

## Annual Conference: Identities, Nations, Seas

Online Event

9 & 10 September 2021

You can register for the conference at

<https://buyonline.ljmu.ac.uk/conferences-and-events/ljmu/conferences>

Registration is £5 for waged delegates and free for unwaged delegates.

Registration closes on 7 September and the link to join the online events will be sent to the email address used at the time of registration on 8 September.

As our conference in 2019 revealed, much of the history of maritime art has been reflective of how (national) identities were and are formed through (often uneasy) relationships with the sea. Recent studies, such as Andrew Lambert's *Seapower States* (2018), have indicated that maritime-focussed nations have been marked out from continental ones by distinctive political and business structures as well as cultures from ancient to contemporary times. In a current age of resurrected maritime geopolitical and economic competition between nation states we are reminded that national rivalries have often been played out at sea. In the twentieth-century era of decolonisation, meanwhile, new nation states frequently viewed the development of their own military and merchant marines as key symbols of sovereignty, while seafarers and port workers enjoyed a leading role in struggles for independence. By the same token, however, maritime communities and port cities have frequently developed cosmopolitan, internationalised identities at variance with or in opposition to the nations and empires they have variously been part of. Hence, the conference seeks to be as much about maritime resistance, alternatives, and, ambivalence to national narratives as it is concerned with the construction of national identities through sea-oriented cultures, communities and activities. In encouraging the presentation of current, cutting-edge research on the history of maritime linked national identities, the conference theme is deliberately broad in scope. Paper abstracts can be found at the end of this programme.

### PROGRAMME

#### Thursday 9 September 2021

9:30 – Session open

9:50 – Welcome and Introductions

10:00 – 11:00 Keynote Address

Dr Richard Blakemore, Lecturer in the History of the Atlantic World, University of Reading

*National Identities and Composite Empires: British Seafarers in the Seventeenth Century*

**11:00 - 11:30 Break** – the online link will remain open for delegates during the break for additional discussion and networking and allow all delegates to join for the next session

Programme 9 September 2021**11:30 – 13:00 Session One: Elite Individuals and National Maritime Identities**

David Seymour, Independent Researcher

*The North Sea as 'Britain's heartland': Admiral Adam Duncan's fleet, 1795 - 1800*

Aidan Jones, PhD Candidate, King's College London

*Greece, the sea and a sailor prince: national identity and the offer of the Greek throne to Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh*

Dr Wayne Turnbull, PhD Candidate, Liverpool John Moores University

*Lord Brassey's faux pas, or how a little local difficulty illustrated the tensions within fin de siècle global maritime competition*

**13:00 - 14:00 Break** – the online link will remain open for delegates during the break for additional discussion and networking and allow all delegates to join for the next session

**14:00 - 15:30 Session Two: Contested Waters: Contestation, Language and Resistance in the Early-Modern Maritime World**

Jean-Marc Hill, PhD candidate, Cambridge University

*'The Golden Age of Piracy': Re-Assessing the Vocabulary of Maritime History*

Naseem Ashiq, MPhil candidate, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

*Merchants and Maritime Bandits: The Problem of Piracy in Indian Waters in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*

Henry Jacob, 2021-2022 Henry Fellow and MPhil candidate in the World History Program, Cambridge University

*The Cimarrón Counterpoint: How Maritime Tensions Built Imperial Identities and Resistance in Portobelo*

**15:30 – 16:00** The online link will remain open during this time to allow delegates to network



**Programme 10 September 2021****10:00 – 11:00 Meet the Publishers and the Editors**

**Alison Welsby, Editorial Director, Liverpool University Press, Professor Andrew Popp, Copenhagen Business School and Professor Nick White, Liverpool John Moores University**

Alison will present a short talk which will provide helpful tips on writing book proposals, getting published and how to convert the PhD thesis into a monograph. Following this, there will be a Q&A session with Alison as well as Nick and Andrew, the editors of the LUP Studies in Port and Maritime History Series.

