



Ian Caskie

Ian was born and raised on Merseyside, where he spent many an hour watching the arrivals and departures at Liverpool's busy Pier Head in the 1950's and 60's. This led to his lifelong passion for ships – especially ocean liners. He was a Primary Head Teacher and School Improvement Adviser in Bristol for many years, and has been a Visitor Services volunteer with the SS Great Britain Trust since 2007.

Talks Offered

SS Great Britain: from launch to 're-launch' **50 minutes**

Ian's enthusiasm for his subject is clearly evidenced in his illustrated talk which tells the ship's remarkable story from her original design through the different phases of her working life. It also describes her incredible salvage and return to Bristol in 1970, and finally her restoration, preservation and 're-launch' as a multi-award winning museum of international renown.

In building SS Great Britain, the second of his three great ships, Brunel successfully combined and adapted the very best of cutting-edge technologies to create the world's first transatlantic liner – a true wonder of the Victorian age.

She was the first ocean-going steamship with an iron hull, and the first driven by a propeller. This extraordinary ship, launched in 1843 as the largest and fastest afloat, transformed shipbuilding and sea travel forever.

Areas Covered

Ian is based in the Bristol area but willing to travel anywhere within England and Wales.



Iain McGregor

Iain was born and raised in Edinburgh and qualified as a Chartered Accountant, working in Hong Kong, and living in Australia. This has given him a strong interest in travel, and foreign lands and their people and how historical technical developments have affected our lives. Iain has been a Visitor Experiences volunteer with the ss Great Britain Trust since 2018.

Talks Offered

Brunel in a changing world.

Up to 1 hour

This talk covers Isambard Kingdom Brunel, his life and his inventions, particularly how they affected communication and travel. The talk then expands to say how these innovations affected society and the economy in Britain and the world in the Industrial Revolution, and are the basis of worldwide international trade today.

Areas Covered

Iain is based in the Bristol area and is willing to travel in Bristol and its surrounding areas up to 30 miles.



Ian Morton

Ian was born and raised in London. As a child he would go with his uncle to the Pool of London where his uncle worked as a ships carpenter. He has lived in Kent, Warrington and now Bristol. He is a Charter Civil Engineer and spent most of his working life as a project manager serving the water industry. Before joining the SS Great Britain volunteer team, he spent 12 years as a volunteer with the National Trust at Tynesfield near Wraxall.

Talks Offered

SS Great Britain: “It is not just the ship’s cat that had nine lives”.
50 minutes

Ian’s talk tells the remarkable story of the ship’s journey from an original idea of a “seamless steam powered journey from London to New York” through the ship’s design, construction, led by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and the different phases of her working life. It also describes her remarkable salvage, return to Bristol in 1970, and finally restoration and preservation.

In building SS Great Britain, the second of his three great ships, Brunel successfully combined and adapted the very best of cutting-edge technologies to one of the true wonders of the Victorian age.

She was the first ocean-going steamship with an iron hull, and the first driven by a propeller. This extraordinary ship, launched in 1843 was the largest moving object ever built at the time. It transformed shipbuilding and sea travel for ever.

Areas Covered

Ian is based in the Bristol area but willing to travel anywhere within England and Wales.



Mike Rapps

Mike was born in North Somerset in 1952 and educated at Bristol Grammar School. He was fortunate enough to gain a history scholarship to Pembroke College, Oxford but studied law and have an MA degree in the subject. However history has always remained one of his big passions (alongside football) and his father (whose initials were GWR!) introduced him at an early age to Isambard Kingdom Brunel and his magnificent engineering works. Mike has been a volunteer at SS Great Britain since 2018 and specialises in school tours.

Talk offered

Isambard Kingdom Brunel and SS Great Britain – a short biography of both 50 minutes

As the title suggests the first part is a fairly whistle-stop tour through Brunel's background, family life, character and greatest achievements (and the odd failure, but not many!). The second part covers the building of the SS Great Britain, its sailing career, its rescue in 1970 and its development since.

Areas covered

Mike is based in the Bristol area and is happy to cover the city and surrounding areas but is willing to consider talks further afield.



David Smith

David is a tour guide and visitor experience volunteer at SS Great Britain. After a career spent between telecommunications and fundraising, joining the SS Great Britain has allowed him to reconnect with his teenage interest in industrial archaeology.

Talks Offered

SS Great Britain: The Surgeon's Tale **50 minutes**

The surgeon's tale is an illustrated talk which tells why the ship had a surgeon, their role and responsibilities, and many stories of how they performed their duties. It also covers other ways Brunel made a contribution towards improving public health in Victorian England.

Areas Covered

David is based in the Bristol area but willing to travel anywhere within an hour or so drive away. (not Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday)