



Section F

MARITIME CULTURE

Britain's historical relationship with the sea produced a distinctive and rich culture, which is reflected in the collections of museums around the United Kingdom. The objects can range from sailors' amateur scrimshaw to a painting by JMW Turner. Many of the objects make wonderful display items, often linked to historically significant characters and events, and provide evidence to support broader stories.

Maritime culture falls broadly into two categories: life at sea, which produced its own language, work songs and shanties, skills, flags and the etiquette of using them, and sailors' arts and crafts; and largely shore-based material culture such as paintings, figureheads and commemorative material. The outputs are extensive and could form a book on their own. In this section we have covered key elements of maritime culture that will provide an accessible introduction to the subject.

1 MARINE PAINTING

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DEFINITION OF MARINE PAINTING

Marine painting might at first seem relatively easy to define: any picture that has ships and the sea as its main subject. The term seascape could also include coastscape or beachscape – really an extension of landscape. The pure seascape is not dependent on the ship as its central theme. Therefore, marine painting may be taken as that which portrays the sea itself as well as the ships that sailed on it.

Marine painting, of whatever country of origin, provides invaluable information about ship construction and design, sails and rigging, ship decoration, and the transitional age when iron superseded wood as the material of construction and steam superseded sail as the means of propulsion. It is a record, too, of naval operations throughout the great sea campaigns of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries.

DEVELOPMENT OF MARINE PAINTING

Marine painting is of comparatively recent development, though pictures of ships decorate Egyptian pottery from the period 3200 B.C. In art of earlier periods, marine subject matter appears either as incidental or subordinate to some major theme, usually religious or mythological. It could be argued that the true birth of marine painting occurred in the Netherlands in the second half of the 16th century, coinciding with the rise to maritime power of the Dutch Republic. During the 17th century the painters of the Dutch School were responsible for elevating marine painting into a separate genre of its own, and established seascape as both a recognised and popular type of painting in the Netherlands and Britain.



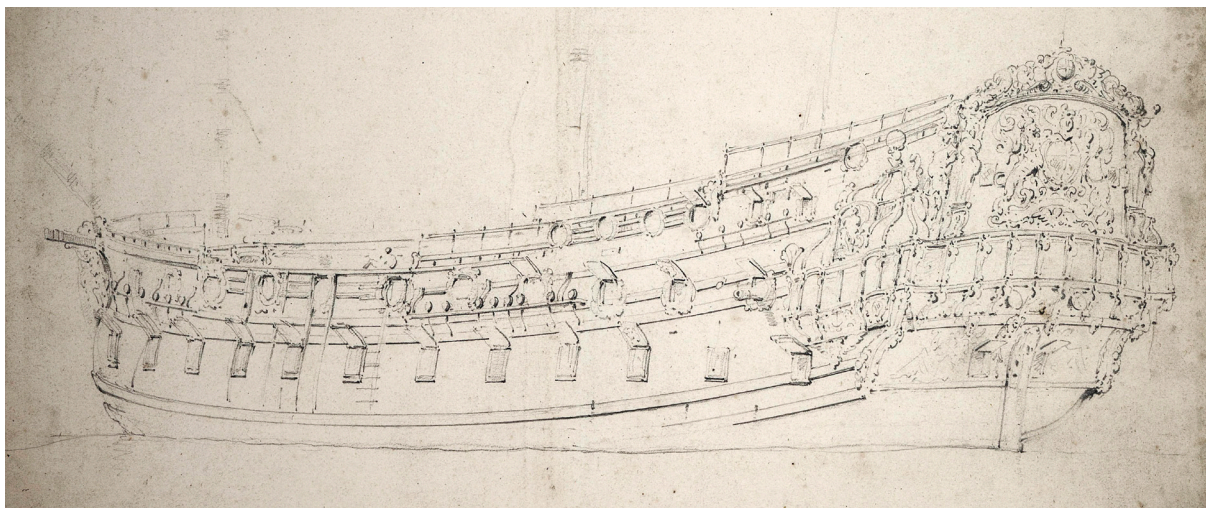
Adam Willaerts, 'A Dutch Squadron attacking a Spanish fortress', 1622, oil on panel



Simon de Vlieger, 'A Ship Wrecked off a Rocky Coast', 1640, oil on panel

BHC0773© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Dutch artists such as Adam Willaerts (1577–1664) and Cornelisz Hendrik Vroom (1562/3–1640) concentrated on dramatic subject matter, such as naval battles and shipwreck scenes. Later marine artists turned their attention to a more naturalistic treatment of the sea, taking into account weather conditions and ordinary shipping, avoiding their predecessors' factual, linear style. Artists such as Jan van Goyen (1596–1656), Simon de Vlieger (c.1600–53), Aelbert Cuyp (1620–91) and Jan van de Cappelle (c. 1623–79) are considered, by some, to be the greatest of all Dutch marine artists.



The Dutch marine artist Willem Van de Velde and his son Willem the younger came to England around 1675. They produced detailed drawings of ships which were often used for paintings. This is one of the most famous. Top: William van de Velde the Younger, 'Portrait of the Resolution', 1676, drawing, PAH3916; and bottom: William van de Velde the Younger, 'The Resolution in a Gale', circa 1678, oil on canvas, BHC3582

both © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



JMW Turner, 'The Battle of Trafalgar, 21 October 1805', 1822–24
Oil on canvas, BHC 0565 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

By the early 19th century, during the Romantic age, the scope of marine painting widened: contrast the naturalism of John Constable (1776–1837), with the intense, metaphysical seascapes of Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) and the apocalyptic scenes of Turner (1775–1851). The subject matter of Victorian marine art was just as varied, as were the techniques of painting. This period witnessed the transition from sail to steam and from timber to steel shipbuilding. The period saw the abandonment of traditional methods of shipbuilding and experienced a boom in the shipping industry. Such changes were inevitably reflected in the paintings of the period. By the late 1880s the artist as sailor had become the artist as explorer, scientist and eye-witness – a typical 19th-century collector of information. With the gradual replacement of sail by steam many, incorrectly, anticipated an associated demise of marine painting.

FEATURES OF MARINE PAINTING

Maritime history has produced many different pieces of evidence and historical documentation which are helpful to the curator or researcher in identifying and interpreting marine art.

- Identifying vessels is often the first task in forming an analysis of a marine painting.
- Considering the various national styles of shipbuilding and the development over the years of shipbuilding techniques; as well as the interweaving of economic, historic, political and climatic factors that affected ship development.
- Identifying flags in the image (there are a wealth of references to aid this task).
- Other aspects which may help in identification and dating are architectural detail (in port scenes) and period dress. Dress can closely date a picture, especially if there are any fashionably dressed figures, and these may also help to identify the location.

STYLES OF PAINTING

There is often some discernible mannerism in the work of marine artists by which they may be identified in their treatment of the sea, sky, landscape, background or shipping. Most seascapes are painted as if from land, and therefore depend on the contrast between the human environment and the wide, free space of the sea. The vastness of the sea frequently extends to a far-distant horizon, and so requires appropriate compositional strategies. Instead of using one-point perspective artists often adopt a horizontal, panoramic sweep, with the relief profile of ships, masts and sails providing structure and a sense of specificity. The sea's changeability and the way it responds to the weather are often the focus of the marine painter. The effect of sunlight on water and wind, for instance, is an almost tangible feature of many seascapes. Faithful observation of such phenomena as wave formation and cloud patterns, the low horizon, and the importance assumed by the sky, were all typical of Dutch seascape of the mid-17th century.

In general the choice of subjects in marine paintings has been controlled by the nationalities of the people who painted them, and also by what was going on around them. The pattern of the development of artistic style was largely dictated by one or two of the most successful masters who created an artistic fashion, which would in turn be adapted by their pupils, the best of whom would create another fashion and so identify a period. Each period will have, in general, its own palette, its own approach to drawing and subject, and will mirror the feeling of the times. Recourse to prints of the ports in the area may also aid in identifying the subject.



Charles Brooking, *'Ships in a Light Breeze'*, circa 1750–59, oil on canvas

BHC1022 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

SHIP PORTRAITS

Ship portraiture developed around the mid-18th century. Almost all marine painters during this period were ship portraitists. These portraits were usually watercolour or gouache on paper and an average size of 51 x 76 cm. Ship portraitists endeavoured to reproduce a true likeness of a ship, correct in outline and proportions and technically reliable. These drawings are occasionally found in old logbooks, private diaries, chests of ships' officers and account books of shipping guilds. Many ship portraits were produced in European as well as foreign ports. Their quality varies from mediocre pieces to paintings with real merit. Ship portraits provide curators with very important iconographic sources. Very often they are the only clue to the maritime history of a certain region and often provide the last remaining evidence of a ship's existence.



*Ernest John Tench, 'The fishing boat George Borrow', LT 956, 1908, oil on board
with kind permission of Lowestoft and East Suffolk Maritime Museum*

Often these paintings are neither signed nor dated, but often have a strip at the base with the names written of the ship, skipper, and sometimes the circumstances of the voyage. It is from the letter forms and spelling of these that the date of the paintings can usually be ascertained. The background, be it seascape or harbour, will indicate whether it is a painting by a north European or Mediterranean artist.

The ship portrait in three positions, showing the ship three times – bow, stern and broadside-on – demanded special skills of the artist. Sometimes these 'pierhead paintings' as they were known, were bought by the sailors who sailed in the ships concerned.



War artists were employed during two world wars and in later conflicts. This painting shows sailors in the naval base at Lyness, Scapa Flow, c 1940. Charles Cundall, 'Libertymen at Lyness', 1942, oil on canvas

BHC1562 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

PRINTS

The invention of printing heralded the first accurate images of vessels. An inked impression printed on paper, or other suitable material, is termed an *original print*. This definition does not apply to modern photographic reproductions, regardless of whether they carry the signature of the artist or not. If an item can be authenticated as having been printed at least one hundred years ago, it is usual (customary) to refer to it as an *antique print*.

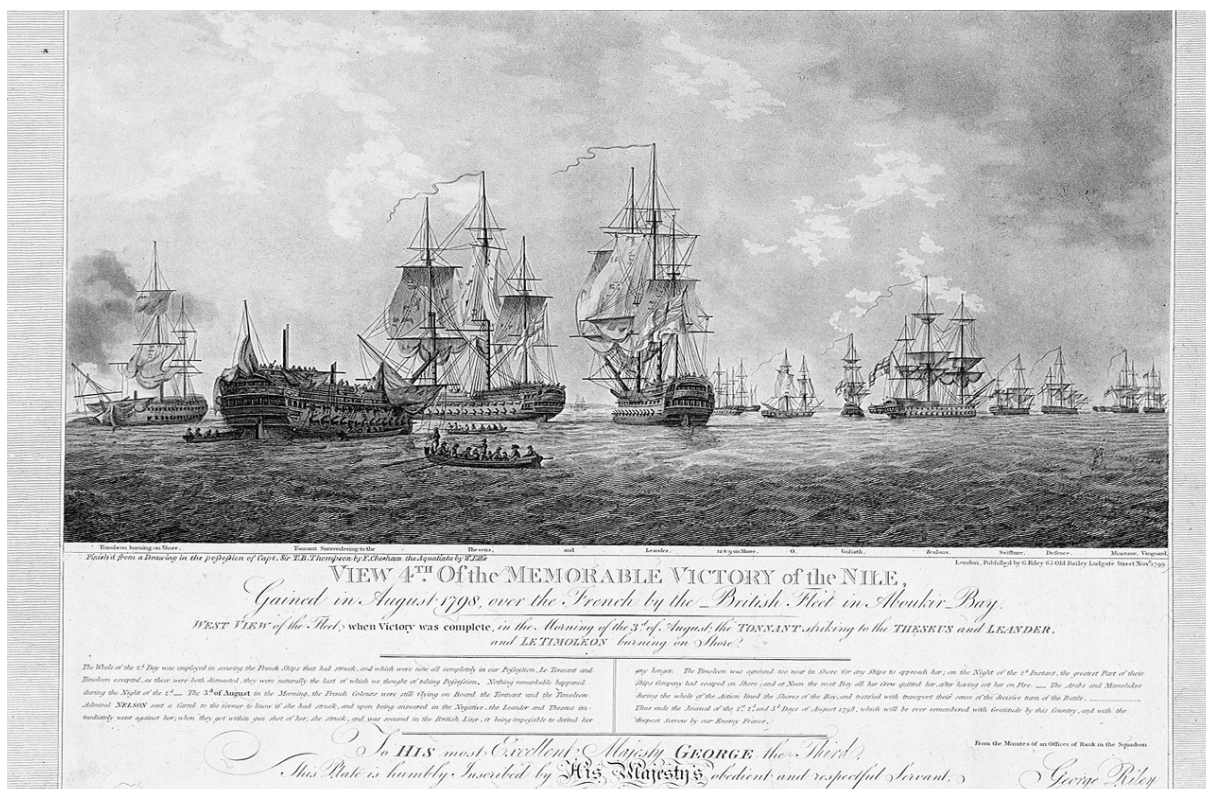
It is possible by means of marine prints to gain an accurate and pictorial history of seafaring. If we wish to see an accurate picture of a frigate action, or an 18th-century East Indiaman, we have to rely either on a contemporary painting or print. Prints provide information and illustrate a wide range of themes as rigging, sail-plans and naval architecture.

It is important to note the difference between original etching, where the artist-etcher himself prepared and executed the design on the plate, and interpretative etching – a copy by an etcher of the work of someone else. Quite obviously, an original etching made by a well known artist has an intrinsic art value far greater than a copy.

PRINTS ARE CLASSIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

- original issues – an original or early issue indicates an example taken from a first printing of the plate after various proof copies have been pulled;
- re-issues – a re-issue may have been printed several years after the original printing and may not carry the imprint of the original publisher. The earlier the impression the better;

- re-strikes – the expression re-strike is normally used to indicate a modern impression taken from an original hand-worked plate. Many old copper plates have been provided with a soft steel surface to improve their wearing abilities and this can be renewed as soon as the steel starts to break down;
- reproductions – reproductions are usually modern copies produced by taking photographs of old prints from which the printing plates are then made;
- copies made with the intent to defraud – to be legal these examples should carry the imprint of the publisher and the date of publication.



Two versions of the same print showing the action near the end of the Battle of the Nile in 1798, PAD5576, PAG8967 (latter engraved by Francis Chesham and William Ellis, 1799)

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

DOCUMENTATION STANDARDS & SECURITY

Documentation is crucial to the security and management of any fine art collection. The recovery and return of objects is more likely given that they have been photographed and adequately described. In many collections the information collected is extremely variable. For the documentation of marine art collections the issue of standardising descriptive terminology is of great importance. Different organisations will, of course, have different data requirements for access and interpretation purposes. In museums we are particularly interested in noting location, condition, proof of ownership and describing artworks in terms of historical significance and cultural meaning. Distinguishing features in art works provide unique documentation.



W L Wyllie (1851–1931) was one of the most prolific marine artists of the period. This watercolour shows the opening of Tower Bridge in London in 1894.

PAF0947 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

A description of any subject depicted or represented is potentially one of the most important ways of identifying an object or finding an image of it. However, describing subject matter in a way that is useful to others is one of the most difficult parts of the process. Different individuals may describe the same subject matter in various ways. In descriptions of subject matter, the recorded information should be self-explanatory to anyone without (maritime) specialist or culturally specific knowledge. The reverse side of a painting can also provide an excellent source of information, such as signatures, inscriptions, stains, stamps, damages, or unique aspects of the fabric support. Other vital categories of documentation for fine art include materials and technique (descriptions often combine the two).

Each accessioned artwork or, where appropriate, group of works should be marked or labelled with its permanent identity number, without damaging the work. Framed prints, drawings, watercolours, oil paintings should be marked both on the stretcher and the frame on the top left-hand corner at the back. Unframed prints, drawings and watercolours should be marked on the reverse, in the border. Unframed oil paintings should be marked on the stretcher.

Measurement is important. When paintings, drawings and prints are measured, the dimensions given should be height followed by width (e.g. 280 x 140 mm). These dimensions will differ depending on whether the unframed size or 'sight size' is measured. Sight size refers to the area visible within the frame rather than the overall size of the canvas, paper, or panel. Museums usually record the dimensions of the work unframed. For prints, measurements are given to the edges of the engraved surface.

COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Copyright is an issue affecting every museum and gallery today, particularly with the potential for global dissemination of images via the internet and social networks. Among the kinds of works protected by copyright are paintings, drawings and any form of engraving or print. Copyright arises automatically from the moment an original work is created. Copyright protection is given to all of the preceding irrespective of artistic merit; it is enough that the work is original. No artistic quality is therefore required. An artistic work includes a painting, a drawing, a plan, map or chart, any form of engraving or print, or a photograph (both negative and final print).

TERM OF COPYRIGHT

Copyright does not last forever: it 'subsists' and then expires. The period that copyright lasts for is called the 'term of copyright'. When copyright has expired, it is said to be in the public domain – in other words it can be freely used without restriction.

OWNERSHIP OF COPYRIGHT

It follows logically that the first owner of the copyright in an original work should be the author (creator/ artist) of it. Ownership can be assigned or transferred by this first owner to someone else, who then becomes a subsequent owner of copyright. Being able to trace how the ownership of copyright may have been transmitted is of vital importance, particularly in the case of museums in relation to exploiting older copyright works (for example those in museums collections).

Authorising someone else to commit an infringement is itself an infringement. With regards to fine art collections the infringements of copying a work or issuing copies to the public (the right of distribution) are particularly relevant. As museums seek to increase access to their collection through public databases, copying includes storing a work in any medium by electronic means. Issuing copies to the public includes the reproduction of postcards and prints. If either of these is done without the authority of the copyright owner, then the copyright is infringed.

CONSERVATION

Seek advice from a professional conservator with any concerns about the condition of pictures in your collection. The cleaning of paintings and prints should only ever be undertaken by a qualified fine art conservator.

