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## **Centre for Port and Maritime History Conference Programme**

### **Memorialisation & the Sea**

**Thursday 15 and Friday 16 September 2022**

**Registration is £10 for waged and free for unwaged**

Please register here: [CPMH Conference 2022: Memorialisation & the Sea | Liverpool John Moores University \(ljmu.ac.uk\)](https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/cpmh-conference-2022)

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### **Thursday 15 September – Merseyside Maritime Museum Royal Albert Dock, Liverpool, L3 4AQ**

IN PERSON ONLY EVENT

**11:00 – Registration and refreshments**

**11:30 – 13:00 Welcome and walking tour, Dr Andy Davies, University of Liverpool & Prof Nick White, LJMU**

**13:00 – 14:00 Lunch**

**14:00 – 15:00 Keynote Lecture - Dr Andre Keil, Senior Lecture in Modern History, LJMU**

**'The 'Wilhelm Gustloff' and the 'Cap Arcona': Two Contested Maritime Sites of Memory of the Second World War in Germany'**

**15:00 – 16:30 Refreshments and tour of MMM gallery 'Life on Board' by its curators**

**16:30 – 17:30 Reception (venue tbc)**

### **Friday 16 September – Redmonds Building LJMU, Brownlow Hill, Liverpool, L3 5UG**

IN PERSON & HYBRID EVENT

**9:15 – Refreshments**

**9:30 – 10:15 Alison Welsby, Liverpool University Press and Prof Nick White, LJMU**

A short presentation on converting a thesis to a monograph, how to get published and an introduction to the Centre for Port and Maritime History's LUP series – Studies in Port and Maritime History, followed by Q&A.

**10:15 – 11:05 PANEL ONE: Technological Change and Nostalgia**

**Morten Tinning, PhD Candidate, Copenhagen Business School**

'Sailing ship nostalgia and identity among Danish seafarers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century'

**Dr Filippo Menozzi, Programme leader, MA English Literature, LJMU**

'Cargo Memories: Politics of Recollection in The Forgotten Space'

**11:05 – 11:20 Refreshments**

**11:20 – 12:45 PANEL TWO: The Perils of the Sea**

**Dr Howard Fuller, Reader in War Studies, University of Wolverhampton**

'Disremembering the Past: The Forlorn Case of HMS Captain (1870)'

**Barbara Tomlinson, Curator Emeritus, Royal Museums Greenwich**

'The RNLI and others: memorials and medals to lifesavers'

**Hanna Nsugbe, PhD Candidate, LJMU**

'Maritime memorialisation as justification for environmental disturbance? Examining the application of sovereign immunity to sunken warships in Micronesian waters'

**12:45 – 13:45 Lunch**

**13:45 – 15:05 PANEL THREE: Monuments and Museums**

**Linda Inga, PhD in Nautical and Naval Design, Università degli Studi di Genova, Italy**

'The Mediterranean identity and its traditional ports as open-air museums'

**Dr Paul O'Keeffe, Independent researcher and author**

'For the Vindication of Rights and Protection of Commerce'

**Dr Rowan Thompson, Alumni Fellow, Institute of Historical Research**

‘Pageantry, Heritage, and Naval Commemoration in Interwar Britain’

**15:05 – 15:20 Refreshments**

**15:20 – 16:10 PANEL FOUR: Contested Memories**

**David Isserman, PhD candidate, Edge Hill University**

‘The Long Moral Arc: The Liverpool Chinese Seamen Memorial and Maritime radicalism’

**Robin Plant, Independent researcher currently working with University of Liverpool and Sheffield Museums**

‘John Bramley Moore Dock and Everton F.C.’s New Stadium: Contested Maritime Memorialisation’

**16:10 Closing remarks, reception, and award for the best paper by a post-graduate**

**17:00 Conference Close**

## **Abstracts**

Thursday 15 September

Keynote Lecture

**Dr Andre Keil, Senior Lecture in Modern History, LJMU**

### **The 'Wilhelm Gustloff' and the 'Cap Arcona': Two Contested Maritime Sites of Memory of the Second World War in Germany**

In the morning hours of 30 January 1945 three torpedoes of the Soviet submarine S-13 hit the passenger ship 'Wilhelm Gustloff', which at the time transported more than 10,000 refugees from East Prussia through the Baltic Sea. The ship sank within an hour and at least 9,000 persons drowned. Months later, on 3 May 1945, another passenger ship, the Cap Arcona, was sunk by British fighter bombers in the Bay of Lubeck. On board were more than 7,000 survivors of death marches from the German concentration camps who were placed in a 'swimming concentration camp'. Almost all internees of the Cap Arcona drowned after the British attack. Both sinkings represented the biggest loss of life at sea in German history. This makes these catastrophes noteworthy in their own right, yet they also take unique places in the German memory and commemoration of the Second World War and the Holocaust.

This paper will examine how both maritime catastrophes have been remembered in both East and West Germany since 1945. Using the concept of the 'lieu de memoire', the paper will argue that the remains of the ships represent both a mental site of memory as well as a physical one. Yet their representation in public culture also allows us to appreciate the complexities of the German memorial culture of the Second World War. The Gustloff – not least because of its role in the novels of German Nobel Prize laureate Guenther Grass – came to symbolise German victimhood, whereas the Cap Arcona was neglected and until recently almost entirely forgotten. Ultimately, the paper will raise the question of whether and how maritime sites of memory can feature in complex and 'difficult' memory cultures, such as the German one.

**Friday 16 September**

PANEL ONE – Technological Change and Nostalgia

**Morten Tinning, PhD Candidate, Copenhagen Business School**

### **Sailing ship nostalgia and identity among Danish seafarers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century**

As the steamship's new 'industrialised' labour structures became dominant in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it produced nostalgic sentiments of the past. This sense of nostalgia is widespread in the writings of Danish seafarers. Chiefly among them were the ageing sailing ship captains, those whose craft, identity, and hegemonic authority seemed to have dissolved in the black smoke rising from the steamship. These sentiments, however, were not universal, and some

seafarers were not as indifferent to the benefits of working on steamships. Nevertheless, a sense of nostalgia has remained around the loss of the "true" maritime world of the sailing ship, kept alive through memories and historical work. In this presentation, I explore this development and its implications for the writing of maritime history in Denmark.

**Dr Filippo Menozzi, Programme Leader, MA in English Literature, LJMU**

### **Cargo Memories: Politics of Recollection in *The Forgotten Space***

Allan Sekula and Noël Burch's 2010 essay film *The Forgotten Space* follows the journeys of shipping containers from Europe to North America and East Asia. The film documents the concrete social realities of maritime commerce, workers, and communities in an age supposedly driven by online communication and financial flows. The central theme of the film concerns the remembering of the sea as site of trade, exploitation, and contestation, and arena for the continuing expansion of capitalism. Yet, in the decade following its release, the film has sparked controversy around the kind of remembering Sekula and Burch aim to produce in the film. Important critics have pointed out the film's own forgetfulness and even a tendency to reiterate, against the directors' intentions, capitalism's ideological illusion of the sea as a passive and smooth space for the circulation of commodities. In this paper, I will explore the debates on *The Forgotten Space* to demonstrate that Sekula and Burch offer a somehow overlooked, yet very productive form of remembering through their experimental technique. In the film, they turn the shipping container from utilitarian, logistical tool into heterotopic space of memory and survival. Sekula and Burch challenge the presentism of contemporary globalisation and suggest a work of remembering set against the violence and destruction of capitalism's logics of dispossession.

PANEL TWO: The Perils of the Sea

**Dr. Howard Fuller, Reader in War Studies, University of Wolverhampton**

### **Disremembering the Past: The Forlorn Case of HMS Captain (1870)**

This paper will briefly examine how the lack of memory and the sea can be controversial in its own right. What does it mean when we choose to forget the 'bad' Past including suppressed trauma?