**11:00 – 12:30 Session One: Navies and Popular Culture**

**May Wassell Smith, Collaborative PhD Candidate, National Maritime Museum and Cardiff University**

*Needlework and National Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Navies*

**Dr Rowan Thompson, Alan Pearsall Fellow for Naval and Maritime History, 2020–21, Institute of Historical Research**

*'A particularly British institution': Navy Weeks, Navalism, and Identity, 1927–1938*

**Jayne Friend, PhD candidate, The University of Portsmouth**

*Warship Weeks and Royal Navy ship adoptions: civic culture and naval pageantry during the Second World War*

**12:00 - 14:00 Break** – the online link will remain open for delegates during the break for additional discussion and networking and allow all delegates to join for the next session

**14:00 - 15:30 Session Two: *Fellows in Interesting Times: The Shifting Ground of Maritime Scholarship on and Beyond Merseyside***

**Chair Professor Robert Lee, Honorary Research Professor, University of Liverpool**

**Valerie Burton, Emeritus Professor of Maritime History, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Dr Diane Frost, Senior Lecturer, University of Liverpool**

**15:45 – Liverpool University Press Mike Stammers Prize Award**

Conference close

## ABSTRACTS

### Keynote Lecture

**Dr Richard Blakemore**

Lecturer in the History of the Atlantic World, University of Reading

#### ***National Identities and Composite Empires: British Seafarers in the Seventeenth Century***

This lecture will explore how, when, and why early modern British seafarers constructed and articulated national identities during their international travels, during which they might move between, and work for, multiple different empires. Recent research on early modern seafarers has often leaned in two directions, either highlighting their attachment to local communities, or suggesting a globally cosmopolitan and indeed radical rejection of national boundaries. In this lecture – based on work for my current book project – I will argue that nationality did matter for these seafarers, in terms of both the legal and political frameworks through which they moved, and the personal, cultural, and social attachments which framed their mobile lives. Seafarers' national identities did not necessarily manifest as a devoted loyalty to the British state (indeed, many of these seafarers served other empires in conflict against Britain), but given the composite nature of early modern empire, in which different authorities and organisations even within one empire both cooperated and competed with one another, this may not be surprising. Drawing on seafarers' autobiographies and legal and institutional records from Britain and the Netherlands, I will show how national identity instead appeared in cultural practices and social associations which persisted even as seafarers navigated through this complex and fragmented imperial system.

### Session One, 10 September 2021

**David Seymour**

Independent researcher

#### ***The North Sea as 'Britain's heartland': Admiral Adam Duncan's fleet, 1795 - 1800***

Sea commerce, sea power and global reach permeated the identities of England and the Netherlands as post-1650 'Great Powers'. With Mediterranean, Atlantic and West Indies operations having dominated scholarship on the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars-at-sea, this paper addresses a less-studied but crucial theatre and force: Duncan's North Sea fleet as enabler of Britain's response to the Batavian Republic, client of Revolutionary France. Duncan assumed a big mission with much less than Britain's biggest fleet. With limited resources to conduct high-stakes assignments, Duncan's missions were not only successful in themselves, but invigorated British confidence in Britannia as a great maritime power that could not be broken at sea.

Facing France in the Channel and Mediterranean, and later facing Spain too, the Admiralty's difficulties in providing a fleet sufficient for Duncan's tasks were only nominally eased by a supporting Russian squadron. Nevertheless, Duncan in the main commanded the North Sea. And in 1799, demonstrating expeditionary power-projection, both a landing and an evacuation were effected at the Helder across an unopposed sea. The Dutch could not respond successfully to Duncan's fleet.

If Duncan did not quite make 'his' maritime manoeuvre space a 'British lake', his command suggestively illuminates the concepts of geopolitical and economic competition over maritime commons. Duncan stands tall for today's Royal Navy (a Type-45 bearing his name). His command suggests the strategic thought that the sea, too, may be considered national 'heartland' – in Mackinder's term – when it is as close and crucial as the North Sea to the British Isles.

**Aidan Jones**

PhD Candidate at King's College London

#### ***Greece, the sea and a sailor prince: national identity and the offer of the Greek throne to Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh***

Five years after the jubilations that marked the twenty-five-year reign of King Otto of Greece, in December 1862, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Ewart Gladstone, remarked to the Lord Privy Seal, the Duke of Argyll, that, 'The world is now taking an immense interest in Greek affairs, and it does not seem to know why'.