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2 FIGUREHEADS AND FANCYWORK

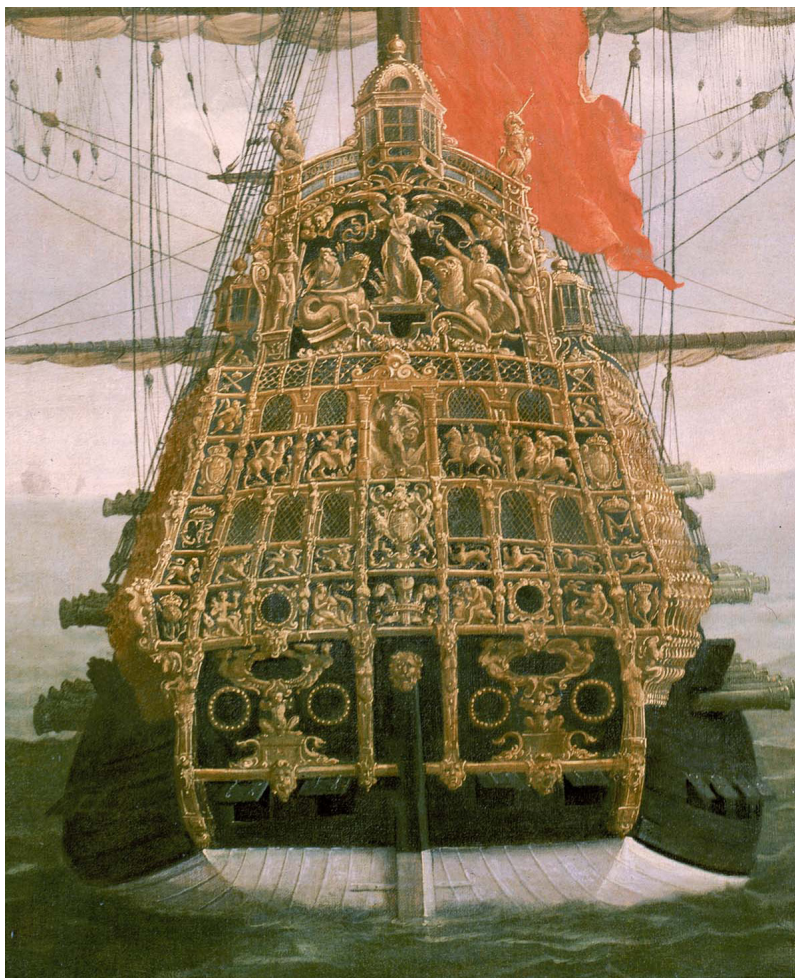
BY MIKE STAMMERS, FORMER KEEPER OF
MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM



The famous figurehead of the Cutty Sark, showing the witch Nanny holding the tail of Tam O'Shanter's horse, as described in Robert Burns's poem.

© Brian Lavery, with kind permission of The Cutty Sark Trust

The external decoration of ships has a long history that can be traced through iconography and archaeology down from Classical times. By the 19th century in the United Kingdom it had developed a defined set of stylistic characteristics. Part of these involved paint schemes such as the dummy painted gunports along the sides of the hull for sailing ships or the choice of common logo or paint scheme for steam ships owned by one firm. Carved decoration was more common in sailing ships and though declining with the gradual disappearance of the sailing ship, lingered on into the 20th century. It is possible that over 500 ship carvings, especially figureheads, have been preserved in the United Kingdom but records of the carvers who fashioned them are scarce.



Peter Pett's Sovereign of the Seas of 1637 was possibly the most heavily decorated ship of all time, with carvings on the sides, bow and stern as shown in this painting by Sir Peter Lely (oil on canvas).

Detail of BHC 2949 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

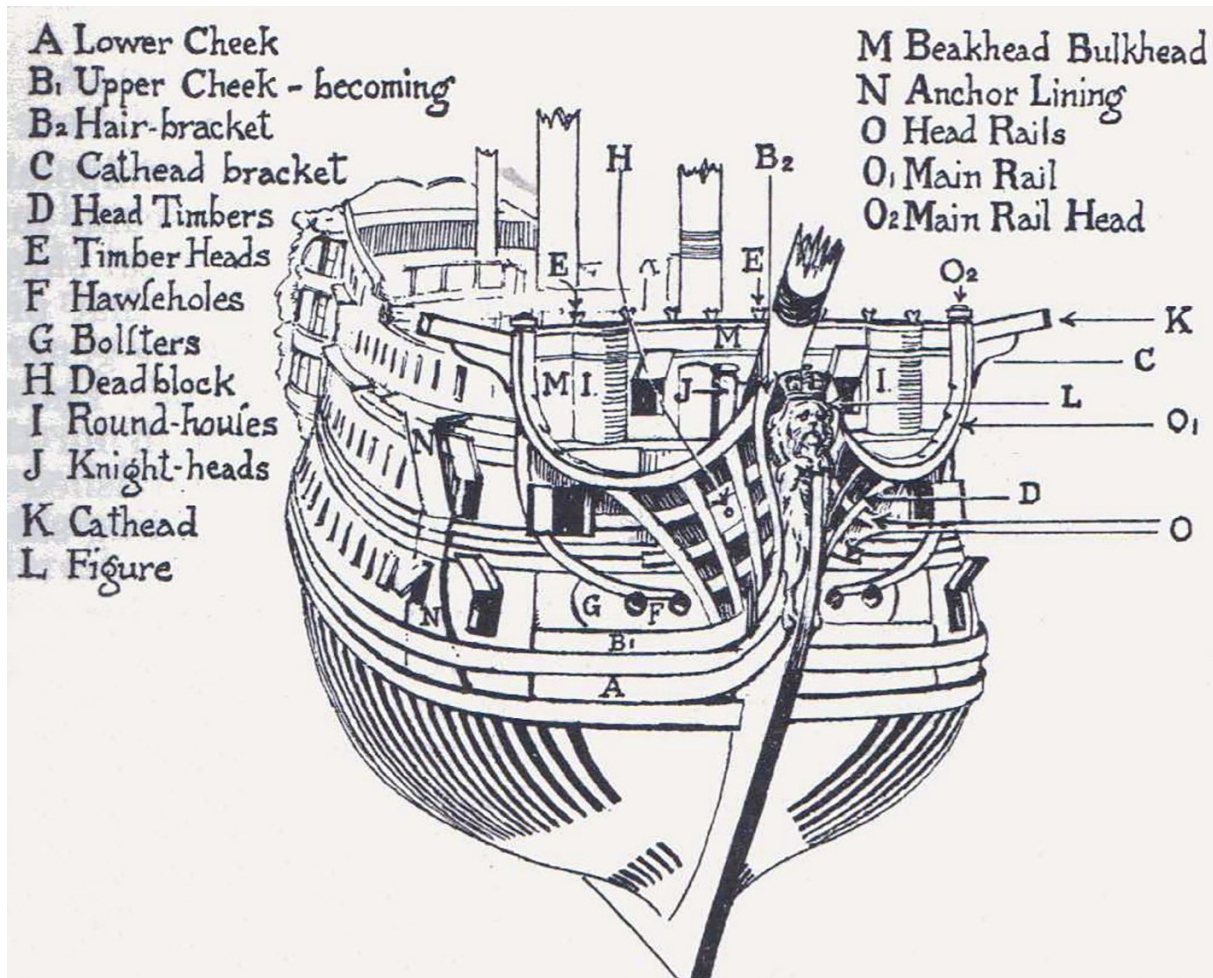
Ship's carvings, especially figureheads, are laden with romance and nostalgia. Most accounts emphasise their mythical origins as embodiments of the spirit of the vessel itself or as a symbolic substitute of a victim's head sacrificed to pacify the sea gods. In this form they can be traced from ancient Mediterranean seafaring peoples such as the Phoenicians. They favoured carvings of horses' heads – perhaps to signify the speed of the ship. The Vikings in similar fashion favoured fearsome dragons to terrify their enemies. Many accounts of the history of ship decoration imply that there was a continuous line of development from these very varied ancient seafaring cultures to the figureheads that have survived in our maritime museums. This is debatable: first, it assumes that the inspiration remained the same. It did not: sacrifice to the sea gods was not a major consideration for a 19th-century merchant ship owner. Pride in ownership and latterly 'brand recognition' in the form of funnel colours and naming schemes was. This pride was manifested in the common application of family names or indeed a portrait of the owner himself and in other manifestations of artistic work and community life such as the commissioning of paintings and the public celebration of the launching of a new ship. Second, there is no continuous line of development from ancient roots to the 19th century.



An illustration from the second edition of Ripa's Iconologia

National Maritime Museum,
Greenwich, London

From what little we know about medieval and Tudor ship decoration it was largely a matter of paint work often in abstract or heraldic designs. This had precious little to do with what came after, which started in prestigious naval vessels with a riot of realistically carved and gilded figures covering the bow, sides and stern. Surviving carvings from the *Wasa* demonstrate how elaborate this new fashion could become. Its inspiration was not maritime tradition but a landward artistic movement, the Baroque. This style was spread right across Europe under royal, aristocratic and ecclesiastical patronage from the late 16th century. It helped to reinforce the ruler's image and tied in with contemporary thought on the divine right of kings and their absolute powers. It was therefore not surprising that a king's naval vessels, which were an increasingly important means of projecting his power, should be treated as symbols of prestige. Its influence with all its allusions to the Classical past was also spread through publications such as Ripa's *Iconologica* of 1593, which was virtually a pattern book for carvers.



Details of a warship's head, from L G Carr Laughton, Old Ship Figureheads and Sterns, 1920

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



For most of the late 17th and early 18th centuries the lion was the standard figurehead for English and British warships. The only exceptions were the largest three deckers, which had individual figureheads.

FHD0088 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



This figurehead is believed to come from a French 18th-century merchant ship.

FHD0078 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A model of the original figurehead of HMS Victory as she was built in 1765. This was replaced by a simpler one during her 'great repair' of 1803.

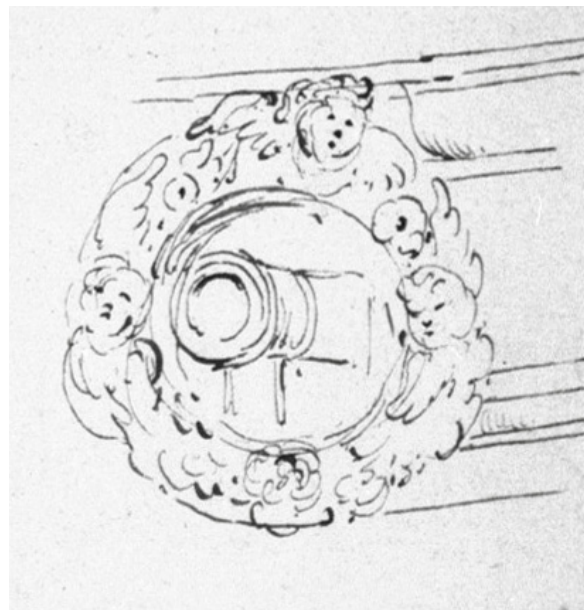
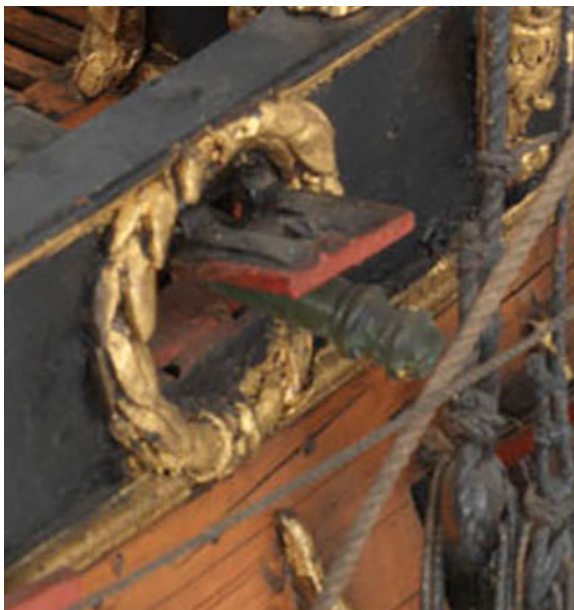
SLR2530 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Not all figureheads were painted, but this one, of HMS Harlequin of 1836, clearly needed colour.

FHDoo81 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Merchant ships did not have the same requirement for decoration or carving along the sides of a hull (such as the naval laurel-wreathed gunports (symbols of victory) which, in a merchant vessel, would soon be damaged by cargo handling). Nevertheless carving rather than painting did become the norm for larger merchant ships.



The wreathed gunport was a standard feature of English warship decoration for most of the late 17th century.

SLR0002, Detail of PAF6626 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



The head of HMS Daring of 1844 FHD0073
© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



This head is believed to come from HMS London of 1844. FHD0091
© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Most figureheads can be broken down into three different sizes: the bust, the demi figure (down to the waist) and the full-length figure. Each came with a different price according to the amount of carving. The majority were carvings of people rather than animals, birds or abstract designs. Some were portraits of the owners or members of his family; some were modelled by the wife or members of the ship carver's family. A good example was that of James Baines, the famous owner of the Black Ball Line of Australian packet ships. In 1853 he had ordered a very large ship from Donald McKay, the Boston (USA) shipbuilder, to be named *James Baines* and he sat for the figurehead at Allan & Clotworthy's Liverpool workshop. The finished piece was crated up and despatched to Boston for fitting on the vessel, which was completed in 1854.

But the human images could embody abstract or other concepts or mythical figures. Places, countries and abstract ideas such as 'Hope' or 'Charity' or gods from the days of Ancient Greece and Rome could all be represented by female figures appropriately dressed and carrying the appropriate symbols. Many smaller coastal traders such as the collier barques of the northeast ports managed without a figurehead.

The second important inheritance was that the decoration was applied at both ends of the ship. Figureheads have attracted greater attention because they are visually more arresting and they have survived in large numbers. But they are not the whole decorative scheme; the stern had its place and was arguably more important because it carried vital information about the vessel itself in the form of its name and port of registration. These were often set off by a ropework border, stars and drops and similar abstract decorations and these could be found on ships which did not have figureheads.

The third inheritance was that ship carving, rather than being an esoteric and separate craft handed down from centuries of tradition, was a branch of the 19th-century wood carver's work. It shared the same techniques and often the same designs and many of its proponents moved freely from work on figureheads to carving furniture. The great furniture designer Thomas Sheraton identified four

separate types of wood carving in his *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1803: architectural, internal decoration such as frames for pier glasses, chairwork, and ship work. The latter included ‘mass figures for the heads and bold foliage for the sterns and quarters of ships’. In the late 19th century many of the surviving ship carvers tackled not only these externals but carved work for the internal staterooms of steam liners.



Royal yachts often had especially elaborate figureheads, such as this one for the Royal Charlotte of 1824. FHD0097

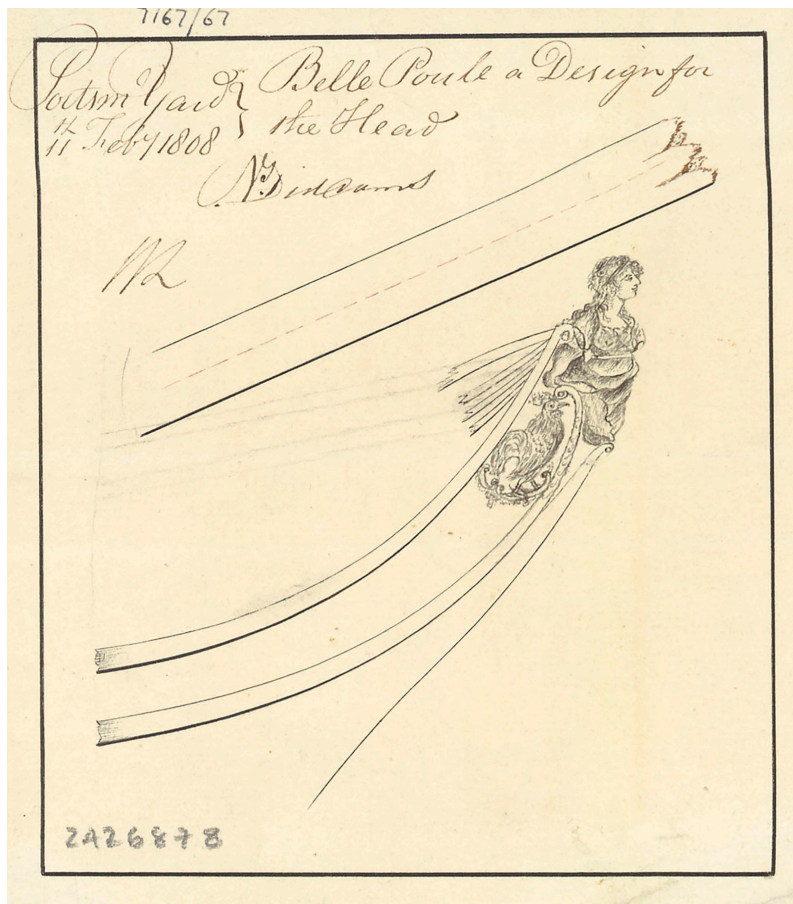
© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



*The head of the steel sailing ship Coriolanus of 1876
FHD0071*

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Wood, the carver's material, comes in many usable species. Ship carvings are relatively large pieces of work and need to withstand a harsh environment. The wood must be capable of taking a sharp edge. The most frequently mentioned woods were pine (especially yellow pine), oak and mahogany. Elaborate pieces were made of a mixture of woods; for example, the main body might be of pine with the outstretched arms of a medium hardwood. The latter were vulnerable to damage and also needed to have the grain of the wood running down the length of the limb to ensure maximum strength.



A drawing for a new figurehead for the frigate *Belle Poule*, captured from the French in 1806.

ZAZ6878 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

The design of the piece seems to have been usually no more than a pencil sketch and not a scale drawing. This is judging by the few surviving ship carver's sketches and notebooks. Merseyside Maritime Museum has copies of sketches by David Hughes and J J Laurie of Glasgow and a notebook that belonged to William Dodd together with his self portrait bust. P N Thomas in his *British Figurehead and Ship Carvers* (Albington, 1995) also refers to sketches in the National Maritime Museum's archives including the Alexander Stephens & Co. papers.

There were two main types of carving: carving in relief on a flat block for such components as trail boards and stern boards and carving in the round for figureheads. Letter cutting was also considered a separate technique. Biographical information about the individual carvers tends to be fairly rare and usually consists of anecdotes about particular pieces of carving. It is also difficult to ascribe particular carvings to one carver or identify 'schools of carvers' in the way a fine art historian might do for painters on canvas. It is likely that most carvers trained as apprentices learning their skills on the job rather than through any formal education. For example Holman Waldron, an American ship carver started in a Maine shipyard as a general assistant at the age of 14. He started with general ship's woodwork and painting. His first piece of carving was a simple piece of rope moulding. He was shown by an older carver how to mark the main cutting lines and then to cut half round lines to resemble rope. (An American example has been used because of the paucity of biographical information for their British counterparts). If it was a single block of wood to be carved the outline of the design was chalked on to it. There is a roughed-out block in the Anderson collection in the Bristol Museums collection. This was a block of pine with a few chalked lines to indicate the main cutting lines. These did not need to be elaborate. The whole process of carving is one of subtraction, of cutting away material to develop the form of the carving. If the piece were larger it might need to be made from several pieces: for example a full-length figurehead with outstretched arms. This of course saved on materials and labour and certainly in Anderson's case components could be carved separately and then fastened

together. Anderson's later work was mainly carving horses for fairground roundabouts and the auction catalogue for his workshop and a surviving unfinished horse's head in the Bristol collection shows how he tackled these large pieces of carving, including having the work piece securely clamped before carving began.