Specifically, the worst Royal Navy shipwreck disaster of the nineteenth century, that of the foundering of HMS Captain on 7 September 1870, remains one of the least remembered events in naval history. More British lives were lost aboard this experimental ironclad (built by John Laird & Sons at Birkenhead) than at the Battle of Trafalgar or at sea during the Crimean War; yet despite the prominence of Lairds in the Victorian era, for example, today's Merseyside Maritime Museum, does not mention the Captain (unlike RMS Titanic and MV Derbyshire)—though that can always change.

Although the nation was profoundly impacted by news of the Captain's loss, culminating in brass memorial plaques at St. Paul's Cathedral and a stained glass window in Westminster Abbey, the horror—and controversy—of the Captain was

quickly forgotten. The plaques for one carved forever the court martial's verdict that not only was the ship (considered the most powerful in the world at the time) badly conceived but poorly built. 'Public opinion' killed the Captain, her crew, and her designer, Captain Cowper Phipps Coles. Naval historians ever since rather avoid the topic except to echo the official line; because the wider 'Why?' the Captain was considered 'necessary' in the first place remains a stubborn obstacle to nostalgic 'Pax Britannica' narratives

**Barbara Tomlinson, Curator Emeritus, Royal Museums Greenwich.**

### **The RNLI and others: memorials and medals to lifesavers**

Founded in 1824 as the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, the RNLI has come to dominate the narrative of British rescues at sea. It is one of the most popular British charities with present-day rescues shown in the BBC documentary programme: 'Saving lives at sea'.

This paper is based on the Royal Museums Greenwich's Maritime Memorials database and their collection of lifesaving medals. Fixed memorials commemorate the dead, medals generally were awarded to encourage the living but eventually became memorials.

The paper will examine rescues carried out by other bodies, rescues which ended in the loss of the rescuers and rescues which were contentious in some other way. A movement which aimed to rescue people in danger of death, to whom the rescuers had no relationship or other obligation, arose during the latter part of the 18th century. It was fueled by enthusiasm for the possibilities of science and technology and a growth in humanitarianism. A wide variety of individuals and groups participated. Lifesaving was praised in naval funerary memorials celebrating the virtues of the deceased. Rescues conducted on the high seas were necessarily accomplished by crew members of other vessels not shore-based boats, and are commemorated primarily through medals. The memorialization of lifeboat crews lost in the line of duty confirmed their new heroic status. Although this is a generally very positive story, sometimes further research reveals commercial and political pressures, or social attitudes, which seem less than creditable today.

**Hanna Nsugbe, PhD Candidate, LJMU**

### **Maritime memorialisation as justification for environmental disturbance? Examining the application of sovereign immunity to sunken warships in Micronesian waters.**

Sovereign immunity is a doctrine enshrined within international law, deriving from the notion that all States are inherently equal and therefore no State can interfere with the property of another. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) currently governs its application to State owned ships, stipulating as and when exemptions may apply. The convention itself, however, is ambiguous and does not clarify its position where a ship has sunk. This ambiguity presents a significant challenge to the protection of the marine environment where sunken warships have begun to erode and cause damage to marine life. This paper explores the application

of the doctrine to sunken warships and the current challenges this presents to the preservation of the marine environment. The Federated States of Micronesia will be presented as a case study and the legal challenges that it has faced in seeking removal of the vessels from its waters. Examining the existing arguments, the paper will address whether the current UNCLOS treatment of the doctrine is sufficient, whether the doctrine should continue to apply to sunken warships and whether the argued historical and cultural relevance of some of these ships is adequate justification for their retention of immunity.

PANEL THREE: Museums and Monuments

**Linda Inga, PhD in Nautical and Naval Design, Università degli Studi di Genova, Italy**

### **The Mediterranean identity and its traditional ports as open-air museums**

The sea has invited man to remain sedentary along its coasts, favoring the development of heterogeneous civilizations. Its relationship is crucial for the characterization of communities identified as "seafarers".

A large component of the maritime heritage is the millenary tradition of the Mediterranean Sea, defined by André Leroi-Gourhan as a "recognizable identity in which the differences between peoples give the dimension of the cultural exchanges that took place in its formation, which contributed substantially to the growth of what knowledge still today identify its territories".