## ABSTRACTS – Session One, 9 September 2021

### Aidan Jones Cont.

The British minister-resident to Greece, Sir Henry Storks, did. 'In these islands', Storks reported, 'the cry is all for Prince Alfred.' The expulsion of King Otto from Athens, after a successful revolution in October 1862, directed the attentions of Europe's ruling houses and Chancelleries to the empty throne of the troubled kingdom. And the question of who would succeed the unfortunate Otto I. For the sea-faring nation of Greece, the obvious candidature for the vacant throne was Queen Victoria's second son, Alfred, who had captured the Greek imagination with his simple dignity and middy's uniform, when he had visited the kingdom in 1859 on one of his naval cruises.

The aim of this paper is to investigate how the election of Britain's sailor prince to the Greek throne would aid the construction of a national identity in Greece, something that was severely undermined after the nearly thirty-year reign of Otto I. For the Greek peoples Prince Alfred's naval career and their own seafaring identity made the perfect fit. Using British sources this paper will examine British interpretations of both Greek identity and Greek aspirations regarding their future king. It will explore how and why Alfred was an attractive minor prince for Greek kingship; How the Greek public hoped that from across the seas Alfred would bring with him ideas of liberal constitutionalism, and the liberal institutions that made Britain the pre-eminent power in Europe. With a sailor king would come trade and commerce, and economic advantages. This paper will argue that, in addition to dynastic stability, Alfred's candidature and the prince's maritime connections were seen as assisting Greek territorial aspirations and the achievement of the Megali Idea. The 'Alfredist movement' that swept Greece equated the sailor prince with dreams of a Greek national identity.

### Dr Wayne Turnbull

PhD Candidate, Liverpool John Moores University

### *Lord Brassey's faux pas, or how a little local difficulty illustrated the tensions within fin de siècle global maritime competition*

On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 1892, the City Corporation of Liverpool formally launched its new, bold and innovative educational institution: the Liverpool Nautical College. Liverpool's political and mercantile elite were assembled in the hall of the Royal Institution building, which the College would occupy 1892-1900. The Guest of Honour and principal speaker at this event was the former First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Brassey. Speaking in support of the formation of the Liverpool Nautical College, Brassey forcibly made the case for investment in nautical education to raise the standard of British mercantile officers to that found elsewhere in the world. In comments he was later compelled to retract, Brassey traduced an entire profession as careless, reckless and incapable, their conduct shameful and discreditable. The ensuing furore invoked a public relations disaster for the Corporation and the fledgling College, yet Brassey was not alone in holding and articulating such views about the British merchant fleet. Indeed, it can be argued that his arguments were a manifestation of a fear of Britain's geopolitical decline amongst maritime nations. It can also be argued that without the fuel of such anxieties, nautical education in the dog days of the Victorian era would not have made such significant strides. This paper contextualises Brassey's (local) reflections in light of (global) economic and political developments, as the starting gun was about to be fired in the Naval Race that would end in Total War.

## Session Two, 9 September 2021

### Jean-Marc Hill

PhD candidate, Cambridge University

### *'The Golden Age of Piracy': Re-Assessing the Vocabulary of Maritime History*

Through its analysis of 'The Golden Age of Piracy', this paper represents a contemporary take on the broader theme of the conference that relates to the maritime resistance to imperialism and the maritime experience of decolonisation. Whilst a recent shift towards a confrontation with our imperial past has resulted in the re-assessment of many sources, states, and histories. The very language and specialist terminology that maritime historians employ has faced significantly less scrutiny. Originating in the histories of the late-nineteenth century, 'The Golden Age of Piracy', in reference to a period of maritime predation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has proven to be a controversial phrase within piratical scholarship because of its periodisation problems and romantic sentiments. However, despite countless scholars' own designation of 'The Golden Age', the problematic connotations of the expression have never been deconstructed or unpacked in any great depth. This paper intends to remedy this. For example, one of the main ideas that will be addressed is that the term 'Golden Age' is very much tied to a 'white European' and imperialist view of the past, which in turn plays a role in a more problematic celebration of certain periods, types, and figures of maritime predation over others. In terms of structure, the first part of this paper will consider the origins, issues, and usage of the expression. Whereas the second part will constitute a justification for the employment of a slightly altered version of the phrase. The main takeaway of this paper is that the traditional vocabulary and specialist terminology employed and reproduced by maritime historians must be scrutinised and re-assessed as intensely as the sources and events that it is used to describe.