The head from the Seringapatam of 1819 is unusually delicate and elaborate.

FHD0102

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



One of the best-known and elaborate surviving figureheads is this one from the 74-gun Ajax of 1809.

FHD0120

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Figureheads survived on the smaller warships of the later 19th century, as they were often partly made of wood like the Gannet of 1878, now preserved in Chatham Historic Dockyard.

© Brian Lavery, with permission of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust

There were three main stages: 'blocking in' is the rough shaping of the wood, using tools like the broad axe and the saw to cut away the larger pieces of waste material to achieve an outline of the piece. This is followed by 'bosting in', which is the real shaping process. It involves a high level of skill because it is difficult to see the shape and any mistake that takes something away cannot be amended. It involves the use of a wide range of gouges and chisels. The final part of 'bosting in' covers the smoothing off of the piece. This leaves the piece ready for the final stage, which is the carving in of detail. In a human figurehead this includes, for example, eyes and jewellery. It is carried out using a technique known as 'chip carving' where angled cuts are made to produce a triangular-shaped depression.

The ship carver required many hand tools to carry out his craft. The Sheffield Tools Catalogue of 1908 illustrated about sixty different types, and this could be multiplied by the number of widths of blade. In the case of gouges – the most commonly used tool – there were ten basic straight gouges, which were made in thirteen widths from half an inch to two inches. Gouges were the carver's most important tools. After the initial shaping of the block gouges would be used to bring definition to the subject by removing more wood. Some were spoon-shaped, some had cranked handles for awkward places and the shallowest were used for smoothing the background. Then there are V-shaped parting tools for incised lettering, textures, etc. and these are usually made in three different angles of 45, 60 and 90 degrees. There were also skew chisels with angled blades for cleaning out waste wood from corners. Veiners and fluters (or fluteironis) were U shaped while maraonis had flat bottoms with vertical sides. All these hand tools were used in conjunction with round mallets of different sizes. The most desirable had lignum vitae heads. A large grindstone was also another essential piece of equipment and the carver had to be adept in sharpening his tools. Some of the gouges in the Anderson collection at Bristol must have been used over a long period because the blades have been all but ground away through years of constant sharpening. The rule was that the softer the wood the more the tools had to be resharpened. All carvers also needed clamps or 'hold fasts' and benches with which to hold the work piece firmly while carving. Smoothing off as part of 'bosting in' also called for a number of other tools such as hand planes and spokeshaves often with curved blades as well as sandpaper. Anderson at Bristol also used machinery in the initial stages. His auction sale on 28 July 1936 showed that he owned a circular saw, facing, moulding and drilling machines worked by electricity generated from a dynamo which in turn was turned by a gas engine. David Hughes, a Liverpool carver who sold his business in September 1907 to emigrate to the USA, also owned a gas engine which he had used to work a circular saw and a lathe.



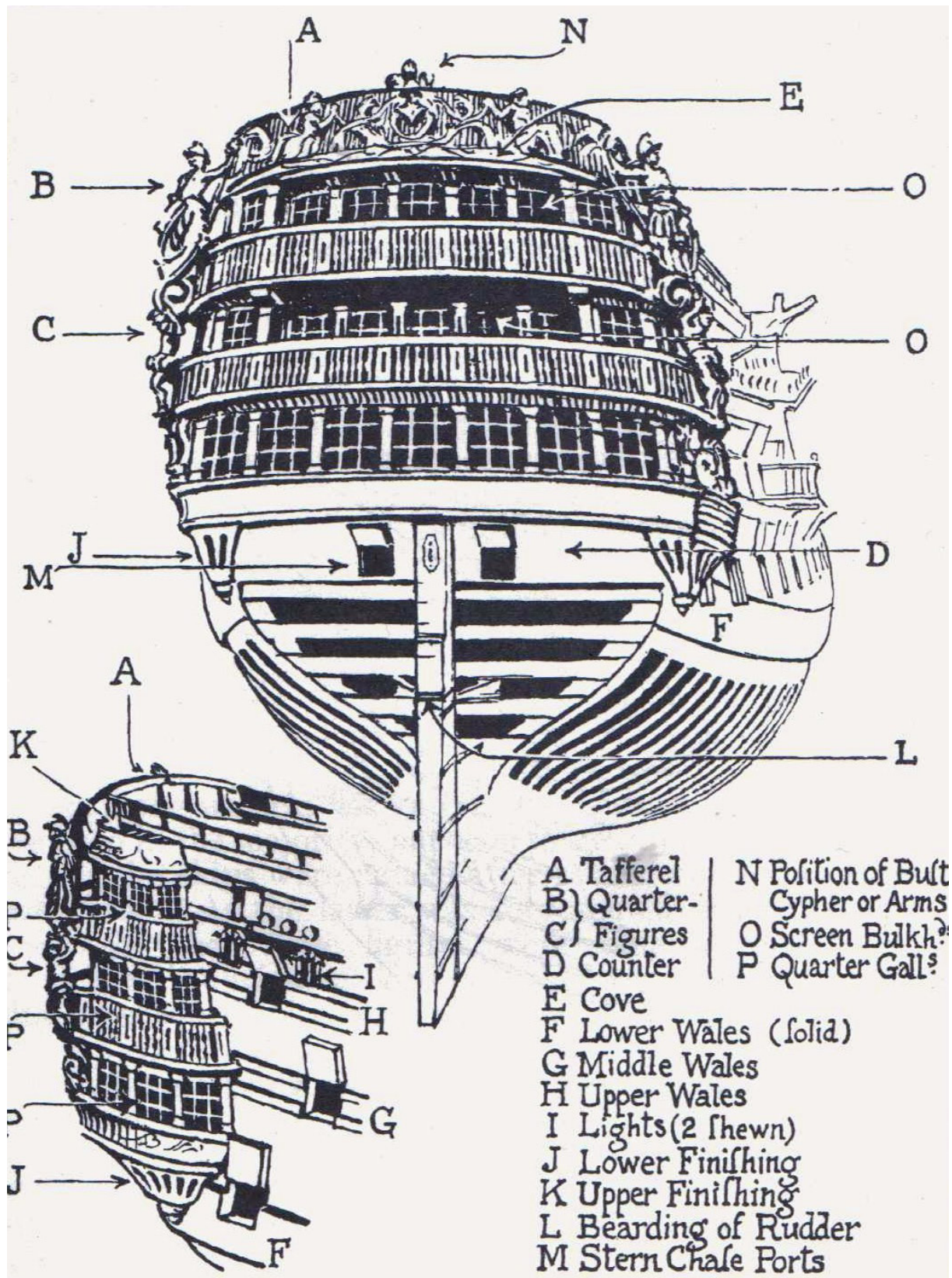
A sailor painting a ship's figurehead by W L Wyllie, late 19th century

PAE2453 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Ship carvers were not artists working in an economic vacuum. They were almost all running small businesses. In shipbuilding, ship decoration was one of the outfitting trades and as such would tend to be subcontracted rather than being part of the shipbuilding labour force. Other examples of the outfitting trades includes sail making, block making, upholstery and painting. Thomas has compiled a list of 125 ship carving firms operating in the 19th century and the majority were in centres of shipbuilding. The heaviest concentration was on the Clyde with 35 and the Tyne with 32. The east coast of Scotland (chiefly Aberdeen and Dundee) had 20, London 13, Liverpool 7 and the Cumbrian ports 7 as well. All the other major ports such as Bristol had at least one firm. There were also isolated figures such as James Brooker of Maryport who started his business there in 1842 after serving his apprenticeship with Robertsons of Liverpool. This small Cumbrian port had a thriving shipbuilding business, as did its neighbouring ports of Workington, Harrington and Whitehaven. Brooker also began to receive commissions from shipbuilders in Sunderland. The local Cumbrian newspapers usually mentioned the quality of his carving when reporting the latest ship to be launched and he also exhibited one of his pieces at the Great Exhibition in 1851. Nevertheless this fame did not prevent him from running out of work at Maryport and trying his luck first in Glasgow and Sunderland before ending his days as a pauper in 1860.

Risk of insolvency haunted most 19th-century small businessmen and it was not surprising that some of the larger carving firms took on a diverse range of work to spread their risks. Kay & Reid of Glasgow advertised that they were ship carvers, gilders, decorators, dealers in works of art, printsellers, picture cleaners, and pattern makers. They had a works at 97 Dumbarton Road and a shop at 103 St Vincent Street. Nevertheless this did not stop the firm being declared bankrupt in 1883. David Hughes diversified into making replica antique furniture at Liverpool after he had set up his own business in 1890. He practised great economy by training his sons and moving his family to live in the workshop building. Nevertheless he failed to make ends meet and sold up and emigrated to Utah in 1907 where he found fame and a stable income as a professor of carving at the state college. However, before 1890, while an employee of other firms, his frequent changes of residence in the poorer parts of Liverpool suggests that neither his income nor his status was of the best.

It is difficult to find any figures on ship carver's earnings, Thomas has extracted several examples from the accounts of shipbuilders on the Clyde, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Sunderland, Liverpool and Whitehaven. Price depended on the complexity of the work: a bust seemed to range about £3 to £6 with an average of £4. A full size figure ranged from £15 to £35 3s with an average of £21 1s. The figurehead of the tea clipper *Friar Tuck*, built in 1857 at Aberdeen which survives at the Valhalla Museum on Tresco, cost £24. Stern carvings cost between £4 10s and £15 10s with an average price of £8 15s. Some carvers advertised off-the-peg figureheads too. Interior carving may have been more profitable and as the number and size of steam liners increased there were increasing opportunities for ship carvers in the main shipbuilding centres. Merchant ships, especially sailing ships, continued to be decorated with carved woodwork albeit in a declining volume through out the 19th century. This has come to be associated with the figurehead but it was a wider decorative scheme embracing both extremities of the hull. Ship carving was a branch of the wider craft of carving using the same skills and tools though usually on a bigger scale. Ship carvers had to be versatile and take non-maritime carving work and the carved, panelled interiors of the first class accommodation aboard steam liners was an important source of work. Most ship carving firms were small businesses usually with less than an dozen employees with all the risks inherent in being a subcontractor to the shipbuilders; and shipbuilding itself was a notoriously cyclical industry.



Features of a decorated stern from L G Carr Laughton, *Old Ship Figureheads and Sterns*

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



The English flagship Royal Charles was captured by the Dutch during the Medway raid of 1667. Her stern carving was preserved in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (see image below) and lent to the National Maritime Museum for the 'Royal River' exhibition of 2012.

BHC0292 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



The stern carving of the Royal Charles

© Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



The elaborate carving on a model of the 80-gun Boyne of 1692

SLR0006 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



There was a much plainer style of carving after the Admiralty decided to 'explode carved works' in 1795. This is the stern of the 74-gun Implacable, captured from the French at Trafalgar and refitted in the Royal Dockyards.

ZBA0552 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



*Stern carvings mounted
on a doorway at Chatham
Historic Dockyard*

© Brian Lavery, with permission of
Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust

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3 COMMEMORATIVE AND RELIC ITEMS

BY RINA PRENTICE, CURATOR EMERITUS,
NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

Most maritime museums include in their collections decorative art objects which have associations with the sea, although they were not necessarily used on board ship or by sailors. These may be precious items of gold or silver, including presentation pieces, or less valuable ceramic, textile, glass, furniture or base metal pieces, which by means of their decoration, inscriptions or use of nautical motifs refer to particular maritime events, ships or people.

GOLD AND SILVER

There is a long tradition of presenting precious objects to naval heroes to mark victorious actions. Such items include valuable gold Freedom Boxes commissioned from leading goldsmiths as gifts from cities or companies. Other silver items, either useful domestic pieces, like soup and sauce tureens, tea sets, plates, or decorative items like large covered cups, centrepieces or ornaments, were presented as rewards for outstanding service. Normally an inscription explains the reason for the gift, and the background should be verifiable even if there is no additional provenance for the piece.



Launching silver, candlesticks and tankard, presented to the Master Shipwright at Plymouth on the launch of the Feversham in 1712.

PLTo211, 0741, 0208 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A City of London Freedom box presented to Captain Edward Berry after the Battle of the Nile in 1798.

PLTo023 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A soup tureen presented to Captain Amelius Beauclerk for taking French privateers in 1796.
PLT0021 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A freedom casket presented to Admiral Sir David Beatty by the City of Oxford in 1919.
PLT0010 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A wine set presented to the steamship Britannia in 1852 to commemorate a rough crossing of the Atlantic. Charles Dickens was among the passengers.
PLT0200, 0201, 0202, 0203 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

The value of such objects means that care should be taken in authentication, particularly if well known subjects are involved. Silver and gold hallmarks can be checked against inscriptions, although it should be remembered that if a piece was not specially commissioned, the engraving might quite legitimately appear on a stock silver item of earlier date. The style of lettering should always be considered in relation to the date of the inscription, and if an engraving of a ship is included, the appearance of the vessel should always be checked for anomalies.

The most prestigious pieces can usually be verified from printed historical sources or from records of their presentation or production, so it may be necessary to check other public records or company archives. This will not only serve to authenticate the piece but may yield other interesting details on the design or circumstances surrounding the presentation.

Some 18th-century silver pieces engraved with inscriptions relating to particular Royal Navy vessels and with precise details of place and date of launch may prove to be presentation pieces to the master shipwright on the occasion of the launch. The National Archives hold a manuscript which lists all such presentations made between 1708 and 1736.

Presentation pieces, often covered-cups similar to the Royal Navy awards, were also given to East India

Company captains to mark outstanding services. Merchant ship captains sometimes received engraved silver from grateful passengers, perhaps to mark a fast voyage or a particularly perilous one. Although full details of the presentation may be difficult to trace, details of the recipient and ship's voyage can be checked in the appropriate registers and further information can sometimes be picked up from seaport newspapers and other local or family records.

Domestic silver pieces said to have belonged to famous naval officers or other maritime personnel, but bearing no presentation inscriptions, are usually more difficult to authenticate if there is no supporting documentation. Family traditions should be investigated as far as possible, and the usual checking of hallmarks and stylistic evidence against the supposed date is necessary. Knowledge of comparable items in other public or private collections can be valuable in putting pieces into context. Engraved crests or coats of arms can be identified from standard reference works or with assistance from the College of Arms. Even after all such investigations no definite confirmation of a family tradition may come to light, so the final opinion may have to remain cautious. It is worth keeping records of such cases: over the years a fuller picture may be built up which can help to authenticate items where the full story has been lost.

There are various other specialised silver items which occasionally appear on the market, including sporting trophies for sailing and rowing races, which range from large cups and shields to engraved silver oars or rowing brassards. The latter are usually oval or circular silver arm badges, which were attached to the sleeve of the winner's prize coat. The most famous of these races is the Doggett's Race on the Thames, which is still rowed for annually, but a number of other examples exist, and can be checked from the records of the Watermen's Company. The boatswain's 'call', used for passing orders on board ship, is another popular and collectible item of nautical silver. Its distinctive shape, with a bulbous buoy or sphere at one end attached to a narrow curved pipe with a flat keel below, has remained virtually unchanged from its origins as a mediaeval whistle to its ceremonial use today. As an item of personal equipment rather than official issue these calls were frequently of silver, decorated to the owner's taste and often inscribed with his name, so the evidence is usually readily available to date the piece.

CERAMICS

Most maritime associated ceramics in museum collections were made to commemorate particular nautical events, such as sea battles, naval commanders, ship launchings, or famous voyages. The earliest maritime commemorative ceramics were produced to honour Admiral Edward Vernon's victory at Portobello in 1739. In 1782 Admiral George Brydges Rodney's victory at the Battle of the Saints inspired the first large-scale production of souvenirs, including both transfer printed and hand decorated ceramics. It was only with Nelson's popular victories at the Battles of the Nile in 1798 and Trafalgar in 1805, however, that such items were seriously mass produced. But not all such pieces are contemporary. Outstanding heroes and major battles continued to be commemorated many years later, so that, for instance, Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar were still inspiring commemorative ceramics throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Some pieces marked particular anniversaries, such as the Centenary of Trafalgar in 1905, but sometimes designs were simply copied from the originals, not always necessarily with an intention to deceive. Pratt ware pieces and Staffordshire figure groups, among others, continued to be made many years after Nelson's lifetime from the old moulds. Even today there is a continuing production both of legitimate replicas and fakes of variable quality.



A plate commemorating the launch of a ship in 1752, by Thomas Cottle

AAA4424 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Liverpool Delftware tiles showing 'A sailor's farewell and return', c 1760

AAA4500, 4501 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Mugs commemorating the Battle of the Nile in 1798, commissioned by Nelson's prize agent, Alexander Davison.

AAA4737, 4738 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A bowl showing the work of the Marine Society, with boys being given clothes to go to sea.

AAA4483 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A mug inscribed 'Success to the Sailmakers', c 1800

AAA6332 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A Thames waterman wearing his traditional dress, c 1750

AAA6052 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A bowl presented to Sir David Beatty to mark the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet in 1918.

AAA5185 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A plate commemorating Admiral Edward Vernon's capture of Portobello from the Spanish in 1739 - one of the earliest examples of such ware.

AAA4352 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Among the most interesting of the maritime ceramics are the 18th-century bowls and plates, potted in delftware, creamware or occasionally porcelain, and hand-painted with various vessels identified by brief inscriptions. These were made perhaps to commemorate a launch, a commission or an important voyage, but there is little documentary evidence of their production. The inscription and type of vessel usually indicate whether a naval or merchant vessel is depicted, and the appropriate records can then be searched. The early editions of *Lloyd's Registers* can sometimes shed light on the meagre details appearing on mercantile pieces, but if there is no master's name given and the ship's name is

a common one it may not be possible to identify the vessel with certainty. Some bowls depict armed vessels, which do not appear in the *Royal Navy Lists*. These sometimes prove to be privateer ships which can be identified from the standard reference works on Liverpool and Bristol privateers.

Many 18th- and 19th-century mugs, jugs, plates and bowls are decorated with transfer engravings of ship designs, sometimes with added hand painted inscriptions relating to a named vessel. It should not be assumed that these are necessarily portraits of a specific vessel, as they were standard transfers and this must be borne in mind when using records to identify the vessel. Similarly, in the case of portraits of individuals, whether hand painted or transfer printed, one must often rely on the inscription as the depiction may be so far from the original as to be unidentifiable. Prints of naval actions, caricatures and scenes of sailors ashore, either drinking or with their lasses, are often related directly to prints on paper and the date of publication of an engraving can give useful guidance to dating the ceramic, although designs were sometimes resurrected many years later. Eighteenth-century ceramic figures of sailors have an additional use in a museum display by illustrating in three-dimensional form the distinctive seaman's costume of a period before official uniform was introduced.

