to protect the commercial success of the venture was always high on the agenda. Thus it was common for masters to have a financial interest, for example as part owner of the ship, or for there to be at least a family financial involvement. When Captain W.G. Wainwright took temporary command of the S.S. *Mab* in 1898 owing to the regular master's illness, the managing owners, confirming his appointment, were entirely concerned with commercial factors, apparently taking all other aspects of command for granted:

...make all efforts to get the cargo out by the 30th as we do not wish to lose the homeward charter; a few gratuities here and there may assist matters;...

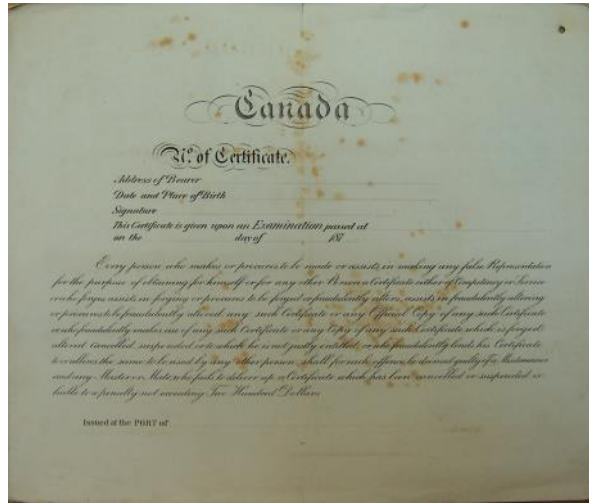
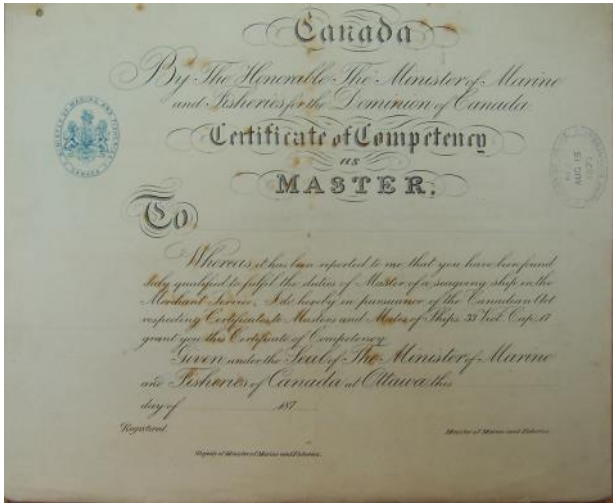
we don't suppose that Messrs...[the charterers] would endeavour to keep sufficient cargo in the 'Mab' so as to make her lose her homeward cancelling date, still you had better be on the lookout for this...We hope you will have a quick and satisfactory voyage, and that you will show that our confidence in you is not misplaced.<sup>37</sup>

Appointment to command then, was a matter for the owners of the ship, often handled as a matter of day-to-day management, by a managing owner. However, the appointment might be conditioned by insurance requirements, the quality of master and crew being a factor in the assessment of the risk to be insured. Local examination and certification provision did exist at times, for example by local mutual insurance clubs, by Trinity House of Newcastle, and by the East India Company.<sup>38</sup> The rules of the Porthmadog Ship Insurance Society (a local P & I club), stipulated:

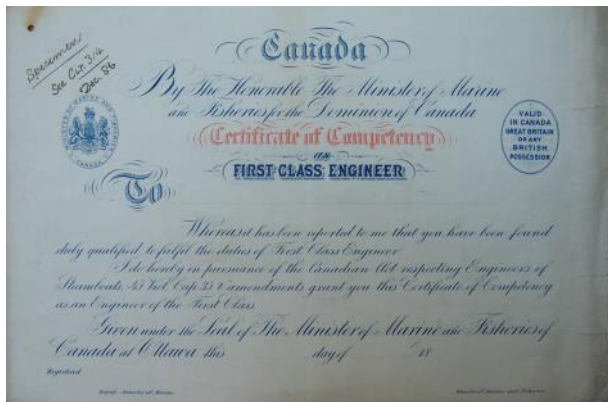
...no person shall be employed as master of any vessel insured by the Society who shall be under the age of 21 years, unless the previous consent of the Committee for that purpose shall have been obtained and entered into the books of the Society. The master of every vessel insured in the Society who shall not previously have commanded a ship or vessel for 12 months shall appear before the Committee to be examined as to his competency.<sup>39</sup>

This would most likely have been an oral examination conducted by senior members of the Society, and invariably themselves shipmasters of considerable experience. It would certainly have many of the practical matters of command already noted, but was unlikely to have tested underlying theoretical knowledge, for example in ocean navigation. However, Aled Eames shows that there were several small private navigation schools in that part of North Wales which also offered commercial topics.<sup>40</sup> A report from a respected navigation teacher might well have satisfied the examiners. From the inception of the state examination and licensing system to the present, the "oral" has remained a key element of the masters' examination.

The need for a national system for the examination and licensing merchant shipmasters backed by special educational provision, had long been recognised in Britain. A combination of public agitation about the numbers of merchant ship casualties, technical change and the massive expansion of the size of the merchant fleet, heightened concerns about the quality of men being appointed to command. The case was most effectively put in the Report of the Select Committee on Shipwrecks, 1836, which recommended the institution of examinations backed by a network of cheap nautical schools.<sup>41</sup> Eventually, in 1845 a voluntary system of examination operated by Trinity House (London) was instituted, which set quite a high academic standard. But in the absence of statutory compulsion barely 3,000 certificates (at all grades) were issued. In the context of a British fleet at that time approaching 30,000 vessels, and taking wastage, leave and other factors into account, the voluntary arrangements hardly touched the need.<sup>42</sup>



**Figs. 1a & 1b. Specimen "Certificate of Competency as Master" (front and back), sent from the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries of Canada to the Marine Department of the Board of Trade of the United Kingdom for approval, in 1871.**



**Figs. 2a & 2b. Specimen "Certificate of Competency as First Class Engineer" (front and back), sent from the Ministry of Marine of Canada to the Marine Department of the Board of Trade of the United Kingdom for approval, in 1886.**

It was something of a *volte face* in government policy which led to the enactment of state examinations and licensing amongst a series of measures concerned with the regulation of merchant shipping and seafarers, and the administration of those regulations by the state.<sup>43</sup> A whole national administrative machinery had to be designed and introduced and it took time for the system to become established. New legislation is rarely retrospective, so provision had to be made for all existing masters (subject to proof) to be granted certificates of service as master (*i.e.* without examination). The scale of the new examination system was further limited by excluding Britain's massive coastal trade from the requirement to carry certificated masters. Indeed, coastal ships not carrying passengers were not required to carry certificated masters until the 1980s, though the requirement was applied to coastal passenger ships from the 1854. Thus the examination and licensing of British ship masters essentially related to the command of foreign-going ships. Following the passing of the Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869, in the United Kingdom, colonial maritime authorities were able to establish their own licensing administrations. Under the Merchant Shipping Act (Amendment) Act, 1862, certificates of competency were introduced in the UK for engineers in foreign-going merchant ships.<sup>44</sup>

The question here is whether passing the compulsory examination for master mariner adequately demonstrated a fully rounded fitness for command as indicated earlier in this paper. The answer in all periods must be no, though with the proviso that gradually, as the syllabus was amended, more elements of the scope of commanding a merchant ship were brought within the assessment. Throughout, the brief of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade (now the Maritime and Coastguard Agency) has been restricted to the safety of ship, crew and passengers (if any), that is to property and life, and it has never embraced the wider aspects of maritime commerce and management, especially man management.<sup>45</sup> Thus, whole areas of command activity have always depended on innate ability and experience for their effective practice. Indeed, in the early decades of the state system the examinations were primarily concerned with navigation and seamanship, the former tested in written papers, the latter by means of the oral examination. The syllabus for the three compulsory grades, second mate, first mate and master were progressive and cumulative. Although there were additional topics in the higher grades, all the earlier material was subject to re-assessment. The techniques of coastal navigation and the method of nautical astronomy comprised the navigation syllabus while anything else considered relevant was originally tested in the oral examination. Though heavily biased towards handling a ship under sail and collision avoidance, this did cover compass correction, cargo handling, anchor work and anything else the examiner chose to address. Provision was also made for a voluntary higher examination, Master Extra, for those desirous of demonstrating a superior knowledge. In time this was to become the standard qualification for second careers ashore especially in teaching, as marine superintendents for shipping companies, and for joining the survey and examining staff of the Marine Department.<sup>46</sup>