**ABSTRACTS – Session Two, 9 September 2021****Naseem Ashiq**

MPhil candidate, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

***Merchants and Maritime Bandits: The Problem of Piracy in Indian Waters in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century***

Piracy is an act of offense or an act against the morality and ethics of a mercantile world. It is impossible to conceive maritime trade without pirates. The concept of piracy includes a wide variety of violence like seizure of ship, making hostages for ransom and business purpose, attack on pilgrim ships and so on and so forth. There is a link between trade and piracy as trade involves the accumulation of money, which in turn attracts pirates. The sense of criminality in trade is not new rather, it is as old as trade itself. Whenever trade was carried out enormously, there was an increasing threat of pirates. Traders, Travellers and Hajj pilgrims encountered the Malabaris, Angiras, Sanganians, Okhas and European pirates on their journeys who used to rob and loot on the prosperous trade routes.

The present paper examines and largely depends on some of the sixteenth and seventeenth century European travel accounts which provide us with an important source for the study of details of piracy conducted by notorious pirates in the Malabar, Konkan, Goan and Gujarat coasts of the Indian subcontinent. The paper discusses the way of how these sources castigate pirates and criminalize their activity. It further explores the modus-operandi of pirates, their quasipredatory and quasi-sedentary nature and the details of different gangs involved in piracy.

**Henry Jacob**

2021-2022 Henry Fellow and MPhil candidate, Cambridge University

***The Cimarrón Counterpoint: How Maritime Tensions Built Imperial Identities and Resistance in Portobelo***

Using Portobelo, Panama as a case study, this paper explores how hybridic maritime dynamics can shape not only imperial identities, but also practices of local resistance. Since its founding in 1597, Portobelo served as a Spanish trading entrepôt and as the home to a community of cimarrones, or freed slaves. Until its sacking in 1739, the port city held 195 ferias, multi-week events where Spanish traders exchanged goods as well as people. Cimarrones, Portobelo's only permanent residents, provided the knowledge necessary for these fairs to flourish. However, cimarrones facilitated the decline, as well as the growth, of Portobelo. Indeed, these former slaves aided British pirates in their frequent and ferocious raids of the area. In 1739, these attacks culminated in Portobelo's collapse as a commercial center. As the locus of interimperial commerce and conflicts, Portobelo played a fundamental role in the formation of British, Spanish, and cimarrón identities. Despite Portobelo's fall from prominence, this ambivalent maritime space continued to influence customs of national and non-national belonging. Upon destroying Portobelo's trade system, the British converted this military victory into a rhetorical instrument of empire. Along with the Portobello Road in London, cities in Scotland and New Zealand commemorate Panama. Even if largely forgotten in Europe, the descendants of cimarrones still organize lively carnivals in the land where their ancestors gained freedom. Today, multiple Portobelos exist, but they share the same history. Unveiling these intertwining narratives sheds light on the construction of and challenges to imperial identity in maritime communities.

**Session One, 10 September 2021****Maya Wassell Smith**

Collaborative PhD Candidate, National Maritime Museum and Cardiff University

***Needlework and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Navies***

From sketch to stitch, British sailors were proficient and prolific makers whose crafted output often reflected upon their national identity. Men in the merchant and Royal Navies embroidered pictures of flags, ships and other objects of imperial expansion, tattooed them onto their skin and drew them in their journals. They engaged in this work at sea, as they shipped British passengers and goods around the world and fought wars on their behalf, and also in their retirement, after their seafaring careers had ended. This paper will examine the patriotic imagery in the artwork of the nineteenth-century sailor, before exploring his motivations for articulating national feeling in this way. I seek to address not only how the British seafarers saw themselves within the national community, but also how craft influenced the way the national community saw the British seafarer. Here, the Victorian valorisation of sailor craft in national temperance and missionary movements will be considered alongside the way sailors conformed to, appropriated or deviated from the image of the 'handyman' sailor. Craft will be shown as a legitimising practice for seafarers, one that pacified a problematic figure in the national imagination and was used to navigate the space between sea and land, sailor and nation.