Maritime collections often include purely domestic ceramics which have no nautical design, but came with a tradition that they were once the property of a famous maritime figure such as Horatio Nelson or James Cook. As in the case of silverware, their authentication must rely on a combination of provenance and stylistic evidence and comparison with similar documented examples in other collections. Pieces from the well known Nelson personal services, for example, are readily recognisable, but care should be taken to distinguish authentic items from the various copies, which also frequently appear.

Another group of maritime related ceramics are the pieces actually used at sea. Little survives from earlier than the mid-19th century, except in the context of shipwrecks. One reason is that wares used at sea were indistinguishable from pieces made for domestic use. Later in the 19th century mess ware made for Royal Navy use was of a distinctive design, although it was not supplied officially until a later period. Fragments of the earlier pieces found underwater in naval ports serve as useful typological specimens where complete examples do not exist.

By the mid-19th century ceramic services were being specially printed for use aboard named vessels, including early transatlantic steamships such as the 1840 Cunard ship *Britannia* and Brunel's *Great Britain* of 1843, and later by particular shipping lines. Services made for Arctic voyages were printed with the expedition logo as early as Nares' expedition in HMS *Discovery* and *Alert* in 1875 and other pieces were commissioned for use in the Royal Yachts and other prestigious private yachts.

Most maritime related commemorative pottery of the 18th and 19th centuries carries no maker's marks and identification relies on comparison with other marked pieces and by reference to pottery histories. Porcelain and later wares, however, are often marked on the base with printed or impressed marks, which can be interpreted by reference to standard works on the subject. Any piece bearing the words *Made in England* can be assumed to be of 20th-century date.

Maritime related ceramic collections can be studied particularly at the National Maritime Museum, Merseyside Maritime Museum and the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth, as well as in more general collections such as that of the Victoria & Albert Museum, the City Museum & Art Gallery at Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, and the various Stoke-on-Trent factory museums.

GLASS

Drinking glasses and other glass items were often engraved with nautical subjects. Perhaps the most well known of these are the 18th-century privateer glasses. These were usually small wine glasses on opaque twist stems with a ship portrait and inscription such as 'Success to the Eagle Privateer'. The popularity and increasing value of these and other early glasses engraved with nautical subjects has encouraged the manufacture of many modern reproductions, some of which may be difficult to recognise, so specialist advice is to be recommended if an acquisition is being considered. Fortunately there are also many other interesting engraved ship glasses of later date. Perhaps the most commonly encountered are the 19th-century Sunderland Bridge rummers, which, like the lustre-ware pottery mugs and jugs from the same area, depict vessels passing under the bridge over the River Wear. Another series of mid-19th-century drinking glasses were decorated by an East Coast engraver with small local sailing craft, usually with the vessel's name inscribed within a cartouche of fruiting vines.

Other glass objects often encountered in museum collections include the glass rolling pins decorated with transfer printed or hand-painted ships or nautical inscriptions, spun glass ship models bought at fairs, and commemorative glass pictures based on popular engravings of subjects such as the death and funeral of Lord Nelson.

FURNITURE

Many museums own a few items of furniture with maritime associations. On rare occasions genuine shipboard pieces are encountered, and when their provenance is known these are always of particular interest. Such items are invaluable when research is being carried out for a ship replica, a period film or a museum display. Occasionally, purpose made 18th- or early 19th-century cabin furniture comes to light, such as travelling chests which double as writing slopes and dressing tables. Particularly interesting are the items of portable furniture such as folding chairs, which can be quickly stowed, and beds and double chests which break down for ease of carrying aboard. In less obvious cases clues to a nautical origin can be gleaned from metal fittings and rings which enable the item to be fastened down to a deck or secured to a bulkhead and catches on drawers which prevent them sliding out at sea. Often in earlier periods naval officers simply took to sea with them whatever small items of domestic furniture they could fit into their limited accommodation.

Sea chests used by 19th-century sailors are to be found in many collections. Often made with slightly sloping sides (which allows them to be stored with other chests and lifted in and out without difficulty) they usually have an internal locker for small possessions, and the most interesting examples have paintings inside the lid and decorative ropework beackets or handles, which enabled the chest to be carried without grazing the knuckles. Equally distinctive is the midshipman's large iron bound wooden chest supplied by naval outfitters, complete with internal compartments and useful fittings inside the lid. In recent years painted chests and chests of drawers have appeared on the market, which are decorated on the outside with pictures of ships, names of captains and inscriptions on the drawers indicating their use. These are of course, spurious, although they are probably intended to be amusing decorative items rather than deliberate attempts to deceive. Genuine sea chests are very unlikely to be painted on the outside where they would be so easily damaged.

When a famous ship was broken up or timber raised from a historic wreck like HMS *Royal George* or HMS *Foudroyant*, the wood and copper were sometimes manufactured into souvenir furniture and trinkets for sale. The items produced ranged from chairs and tables and wooden panelling to walking sticks, boxes, and miniature book covers. In the case of the *Foudroyant*, previously Admiral Nelson's

ship which was wrecked in 1897, the public could even order their mementoes from a published catalogue. Such items are frequently met with and usually such souvenirs have a small engraved metal plaque or an inscription indicating the origin of the piece. In the 20th century, shipbreakers often sold off ships' timber made up into everything from substantial furniture such as garden benches down to trinkets such as miniature teak barrels, all with metal plaques to identify them.

SAILOR'S CRAFTWORK

Many sailors became accomplished craftsmen as a result of passing the time off watch by perfecting practical crafts. These useful pastimes included decorative ropework, carving, model making, scrimshaw, ships in bottles, woolwork embroideries on canvas and even painting pictures inside sea chest lids. Folk art has now become desirable and collectable in its own right, but from a maritime museum point of view, sailors' work is important in the light it sheds on life at sea and the seaman's view of his world.

Such items are usually readily identifiable as sailors' work from the subject matter. The seaman naturally tended to depict marine subjects, and frequently his own ship, which would generally be fairly accurate in design and rigging details even if naively executed and sometimes out of proportion. The completed work was frequently intended as a gift for sweetheart or family, and perhaps for this reason folk art of this type is rarely signed. Artefacts which have some provenance, where the name and ship of the maker are known, and the date of the piece can be established, are therefore of particular interest in a museum collection. Donors of such material should always be asked for any available additional material if the item is a family piece. Such questioning can sometimes result in offers of related photographs, documents or other interesting background material, which will enhance the social history significance of the item in a display.



*A highly unusual paper ship made by Augustine Walker of Rye in 1761
OBJ0531 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London*

Where a positive identification is not known, clues must be sought from the work itself. Ships depicted in woolwork embroideries or naive paintings can sometimes be identified even if unnamed. Flags are often a feature of such work. Sometimes these are purely decorative, for instance if a vessel is shown dressed overall, but even so the design of the flags can be a useful clue to date, and may indicate the squadron of a naval vessel or the Commercial Code number of a merchant ship. Before 1864 naval ships wore a red, a white or a blue ensign, depending on which squadron the vessel belonged to; thereafter all Royal Navy ships adopted the white ensign.



A piece of scrimshaw carved in whalebone and showing a whaling scene, mid-19th century.

AAA0031 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Scrimshaw was produced by men on the whale ships working with the available whalebone, whales' teeth and baleen. Usually the engraving was worked on sperm whale teeth and flat panbone ornaments, decorated with whaling scenes, ships and other more homely subjects. Rarer pieces include whalebone carvings and every type of useful object from decorated seam rubbers and fids to stay busks, swifterns and pastry crimpers. The market is now swamped by fake scrimshaw, resulting from the popularity and consequent rise in the price of genuine examples. Both mass produced resin pieces and recently engraved old teeth are frequently encountered, and can be difficult to distinguish from genuine work. Any item showing a famous ship, commander or action, as well as pieces purporting to be earlier than the mid-19th century should be very carefully checked out, even if they appear to be real whalebone.

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4 MARITIME EPHEMERA AND MISCELLANEA

BY ARTHUR CREDLAND, KEEPER OF MARITIME
HISTORY, HULL MUSEUMS

All images in this chapter are courtesy of Hull Maritime Museum

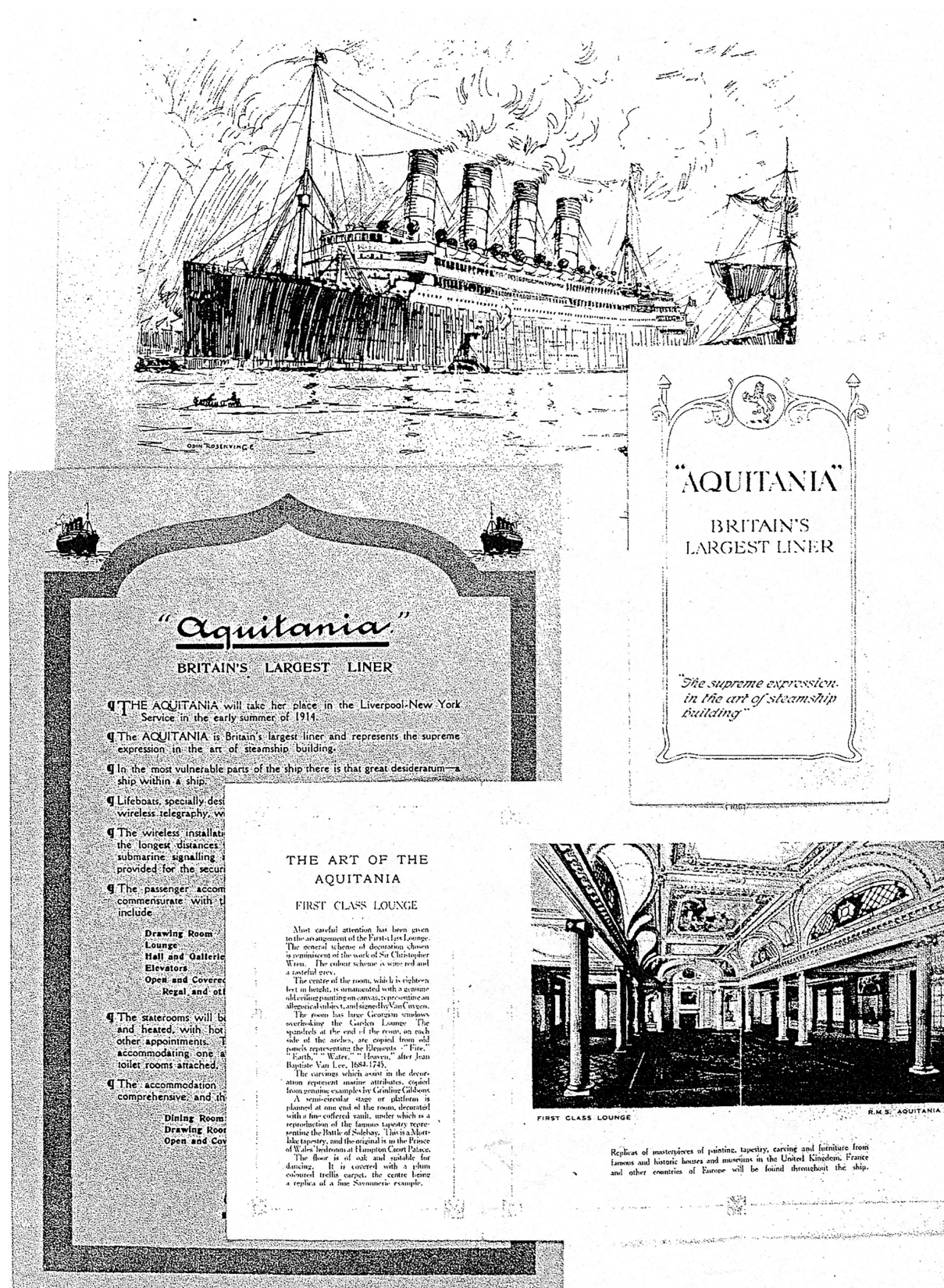
This chapter summarizes the huge variety of mainly printed ephemera connected directly or indirectly with ships and the sea. A few miscellaneous artefacts are also mentioned which are not easily categorised or do not generally accumulate in sufficient numbers to form a corpus which can be studied as a subject in its own right. Inevitably many of the examples given are taken from the author's long involvement with the collections at Hull, which are particularly strong in the areas of whaling and fishing. The text is intended to give some idea of the range of ephemera and miscellanea which can be regarded as of interest to the maritime curator. It does not claim to be exhaustive but demonstrates how ships and the sea embrace the gamut of printed, manufactured and hand crafted objects.

There is a wide range of printed material connected with the advertising and promoting of ships to potential passengers and traders intending to place cargoes. During the 19th century advertising bills were simple letter-press productions, the only decoration being a woodblock design of a sailing ship or steamer. At each port a local printer would also produce a daily shipping list of vessels inwards and outwards, and for each voyage a crew agreement and muster roll would be compiled. On leaving a vessel each seaman would receive a Certificate of Discharge indicating the name of the vessel he had sailed on and the dates of his departure and return. This document was signed by the captain who also indicated the recipient's competence as a seaman, usually 'V. Good' or 'Good', though if the seaman's performance was unsatisfactory he would decline to comment!

In the latter half of the century sailing cards were produced indicating the name of the vessel, its sailing time and the dock or quay it sailed from, attractively printed in brightly coloured inks.

Some young men and boys were lucky enough to find a place in a navigation school, or a seasoned sailor might take private tuition in chart work and navigation to enable him to rise through the ship's hierarchy. Their copy books, with exercises and problems in trigonometry all neatly written out, not only exhibit handsome calligraphy but are informative about the quality and range of teaching available at a particular period. The early (pre-1850) ship logs are completely handwritten rather than being standard printed books to be filled like a diary. They were occasionally embellished with sketches of coastlines or the flora and fauna observed in the polar seas or exotic climes, though the overall contents tend to be a routine record of the course followed and changes in wind and weather. Even incidents such as the accidental death of a member of the crew tend to be dismissed in one or two lines. There are also personal journals kept by a crewman, surgeon or passenger, which may range from semi literate jottings in a dog eared pocket book to the detailed and eloquent memoirs of a particular voyage, which can be a major historical source. In addition there are the various documents relating to the cargo being carried: manifests, bills of lading and the stowage plans prepared by the mate or bo'sun. A legal document, sometimes elegantly printed, was prepared when a vessel was

chartered by another company and insurance policies, often with handsome headings, were prepared to cover the possibility of a vessel sinking or its cargo being lost or damaged in fire, storm or wreck.



Ephemera from the Aquitania

Yesterday, Monday July, 3rd, in consequence of intelligence of the Saco ship being sighted, many thousands assembled at Southend, and were gratified with the sight of the long-lost vessel, whose reappearance was regarded as a sort of resurrection. On nearing the Humber Dock Basin, three loud and hearty cheers were given by the assembled multitude on shore, and answered from the Saco at half of five o'clock, and during the two succeeding hours which elapsed whilst passing through the New and Junction Docks, until she was safely moored on the north side of the Old Dock, the thousands of spectators who thronged all the shipping and both sides of the docks, saluted her with a cheer, and appeared to suffer no abatement of interest.

The two wives of her crew, including Captain Dring and his two sons are all in tolerable health; the male and one or two others look remarkable rather thin. No words can well describe the rejoicings and sufferings to which the men have been exposed. The crew consists of about 400 men and boys, and land hogs and while native Marquis safe.

Full Dai

party of men endeavoured unsuccessfully to reach a Danish settlement, the surgeon is of opinion that no more than 12 persons would have died, and of those who died of scurvy it is proper to observe that their end approached very fast, when their spirits began to fail them after the melancholy affair.

During their confinement in the ice, divine worship was conducted every Sabbath, in a most orderly and impressive manner, by a pious Ship-lender, the whole ship's company engaging heartily in the service. Thus Swen has three fish, about 30 tons; twenty of the Duncombe's men have arrived with her; the Duncombe has four fish, 60 tons. The ships were parted into the Western ocean, about a fortnight ago, in lat. 53 N. and long. 40 W., since which they have not seen each other, but the snow has been unpropitious to daily separation. We intend to recur to this subject next week, by which time we shall be able to give further and deeply-interesting details of this most hazardous voyage.

The following are the names of the men lost—Thomas Haller, Henry Judge, Robert Derby, Robert Collins, Davis.



Pull Daily Shipping List.
No. 159.—1832.

No. 159.—1832

SATURDAY, JULY 14

[illegible]

High Water to-morrow Morning at Quarter before Nine o'clock.

William Stephenson, Printer, Bowditch-Lane, Hull.

Male and Female, brought home by Captain Parker, of the Ship *Truelove*, of Hull, from Nyatlick, in Cumberland Straits, on the West side of Davis' Straits,

On Thursday and Friday, March 9th & 10th,
In the Lecture-Hall, York,
For Two Days only, previous to their return to their Native
Country on the 20th Instant.

This interesting married couple, MEMIADLUK and UCKALUK, (whose respective ages are 17 and 15,) are the only inhabitants ever brought to England from the Western Coast. They have been visited by upwards of 12,000 persons in Hull, Manchester, Beverley, Driffield, &c.

have been visited by upwards of 12,000 persons in their staid, dignified, and
THEY WILL APPEAR
IN THEIR NATIVE COSTUME.
 With their Canoe, Hut, Bows and Arrows, &c.

From the Manchester Guardian, Jan. 5, 1918

[illegible]

(E) **CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE,**
FOR SEAMEN NOT DISCHARGED BEFORE A SHIPPING MASTER.

FOR SEAMEN NOT DISCHARGED BEFORE A SHIPPING MASTER

Name of Ship.	Official Number.	Port of Registry.	Engineered Tonnage.	Description of Voyage or Employment.
<i>John M. Giger</i>	<i>530</i>	<i>Hull</i>	<i>504</i>	<i>Hamburg</i>
Name of Seaman.		Place of Birth.	Date of Birth.	
<i>John M. Giger</i>		<i>Hull</i>	<i>1835</i>	
Capacity.	Date of Entry.	Date of Discharge.	Place of Discharge.	
<i>Mate</i>	<i>1 July 1866</i>	<i>1 Dec 1866</i>	<i>Hull</i>	

where the above particulars are correct, and that the above-named Seaman was discharged accordingly.

Dated this *31* Day of *Dec* 18*66*

Witness *William Larson* Seaman. (Signed) *R. P. Tinsley* Master

Witness *W. P. Tinsley*

Address of Witness *Hull*

Occupation of Witness *Seaman*

ord.—One of these Certificates must be filled up and delivered to every Seaman who is discharged otherwise than before a Ship.