The generally weak secondary education of the bulk of merchant seafarers aspiring to rise to master, undoubtedly had a bearing on the syllabus and standards set by the Marine Department, which stated publicly that it was setting minimum standards.<sup>47</sup> It could not do otherwise if it was not to create an excessive reaction to the new arrangements. Indeed, the Department always consulted widely with the shipping industry before introducing changes to the syllabus. While the oral examination has throughout largely covered much the same ground, gradually, and especially in the twentieth century, the written examinations at the various levels, have been extended to include mathematics, principals of navigation, ship construction and stability, meteorology, engineering, electricity and electronics, and ship master's business. Further, a number of compulsory supplemental certificates have been introduced, in the twentieth century, including first aid, lifeboat efficiency, radar operation, fire-fighting and electronic navigation aids.<sup>48</sup>

If anything, the compulsory system of examination had a negative effect on the provision of nautical education ashore, narrowing the provision and certainly preventing the delivery of rounded courses of study in preparation for command. It is true that the private and endowed navigation schools, which appear to have existed in most areas having a shipping tradition, largely concentrated on navigation and nautical astronomy, the new science of the eighteenth century, but there was the freedom to take this to its highest levels and to range more widely, for example as noted above into commercial matters. In the style of the period these took in adult students but also catered for boys preparing to go to sea. While pre-sea study could still be widely based, the new system of examination for licenses inevitably meant that the teaching of adults, that is those who had accumulated the requisite sea service required for admission to the examinations,

became restricted to the minimum required of the syllabus. To survive, these teachers had to become “crammers”, teaching mechanical answers to the more or less standard questions, and versed in particular in the idiosyncrasies of the individual examiners conducting the oral examiners. Despite the efforts of many navigation school teachers, to broaden the approach and through the publication of textbooks, this was the pattern well into the twentieth century.<sup>49</sup> The recommendation made in 1836, for a network of cheap nautical schools was carried into effect between 1853 and 1862 with the founding or inclusion in the network of seventeen schools aided through the Department of Science and Art. However, this provision, which had the merit of planting a body of young trained teachers (though non-seafaring) in nautical education, had foundered by 1864 owing to inflexible regulations associated with payment-by-results.<sup>50</sup> Preparation for command was not to feature in the work of nautical schools until the 1970s.

If educational provision and the licensing system have largely failed to contribute to the process of preparation for command, it follows that such preparation as is possible has largely been undertaken at the individual seafarer’s own initiative. Of course, the hierarchical climb from apprentice or seaman through the various ratings of third, second and first mate progressively widened experience of the variety of topics and tasks involved in operating a ship, and provided a sequence of delegated command responsibilities as the building blocks. Putting an apprentice in charge of the boat plying between an anchored ship and the shore not only developed boat handling skills; it also offered experience of petty command. Similarly, the years of experience in charge of a watch will have raised numerous ship handling, collision avoidance and weather situations requiring command decisions, though admittedly taken under delegated authority. The first mate of long experience might take temporary command, for example, of moving the ship down river while the master is still ashore concluding business.

Certainly, those looking for command study the actions of those in command, keep note books and do their best to tap into those aspects of command which remain the preserve of the master.

From time to time there have been attempts by masters ashore to explore the scope of merchant service employment. Some shipmasters’ societies have contributed papers on aspects of command training. In the 1890s, the most notable was the Shipmasters’ Society, London, which held meetings and published its deliberations. From the 1930s the Honourable Company of Master Mariners (1926) has made a contribution. But it is in recent years that real drive to address preparation for command has been made by The Nautical Institute (1972). Through a series of conferences and conference papers, its journal *Seaways*, and by instituting its Command Diploma scheme, it has attempted to provide continuing professional development related to command for its principal sector of membership, the serving mates and masters of British merchant ships.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Nautical Institute commenced its work at the time when the importance of widely based higher nautical education was at last being recognised through specialised degree courses and dedicated research. Further it has come in a period of rapid technological change when the burden of national and in-up of the traditional shipping company, the complexity and remoteness of modern ship ownership, are increasingly leaving the present-day British ship-masters in a level of isolation from potential back up, which has more in common with earlier centuries than earlier decades of the twentieth century. The range of topics involved in command is ever more diverse,

and the note by the Command Seminar in 1982, that “the position of command requires special qualities” is surely an understatement. The modern literature ably tackles the detail but finds it just as difficult to pin down the kernel of command. In a recent paper fitness for command involves: accounting skills, commercial awareness, communication skills, decision making, looking after the owners' interests, negotiating skills, operations management, personnel management, and professional seafaring skills.<sup>52</sup>

In this next section of the study the author offers some of his own experiences of masters in command of merchant ships. As he did not remain at sea long enough to serve as master, what follows is of necessity restricted to the perspective of a subordinate. It should be noted that the author comes from a seafaring family and had made passages to Australia and back by the age of ten, so that by the age of sixteen when he embarked on an apprenticeship, he had a subconscious understanding of significance of the position occupied by ships' masters. His first voyage as an apprentice was in the four-masted barque *Passat*, where there was little direct contact with either of the two masters who held command.<sup>53</sup> With a boarding school background perhaps they were seen more as headmasters than men in command.

The master who holds the appointment at the time that a crew is engaged is seemingly automatically credited by the new crew with the status as master in accord with that crew's collective experiential understanding of command. If for any reason he has to be replaced by the next most senior officer (normally the first mate) that understanding has to be transferred to the new man, someone who until that time had engendered a different collective understanding which included a status below that of master. He had to prove himself worthy, in the eyes of the crew for his new status. It was probably easier for the new master to come from outside than from the existing membership of the ship's company. Thus, when the *Passat*'s original master, an elderly man with extensive sail experience, left after the first passage from Brake in Germany to Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, the author shared the probably irrational crew feeling that the rather younger first mate, now upgraded to master, was somehow less fitted for command. The youthful mess room experts, lacking insight into the weight of command, blamed him for not carrying sufficient sail and for using the ship's auxiliary engine in calms and headwinds. They were more than delighted when the propeller shed a blade which meant that the engine could not be used.<sup>54</sup>

Later voyages during the author's apprenticeship, aboard the modern cargo liners of the Blue Funnel and Glen Lines, brought him increasingly in touch with the master through bridge duties. The more senior apprentices frequently kept bridge watches often on the 12-4 watch under the second mate, practising navigation and learning collision avoidance. At least one apprentice was expected to take a morning sight, run it up to noon, and to join the ship's officers taking the meridian altitude at noon. Invariably asked by the master to reveal his reading before the others, he faced at least a raised eyebrow and probably a scathing remark if his reading was significantly different from that of the master (who of course never revealed his reading). Senior apprentices were also required on the bridge, during stations leaving and entering port. They had minor duties including bringing the pilot to the bridge, keeping the movement book, handling flag signals, relaying commands by phone, acting as helmsman, making tea and occasionally operating the engine room telegraph (normally the third mate's task). So ship handling could be observed, though until experience had grown, there was always the worry about



hearing an order and obeying it or relaying it correctly and reacting quickly enough to satisfy the master.

An incident under pilotage carried an important lesson of giving orders with maximum clarity. Approaching the quay towards which the wind was blowing, the pilot shouted from the bridge wing what sounded like “stop her” (a phrase often used rather than the more correct “stop engine”), and the author rang stop on the telegraph. The ship lost way and came down heavily on the quay denting a plate above the waterline. The pilot had actually shouted “starboard”, a vague helm order open to interpretation by the man at the wheel as something less than hard-a-starboard. Subsequently a ship surveyor certified the ship’s continued seaworthiness, and the damage was repaired at the next dry-docking.

Unfortunately, almost all pilotages were compulsory, which meant that masters were rarely seen handling their own ships, apart from reducing speed to pick up the pilot, or occasionally anchoring the ship. Almost all ship handling commands came directly from the pilot, though it was well understood that they were in effect the master’s commands. Nevertheless, compared with sailing ships, it was rare to see a 1950s cargo liner master giving ship handling commands. It happened on only two ships in the author’s experience as a third mate, and did much to raise his respect for the masters involved.

If a master is not to be permanently on duty it is essential that he have confidence in his watch keepers. Early in his career as third mate the author joined a ship whose master was notorious in the company for “eating” third mates. He was rumoured to be a reformed alcoholic who could not afford any mistakes if he was to retain his position in the company. In one incident he drove home the principal of personally checking equipment by ordering the author to go down to personally switch on a portable light cluster hung over the rail ready to illuminate the pilot ladder, as the ship was closing the pilot boat one evening. This was a task usually undertaken by the duty apprentice assisted by the seaman of the watch, who had already reported back. The author survived for a second voyage and picked up several “tricks of the trade” about navigation and collision avoidance.

On another ship, when about to enter Penang in Malaysia, the master was observed drawing lines all over the harbour approach chart, a practice not previously encountered. They turned out to be clearing and danger transits which enabled the master to keep a mental check on the pilot’s actions and if necessary to take personal command in the fullest possession of the position and movement of the ship. This episode was used in his teaching career to masters’ examination students sceptical about the merits of passage planning (new to the navigation syllabus in 1979), to emphasise the value of detailed planning to the berth in port.