Not only history but also legends, traditions and myths suggest the complexity of the link between man and sea. Some of the main urban centers overlooking its waters testify, through strong cultural and social identities, a development constantly influenced by maritime identity.

From Portofino to Marbella, from Kèlibia to Ayvalik, the Mediterranean ports tell the connection between man and sea in a different way: a link with the past that preserves the identity of coastal cities, guardians of a heritage made up of tangible and intangible assets; if walking among vintage boats and sailing ships arouses curiosity and admiration, listening to the tales of shipwrights and elderly sailors enchants and allows you to immerse yourself in a history that is not too far. Rediscovering the maritime memory also means bringing to light the natural vocation of some of the Mediterranean ports to be open-air museums and witnesses of an identity of inestimable value, a symbol of union and peaceful coexistence of men, religions, histories.

**Dr Paul O’Keeffe, Independent researcher and author**

### **For the Vindication of Rights and Protection of Commerce**

This presentation will examine the process whereby three nineteenth century Liverpool monuments – all raised by public subscription - were commissioned, executed and erected. It will compare their popular and critical reception, and will suggest that however great a city’s capacity for patronage, the generosity of distribution will be dependent on the partiality of its commercial interests.

Of the myriad statues, columns and obelisks that sprouted following the battle of Trafalgar and death of Nelson on 21 October 1805, Wyatt and Westmacott's extraordinary monument in Exchange Flags, Liverpool - unveiled just eight years after to the day - is surely the most striking and complex. It is also the most disquieting when viewed in the light of the port city's then still recent slaving past. The four naked 'prisoners' chained to its base do nothing to alleviate that disquiet. And lest this be thought an example of 21<sup>st</sup> century overthinking, Herman Melville was struck by the same connection when he encountered it as early as 1839.

Liverpool's perceived indebtedness to the protector of its maritime trade routes was reflected in expeditious fundraising. The monument's cost of £8,000 was met and exceeded within two months: £8,930 being raised by public subscription and further contributions of £1,000 from the Liverpool Corporation, £500 from Lloyd's Underwriters, and - significantly - £500 from the West India Association of traders and planters. The Memorial Committee made clear who had reason to be grateful and for what: 'The people of Liverpool... should, in the midst of their mercantile transactions, and daily concerns, be perpetually reminded of the man to whom they are so greatly indebted, for the vindication of their rights, and the protection of their commerce.'

The alacrity with which so elaborate and expensive a monument was erected within eight years of its subject's death, was in marked contrast to the public apathy greeting the memorialisation of figures with less direct commercial significance for Liverpool. A subscription was opened in 1809 to finance a monument celebrating the 50th anniversary, the following year, of George III's accession to the throne. Despite the cost of the proposed equestrian statue being pared down from £5,000 to £3,000, even that more modest target had not been reached twelve years later and the sculptor's fee was only covered with the aid of a contribution from the surplus raised for Nelson.

There was a comparable lack of enthusiasm when the Duke of Wellington died in 1852 and Liverpool Corporation proposed a statue and column reminiscent of Nelson's in Trafalgar Square. The projected cost was estimated at between ten and twelve thousand pounds. Had the Duke been killed at Waterloo in 1815, the warmth of national, as well as local patriotic sentiment might have raised statue and column as swiftly as Nelson's monument had been. But Wellington survived his glorious victory for nearly forty years, long enough for his reputation to suffer as a deeply unpopular tory Prime Minister. After four years the fund raised by public subscription was just under six thousand. It was at last decided that for a column sixty feet smaller than Nelson's the project could be completed for £7,000. The proceeds of the subscription having languished unspent for so long, the shortfall in funding was made up by the accrued interest.

**Dr Rowan Thompson: Alumni Fellow, Institute of Historical Research**

### **Pageantry, Heritage, and Naval Commemoration in Interwar Britain**

This paper examines how naval pageantry shaped public understanding of British sea power in the interwar years. The performance and representation of naval history and heritage through historical pageantry was commonplace in the popular civic ritual of interwar Britain. Thousands of men from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines –

alongside naval veterans and amateur volunteers – took part in performances, while hundreds of thousands of spectators (if not millions) saw some form of naval pageant. Rather than being a period in which there was a ‘collapse of British navalism’, this paper instead argues that naval pageantry was a crucial way in which members of the British public interacted, engaged with, and memorialised aspects of Britain’s naval and national history following the First World War.