W3-73-76

Every conceivable craft, manufacturing, wholesale or retail activity advertised itself with the aid of the printed trade card. This includes those of a nautical nature such as ship's chandlers, nautical instrument makers, map and chart sellers, shipbuilders, ropemakers, ship painters and many other maritime occupations. The humble compass card was produced in an amazing diversity of decorative schemes which vary from one instrument maker to another, from century to century and country to country. There were also posters relating to the docks, proclaiming the official byelaws, or bills offering rewards for the recovery of stolen gear and pilfered cargoes. From the end of the 19th century there are increasing numbers of trade catalogues produced by engineering firms and tool makers illustrating the range of machines, components and implements used in the maritime trades. At first these would be embellished with engravings and later with photographs and are an invaluable reference for identifying and dating the immense variety of nautical paraphernalia. Shipyards also produced brochures illustrating their range of products. These were regularly updated enabling us to follow the designs made in a particular yard as they evolved over the years.

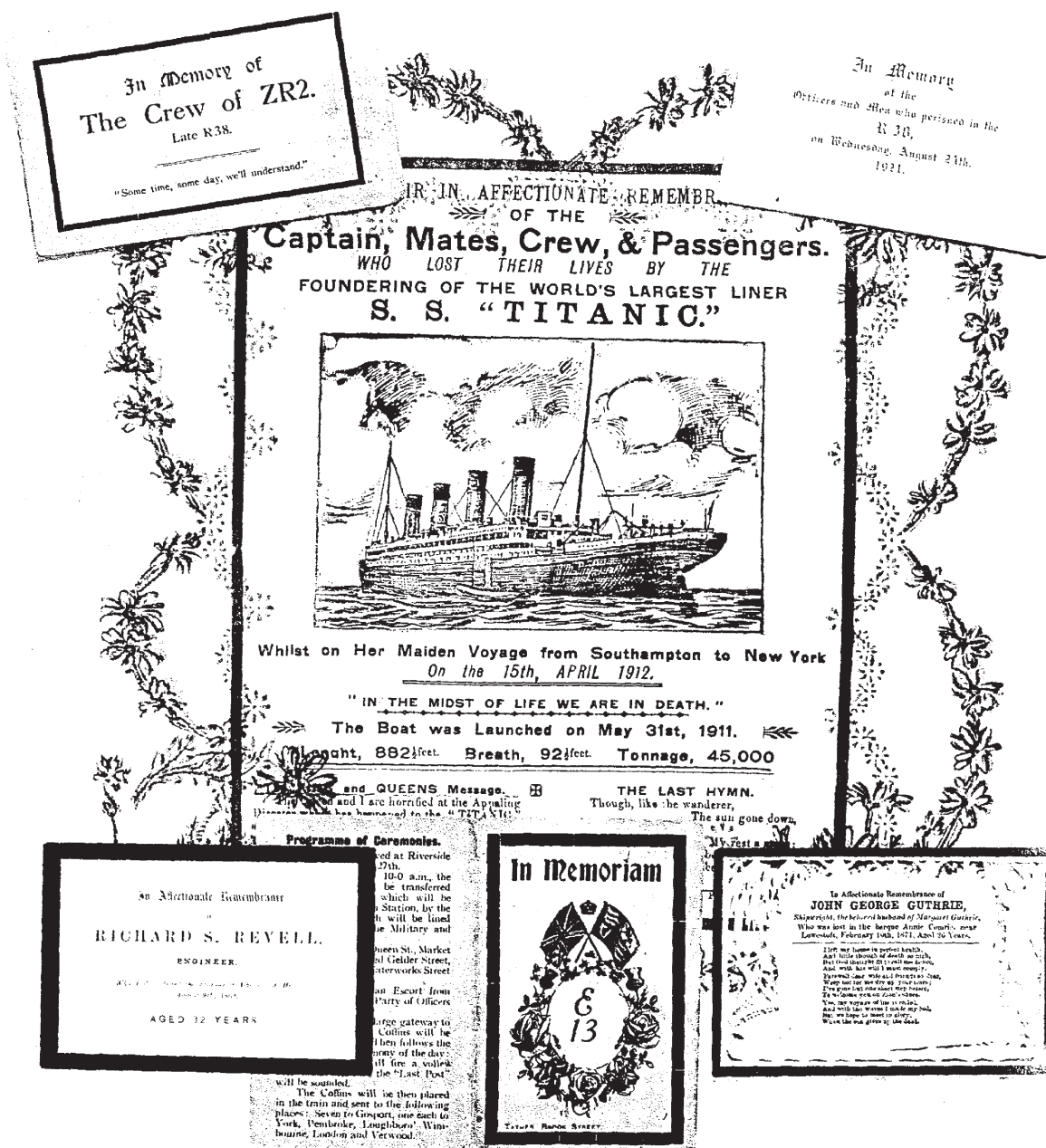
Most ports displayed a greater or lesser involvement in recreational activities afloat. There were rowing and boating clubs, some of which have survived over several generations, and even down to the present. Many have left us only bills, posters, competition notices and membership cards. Some, however, produced informative newsletters and a record of their annual activities, outstanding in this respect is the Humber Yawl Club. Founded in 1883, it has produced an annual journal filled with plans and descriptions of boats, accounts of interesting cruises and events all handsomely decorated and illustrated by their members. Artists, both amateur and professional, have left their mark on this year book, notably George Holmes, Albert Strange and Frank Mason. The early yacht clubs are often only poorly recorded except in the form of contemporary paintings, prints and advertisements for their regattas. The latter are usually letterpress with some simple wood block decoration but with a text packed with information detailing the courses to be sailed and the prizes to be awarded.

At a time when newspapers were expensive and not often bought by the man in the street major national events and local sensations were widely reported through the broadsheet. Boldly printed, they might be decorated with a crude woodcut and indeed had changed little in their appearance from their 17th-century antecedents. They were hawked around and sold at ½d, 1d or 2d each, having been rushed onto the streets by an enterprising local printer. Broadsheets were an effective way of circulating news of major national events – or sensational occurrences of purely local interest – and also a means of transmitting the texts of popular sea songs and ballads. Pamphlets and broadsheets recorded the numerous steamship accidents of the 1830s and 1840s, many of which resulted in a major loss of life. Steam power was still a novelty in this period and shipping companies were involved in intensive competition for cargoes and passengers, their steamers going all out to beat their rivals' sailing times. Captains would race their vessels flat out, oblivious to the risk, and the result was often a boiler explosion or fire. Other tragedies resulted from mechanical failure; the most famous of all the steamer disasters in the last century being the wreck of the *PS Forfarshire* on the Farne Islands in 1838. This not only resulted in the usual broadsheet productions but a flood of literature (pamphlets and books) which turned Grace Darling, who with her father had bravely rowed to the rescue, into one of the great Victorian heroines.

Elsewhere, handbills, pamphlets and tracts were produced in abundance by the port missions, eager to proselytise and draw seamen to their chapels and churches. Some of these organisations offered chiefly spiritual support, others provided cheap and wholesome accommodation away from the temptation of strong drink, loose women and the local gambling dens. The Port of Hull Society had two divisions: the mission, which produced a monthly journal, the *Helmsman*, full of encouraging moral articles; and the orphanage, which looked after the children of seamen who had been lost or incapacitated.

The orphanage also produced, and still produces, a journal called *Ashore and Afloat*, which records their work and encourages local sponsors to help with money and support. Similar publications can be found throughout Britain though few have shown such longevity.

The Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen was active both ashore and out on the fishing grounds of the North Sea. They produced a huge amount of tracts as well as offering practical help: lodgings in most fishing ports, and provisions, tobacco and medical help at sea. Their splendid monthly magazine, *Toilers of the Deep*, is profusely illustrated with steel engravings. Depicting incidents at sea, the work of the mission and with patterns for knitting socks, mittens and balaclavas, the magazine proved very popular with the fishing fraternity in the 19th century.



Titanic memorabilia

There are also items related to Seamen's Rests, especially those established under the auspices of Dame Agnes Weston, which offered inexpensive accommodation and recreational facilities in all the major and minor ports across the country for seamen far from home. Hobbies and crafts were encouraged including carving, knotwork and woolwork, many of which can be found amongst the miscellanea of museum collections. Woolwork pictures became popular in c.1860 and were still in vogue during the First World War. Examples from 1914–18 often combine the traditional images of ships and trophies of flags (stitched in wool on canvas) with a photograph either of a ship or the seaman who made the piece. Marquetry pictures cut from wood veneers, usually depicting the portrait of an individual ship, are not uncommon but much less often found than woolwork pictures which, judging by the variety of images, were made by fishermen, merchant seamen and royal naval personnel.

Ships in bottles were the special invention of the sailor and became more and more popular throughout the 19th century as clear glass bottles became more common instead of the traditional green and brown ones. Making 'ships in bottles' is now largely a land lubber's craft and miniature ships are to be found not only in bottles but light bulbs and any kind of glass container that comes to hand. Common items bought by seamen and the public at large as souvenirs were the wooden boxes, model capstans, cannon, etc. made from the timbers of some of the old 'wooden walls'. Examples frequently found are those carved from the wood of the *Royal George*, a first-rate naval ship which sank at Spithead on 29th August 1782 and of course from Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar, the *Victory*. The *Foudroyant*, another of Nelson's flagships, is also well represented. This vessel was wrecked on Blackpool beach in 1897 after many years of being on public view. Of more recent origin are the pieces – letter openers in particular – carved from some of the wooden interior fittings of the *Iron Duke*, the dreadnought battleship which served as Lord Jellicoe's flagship at Jutland in 1916.

Posters and bills often survive announcing the exhibition of a sea monster or 'mermaid' recently brought into a port or being taken around the country as part of a freak show. Stranded whales (especially common on the east coast), were regularly displayed to the public, though in the 18th or 19th century the showman's chance to earn a few coins was limited by the lack of means of preservation. The whole animal would be a mass of putrefaction within a few days. In the twentieth century, however, huge examples of blue whales brought to Europe in whale factory ships might be driven around the country on trailers, the whale carcass being drenched in formaldehyde. A 65-foot, 70-ton rorqual whale was toured round in England in this fashion during the 1950s, advertised perhaps inevitably as 'Jonah'.

Whale strandings in Holland were celebrated by engravings executed by the finest artists of the 16th and 17th centuries. A sperm whale washed ashore on the Holderness coast in 1825 was claimed by Sir Clifford Constable who had it mounted in the grounds of Burton Constable Hall. He also had published an engraving of the whale shown lying on the beach. This was for limited circulation – but a cheap popular version in lithographic form was made available to the public. Some maritime occupations like hunting the whale, were particularly dangerous both because of the immense size of the quarry which could easily smash the attacking whaleboats to pieces, and due to the severe climatic conditions found in the Arctic. The season of 1836 was particularly bad with ships lost and many others beset and not able to return home till after the thaw in the following spring. Many men died of cold and starvation, and without any means of communication stranded ships might be given up for lost. The poignant footnote of a broadsheet celebrating the return of the whaler *Swan* relates that the wife of one of the returning crewmen had in the meantime remarried. In days when there was no regular welfare system a widow, especially with children, would quickly have to find a new breadwinner in order to survive. As well as receiving general publicity tragedies would also be recorded on a more personal level by mourning cards printed on behalf of the family at the time of the funeral or memorial service. They

were often plainly printed with a black border but sometimes had elaborate decoration in the form of embossed motifs and cut outs.

An infamous event took place on the evening of 21 October 1904 when the Hull fishing fleet on the Dogger Bank came under fire from the Russian Baltic squadron heading through the North Sea en route to the Far East to engage the Japanese. The trawler *Crane* was sunk and three men were killed; the resulting furore brought Anglo-Russian relations to near breaking point. Huge numbers of postcards were produced showing the damaged vessels and their crews, not only issued by local printers in Hull but by firms such as Valentines, and at the time of the funeral fold over mourning cards with the names of the dead and a verse were widely sold. Similar cards can also be found for the loss of the British Submarine *E13* off the Danish coast on 20 August 1915 and marking the funeral of the victims of the R38 airship disaster which in 1921 broke up over the Humber and crashed into the river with heavy loss of life.



Ephemera from the Dogger Bank incident

The fishing trades are the source of a variety of items both charmingly decorative and mundane. Early this century small brass tokens were used to record the quantities and types of fish landed. Each is an accurate representation of the particular species with a stud on the surface and depression on the underside so that the tokens could be placed in stacks, neatly interlocking. The fish dock workers who discharged the fish, known as 'bobbbers' in Hull and 'lumpers' elsewhere wore an armband with a registration number and a simple plain metal tag attached to their clothing also stamped with the registration number.

Unions and friendly societies are the source of a variety of printed items, including their rule-books and membership cards; some of them sometimes produced full colour printed membership certificates. The branches of the shipwrights union seem to have taken on an especial liking to these and examples can be found from many ports filled with scenes of shipbuilding and featuring the tools, symbols and coat of arms of the union. Trade union banners for parading through the streets are magnificent examples of folk art resplendent with badges and symbols and allegorical pictures of the craft or trades represented.



Fishing ephemera

In the latter part of the 19th century many thousands of emigrants departed from Europe seeking a better life in the USA. This encouraged investment by the shipping companies to build larger, more powerful transatlantic steamers which they could fill with both conventional cargo and hundreds of migrants packed into steerage. Then followed the huge, richly appointed passenger liners designed for the rich and leisured classes, including the *Titanic*, the White Star liner that sank after a collision with an iceberg on 15 April 1912. The contemporary newspapers were filled with details of the tragic event, with special supplements from magazines such as *Sphere*. The flood of *Titanic* postcards and printed ephemera continues to be produced to this day, stimulated by the recent location of the wreck and recovery of numerous artefacts from the seabed. A cheap and popular souvenir item of the early part of the century was the tissue square printed with details of sad and noteworthy events. They were certainly produced for the loss of the *Titanic* and also for the unveiling of the statue commemorating the fishermen lost in the 'Russian Outrage'. Although particularly fragile items, numbers of these have survived – often carefully preserved like pressed flowers between the leaves of a book, or at the bottom of a drawer.

The period between the two World Wars was the great age of the ocean liner, and the construction and commissioning of these sea going giants was always accompanied by a mass of newspaper and magazine articles. The shipbuilders and owners issued elaborate brochures to celebrate the launch and booklets illustrating the luxuries on offer and giving remarkable statistics – comparing the size of the vessels with St. Paul's Cathedral and Trafalgar Square, for instance. On board the vessels, decorated menus and programmes of entertainments would be available and often even a ship's newspaper such as Cunard's *Ocean Times*, printed afloat. At a more humble level, postcards were available as souvenirs either as photographic reproductions or more often a reduction of a full colour drawing or painting by such noted commercial artists and marine painters as Odin Rosenvinge, Kenneth Shoesmith, Montague B. Black and Harry Hudson Rodmell. They were often involved in the design of the menus and brochures too but the most impressive examples of their work were the posters produced for the great liner companies. The 'age of the ocean liner' was undoubtedly also the great period of poster production, particularly those for advertising sea voyages and the railways. Fine examples of graphic art can be found on a rather smaller scale than the poster. For example the sardine tin label is, in miniature, a veritable treasure trove of exciting and colourful images with an immense range of subject matter from mythology to cars and aircraft. The artists are usually unknown, but the end result, albeit on a much smaller scale, often rivals that of the poster designer in the quality of work. Since Norway, most notably Stavanger, once dominated the sardine canning industry, the collecting of these labels christened *iddis*, has become a particular passion there. On an even smaller scale, the cigarette cards and trade cards issued by manufacturers also offer a wealth of subjects. Sets were issued by Hill, Phillips, and Wills among others, covering ocean liners, warships and naval dress and badges.

The miscellaneous antiques and printed ephemera associated with the maritime trades are almost infinite in number and type. Often they may have little intrinsic value but all offer fascinating resonance of historical events, customs and ways of life which have gone forever. Occasionally the objects are linked to archetypically tragic events such as the loss of the *Titanic* so that even the most mundane article gains a significance and value which makes it a popular item for display.

Hat bands record the names of ships of the royal navy and the merchant navy and the heraldry of the two services is displayed on buttons and cap badges. Medals can be part of a major numismatic collection but the majority of museums have only a miscellaneous assemblage whether relating to life saving, individual acts of valour or long service. There is also a wide variety of glassware, pottery, silverware and cutlery marked with the crests and names of famous and not so famous, companies and ships. Already referred to above are the individual pieces of craftsmanship made by the seamen

There are numerous examples by George Race (1877–1952) who was active in Grimsby and on the east coast. Seamen visiting Oslo could purchase lifebuoy pictures by the local artist and photographer Olaf Gulbrandsen. These examples of folk art can be regarded as the cheapest end of the scale of the pier head paintings produced by jobbing painters. They were painted very quickly, to a formula, so that they were available to the buyer even after the briefest of stays before his vessel set sail again. The painted wooden panels removed from canal boats and the buckets, teapots and other domestic equipment decorated with ‘castles and roses’ motifs constitute another example of naive or folk art which deserves a cherished place in our collections.

COPY OF AGREEMENT TO BE MADE ACCESSIBLE TO THE CREW.

Note. The blanks are to be filled up so as to correspond with the original Agreement as it is signed by the Crew.

Part of Registry
 Registered Tonnage
 Gross
 Net
 2396-28

POSITIONS OF THE DECK LINE AND LOAD LINES.
 Freshwater from Deck Line
 Tropical Summer
 Winter
 Winter North Atlantic
 All other
 The ship

Name of Master and No. of his Certificate
 Date and Place of First Signature
 Agreement
 A. P. Dugdale
 22/4/31
 No. 033215

BY SECTION 25 OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1890

ST. PETERSBURG TOWN, DIRECT,
 CUSTOM HOUSE QUAY.

THE SPENDING-DECK STEAMER
NAUTILUS

CAPTAIN WM. WINTERINGHAM,
 On SATURDAY EVENING, August 31st.

This fine vessel has superior Cabin Accommodations.
 BROWNLOW, LUMSDEN & CO., Hull.

Three or four
 of the first day of January
 of the first day of May, and at any other time when they can

three pounds of fresh meat may be substituted for two pounds of
 of the vessel in the case of every ship leaving a port within
 the first day of May, and at any other time when they can

of fresh meat and half a pound of fresh vegetables
 and, salt and preserved meats and dried or

without DEMONSTRABLE CAUSE.
 Split Peas
 Flour
 Caluminate or hulled beans
 Rice
 Mangelwurzel
 Jam
 Butter
 Malt
 Tea powder

ANCHORED BY THE
 MERCHANT SHIP
 in New York, the port where the

if the crew is to be sent to the
 of the ship shall be remitted or reduced
 of the ship shall be remitted or reduced

First Shipilla.
 First Shipilla.
 First Shipilla.
 First Shipilla.
 First Shipilla.
 First Shipilla.

HULL TO BRISTOL
 THE STEAMER
HELENA

Capt. JAS. HAYES.