Perhaps the author’s company, Blue Funnel, was not in every respect the most suitable company in which a junior officer might build up experience and confidence in preparation for command. It was tightly regulated in many of the aspects of ship operation, maintenance, cargo, manning, and of course navigation. Company routes across oceans were prescribed and the detail of navigating the ship was scrutinised at the end of voyages through a detailed inspection of logbooks and charts. Rumour had it that

masters were reprimanded if they passed within sight of Bishop Rock Light (Scilly Isles) contrary to the company's navigation instructions. Company success may have come through attention to detail but it certainly undermined command authority and tended to engender a culture fearful of "the office" (the collective term for any company employees based ashore). So masters were seen to give undue attention to petty matters well within the capabilities of their mates. An example of this was the almost universal practice of the master requiring to be called to the bridge for every formal alteration of course, regardless how minor the change might be. Fortunately, some masters had the confidence to delegate, through verbal instructions or through the night order book, though of course their standing orders (compulsory reading for all mates) contained the appropriate phrases about being called "if in doubt". The author experienced an unusual level of trust on a passage from Singapore to Fremantle. Just south of Singapore the route through the islands involved negotiating the one mile wide Rhio Strait with its tidal streams and frequent changes of course. Many masters would have kept to the bridge, but in this case the master left it to his third mate while he took dinner with the passengers, though requiring a chit to be delivered to him at table reporting each change of course as it was made. No doubt he was fully in control at arm's length, but it did much for the self-confidence of the third mate.

Of course, masters could as easily undermine their officers through over attention to routine matters. One master was well known for attention to the detail of stowing cargo. Most Blue Funnel ships of that period were constructed with a walkway across the front of the accommodation block outside the master's suite. Known as the master's bridge, this allowed him to keep his own lookout and to monitor unseen the actions of the officer of the watch. Earlier, one writer noted that masters have no duties; this was particularly the case for this master in port loading homeward in Malaysia. He watched No. 3 hatch like a hawk, repeatedly calling to the officer on cargo duty about the handling of the cargo and the use of dunnage. On one occasion he was discovered down in the hold attending to the stowage. In fact, everything was under the mate's control. The ship was working six hatches and twelve gangs, and they had many other aspects of loading to attend to.

The 1950s were a particularly stable period for British merchant shipping and Blue Funnel was a particularly stable company. The Blue Funnel version of the hierarchy and of shipboard relationships was well understood by all ranks. Out of the ordinary incidents which are the meat of maritime fiction were rare. The only serious incident in a career of ten years at sea, was a collision with a German cargo liner in the narrow section of the River Weser a mile down river of the docks at Bremen. The German ship was outward bound, the author's ship inward bound. As the vessels approached each other at dead slow speed, signals agreed passing starboard to starboard. All appeared well when suddenly the German ship's bow swung towards the author's ship, and tore open a section of plating above the waterline in the region of number two and three holds. As a result the author's ship spent a month in dry dock being repaired. The cause was probably a hydrodynamic effect known as interaction. Aboard the British ship the only action which could be taken were manoeuvres to keep the heading steady as she was in danger of grounding. Throughout her master remained calm, the pilot continuing to give such orders as were necessary. As third mate the author was a witness and gave evidence at the German court of enquiry.

In this paper an attempt has been made to probe the kernel of merchant ship command by exploring in turn such insights as maritime writing, licensing, education and training and personal experience, might provide. It will be obvious that it is much easier to address particular elements from the numerous dimensions which comprise command, than to express the nature of command in a single sentence or paragraph. Perhaps only those who have held command are capable of comprehending its immensity and even then such persons may not be able to express its nature succinctly. The discussion has also attempted to draw out some of the aspects of command which are constants in any period regardless of changes in context. More extensive reading of the maritime literature may well reveal better insights into the nature of command, but it is unlikely that more detailed research will put the history of licensing and the contribution of nautical schools to actual command preparation in any better light. The mismatch had long been common knowledge. Insufficient evidence has so far been located to show whether the local insurance-based examinations, which presumably died with the introduction of the statutory system, were more successful in assessing fitness for command. Perhaps the experienced shipmasters turned owners could make that assessment when appointing masters to ships they owned, but as the power-driven age progressed owners having a sea-going background became increasingly rare and appointments must increasingly have been made solely on references and without any special insights which actual experience of command might confer.

Perhaps there has always been something of a lottery in identifying the man suited to take command. It is a commonplace amongst merchant seafarers that some men who are excellent deputies turn out to be disasters when placed in command. The Nautical Institute cites Conrad's unimaginative Captain McWhirr as just the kind of man who should not achieve command:

This is not good enough for the professional today. An intelligent assessment of what might happen has saved many ships from tragedy. He should be authoritative (not authoritarian), positive in his approach to problems, enthusiastic, not be depressed by setbacks and loyal to his employer....The captain will be compassionate without being soft, and he must never be a bully. He will have integrity and emotional strength (used to be called backbone). If the foregoing sounds like 'all things to all men' so be it. The professional captain has few outside resources to call on.<sup>55</sup>

With an ever-increasing number of regulatory measures being added to the burden of command, Julian Parker, sometime Secretary of the Nautical Institute, reviewing the future of merchant ship command, argued that the "future of command is the future of the industry". He pleaded for masters to be given clerical back up as the scale of business communication and regulatory requirements threatens to overwhelm their command functions related to safety.<sup>56</sup> The essence of command may be common to all ages, but there is an urgent need to simplify and clarify the overinflated international regulatory framework, which, together with fatigue, is today's most weighty feature of commanding merchant ships.

## Endnotes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the University of Exeter Maritime History Conference, 16-17 October 1999.
2. For an exploration of the word “command” see P.M. Roget & J.L. Roget, *Roget's Thesaurus of Synonyms and Acronyms* (London, University Books, new edition 1972).
3. H.W. Fowler & F.G. Fowler (eds), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1951), 234, 237.
4. *The Acts of the Apostles*, chapter 27, and 28, 1-13.
5. See for example, British India Steam Navigation Company Limited, *Regulations and Instructions* [for sea employees] (B.I.S.N., 1936).
6. Dorothy Burwash, *English Merchant Shipping, 1460-1540* (1947, Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1969, 66-9.
7. See for example the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, 57 & 58 Vict., Ch. 60, sections 7, 9, 16, 19, 92, 93.
8. Space precludes the citation of examples of the works of the authors mentioned in passing. However, there are several maritime anthologies which will provide insights into the broad range of maritime literature. Examples include: Richard Wilson (ed), *A Book of Ships and Seamen* (London, Dent, 1921); Odhams Press, *Fifty Great Sea Stories* (London, Odhams, nd [1940s?]); “Mainsail” (ed), *Fifty Famous Sea Stories* (London, Burke, 1961); Brant Aymar (ed), *Men at Sea: the Best Sea Stories of All Time from Homer to William F. Buckley* (London, Barrie and Jenkins, 1989); Jonathon Raban (ed), *The Oxford Book of the Sea* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992).
9. William McFee, *Letters from an Ocean Tramp* (1908, London, Cassell, 1928), 44.
10. Jan de Hartog, *A Sailor's Life* (New York, Harper, 1956), 47-49.
11. A.G. Powell (ed), *John Jellard's Journal: Being the Day-to-Day Story of a Voyage Round the World in the Barque Avery, written by John Jellard, Master Mariner, 1856-1857* (Bristol, Chatterton Press, 1938), 32.
12. Nora Coughlin (ed), *Voyaging: Fifty years on the Seven Seas in Sail; Pen Pictures and Paintings by Captain James William Holmes* (Lymington, Nautical Publishing, 1965), 82.
13. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (1851, Ware, Wordsworth, 1992), 123-6.
14. McFee, *Letters from an Ocean Tramp*, 41-2.
15. Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon* (1903), in *The Nigger of the Narcissus, Typhoon and the Shadow Line* (London, Dent, 1945), 133.
16. For a fuller discussion see Alston Kennerley, “Occupational Conditioning: First Voyage in *Passat*”, in Stephen Fisher (ed), *Man and the Maritime Environment* (Exeter, University of Exeter, 1994), 210-32.
17. Powell (ed.), *John Jellard's Journal*, 37.
18. R.H. Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840, London, Nelson, 19..), 22.
19. Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 36-7.
20. Coughlin (ed.) *Voyaging.*, 71-2.
21. Coughlin (ed.), *Voyaging*, 33.
22. F.T. Bullen, “The Skipper of the *Amulet*”, *A Sack of Shakings* (London, Pearson, 1901), 60-70.
23. William McFee, *In the First Watch* (London, Faber and Faber, 1947), 82-3.
24. McFee, *In the First Watch*, 30-1.
25. Coughlin (ed.), *Voyaging*, 79.
26. Coughlin (ed.), *Voyaging*, 58. I.O.G.T: International Order of Grand Templars.
27. F.T. Bullen, *With Christ at Sea* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), 204-6.
28. McFee, *In the Night Watch*, 119, 133.
29. Bullen, *With Christ at Sea*, 188-9.
30. Bullen, *With Christ at Sea*, 203-4.
31. Powell (ed.), *John Jellard's Journal*, 74.
32. Powell (ed.), *John Jellard's Journal*, 54-9.
33. This has been a recurring theme in *Seaways*, the journal of the Nautical Institute.
34. F.C.Hendry (Shalimar), ‘Their Hopes and Fears’, *Land and Sea* (1939), 240-270.
35. Powell (ed.), *John Jellard's Journal*, 70.
36. Joseph Conrad, *The Shadow-Line - a Confession* (1917), in *The Nigger of the Narcissus, Typhoon and the The Shadow Line* (Nelson 19?) 233.