**ABSTRACTS – Session One, 10 September 2021****Dr Rowan Thompson****Alan Pearsall Fellow for Naval and Maritime History, 2020–21, Institute of Historical Research*****‘A particularly British institution’: Navy Weeks, Navalism, and Identity, 1927–1938***

‘Navy Week’, declared *The Times* in 1938, is a ‘particularly British institution, which is worthy of the full support of the public, conscious as they must be of the close association it provides between the people of this country and the time-honoured Service upon which the preservation of their liberties so largely depends’. Held at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Chatham from 1927–1938, Navy Weeks brought visitors into contact with the work, life, and routine of the Royal Navy. While raising funds for naval charities was the publicly stated aim of Navy Weeks, the event was an important stage for the Admiralty to promote the navy’s centrality for the preservation of nation and empire, as well as encouraging sea-mindedness and education among the British public. Navy Weeks represented a site of modernity, technological innovation, and military prestige, while also promoting naval heritage, nostalgia, and tradition. Like fleet reviews and warship launches prior to 1914, Navy Weeks represented a naval theatre in which, as Jan Rüger has shown, the navy and the nation were displayed on a public stage, visible to both domestic and foreign audiences. Navy Weeks also provided a crucial platform for the construction (and projection) of local, national, and imperial identity. More broadly, national security, defence, insularity, and national exceptionalism were all tied to expressions of Britishness in the rhetoric and discourse surrounding the event. However, as this paper will demonstrate, the celebration of navy and nation was highly contested, attracting criticism from pacifist, anti-war, and liberal internationalist organisations.

**Jayne Friend****PhD candidate, The University of Portsmouth*****Warship Weeks and Royal Navy ship adoptions: civic culture and naval pageantry during the Second World War.***

Warship Weeks urged the British public to invest in national savings stamps and certificates for the provision of new ships and to help fund Britain’s wartime financial deficit. To encourage investment, many towns and cities conducted a range of distinctly militarised ceremonies, social events, parades and pageants to promote their chosen Warship Week target of the ‘adoption’ of a particular type of ship. These were highly choreographed events designed to stir local patriotism and mobilise the civilian population towards making sacrifices in aid of the Royal Navy. Naval parades, ceremonies and iconography during these weeks had a significant impact upon local civic culture and the relationship between the British public and the Royal Navy during the Second World War. The exchange of commemorative plaques and other symbolic objects further cemented these associations. This paper examines Warship Week pageantry and ship adoptions to consider the impact this had upon wartime civic culture and the construction of local identities. In doing so, this paper makes the case for the continued influence of naval culture and public naval theatre and explores the many ways in which this was presented in wartime society through the concerted effort to foster ‘naval character’ in civic celebrations. In highlighting how these celebrations and ceremonies perpetuated localised naval pageantry throughout the Second World War, this paper begins to address a lack of scholarship concerning the cultural role of the navy in wartime Britain as an omnipresent symbol of national identification.



## Session Two, 10 September 2021

**Valerie Burton**

**Emeritus Professor of Maritime History, Memorial University of Newfoundland**

**Dr Diane Frost**

**Senior Lecturer, University of Liverpool**

### *Fellows in Interesting Times: The Shifting Ground of Maritime Scholarship on and Beyond Merseyside*

In the 1980s and 90s emerging historians of merchant shipping, seafaring, and sea-borne trade found financial support and an academic home in Liverpool at the University's Department of Economic History and Merseyside Maritime Museum. As McQuie Mather Fellows, our research, teaching, and public outreach furthered links between the two institutions. From this base our scholarship found a place in docklands re-development and in the re-engagement of the city's maritime heritage for a younger generation.

Unparalleled as was this fellowship, it is little known about now. The recent death of the former Department Head Peter Davies makes us newly conscious that he and other promoters and supporters are due our gratitude. We are, however, moved to say that neither the fellowship nor the ground they occupied were unproblematic. More is intended for this session than a show of thanks or a rosy-tinted retrospective. A critical evaluation has resonance across the decades.

Adding Robert Lee as Chair furthers reflection on what the Fellowship and two of its incumbents achieved at the time and more so over the longer-term. Career-long contributions to the discussion of identity and of nation mean Valerie Burton and Diane Frost are well placed to reflect on the local, national, and international complexion of the conference's themes. More particularly we raise a provocation: we suggest that the aspirations we formed during the fellowship for a merchant seafaring and trading past to be a democratizing element in historical understandings of the long nineteenth century might be more difficult to achieve given the politics of maritime history in Britain now.