To Sail on Friday, 21st inst.

For Freight, &c., apply to
 W. H. H. HUTCHINSON.
 PRINCE'S DOCK WALLS.

December 18th, 1901.

For Freight, &c., apply to

of the crew to be sent to the

of the crew to be sent to the

of the crew to be sent to the

R.M.S. OSLO

of the crew to be sent to the

HULL TO BRISTOL
 THE STEAMER
HELENA

STEAM FROM HULL TO
 ST. PETERSBURG TOWN (DIRECT)
 (DISCHARGING AT CUSTOM HOUSE QUAY.)
 THE SHIPING-DECK STEAMER

MIRANDA

ON SATURDAY Afternoon, May 12th.

BROWNLOW, LUMSDEN & Co.
 THOMAS, DOUGLAS & Co., St. Petersburg
 JOHN WILLIAMS, St. Petersburg

of the crew to be sent to the

of the crew to be sent to the

of the crew to be sent to the

of the crew to be sent to the

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Hull maritime ephemera

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5 FLAGS AND FUNNELS

BY EDWARD W. PAGET TOMLINSON,
FORMERLY CURATOR AT MERSEYSIDE AND HULL
MARITIME MUSEUMS

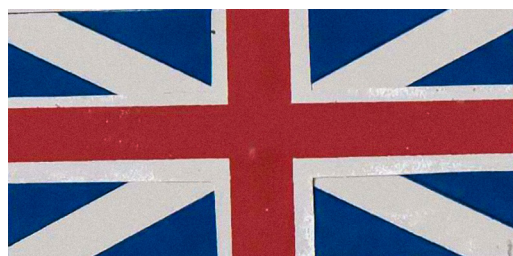
Flags have long been used as a primary means of identifying and signalling aboard ships. When steam ships emerged, the highly noticeable funnel was quickly pressed into similar service. A knowledge of 'vexillology' – flag history, design and etiquette – will prove helpful to a curator in establishing provenance, historical significance, date, place and (if contemplating acquisition by purchase) value, of a model, a picture, a sea chest lid, a cup and saucer, or other nautical trinket.

**St George's cross
(England)**



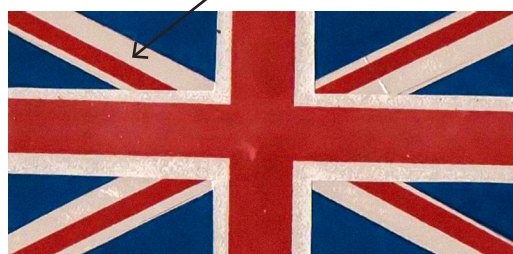
**St Andrew's cross
(Scotland)**

**St Patrick's cross
(Ireland)**



The union flag, 1603- 1801

Wider gap here if the flag is the right way up

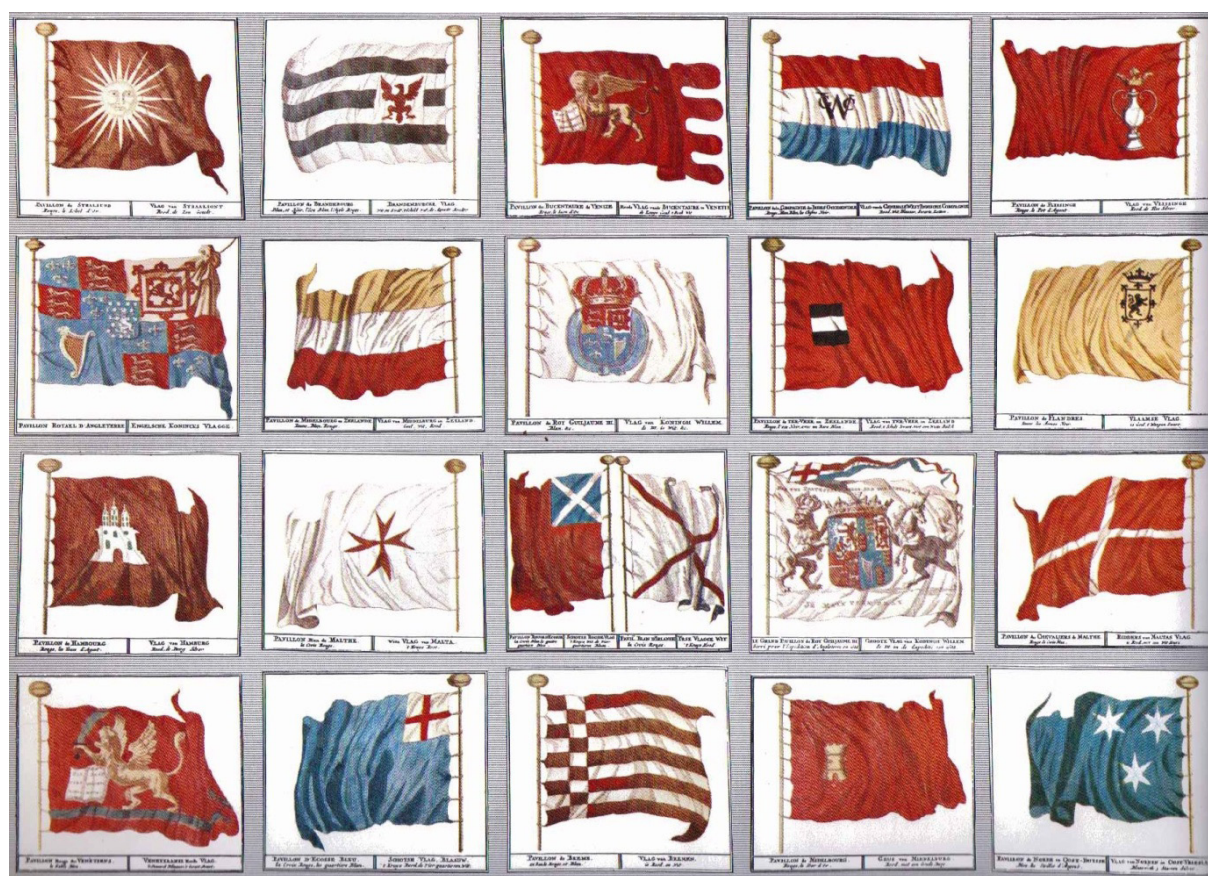


After the union with Ireland, 1801

The evolution of the union flag. Though it existed after the Union of the Crowns between Scotland and England in 1603, the two nations continued to fly their own flags until the Union of the Parliaments in 1707.

From Admiralty Manual of Seamanship, 1909

National flags and ensigns at least should be known by sight, along with the International Code of Signals and the meaning of simple hoists. References for the more familiar company house flags and funnels will prove helpful. This knowledge need not be encyclopaedic for there are many books on each subject, a few of which are listed in the bibliography.



From a late 17th-century book of national flags: Joseph Jobe, *The Great Age of Sail*, 1967, originally from *Neptune Francois*, 1693



A Spanish naval ensign c 1800

AAA0549 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



National naval flags, c 1930

Taken from The Wonder Book of the Navy, Ward Lock, London, n.d. but pre-1938

There are many national flag books, but it is the ensign at the stern of the model or ship portrait which should be considered first. Apart from the obvious identification of country, the ensign might give a clue to date; an English warship of the 17th century bears only the St George's cross in the canton (the top left hand corner), as the addition of the St Andrew's cross came only in 1707 and the St Patrick's cross in 1801. Other examples are the complex ensigns of Norwegian and Swedish vessels in the 19th century, until the two countries separated in 1905. Here the cantons bear the combined colours of both Norway and Sweden with the red, white and blue for Norwegian ships and the blue and gold for Swedish in the fly. Incidentally, it is a good idea to learn the parts of a flag, e.g. hoist, fly, foot, etc.



Parts of a flag, based on the house flag of the Link Line of Liverpool, c 1956. By convention, a flag is always shown with its hoist to the left.

AAA0293 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Pope Collection. Reproduced with kind permission of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company



The return of Prince Charles from Spain in 1623 by Hendrik Vroom, showing his Royal Standard at the mainmast.

BHC0710 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Caird Fund



The Royal Prince flying the Royal Standard in 1679, by Jan van Beecq

Oil on canvas, BHC0976 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



The Royal Yacht Britannia at the opening of the St Lawrence Seaway in 1959 by John Stobart, showing the Admiralty flag and the Royal Standard to indicate the presence of the sovereign.

Oil on canvas, BHC3746 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Until 1864 an admiral flew the flag of his squadron – red, white or blue. A full admiral flew it from the mainmast, a vice-admiral from the foremast and a rear-admiral from the mainmast. By 1864 most ships did not have three masts, so the admiral flew the plain St George's cross, the vice-admiral had a ball in the 1st quarter and a rear-admiral had two balls.



This flag was flown by Rear-Admiral Sir Hugh Paget-Sinclair, c 1925

AAA0793 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Until 1864, each naval ship flew the ensign of the admiral in command of the fleet – red, white or blue. This picture by Dominic Serres the Elder shows a ship of the blue squadron during an attack on Havana in 1762.

Oil on canvas, BHC0415 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich,. Accepted by HM Government in Lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the NMM, 1983



A two-decker entering Harwich, c 1755, flying the red ensign, by Charles Brooking

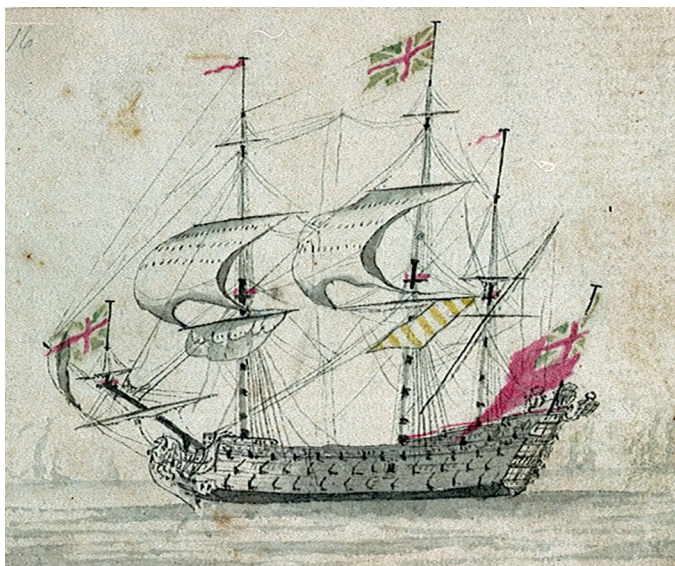
Oil on canvas, BHC1836 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Admiral Rodney's flagship the Sandwich at the Moonlight Battle of St Vincent in 1780, by Francis Holman. It shows the white ensign, which became the standard naval flag in 1864.

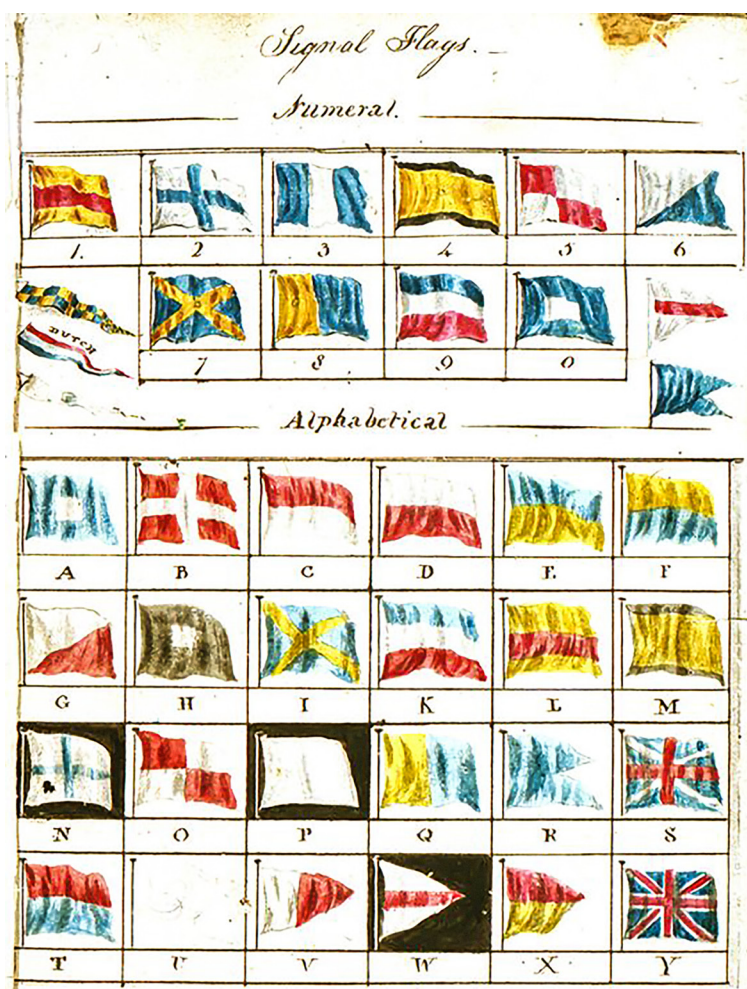
Oil on canvas, BHC0427 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Caird Collection

Signal flags both naval and mercantile are massively complex, especially when in the 18th and 19th centuries several systems were in use. However, during the latter century the code became more standardised and it is possible to identify ships in a model or painting 'making their number' or stating their name by a display of flags that can be looked up in a code book. This is especially useful in the case of paintings and for a full study that includes two numerical commercial codes, see A S Davidson's 'Marine Art & Liverpool'.



Early naval signalling involved systems which might use national flags, specialised signal flags, the discharge of guns and the loosing of certain sails to convey pre-arranged messages. 'For Fireships in the Admiral's Divisions – flag signal', from Jonathan Greenwood's signal book of 1714.

PAD9769 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Home Popham's code of 1803, the first to use individual letters so that words could be spelled out – though most messages still used pre-arranged combinations.

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Pages from the signal book used by Nelson at Trafalgar, showing the flags to call individual ships

PAI5425 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

The foundation in 1817 of what became the International Code of Signals was the work of Captain Frederick Marryatt (later the famous novelist). It could be adapted to any language and in spite of rivals was the basis of the mid-19th-century Commercial Code whose flags are in use today. Apart from 'making her number' the ship in the painting might be signalling for a pilot, announcing she has a pilot aboard, requesting a health clearance, or declaring that a cargo includes dangerous materials.



Signal flags of the International Code, c 1930, taken from *The Wonder Book of the Navy*, Ward Lock, London, n.d. but pre-1938.

Single flags generally impart this information and if the museum library includes the widely available code book for the International Code, the curator should be happy. This type of signal shades off into the 'Rules of the Road for Preventing Collisions at Sea' whose symbols include shapes such as the two black balls indicating a vessel not under command, or a basket from the forestay of a fishing vessel at work, as well as lights, bells, sirens and whistles. Knowledge of the Rules would be another curatorial asset.



By the second half of the 19th century, merchant ships were allocated a four-letter code to identify them at sea. This is the barque Antagonist entering the River Elbe in 1856, painted by Heinrich Petersen.

Oil on canvas, BHC3199 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Naval signals are in a class of their own, with a considerable literature. Some form of order came out of varied practice at the end of the 18th century when in 1799 the British Admiralty issued a 'Signal Book for Ships of War'. This was followed in 1803 by Sir Home Popham's Code, which was used by Nelson for his famous signal at Trafalgar. Further revisions of naval signalling followed in the 19th century with some of the flags of the same design and colours as the International Code by signifying different letters, and others unique to naval practice such as the Negative flag and the Port and Starboard flags.



The Royal Navy's Channel Squadron, exercising in 1898. HMS Majestic flies the flag of Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Stephenson, and also various signal flags. By Eduardo de Martino

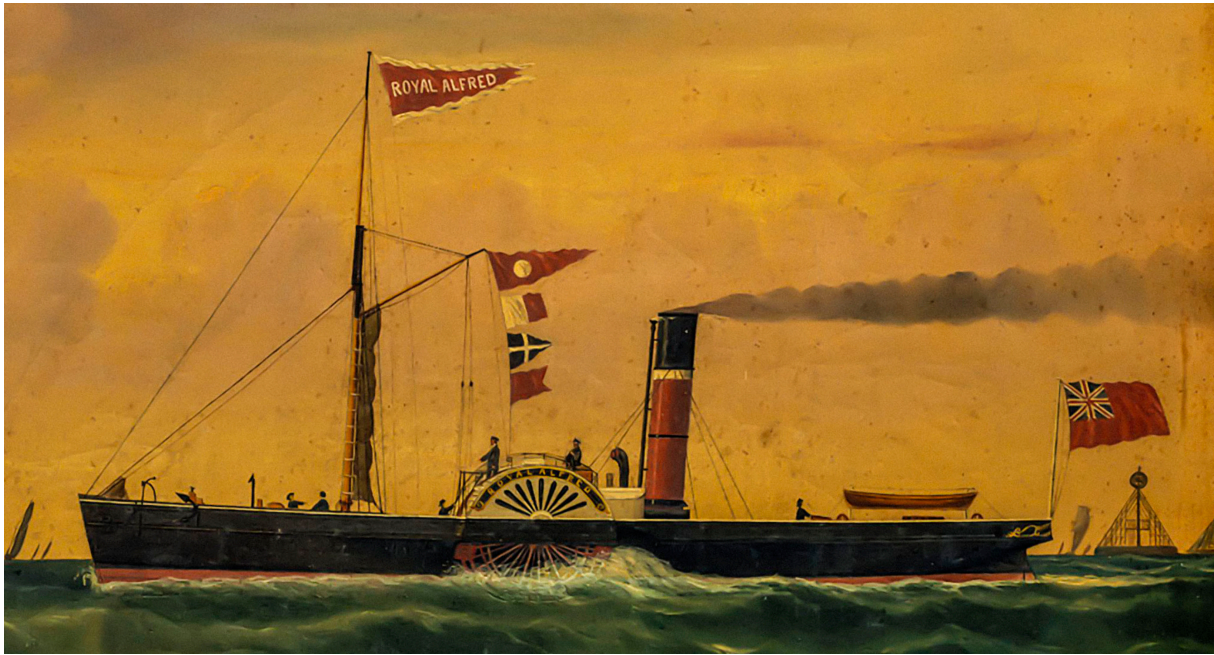
Oil on canvas, Detail of BHC0646 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



*An East Indiaman flies the East
India Company's flags c 1720, by
Peter Monamy*

*Oil on canvas, BHC1011 © National Maritime
Museum, Greenwich, London*

Let us move on from the complexities of signals to the more straightforward history of mercantile house flags and funnels. Sailing ships, of course, had no funnels for recognition purposes, but they did however have masts and spars and these have been used to display distinctive colours – the banded diagonal ‘spreet’ or ‘sprit’ of a Thames spritsail barge, the mast bands and masthead colours of a Norfolk Wherry, the similar mast decoration of a Mersey Flat and Weaver Packet. Flags and funnels have an impressive bibliography and historically are well documented, although early examples are sometimes uncertain in their meaning. Main colours were the rule at first, with simple designs such as the two pennants of the British & North American Steam Packet Company (later the Cunard Line), the upper blue with a St Andrew’s cross, the lower just red. Name pennants seem also to have been favoured according to contemporary art; the pioneer paddle steamer *Great Western* flew a white one with ‘GREAT WESTERN’ in red. Such evidence may not be altogether trustworthy as print makers, for example, might colour funnels and flags as the customer wished, without reference to reality, a point noted by the author as recently as 1963. Early funnels were either plain or by contrast lavishly patterned with bands or diamonds like a harlequin.