37. Wainwright papers, in the author's possession. S.S. *Mab*, O.N. 97977, 1846 registered tons, managing owners, Pyman, Bell & Co., Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Captain Wainwright (1862-1943) was the author's maternal grandfather.
38. David R. Moir, *The Birth and History of Trinity House, Newcastle upon Tyne* (Glasgow, Mckenzie, Vincent, 1958), 27-8; A.G. Course, *The Merchant Navy, A Social History* (London, Muller, 1963), 145-6. See also "the Substance of that Examination, which every Candidate for a Commission in the Navy or the East India Service, must necessarily pass, previous to his Appointment...", John Hamilton Moore, *The Practical Navigator and Seamen's New Daily Assistant...*(London, Law, Robinson & Moore, 7th ed., 1782), 212-25.
39. Caernarvon Record Office, XM/1853/2, quoted in Aled Eames, "The Seamen", in Emrys Hughes Hughes and Aled Eames, *Porthmadog Ships* (Caernarvon, Gwynedd Archives Service, 1975), chapter 3, 101. P & I: protection and indemnity.
40. Eames, "*The Seaman*", 102-4.
41. British Parliamentary Papers (B.P.P.), 1836, XVII, Report, iii-iv, viii-ix (sections 31 and 35). The chairman was James Silk Buckingham. For a fuller discussion of the background see Alston Kennerley, "The Education of the Merchant Seaman in the Nineteenth Century" (unpublished MA thesis, University of Exeter, 1978), chapter 3.
42. Kennerley, "Education of the Merchant Seaman in the Nineteenth Century", chapter 3.
43. For a fuller discussion see Alston Kennerley, "The Education of the Merchant Seaman in the Nineteenth Century", chapter 4.
44. 32 & 33 Vict., c 11; 25 & 26 Vict., c 40.
45. See Alston Kennerley, "The Shore Management of British Seafarers in the Twentieth Century", in David J. Starkey & Hugh Murphy (eds.), *Beyond Shipping and Shipbuilding: Britain's Ancillary Maritime Interests in the Twentieth Century* (Hull, University of Hull, Maritime Historical Studies Centre, 2007), 133-165.
46. Kennerley, "Education of the Merchant Seaman in the Nineteenth Century", chapter 4.
47. Board of Trade, Naval Department, *Notice of Examinations of Masters and Mates Established in Pursuance of the Mercantile Marine Act, 1850*, London, Board of Trade, 19 December 1850, 7.
48. *Regulations for the Examination of Masters and Mates*, form Exn. 1, updated as requisite, have been issued by the Board of Trade (and successors) since ca 1860.
49. For a discussion of one attempt to provide more widely based courses, see Alston Kennerley, "Merchant Marine Education in Liverpool and the Nautical College of 1892", *International Journal of Maritime History*, V, No.2 (December 1993), 103-134.
50. For a fuller discussion of Science and Art navigation schools see Alston Kennerley, "Early State Aid for Vocational Education: the Science and Art Navigation Schools, 1853-1864", *Journal of Vocational Education*, LII No.2 (2000), 211-224.
51. The list of command publications on aspects of command is extensive. Examples include the proceedings of the Command Seminars, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988; the Command Diploma Scheme (1986); *Maritime Education and Training: a Practical Guide* (London, Nautical Institute, 1997); Malcolm Maclachlan, *The Shipmaster's Business Companion* (London, Nautical Institute, 1996). The author was a Chairman of the Education and Training Committee of the Nautical Institute.
52. Peter Roberts, "Training for Command", *Maritime Education and Training*, 250-5.
53. For a fuller discussion see Kennerley, "Occupational Conditioning...".
54. Author's diary of the voyage, *passim*.
55. *The Nautical Institute Logbook for the Command Diploma* (London Nautical Institute, 1986) 28.
56. Julian Parker, "Command in the 21st Century", *Fairplay International Shipping Weekly*, 24 June 1999, 26-7.

## Obituary

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### Ronald James Barrie

I regret to report that Ron Barrie passed away on September 7, 2017 after major heart surgery. Born in Canso NS in 1949, he spent thirty-five years in Canadian government service, mostly in the Coast Guard. He retired after serving as the Contingency Officer in charge of pollution prevention and cleanup in the Maritimes Region.

His father had served in the RCN during the Second World War. Perhaps this generated Ron's life-long interest in Canadian nautical history. Although he was not a member of CNRS, his name would be well known to many members as he had collaborated with Ken Macpherson on several books. He was principal author of *Cadillac of Destroyers* (Vanwell 1996) and co-author of the third edition of *The Ships of Canada's Naval Forces* (2002) and also with Charles (Doug) Maginley and Bernard Collin, of *The Canadian Coast Guard Fleet 1962-2012* (Long Hill 2013). Ron was a friend and valued colleague and I will miss him greatly.

Doug Maginley, Mahone Bay

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**Editors' note:** While we never met Ron Barrie, we would like to express our appreciation for his lifetime of contributions. Isabel recalls that many historians at the Directorate of History and Heritage have relied upon Ron Barrie's reference works for inquiries and historical writings. He left behind a legacy which is deeply valued by us all. We also would like to express our sincere sympathies to his family and friends.

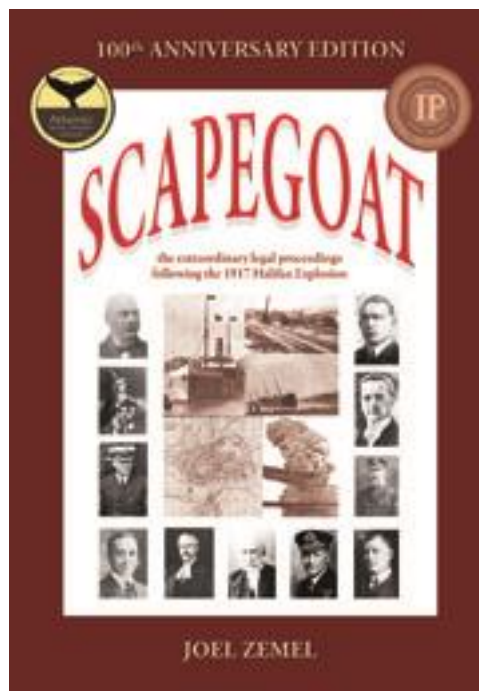
## **“Scapegoat” book wins the prestigious International John Lyman Award**

(Canadian Naval and Maritime History)

*Scapegoat*, 100th Anniversary Edition, was recently announced as the 2016 winner of the prestigious International John Lyman Award. The award is for books published in 2016, and was announced by the North American Society for Oceanic History (NASOH) in June, 2017.

The John Lyman Book Awards are given annually by the North American Society for Oceanic History (NASOH) to recognise excellence in “books, authors and editors that contribute significantly to the understanding of the maritime and naval history of North America, its rivers and lakes and adjoining oceans”.

These awards are named after Professor John Lyman of the University of North Carolina. There are six awards: five for the USA and one for Canada.



*Scapegoat*, the amazing story of the post-Halifax Explosion (December 6, 1917) legal proceedings has won several previous awards, with the first edition winning the 2014 Atlantic Book Award (Robbie Robertson Dartmouth Book Award) for the best non-fiction book published in Atlantic Canada that year. That was followed in 2015 with a bronze medal in the International Independent Publisher Awards (IPPY).

This new edition was released early (late 2016) as an updated edition for the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion to be memorialized on December 6, 2017. This edition has been thoroughly edited and revised, with many re-organized & consolidated appendices, as well as all-new additional chapters.