\* Valerie Burton was the McQuie Mather Fellow in 1986-89, and Diane Frost in 1991-94. A third McQuie Mather Fellow, Graeme Milne (1995-97), is unavailable for this session.

**Liverpool John Moores University is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and celebrates diversity. LJMU will not tolerate any form of unfair discrimination or harassment, be that written, physical or verbal, based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.**



# STUDIES IN PORT AND MARITIME HISTORY

## FROM LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY PRESS

This newly launched series seeks to publish current research of the highest quality in the fields of maritime and port history. The series is perhaps unique in encompassing the histories of both ports and the maritime.

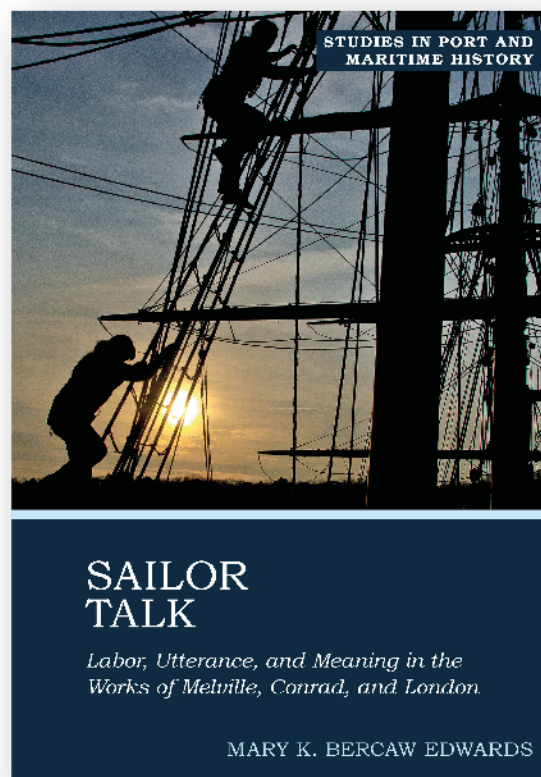
### Series Editors:

Andrew Popp, University of Baltimore  
Nicholas J. White, Liverpool John Moores University

### Interested in publishing with us?

Contact Commissioning Editor  
Alison Welsby a.welsby@liverpool.ac.uk

## New and forthcoming books



### Sailor Talk

Labor, Utterance, and Meaning in the Works of Melville, Conrad, and London

Mary K. Bercaw Edwards

*'A rich, meticulously researched, and engaging exploration of the literary and cultural significance of "sailor talk".'* - Emily Cuming, LJMU

Investigates the literary and cultural significance of 'sailor talk,' rethinking the nineteenth-century sailor and sailor-writer, whose language articulated the rich and complex culture of seafarers in port and at sea, and the foundational role of maritime language in the works of Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, and Jack London.

#### About the author

Mary K. Bercaw Edwards is Associate Professor of English and Director of Maritime Studies, University of Connecticut.

#### MARCH 2021

HB 9781800859654 | E 9781800858688  
£90.00 £63.00

### Beyond Trawlertown

Life and Legacy in the Wake of the Cod Wars

Joanne Byrne

*Beyond Trawlertown* takes a journey through the British trawling port of Hull in a climate of disruption. This book offers new historical and cultural perspectives on how global maritime events impacted upon seafaring communities.

#### PUBLISHING JANUARY 2022

HB 9781800856554 | E 9781800855618 | £90.00 £63.00

### Also in Maritime History



Economic Warfare and the Sea

Edited by David Morgan-Owen and Louis Halewood

*Economic Warfare and the Sea* presents new perspectives on sea power and grand strategy.

*Research in Maritime History, 55*

**MARCH 2020 | £80.00 £56.00**



## 30% discount for conference attendees

UK & RoW **CPMH30** [liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk](http://liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk)  
USA **ADISTAS** [www.global.oup.com/academic](http://www.global.oup.com/academic)

[www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk](http://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk)

 SUBSCRIBE

  FOLLOW @LIVUNIPRESS

 PUBLISH