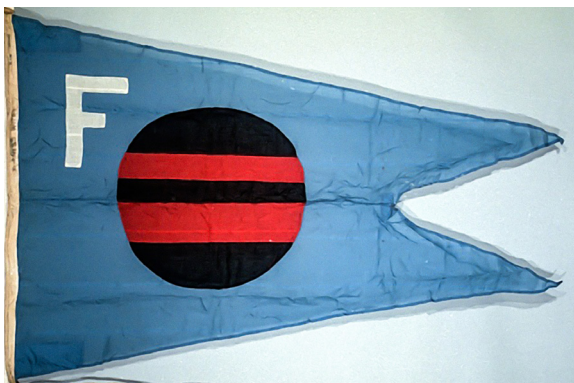
The steam tug Royal Alfred painted by W Jack in 1865, showing the name on a flag.

Oil on canvas, BHC3597 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



The house flag of the Cunard line, c 1951

AAA0214 National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Pope Collection. We regret that Museum enquiries have not been able to identify the owner of the flag's emblem and would welcome any information that would help us update our records. Please contact the Picture Library



The Furness house flag, c 1951

AAA0232 National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Pope Collection. We regret that Museum enquiries have not been able to identify the owner of the flag's emblem and would welcome any information that would help us update our records. Please contact the Picture Library

Later, more distinctive flags appeared bearing the initial letters of the company, F for Furness, or colours associated with the trade, like the red and gold of Spain and the blue and white of Portugal (before the republic was declared in 1910), adopted by the Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company. Examples could be quoted at length with reference too to the variant flags flown by the commodore of the company and the designs adopted when companies merged. In 1900 the new

Union-Castle flag combined the red saltire of the Union Steamship Company and the white saltire on blue of Curries Castles. In 1956 Union Castle merged again with the Clan Line to form British & Commonwealth with the new pennant incorporating the Cayzer lion rampant.

An increasingly frequent and regrettable tendency has been the display of complex devices on the funnel, often taken from the house flag. A modern flag and funnel book contains some amazing and indecipherable symbols, impossible to pick out at any distance. The Holland America Line have abandoned their long-lived buff, green and white for a white funnel bearing their badge of a sailing ship and modern liner in an oval surround, fine on notepaper but not suitable for a funnel, and many more instances could be cited.



The ships owned by Alfred Hold of Liverpool were identified by their blue funnels so it was known as the Blue Funnel Line. This is their house flag from c 1951.

AAA0265 National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Pope Collection. We regret that Museum enquiries have not been able to identify the owner of the flag's emblem and would welcome any information that would help us update our records. Please contact the Picture Library



Cunard also had iconic funnels, painted red and black and seen here on the Queen Mary 2.

© Brian Lavery



It was the shape rather than the colour of the twin funnels of the Canberra (the 'great white whale' of the Falklands War) which gave the ship her identity.

© Brian Lavery

Somehow the curator must assimilate all this and at the same time be aware of mistakes. Some sailor made models and ship portraits worked in wool have the colours transposed (the Union flag as an example, with a blue cross and a red background like the Russian naval jack) and proportions may be wrong. Funnel colours may display the wrong shade – too dark a red, too yellow a buff. Buff is indeed tricky, varying from the bright yellow of the Liverpool & North Wales steamers to the ochre of Shaw Savill. Most publications pair funnels and house flags, although Talbot Booth's *Merchant Ships* of 1942 has them infuriatingly separate, the funnels grouped with notes on where to find the relevant flag, miles away in the text as it happens. Most flag and funnel books are in colour, few being content with the standard code of shading, vertical for red, horizontal for blue, diagonal to the left for green, dotted for yellow. It sounds a minefield but here are some useful books:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ON FLAGS GENERALLY:

EMC Barraclough and WG Crampton, *Flags of the World*. Warne, London, 1981 and earlier editions.

Emil Buhrer, ed.. *Flags through the Ages and across the World*. McGraw Hill Book Co (UK), Maidenhead, 1975.

Both comprehensive works on the whole subject.

Timothy Wilson, *Flags at Sea*. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. HM Stationery Office, London, 1986.

A useful survey illustrated from the collections of the National Maritime with an all embracing bibliography which could hardly be bettered.

ON SIGNAL FLAGS:

WG Perrin, *The Evolution of the Signal Flag*. Cambridge, about 1922.

A standard work.

AS Davidson, *Marine Art & Liverpool. Painters, places & Flag Codes 1760 1960*. Waine Research Publications, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, 1986.

Already referred to in text.

Admiralty Manual of Seamanship. Admiralty, United Kingdom, (now Ministry of Defence, Navy). 1972 and earlier editions.

ON HOUSE FLAGS AND FUNNELS:

JL Loughran, *A Survey of Mercantile House flags and Funnels*. Waine Research Publications, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, 1979.

A thorough descriptive account copiously illustrated and generously indexed with an equally comprehensive bibliography.

Lloyd's Book of House flags & Funnels of the Principal Steamship Lines of the World & the House flags of Various lines of Sailing Vessels. Spottiswoode & Co Ltd, London, 1882, 1904, 1912 editions.

The most comprehensive flag and funnel book ever published, in full colour. The 1882 edition is very scarce.

James Griffin, Flags National & Mercantile. Griffin & Co, Portsmouth 1874 and later editions to 1912.

Not as comprehensive as Lloyd's but good colour printing.

Colin Stewart, ed.. Flags, Funnels and Hull Colours. Adlard Coles, London, 1953 and a later 1963 edition revised by J S Styring.

Some flags and funnels are in black and white in the first edition, as are some hull colours in the 1963 one, but this does not detract from their usefulness. Hull colours are not found in many such books.

J L Loughran, compiler. Brown's Flags and Funnels. Brown, Son & Ferguson, Glasgow, 1926, first edition and nine subsequent ones, the last in 1995.

6 LIFE AT SEA

BY BRIAN LAVERY, CURATOR EMERITUS,
NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

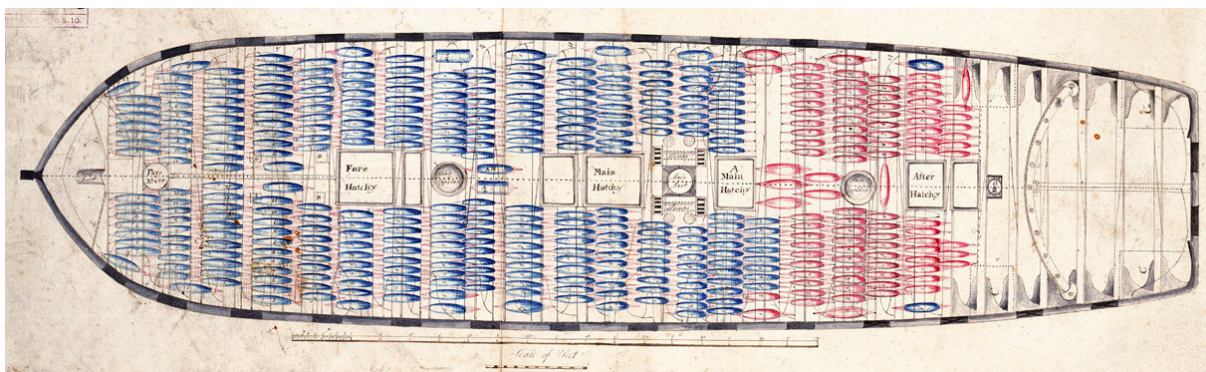
Shipboard life is a subject which the public, including children, can relate to if it is presented well in an exhibition, as it involves familiar issues of eating, sleeping and entertainment. It is also a valuable item in archives, as family historians often want to find out how their ancestors lived either as crew members or passengers, especially migrants.

Despite popular stereotypes, life at sea offers a great deal of variety of conditions. Ferryman and inshore fishermen do not travel more than a few miles from their home, while ocean sailors might travel the world. A voyage might last for a few hours, or several years in the case of voyages of exploration. The seafarer's employment might be for a single voyage, as was the case with most merchant seamen until recently, or it might involve a long-term engagement such as twelve years in the Royal Navy. In the days of sail, nearly all members of the crew were out in the open air handling sails and anchors. With the coming of steam huge numbers of stokers were needed for fast ships such as battle-cruisers and ocean liners, working in overheated and dusty conditions below decks. In addition, modern ferries, liners and cruise ships need large domestic and administrative staff whose work is not very different from that in a hotel or office ashore. The long-distance seafarer was once a race apart, a man who had travelled the world when most people had barely left their towns and villages. This has gradually reduced over the years, as almost everyone can travel nowadays. Attitudes to safety have changed radically over the years: it is no longer assumed that seafaring is dangerous and that shipwreck has to be an accepted part of it. The single most common factor in seafaring life is the focus on the ship as a closed community in which every member of the crew must participate and often literally pull his weight.

THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE

Because a ship is an enclosed community, all the necessities of life must be provided for crew and passengers, especially on a long voyage. It can usually be assumed that there is shelter below decks, though the standard of comfort might vary wildly. Early sailors slept on the deck, often on straw mattresses. The hammock was discovered by Drake in the West Indies in 1598 and became the standard method of sleeping for seamen, often in very cramped conditions. In the 18th century the standard space allocated to each man was 14 inches wide.

SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION



Hammocks on the 74-gun ship Bedford of 1780. The blue ones are for seamen, red is for marines and the space aft is for officers's cabins and the movement of the tiller.

ZAZ 6793 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Admiralty Ship Plans Collection



A hammock on display in HMS Victory, showing the wooden spreaders which gave the occupant some extra space.

© Brian Lavery

Officers lived in cabins, as did passengers on 19th-century liners, except for migrants in steerage who usually slept in bunks, often in very cramped conditions.



An officer's cabin in the Cutty Sark

© Brian Lavery, with kind permission of Royal Museums Greenwich



Seamen's bunks and table in a deckhouse in the same ship.

© Brian Lavery, with kind permission of Royal Museums Greenwich



Emigrants on the sailing ship Otago on a voyage to Australia in 1884, with their numbered bunks behind.

from The Gull, a weekly newspaper published on board the Otago during its voyage, edited by Keith Cameron, electronic resource, 2010

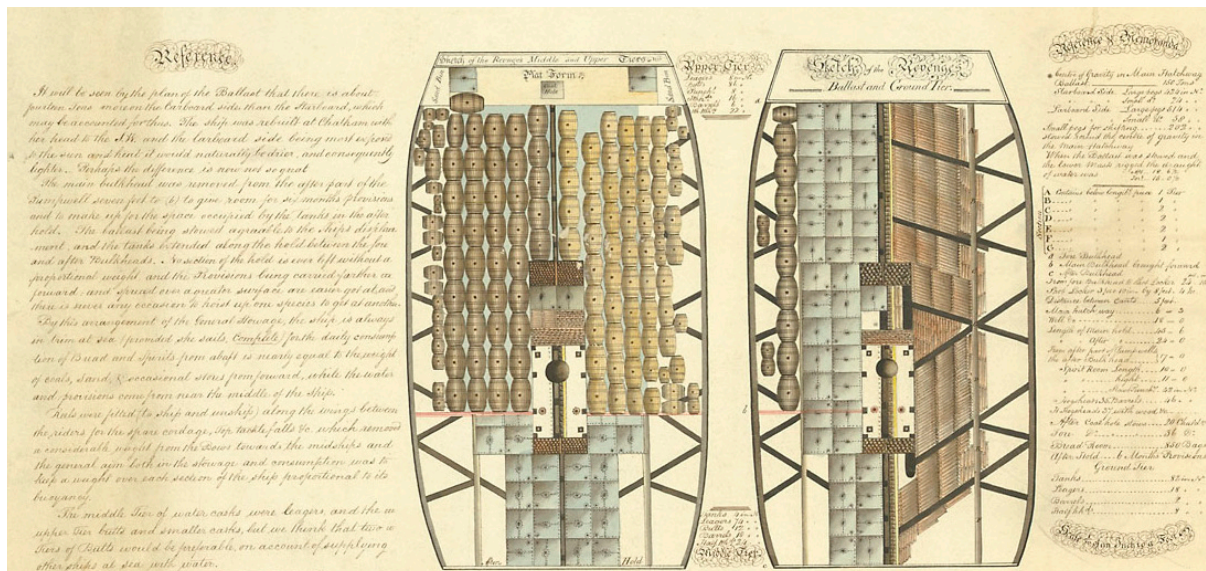


Passenger cabins tended to be quite simple until the 1920s, even in a first class suite as shown here in the Orduna of 1914.

G10764 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

FOOD AND DRINK

Until refrigeration became common in the late 19th century, food was mostly stored in wooden casks in the hold.



The hold stowage of HMS Revenge in 1827, with casks on top of water tanks.

ZA1236 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A standard naval type of galley stove from the late 18th century. The side shown has a grill and oven for the officers' food, the seamen's food was mostly boiled, except for ship's 'biscuit', a kind of bread.

Ship's firehearth model, c. 1780 MDL0025
© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



The passengers' galley in the liner Llandoverly Castle in 1914, with equipment similar to a kitchen ashore.

G10752 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Passenger liners usually had dedicated dining rooms by the late 19th century, as in this P&O ship encountering rough weather crossing the Bay of Biscay in the 1880s.

from P&O Pencillings, by William Whitlock, 1891



A mess table and benches between the guns of HMS Warrior of 1860, in a style which lasted for centuries.

© Brian Lavery, with permission of the Warrior Preservation Trust



The officers' saloon of the Cutty Sark, with trays designed to hold glasses in rough weather.

© Brian Lavery, with kind permission of Royal Museums Greenwich



Royal Naval sailors lived, ate and slept in communal messdecks until well into the 20th century, as shown by this drawing from the Second World War.

from *Men dressed as Seamen*, S. Gorley Putt, 1943
© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



The forward messdeck of the Cavalier. The coloured board is for 'uckers', a naval version of ludo.

© Brian Lavery, with kind permission of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust



The crew's utensils were often very simple, though messes might subscribe together to buy more sophisticated goods. A bottle, spoon, square plate and tankard recovered from HMS Invincible, lost in 1758.

© Brian Lavery, with kind permission of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust

Water was carried on board ship but was often unpalatable after months in the cask, and sailors preferred alcohol in any case. Rum was by no means the only naval drink in the 18th century, they were issued with whatever was available – beer in home waters, wine or brandy on the Mediterranean and rum in the West Indies. This was ‘grog’, watered down with two parts water to one part rum to prevent men storing it.



In the 19th century the rum issue became ritualised and was poured from jugs like this one from the 1930s. The rum issue was abolished in 1970.

TOA0039 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A typical rum cask from HMS Gannet

© Brian Lavery, with kind permission of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust

DRESS



A sailor carrying his hammock in 1775, showing the dress of the period, by Nelson Dawson

PAG1989 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Naval uniform was only introduced for officers in 1748, but for more than a century after that sailors wore their own clothes. They tended to prefer loose trousers and short jackets which contrasted with the long coat and breeches worn by landsmen.



A shoe, stockings and soldiers' buttons from the wreck of the Invincible - very rare examples of ordinary sailors' clothing.

© Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust



An example of the first naval uniform, the pattern for a lieutenant's coat from 1748.

UN10003 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Royal United Service Institution collection

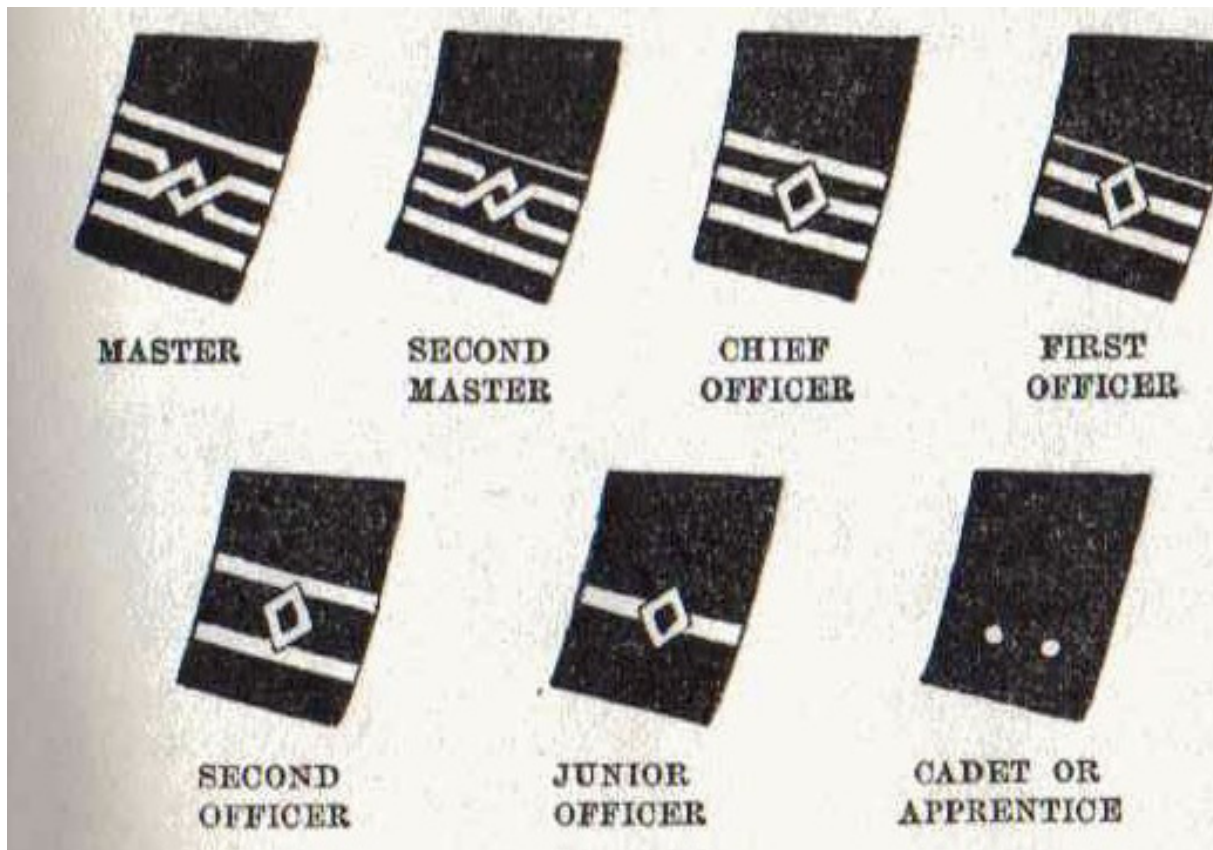
Royal Navy ratings began to wear a regular uniform from 1857, based on the loose trousers and square collars which were fashionable among seamen at the time. Sailors were usually adept with needle and thread and often adapted their uniforms to suit their own taste.