Naval pageants, tattoos, tableaux, and re-enactments were all used by the Admiralty – and a range of non-state actors and associational bodies – to promote naval heritage and commemoration. Yet, pageants were not simply conservative or anti-modern, also staging hyper-realistic portrayals of modern war and conflict. At the heart of naval pageants were a range of models and reproductions of historic ships, from Nelson’s *Victory* and Drake’s *Golden Hind* to modern battleships and battlecruisers such as the *Iron Duke* and *Lion*. Such ships represented potent naval memorials and symbols, demonstrating the long-standing importance of the navy to the nation in a period of supposed naval decline. As this paper illustrates, naval pageants offer important insights into the contested attitudes in British society towards heritage, commemoration, memorialisation, war, and peace.

PANEL FOUR: Contested Memories

**David Isserman, PhD candidate, Edge Hill University**

### **The Long Moral Arc: The Liverpool Chinese Seamen Memorial and Maritime radicalism**

At the end of the Second World War some 2,000 Chinese seamen were deported from Liverpool on the orders of the British state. Not only had many of these men risked their lives in the merchant navy during the war but many had not set foot in China in years. Some had even married British women and started families that were torn apart during this time. The Liverpool Chinese Seamen Memorial at the Liverpool Museum stands as a monument to this injustice. The memorial was the result of a long campaign by the Liverpool Chinese community, including a number of descendants of the deported sailors.

While the memorial was created as a result of a grassroots community effort to bring public attention to a particular historical tragedy, this monument acts as both a reminder of the long presence of the Chinese in Liverpool but also as a part of labour history. Chinese seamen were among the most exploited of the maritime proletariat, often earning dismal wages and enduring racist abuse from both their employers and the labour movement. However, by the 1940’s a growing class-consciousness began to take shape among many Chinese seamen in Britain, notably in Merseyside with the formation of the radical strike prone Liverpool Chinese Seamen’s Union, which was closely linked to both the British and Chinese Communist Parties.

With these factors in mind; the Liverpool Chinese Seamen memorial is a valuable contribution to the field of public historical memory in Liverpool. It not only reminds us of a great miscarriage of justice but it also has the potential power to shed light on a little known section of British trade union and maritime history.

**Robin Plant, Independent researcher currently working with University of Liverpool and Sheffield Museums**

### **John Bramley Moore Dock and Everton F.C.'s New Stadium: Contested Maritime Memorialisation**

In 2017, Everton F.C. announced Bramley-Moore Dock as the location of their new £500-million stadium. This has emphasised the dock's legacy as a contested site of maritime memorialisation. This paper examines, the public career and historical legacy of John Bramley-Moore (1800-1886), a merchant, Mayor of Liverpool, MP, and Chairman of Liverpool Docks. Bramley-Moore's business dealings were directly linked to the use of enslaved labour as he traded in Brazilian coffee. Moreover, in British parliament he successfully fought against the suppression of the slave trade and argued that slavery was essential for the cultivation of land in the U.S.A. and Brazil. For this he was awarded the Order of the Rose by Emperor Pedro II of Brazil. Bramley-Moore Dock brings into focus Liverpool's historic entanglement with Atlantic slavery, and it's under explored connections to Brazil where slavery continued until 1888. After a short history of Bramley-Moore Dock and the man, this paper will provide a critical overview of the historiography of both. Next, Bramley-Moore's role as a perpetrator and defender of slavery will be explored, and the archive material on his life and business dealings mapped out. It will conclude, with a reflection on how best Everton F.C. and Liverpool City Council can engage with the process of memorialisation and reconciliation. Local activists and historians have long campaigned for the recognition of Liverpool's historic ties to Atlantic slavery. Consequently, Everton F.C. have an opportunity to help offer reconciliation to local marginalised communities affected by the legacies of racism and slavery.