### **New Material:**

1. A new chapter on the “Ships in the Harbour” on that fateful day ... 41 vessels with 33 accompanying photos;
2. Another new detailed chapter on the first Royal Naval College of Canada, founded in 1911 in Halifax, but moved to the west coast after the devastation of Halifax.
3. An important detailed time line from Collision to the Explosion itself (very popular at talks/presentations).
4. Complete witness lists for trials, commissions, appeals.
5. Seventy (70) additional historical photos (many never previously seen - many from USA and UK)

**Consultant:**

Author, Joel Zemel is the historical and design consultant for Canada Post Corporation's 2017 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion Stamp Project - (Official First Day Cover to be released on 6 November 2017). He is also the historical consultant for an upcoming online interactive presentation on the explosion by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Generally, Joel is the "go to person" on the Explosion for much of the media regionally and nationally ... and he has been an historical consultant and official supplier of unique photos for several new Atlantic Publisher's titles for the 2017 Explosion Anniversary.

**Public Events with Joel Zemel:**

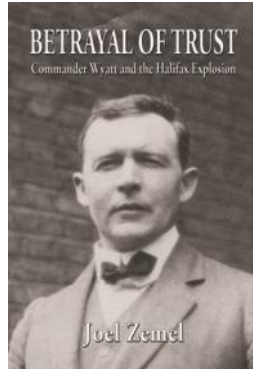
- A. Canadian Nautical Research Society - CNRS-RCN Historical Conference 2017 Admiralty House (Naval Museum of Halifax) Friday Morning (8:30-1:30), 11 August 2017: Alan Ruffman & Joel Zemel, The 1917 Explosion Cloud as seen in Halifax Harbour: An Ephemeral Signal for Help
  - B. The 100th Anniversary Halifax Explosion lecture at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic: December, 5; 7 PM (Small Craft Gallery). [Joel also delivered the MMA official lecture on the 99th Anniversary to standing room only crowd]
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## New Book

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### Betrayal of Trust

By: Joel Zemel

Publisher: New World Publishing

Website: [www.newworldpublishing.com](http://www.newworldpublishing.com)

ISBN (print): 9781895814767

ISBN (ePub3): 9781895814774

### About/Review

Before the Halifax Explosion, F. Evan Wyatt was a recently-married officer with a promising career in the Royal Canadian Navy. He also enjoyed popularity among those in the city's elite society. But little else is known about the only man indicted for allegedly causing the disaster.

The French munitions ship, *SS Mont-Blanc*, and the Norwegian freighter, *SS Imo*, collided in Halifax Harbour on the morning of 6 December 1917. The resultant explosion killed nearly 2,000 people, caused 9,000 thousand injuries and left many more homeless and without shelter. Property losses were in the millions of dollars. In the aftermath of the blast, an inquiry was set up to determine the cause of the collision between the two ships in the harbour. However, the proceedings quickly devolved into a search for scapegoats on whom to lay blame for the explosion.

The captain and pilot of the French vessel were arrested along with the Royal Canadian Navy's chief examination officer (CXO), Commander F. Evan Wyatt (ret. R.N.R). Each man faced a charge of manslaughter. Charges of criminal negligence were added at a subsequent preliminary hearing. The captain and pilot were soon released on a writ of *habeas corpus*, but Commander Wyatt was indicted by a grand jury and put on trial. Although duly acquitted, his personal reputation and professional career in Canada were ruined.

*Betrayal of Trust* delves into the life and times of F. Evan Wyatt, the circumstances leading up to his being scapegoated, and the failure of the Department of the Naval Service of Canada to protect one of its own.

"If I had known the fascinating and poignant tale of Commander Wyatt's personal life, as related by Joel Zemel, I doubt that the novelist in me could have resisted his compelling story. It gives to the factual literature of the Halifax Explosion, an unusually intimate personal dimension, worthy of a novel."

- Robert MacNeil, author of the novel *Burden of Desire*

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## Another book on the Dardanelles?

By Chris Bell

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When I told a senior historian that I was working on Winston Churchill and the Dardanelles campaign, his response was “Is there need for another book on the Dardanelles?” He clearly didn’t think so. And I had to admit, it was a reasonable question – especially since I had already written on the subject myself in a previous book, *Churchill and Sea Power* (recipient of the 2013 Keith Matthew’s Award).

I was confident, however, that there *was* something new to say on the subject. In *Churchill and Sea Power* I had devoted a mere twenty-five pages to the opening months of the First World War and the Dardanelles campaign, which was not nearly enough to do justice to such a rich and complex subject. Because my focus was Churchill’s development as a naval strategist, I could not justify a detailed account of the naval operations themselves. I could only address the reasons why the offensive failed in broad brush strokes. The British government’s chaotic decision-making process, and Churchill’s role in it, were necessarily reduced to the bare essentials. And there was little scope to examine the complicated relationship between Churchill and his naval advisers, which was so critical to the decision-making process at the British Admiralty.

I was also disappointed that I had not been able to follow the story of the Dardanelles past May 1915, when Churchill was forced to relinquish his post as First Lord of the Admiralty. The failed campaign had nearly destroyed Churchill’s political career, and for decades was held up by critics as evidence that his military judgement was fatally flawed. It seemed that there was an important question that still needed to be addressed: how had Churchill been able to put this disaster behind him and become Britain’s Prime Minister during the Second World War? Given how low Churchill’s reputation had dropped in 1940, it was remarkable that in the early days of May 1940, when Britain was looking for a new leader, the Dardanelles campaign had not stood in his way. Opinion on the campaign had changed remarkably since 1915 – in part because of Churchill’s own efforts to re-write the popular narrative of the offensive during the 1920s. There was an important story here that needed to be told.

On a more personal level, I also wanted to satisfy myself that I had at last worked out how the Dardanelles fit into Churchill’s legacy. It is almost impossible today not to view the failed naval offensive of February-March 1915 through the lens of Britain’s ‘Finest Hour’. In Britain’s national mythology, Churchill single-handedly changed the course of the Second World War. He inspired the nation to carry on the fight against Nazi Germany, sustained the morale of the British people at the lowest point of the war, and ensured Hitler’s ultimate downfall. Even today, it is difficult to treat Churchill dispassionately. As an impressionable undergraduate, I had absorbed Churchill’s case for the Dardanelles campaign in his memoirs of the First World War, *The World Crisis*. I had wanted to believe that the figure whose heroic defiance of Nazi Germany I admired so much had, in fact, been right about this as well. And even as my doubts about Churchill’s version of events grew in later years, I still nurtured hopes that an exhaustive study of the evidence would one day reveal that he had been right to launch this attack. As I delved into the archives, however, it became increasingly clear that would not happen.

Opinion on the Dardanelles offensive has been sharply divided for decades. For some, it was a brilliant concept that might have dramatically shortened the First World War and saved millions of lives. For others, it was fundamentally misconceived and doomed to fail. As I worked through this project, it was obvious that neither perspective was accurate. Churchill had certainly made mistakes. Many of them, in fact. And some of them quite serious. It would be wrong, though, to depict him as the hero of the story, or to treat him as a victim. At the same time, his failures did not necessarily make him the villain of the piece. He had not been wrong about everything. There was actually a great deal he got right. And he was by no means the only one to make mistakes.

Many of the criticisms that have been levelled against Churchill over the years are distorted, exaggerated, or wrong. But so are aspects of the case that Churchill himself developed to defend his reputation. The only way to sort things out, I decided, was to go back to the archives and start over. Strip away a century of myth-making and legend-building, re-examine the campaign with fresh eyes, drawing on newly-available or long-overlooked documents, and then look at how and why so many myths and misconceptions about the offensive have emerged over the last century. This naturally shed new light on how popular opinion about the campaign – and about Churchill himself – have evolved since 1915.

At the end of the process, I was gratified – and more than a little relieved – to see that my initial instinct had been right: there *were* new and important things still to be said about Churchill and the Dardanelles.