A "TIDDLEY" SAILOR

A 'tiddley' sailor of the Second World War, looked on by a man in more workaday dress

from *Men dressed as Seamen*, S. Gorley Putt, 1943 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



Taken from All about Ships and Shipping, E P Harnack, 1959 edition

The merchant marine was much slower to adopt uniform, except on passenger liners. A regular pattern of officers' badges was approved in 1919.



This picture, by Edward Cooke, shows the famous 'sou'wester'

PAE6373 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Wet weather gear was worn by sailors on less formal occasions, especially 'oilskins' which were originally covered with oil to keep out water.

WORKING LIFE

Some members of the crew – surgeons, carpenters and later engineers – worked at professions or trades they had learned ashore.



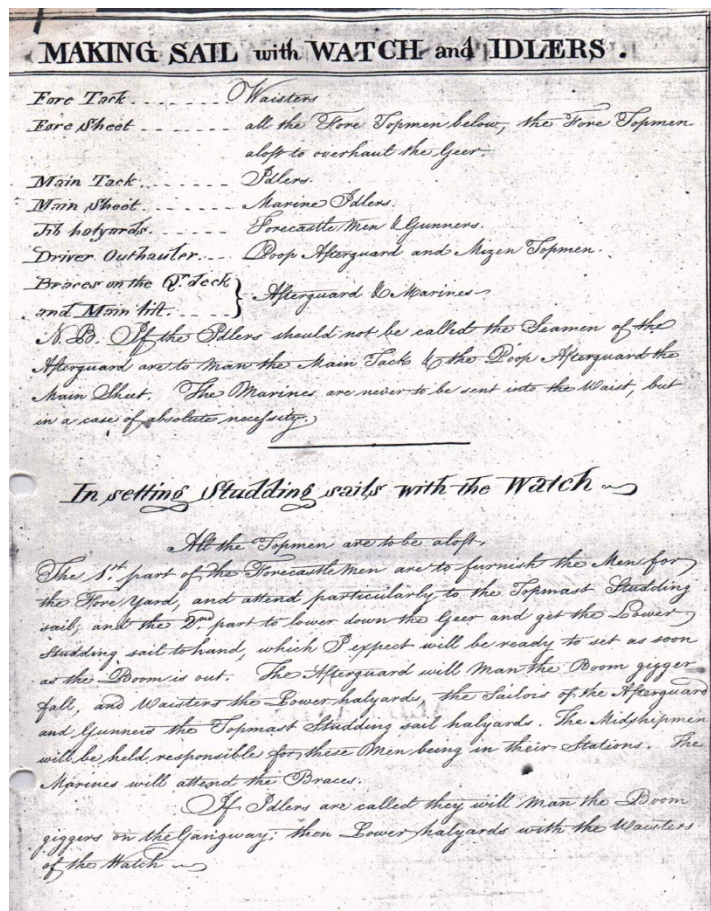
A ship's carpenter, a vital figure in a wooden ship, as drawn by Thomas Rowlandson, 1799.

PAF4968 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



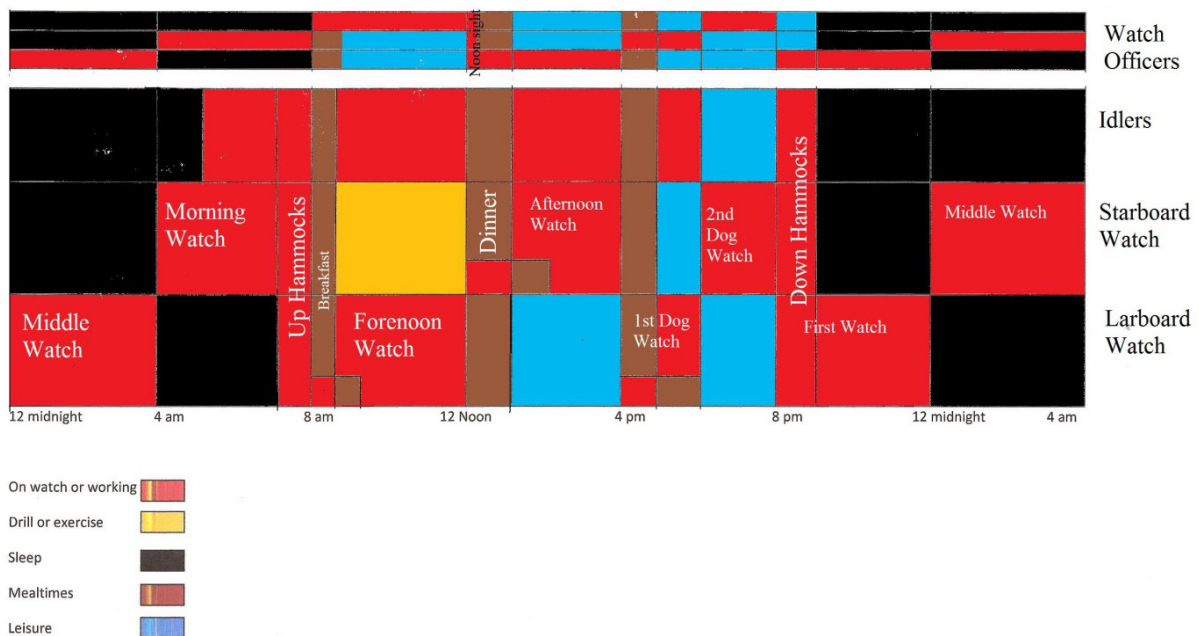
Not all the occupants of the engine room were skilled engineers; hundreds of stokers were needed to shovel coal in extremely hot conditions in many ships during the 19th and much of the 20th centuries.

We regret that enquiries have not been able to identify the copyright holder and would welcome any information that would help us update our records.



On large warships the men were divided into teams according to the part of ship in which they worked. This is a station bill from HMS San Domingo showing the work to be done when making sail. The 'idlers' were craftsmen and domestic workers who did not normally keep watch.

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



A typical daily routine for a warship, c 1800 © Brian Lavery

Life at sea was carefully regulated, especially in large ships. Seamen normally worked in two or three watches of four hours each, so that enough were on duty at any given moment of the day or night. The dog watches were of two hours each so that the routine was varied from day to day.



The seaman's life often involved quite dangerous work such as taking in sail in bad weather.

© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

LEISURE



With very little contact with the outside world, the sailors often spent their leisure time telling stories or 'spinning a yarn' as in this picture by Thomas Streatfield from 1820.

PAI4315 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



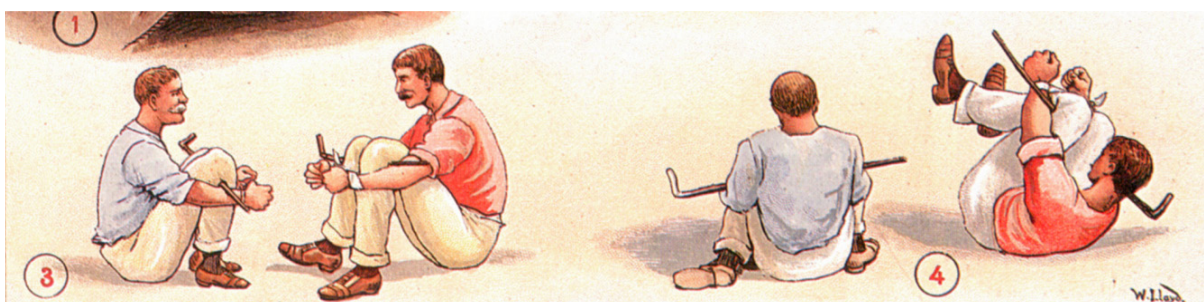
Many sailors indulged in handicrafts, and sometimes they made models of the ships they served in, such as this one of the model of the Ann and Mary, a cargo barquentine, from 1843. Like most sailor-made models it is rather heavy in its construction.

SLR2785 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

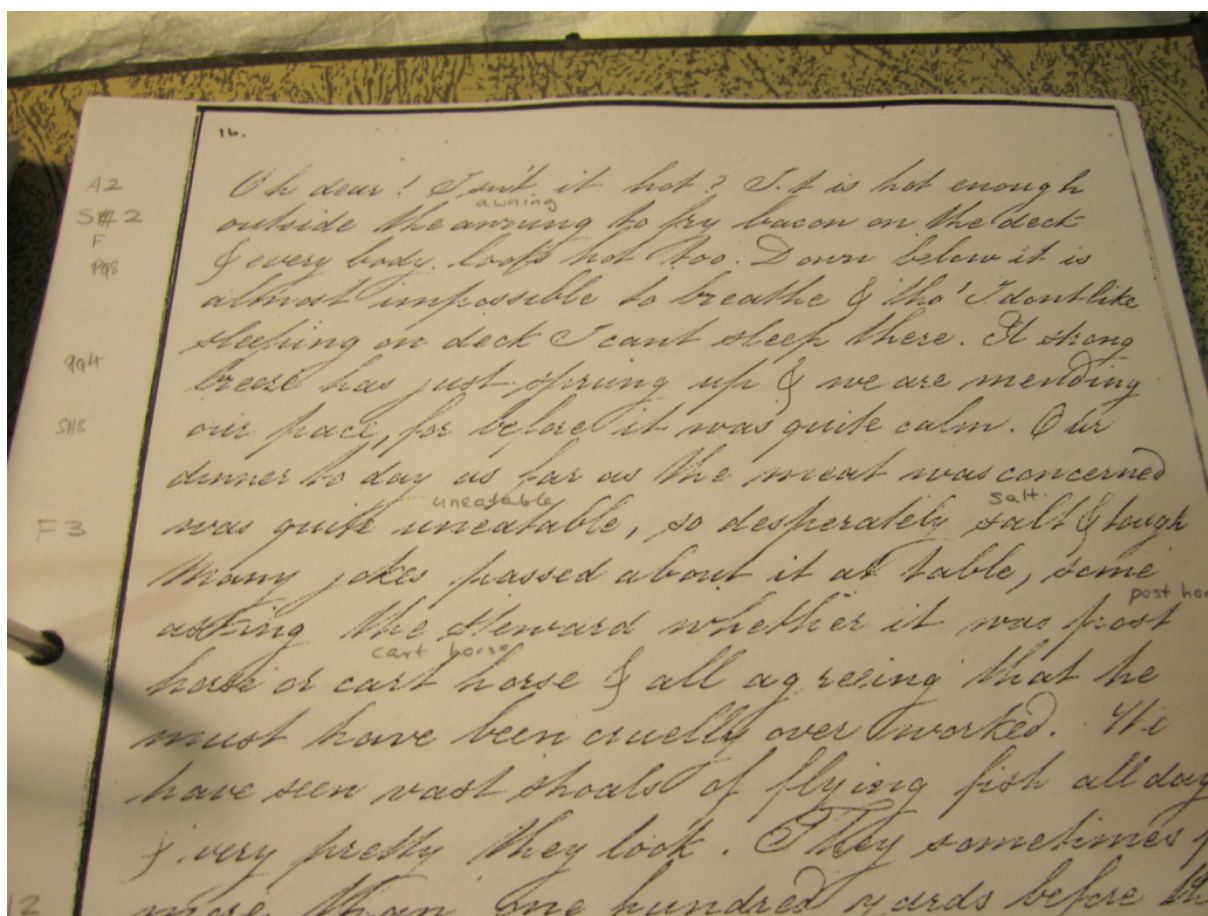


Dancing was popular with both seaman and passengers, as in this view of HMS Vulture in 1854 by Edwin Dolby. Victorian passengers often organised concerts on board.

PADO175 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



'Cock fighting', a common game on board ship from P&O Pencillings, by William Whitlock, 1891



Shipboard diaries often give very useful accounts of life on board, such as this one kept on board the SS Great Britain by an anonymous author.

© ss Great Britain Trust

THE "GREAT BRITAIN" TIMES,

PUBLISHED EXPRESSLY FOR THE PASSENGERS OF THE S.S. "GREAT BRITAIN,"

AND CONTAINING

AMUSEMENT TO ALL—OFFENCE TO NONE!

No. 1.

'I Sea,' Saturday, October 28th, 1865.

GRATIS.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

THE "GREAT BRITAIN" TIMES.

This Paper will be issued every Saturday Morning, at 10 o'clock.

It will contain every information respecting the progress of the vessel in her passage, every important incident transpiring on board, and afford an opportunity for passengers inserting advertisements.

All the price we ask from the Readers will be their assistance. Our office will be found at

No. 9, COLLINS STREET,
SECOND SALOON,
G. B.

THE "GREAT BRITAIN" TIMES.

Contributors are requested to place their Papers in the "Editor's Box" at the Bar not later than 2 o'clock, afternoon of every Thursday.

Business Advertisements, or any other Advertisement after that time, will be charged so much per line.

TRADESMEN AND SERVANTS.

WANTED for The "Great Britain" Times, a Printer's Devil, a good runner preferred. Apply at the Times Office.

WANTED a First-Class Printing Press, to expedite the "Times" business. A cheap one is requisite. Apply "X" No. 9, Collins Street.

WANTED a few Wet Nurses, and other Nurses, to attend the invalids in the Second Cabin. Good testimonials requisite. Apply to the "Editor" of the "Times."

WANTED an A.B. Young Man, to assist the nurses and dress the inmates of the Hospital and run after the doctor. Salary liberal. He must have an irreproachable character. Immediate application to "Capt. T." of No. 4, Berth Steerage, who will attend to it.

MISSING ARTICLES FRIENDS.

If this should meet the eye of Henry Miller, who shipped in the S.S. Great Britain, from some port in October last, and who was seen last on a trip in the mizzen rigging, He will Hear of something to his advantage by communicating with

D. W. ALDRIDGE,
No. 4, Starboard Street, Steerage.

THE "GREAT BRITAIN" MUSIC HALL.

A GRAND CONCERT

will be given in this Hall on Friday, the 3rd proximo, commence at 8 p.m. precisely.

PROGRAMME.

PART FIRST.

Overture .. Piano-Forte .. Miss Russell and Mr. Anderson.
Quartette .. "Come Where my Love Lies Dreaming."
Mrs. Cookworthy, Miss Adams and Messrs. Cookworthy and Venables.
Song .. "Sing, Birdie, Sing" .. Mrs. Cookworthy.
Song .. "Good Rhein Wine" .. Mr. Venables.
Duet .. "Tel Rammento" Mrs. Cookworthy & Miss Adams.

PART SECOND.

Duet .. "Piano-Forte Semiramide" .. Miss Russell.
Trio .. "Hark, 'tis the Indian Drum" .. Miss Adams,
Messrs. Cookworthy and Venables.
Song .. "Una Voce Poca Fa" .. Mrs. Cookworthy.
Song .. "As I View those Scenes so Charming" Miss Adams.
Song .. "Friend of the Brave" .. Mr. Venables.
"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."
Tickets free—to be had Everywhere.

Lost, Stolen or Strayed, from one of the rooms of the officials of the ship, a Gentleman's Heart. It is supposed to have gone in the direction of the Second Cabin or Saloon. If any lady should find the same, she is requested to give it to the owner, or what would be better or more to the purpose, her own heart in return.

If after this notice it is detained, the offender will be brought before the Hymeneal Court.

Any one obtaining information respecting the above, will please leave word in writing in the Editor's Box.

MEETINGS.

On Sabbath Evening the 29th inst. (p.v.) Divine Service will be held in the Second Cabin at 6-30 p.m. All are invited.

MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC!

A number of the passengers are desirous of forming a Music Class, and intend having a Meeting in the second cabin, at 2-30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 31st instant.

Those having Music Books are specially requested to attend, bringing their books with them.

DRAPERIES.

LADIES! LADIES! LADIES!—Clearing Sale—A Rare Chance, Crinolines, Stays, Laces, First-Class Cape Horn, Petticoats and Dresses; Gloves, Kid and Cotton Stockings, and all sorts of Under Clothing, can be had at a greatly reduced scale by calling on

TAG, RAG, & BOBTAIL,
Drapers, and Within Fitters, Swanson street, Saloon.

AUCTIONEERS.

Messrs. NEW, STEERAGE, & Co. want the people in the vicinity of the "Great Britain" to know that they have passed the Insolvent Court, and are about to Recomence Business on a most magnificent scale. We have rented those valuable premises, formerly occupied by Messrs. Old, Steerage & Co., and refitted the same at an enormous expense. Our Stock consists of valuable importations from Victoria, N. S. Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand. New, Steerage, & Co., No. 4, Stock and Station Agents. N.B.—Our valuable Stock will be seen from 4 o'clock a.m., till 9 p.m., forward of the funnel. N. S. & Co.

Messrs. New, Steerage & Co. have received instructions from Messrs. Intermediate & Co., to sell by Auction on the 6th of November next, 1,116 Portraits of Guy Fawkes, 11,164 Boxes of Matches, 1,136 Tons Gunpowder, and a large assortment of Slop Pails and Bouilli Soup Tins. An inspection invited prior to sale.

To avoid imposition, notices of Births, Marriages, and Deaths must be previously authenticated by a responsible comical personage, to secure their insertion herein. The following have been duly authenticated, and we take pleasure in inserting them.

BIRTHS.

TIMES. On board, on the morning of this day, the first publication of the "Great Britain" Times. Great Rejoicing!

MARRIAGES.

RITCHIE. Within the inside of a certain saloon on board the S.S. "Great Britain," on her passage from Melbourne towards Liverpool, G. Ritchie, Esq., of Auckland, to Miss—to be, perhaps continued. No cards.

DEATHS.

DYED. Suddenly at the barbarous establishment of a hair cutter, in the third cabin, in the prime of life, on the 27th inst., a Pair of Whiskers, much and justly lamented. Friends will please accept of this intimation.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All offensive communications will be rejected, and retained by the Editor.

Contributors must enclose their name or card when sending Papers for insertion.

The Great Britain Times of 1865

© ss Great Britain Trust

Ship's newspapers are often a rich source for details of the voyage, especially long ones. During the 19th century it was very rare to have printing facilities on board and they were copied out by hand and often read out to the passengers. They rarely survive in that form but it was not unusual for the passengers to subscribe to have them printed after they landed.