**Christopher M. Bell** is Professor of History at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In addition to *Churchill and the Dardanelles* and *Churchill and Sea Power* (both Oxford University Press), he is author of *The Royal Navy, Seapower and Strategy between the Wars* (Stanford University Press, 2000), and co-editor (with John Maurer) of *At the Crossroads between Peace and War: The London Naval Conference of 1930* (Naval Institute Press, 2014) and (with Bruce Elleman) *Naval Mutinies of the Twentieth Century: An International Perspective* (Routledge, 2003). His latest work, *Churchill and the Dardanelles*, may be ordered at your local book store or at: <https://www.amazon.ca/Churchill-Dardanelles-Myth-Memory-Reputation/dp/019870254X>

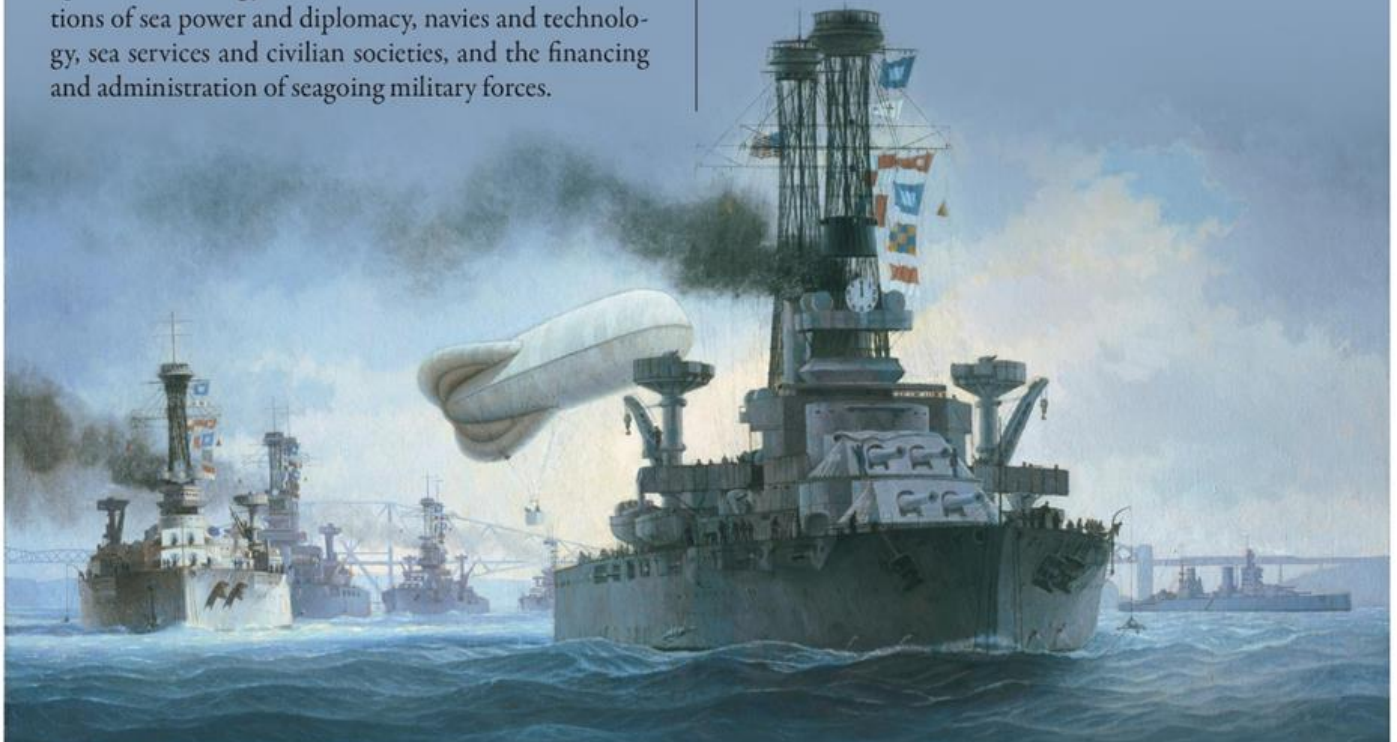
**Editorial Note:**

Chris has recently been appointed to a new Naval Institute Series Press. Our readers are invited to consider submitting manuscripts to this new series:

## Studies in Naval History & Sea Power

THE NAVAL INSTITUTE PRESS is pleased to announce a new series, *Studies in Naval History & Sea Power*. The titles in the series will advance our understanding of sea power and its role in global security by publishing significant new scholarship on navies and naval affairs from established authors and historians in the field. The works in *Studies in Naval History & Sea Power* examine all aspects of navies and conflict at sea, including naval operations, strategy, and tactics, as well as the intersections of sea power and diplomacy, navies and technology, sea services and civilian societies, and the financing and administration of seagoing military forces.

The first titles in the series will appear in Fall 2018. The series editors, Drs. Christopher M. Bell and James C. Bradford, bring their extensive experience in the discipline and an eagerness, with the Naval Institute Press, to engage with both established and new historians for vibrant works of scholarship that will illuminate new areas of international naval and maritime history.



### SERIES EDITORS:

**Christopher M. Bell** is Professor of History at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is the author of *Churchill and the Dardanelles* (Oxford University Press, 2017), *Churchill and Sea Power* (Oxford University Press, 2012), and *The Royal Navy, Seapower and Strategy between the Wars* (Stanford University Press, 2000), and co-editor of *At the Crossroads between Peace and War: The London Conference of 1930* (Naval Institute Press, 2013) and *Naval Mutinies of the Twentieth Century: An International Perspective* (Frank Cass/Routledge, 2003).

**James C. Bradford**, Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University, has served as president of the North American Society for Oceanic History, held the Class of 1957 Distinguished Chair in Naval Heritage at the U.S. Naval Academy, and received the Commodore Dudley W. Knox Naval History Lifetime Achievement Award from the Naval Historical Foundation. His recent publications include the *International Encyclopedia of Military History* (2006), *A Companion to American Military History* (2010), and *America, Sea Power, and the World* (2016).



### PROSPECTIVE AUTHORS:

Authors interested in submitting proposals or manuscripts for the series should contact Christopher M. Bell at [bellcm@dal.ca](mailto:bellcm@dal.ca) or Jim C. Bradford at [jcbradford@tamu.edu](mailto:jcbradford@tamu.edu).

# Canadian Nautical Research Society Société canadienne pour le recherche nautique

www.cnrs-scrn.org

## Minutes of the Council meeting held at Juno Tower, CFB Halifax, Nova Scotia Thursday, 10 August 2017

### Present:

Chris Madsen, President; Roger Sarty, First Vice-President; Michael Moir, Secretary; Faye Kert, Membership Secretary; Richard Gimblett, Chair of the Editorial Board and Nominating Committee; David More, Councillor; and Alec Douglas, Honorary Member.

Regrets: Walter Lewis, Second Vice-President; Sam McLean, Winston "Kip" Scoville, and Ian Yeates, Councillors.

### Calling to Order

Chris called the meeting to order at 1815hrs.

### Minutes of Council's Previous Meeting

Faye moved, David seconded acceptance of the minutes of 4 March 2017. Carried.

### President's Report

The Society faces the same issues as Chris discussed in the mid-winter report. We must engage our members to sustain our numbers. The Society is in pretty good financial condition due to economical conferences, but we are not at a point where we can restore cash awards. The President's Appeal and follow-up contact with members led to a surprising response. Several members were not donating money because issues of *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord (TNM)* were arriving late, and some expressed concern over a negative experience submitting manuscripts to the journal. Timely communications must be a priority if we wish to avoid alienating members.

It has been a pleasure to serve as President during last three years, but it is time to step down. Chris will not serve on Council as Past-President.

Faye moved, David seconded acceptance of the President's Report. Carried.

### Treasurer's Report

Chris gave a verbal report on behalf of the Treasurer, as there was no financial statement available for the period to 30 June 2017. The Society's financial position is stable with assets increased by a couple of thousand dollars due to rising membership numbers and a favourable exchange rate. We are able to continue publishing the journal for another year.

## **Membership Secretary's Report**

Faye circulated the document attached as Appendix 1. Eleven new members have joined since the previous report, including two institutional members. We are losing members from the United Kingdom, but getting more Canadian members. There is now only one institutional member from Australia, and one individual member from New Zealand. It is difficult to retain members if the Society is not delivering the journal on time. We have also lost members who pay \$25 when renewing with the North American Society for Oceanic History (NASOH). Total membership is 190: 147 individuals, and 59 institutions (16 are complimentary).

Richard reported that this year's conference brought in five new members, and perhaps a sixth.

Roger moved, David seconded acceptance of Faye's report. Carried.

## ***The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord***

Richard's report was much the same as mid-winter. The principal problem delaying production is the slowness of peer reviews; some take weeks, even months. It is difficult to get ahead in terms of content. Articles for the summer issue are in hand with Walter Lewis, the journal's Executive Editor. It will be mailed in September. Today's conference proceedings offer considerable promise for future submissions.

The Society needs to have a good, hard look at peer review. We do not want to water down the credibility of the articles in *TNM*, as several readers have remarked that the journal has increased in prestige and credibility. We have a good product, but we need to refine the process to get a timely response from reviewers. The revamped Editorial Board has helped, but they are not always subject matter experts. Roger observed that when he served as General Editor, it took up to two years to get some articles reviewed.

It was agreed that each issue should contain three articles, or two articles and a review note. Discussion regarding the ongoing need for new submissions touched on the importance of recruiting new authors from presenters at conferences, such as those organized by NASOH, the Society for Military History, and the Association of Great Lakes Maritime History.

Michael reported on the progress with developing an online version of *TNM* with York Digital Journals. A hosting agreement has been signed with York University Libraries, and digital copies of past articles have been transferred to be loaded into the OJS application. One of the challenges in developing this site will be providing abstracts in both English and French for all articles, especially as abstracts were not included in the journal's first seven years. This work could be crowd sourced among the membership. A lengthy list of technical and procedural requirements were given to Michael by the Libraries shortly before his departure for Halifax, and given the late arrival of this information, discussion of the financial requirements to manage a digital journal will be deferred to the 2018 mid-winter Council meeting 2018. Chris, Richard, and Michael will take the lead in this work.

There was some discussion regarding the possibility of adopting a print-on-demand model in the future, so that members could select whether or not they wished to continue receiving a paper copy of the journal. Richard is pleased with the service provided by the current printer, but competitive quotes could be useful as the print numbers decline.

Whereas it is desirable that one-third of the Editorial Board be appointed each year, Faye moved, Roger seconded that the following appointments be made for a three-year term: Olaf Janzen and Roger Sarty, CNRS members nominated by the Society; Alicia Caporaso and Ingo Heidbrink (Ingo is replacing Blake Dunnavent), nominated by NASOH; and Andrew Cook, international member. Carried.

[Secretarial note: the subsequent election of Richard as President will require changes to the leadership of the Editorial Board, with the initial proposal being the appointment of Roger as Chair (necessitating his replacement on Council as First Vice-President) and Barry Gough as Vice-Chair. This matter will be brought forward for consideration by Council at a future date.]

Chris moved, Faye seconded that Richard's report be accepted. Carried.

### ***Argonauta***

This publication is going well, and it is meeting the Society's needs in terms of announcements. There is always a demand for content, and while this year's conference should generate some submissions, suggestions for new material included member and project profiles.

Chris noted that the editors require the timely arrival of text for the President's Corner.

Michael proposed that *Argonauta* be placed behind the paywall on the Society's website for members so that it is available only to members as a benefit of paying their fees. The incoming President will discuss this suggestion with the editors.

### **Awards Committee**

William Glover has submitted his report. The committee has selected a book for the new category of special recognition, as well as an article from *TNM*. There will be no book award; despite considerable solicitation, there were no responses from publishers meeting the criteria.

### **Upcoming Conferences**

2018, Toronto – Chris, Michael, and Sam are organizing the conference to be held 21-23 June at York University

2019 – Thunder Bay. Michael reported that there is considerable interest from contacts with the City of Thunder Bay Archives and Lakehead University in collaborating with the Society in organizing this event

2020 – North Vancouver

2021 – Suggestions included Penetanguishene, Discovery Harbour, Port Hope, and Burlington

### **Nominating Committee**

Richard reported that there were no nominations for President, and while members of Council were willing to serve another year in their current capacities, no one was willing to fill the vacancy. Nominations for President will have to come from the floor during the annual general meeting.

Richard thanked Chris for his work as President

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to conduct, the President asked for a motion to adjourn the Council meeting at 2033hrs. David so moved, Chris seconded.

Respectfully submitted  
Michael Moir  
Secretary



## Appendix 1

### MEMBERSHIP DATA as of August 9, 2017

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS		ADDRESSES	
Complimentary	16	40 % Canadian	24 (6 Comp)
2014 Not renewed	6	34 % US	20 (5 Comp)
2015 Not renewed	2	12 % UK	7 (3 Comp)
2016 Not renewed	4	12 % EU	7 (1 Comp)
2017 Renewed	31	1.7 % AU	1 (1 Comp)
TOTAL	59 (43 + 16)	TOTAL	(43 + 16 Comps)

1 new member and 1 returned in 2017, but 6 not paid since 2014 should be removed.

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS ADDRESSES 2 complimentary copies to Matthews Award winners not required

2014 Not renewed	15	74 % Canadian	109
2015 Not renewed	6	21 % US	31
2016 Not renewed	43	2.6 % UK	4
2017 New (11) & renewed	83	1.3% EU 0.7 % NZ	2 1
TOTAL	147	TOTAL	147

There were 11 new members in 2017, including one from New Zealand and 10 student members. Joint NASOH membership continues to decline, accounting for many of the non-renewed US members.

TOTAL membership is 190, up four from the last report with several new institutional and individual members making 147 individual members and 43 institutions. Numbers are actually steady and new members emerging. We are close to the 200 member goal, but this figure will be reduced once the third and final call for renewals is sent out following the meeting and those non-renewers from 2014 who fail to respond are removed.

**Canadian Nautical Research Society**  
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**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Navy Museum of Halifax,  
Admiralty House, Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Saturday, 12 August 2017**

**Present**

Chris Madsen, President, and sixteen members of the Society.

**Calling to Order**

The President called the meeting to order at 1353hrs.

**Minutes of Special Meeting of 19 August 2017 and the Annual General Meeting of 20 August 2016**

Fraser McKee moved, David More seconded approval of the minutes as published in *Argonauta* 34:1 (Winter 2017). Carried.

**President's Report**

Chris Madsen presented his last report as President. The challenges facing the Society remain the same as for much of the last ten years – sustaining membership and finances, as well as the commitment of volunteers to continue publishing *Argonauta* and *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord (TNM)*. Compared with other Canadian historical organizations, the Society has held its own. Membership numbers have stabilized, with conferences and personal contacts bringing in new members as others pass away or decline to renew.

Council has been studying the introduction of software to manage the editorial review of submissions to *TNM*, as well as its electronic distribution and preservation, and has decided to work with York University Libraries to create an online, open access version of *TNM* using the Open Journal Systems (OJS) application. A print copy of the journal will continue to be mailed to members of the CNRS and the North American Society for Oceanic Research (NASOH). The journal consumes approximately 85 percent of our revenues, but it is a good use of funds. Not much money is left for other things, such as awards for books and articles that encourage scholarship, or bursaries to encourage student participation in our conferences. The Society has not been able to undertake large gatherings such as those held by the NASOH and the International Maritime History Association, but our conferences are affordable and meet the expectations of members. Chris has advocated for regional branches especially on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and he expressed his concern over the lack of membership in Quebec, which affects our ability to hold a conference in that province and to attract French Canadian members. He travelled to Ontario for council meetings at his own expense, but we need to keep in mind the need to engage the coasts as well as central Canada.

Chris wished the Society well in the coming years. He would have liked to have left it in a better position in terms of investments and reserves, but it is in no worse shape than when he took over. There are all sorts of ideas of how to spend the Society's money, but it must be done thoughtfully. He closed by stating that we are a society of independent researchers with international connections and a strong relationship with our partner, NASOH.

In the discussion that followed the President's report, Paul Adamthwaite observed that potential members in Quebec were concerned about the preponderance of naval topics in *TNM*.

There was also concern expressed that the decision to turn *TNM* into an open access journal would have a negative impact on revenue from membership fees. Roger Sarty pointed out that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) requires grant recipients after 2015 to publish their research results using open access journals, and that if the journal wants to attract the work of young scholars, we must go down this route. Sean Campbell remarked that he would still want to receive the journal as a benefit of membership because it provides an awareness of research trends and a broader field of maritime issues that might not otherwise occur to him.

Sean Campbell moved, Faye Kert seconded that the President's report be received. Carried.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Chris Madsen submitted the financial reports for the period ending 31 December 2016 on behalf of the treasurer, Errolyn Humphreys. The Society's net financial position is up by \$3,000 with an equity position of \$22,000 due to a favourable currency exchange and Faye Kert's persistence in encouraging members to renew. Donations, sale of back issues of *TNM*, and the agreement with EBSCO to provide libraries with electronic subscriptions to *TNM* have provided limited streams of revenue.

Paul Adamthwaite noted that Corporations Canada's webpage for 2015 does not agree with Errolyn's statement, particularly in terms of expenditures affecting the net income. He asked that Errolyn explain why there is a difference. Paul also asked for an explanation of why printing costs have gone up, and if costs have been carried over from the previous fiscal year.

Errolyn will be asked to report to Council on these questions, and to send this information to Paul.

Alan Ruffman moved, Alec Douglas seconded acceptance of Errolyn Humphrey's financial statements for the period ending 31 December 2016. Carried, with one opposed and one abstention.

### **Membership Secretary's Report**

Faye Kert presented an overview of the Society's membership of 147 individuals and 59 institutions (including 16 complimentary memberships). There were 11 new members in 2017, and only six institutions have not renewed since 2014. The

membership is predominantly Canadian, with a decline of members in the United Kingdom, as well as NASOH members who used to pay \$25 to gain access to *Argonauta* (which is now freely available online through the CNRS website). The Society is attempting to increase its ranks to 200 paid members, but it is possible that the number will stay between 170 and 185.

Fraser McKee suggested that we encourage members to round up when renewing; for example, \$70 would be rounded up to \$75. He has seen this approach adopted by another organization, and it helped to avoid significant increases in membership rates.

Sam McLean noted that online payment of membership fees is not entirely secure, and that he has raised this issue on at least three previous occasions. The response in the past has been that the added costs to ensure secure payments were not warranted due to limited risks.

The members thanked Faye for her hard work.

Paul Adamthwaite moved, Doug Maginley seconded acceptance of Faye's report. Carried.

### ***The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord***

Richard Gimblett, chair of the editorial board, reported on the state of the journal. Collaboration with York University Libraries to create a digital journal offers a bright light for the future, but the timeliness of publication remains a challenge in the near term. Several issues must be addressed: the need for more content, delays brought on by the peer review process, and the search for a new general editor. It has been difficult to build up a stockpile of content to supply three articles per issue for the next year or two. The peer review process provides useful constructive criticism that improves the quality of articles, but it has been difficult to find qualified people who will take on this work, whose depth of knowledge reflects the often esoteric nature of submissions, and who can meet the deadlines required to meet the publication schedule. Many people are too busy, and do not take on this type of work anymore. William Glover is half way through his five-year commitment to serve as General Editor, has other commitments that require his attention, and does not have the institutional support of a university or other organization that could assist with workflow or technological issues. Richard is searching for a new editor, but preliminary inquiries have brought negative responses as most scholars employed by universities receive no credit for editorial service.

The discussion turned to the exchange of views that appeared in the Summer 2017 issue of *Argonauta* regarding the editorial process and technical aspects of the journal. It was noted by Paul Adamthwaite that the word count has gone down in recent issues. Concern was expressed regarding the editorial response to submissions, and the number of errors that made their way into the printed text. Roger Sarty and Paul Adamthwaite gave an overview of copy editing process used when they were responsible for *TNM*.

David More moved, Sam McLean seconded that the report be received. Carried.

## **Nominating Committee**

Richard Gimblett reported in his role as chair of the committee. No external nominations were received in response to the two calls published in *Argonauta*.

David More moved, Sean Campbell seconded that the following individuals be elected as officers and councillors at large of the Society for 2017-2018:

First Vice-President – Roger Sarty, serving the third year of a three-year term  
Second Vice-President – Walter Lewis, serving the second year of a three-year term

Secretary – Michael Moir

Membership Secretary – Faye Kert

Treasurer – Errolyn Humphreys

Councillors – Sam McLean, David More, Winston “Kip” Scoville, and Ian Yeates  
The motion carried.

David More moved, Alec Douglas seconded that Richard Gimblett be elected as President. The motion carried.

Richard thanked the membership for their support, and thanked Chris Madsen for leaving the Society in such good shape. We need a root-and-branch rethink of how the Society operates, which will begin this fall with a meeting open to all members.

## **Upcoming Conferences**

2018 – York University, Toronto, 21-23 June

2019 – Thunder Bay

2020 – North Vancouver

## **Other Business**

Sam McLean raised the issue of social media as a means of drawing attention to the Society and attracting new members. The Society has hosted Facebook and Twitter accounts for a couple of years, but we have to do more in terms of social media. Our website should be a destination for those interested in maritime history. Sam suggested that the Society create a research tool on the website that would draw and engage visitors. It could take the form of a database in which we provide images and transcriptions of documents covering several decades of Canada’s maritime affairs that would support text mining and statistical analysis. We could partner with a university active in the emerging field of digital humanities projects, and apply for funding from organizations such as SSHRC, the Society for Nautical Research, and the Navy Records Society.

Paul Adamthwaite, the Society’s webmaster, would be pleased to expand the scope of the website and can take care of the technological requirements, but he needs additional content. He also noted that if the members want to be able to make secure payments through the website, the Society will have to move to a different service provider. The website is hacked every few weeks, but it is immediately reinstalled by Paul. It is time to invest money in improving and enhancing the website.

Rich Gimblett moved, Roger Sarty seconded that the members express their appreciation to Chris Madsen for moving the Society forward during this past year in his role as President. Carried.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to conduct, the President asked for a motion to adjourn the Council meeting at 1605hrs. Faye Kert so moved, Paul Adamthwaite seconded.

Respectfully submitted  
Michael Moir  
Secretary

## Guidelines for Authors

*Argonauta* follows *The Chicago Manual of Style* available at this link: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>.

However, we utilize Canadian spelling rules, in lieu of American rules, unless referring to proper American names. Thus, the Canadian Department of Defence and the American Department of Defense are both correct.

For ship names, only the first letter of the names of Royal Canadian Navy ships and submarines is capitalized, and the name appears in italics. For example:

Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Queenston*  
Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Châteauguay*

Class of ship/submarine: *Victoria*-class submarines (not VICTORIA Class submarines)

Former HMCS *Fraser* rather than *Ex-Fraser*

Foreign ships and submarines:

USS *Enterprise*  
HMS *Victory*  
HMAS *Canberra* 3

Because *Argonauta* aims to publish articles that may be easily understood by senior high school students and other non-experts, we encourage authors to include general introductory context, suggestions for additional reading, and links to relevant websites. We publish memoirs, humour, reviews of exhibits, descriptions of new archival acquisitions, and outstanding student papers. We also publish debates and discussions about changes in maritime history and its future. We encourage submissions in French and assure our authors that all French submissions will be edited for style by a well-qualified Francophone.

Although *Argonauta* is not formally peer-reviewed, we have two editors who carefully review and edit each and every article. For those producing specialized, original academic work, we direct your attention to *The Northern Mariner* which is peer-reviewed and appropriate for longer, in-depth analytical works.

All submissions should be in Word format, utilizing Arial 12 pt. All endnotes should be numbered from 1 consecutively to the highest or last number, without any repeating of numbers, in the usual North American Academic manner described in the *Chicago Manual* which also provides guidance on using the Word insert function at this link: <https://www.ivcc.edu/stylebooks/stylebook5.aspx?id=14646>. For technical reasons, we prefer that authors use endnotes rather than footnotes. Typically an article in *Argonauta* will be 4 to 6 pages long, though we do accommodate longer, informal pieces. We strongly encourage the use of online links to relevant websites and the inclusion of bibliographies to assist the younger generation of emerging scholars. The *Chicago Manual* provides detailed instructions on the styles used.

All photos should be sent separately and accompanied by captions, describing the image, crediting the source, and letting us know where the original image is held. Authors are responsible to ensure that they have copyright permission for any images, art work, or other protected materials they utilize. We ask that every author submit a written statement to that effect. The images should be named to reflect the order in which they are to appear in the text ( Authurnameimage1, Authurnameimage2, Authurnameimage3) and the text should be marked to show where the images are to be added (add Authurnameimage 1 here, add Authurnameimage2 here, etc.)

All authors are also responsible to ensure that they are familiar with plagiarism and that they properly credit all sources they use. *Argonauta* recommends that authors consult Royal Military College's website on academic integrity and ethical standards at this link:

<https://www.rmcc-cmrc.ca/en/registrars-office/academic-regulations#ai>

We encourage our authors to acknowledge all assistance provided to them, including thanking librarians, archivists, and colleagues if relevant sources, advice or help were provided. Editors are not responsible for monitoring these matters.

All authors are asked to supply a short biography unless the text already contains these biographical details or the author is already well known to our readers.





# The Canadian Nautical Research Society

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Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1S 2N2  
<http://www.cnrs-scrn.org>

## Membership/Renewal Form

CNRS membership supports the multi-disciplinary study of maritime, marine and naval subjects in and about Canada.

Members receive:

- **The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord**, a quarterly refereed journal dedicated to publishing research and writing about all aspects of maritime history of the North Atlantic, Arctic and North Pacific Oceans. It publishes book reviews, articles and research notes on merchant shipping, navies, maritime labour, nautical archaeology and maritime societies.
- **Argonauta**, a quarterly newsletter publishing articles, opinions, news and information about maritime history and fellow members.
- An Annual General Meeting and Conference located in maritime minded locations across Canada such as Halifax, Vancouver, Hamilton, Churchill and Quebec City.
- Affiliation with the International Commission of Maritime History (ICMH).

Membership is by calendar year and is an exceptional value at \$70 for individuals, \$25 for students, or \$95 for institutions. Please add \$10 for international postage and handling. Members of the North American Society for Oceanic History (NASOH) may join the CNRS for a reduced rate of \$35 per year. Individuals or groups interested in furthering the work of the CNRS may wish to subscribe to one of several other levels of membership, each of which includes all the benefits of belonging to the Society. CNRS is a registered charity and any donation above the cost of basic membership to the Society is automatically acknowledged with a tax-receipt.

	Canadian	International	
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Student	\$25	\$25	Patron \$1000 or above
NASOH	\$35	\$35	

Please type in or print clearly and return with payment (all rates in Canadian \$).

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