

SOUTH WEST SOUNDINGS 105

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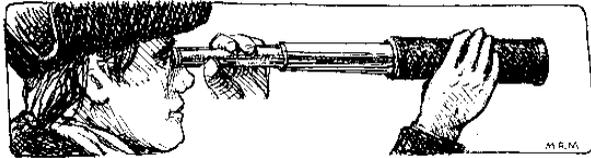
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A reminder/invoice is included with the April edition.

WELCOME ABOARD

Valery Belsey Dartmouth

FUTURE MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS



(Italics indicate an event of interest but not organised directly by the Society)

16 September 2017. Meeting & AGM at The Globe, Topsham.
Calling notice issued with SWS104.

14 October 2017. Cornish Maritime History Conference '17 National Maritime Museum Cornwall, Falmouth. For more details see Letters Notes and News page 33

30 November 2017. A Tale of the Terror; Finding Franklin's lost ships. Matthews Hall. Topsham. For more details see Letters Notes and News page 34

Confirmation of events will be published either in the next edition or in calling notices for bookings, which will be sent to members at the appropriate time.

Next copy date: January 8th 2018

EDITORIAL

Again, thank you to all members who sent in material for the present edition of South West Soundings. In the previous edition I expressed the wish that more readers would forward contributions but I still rely mainly on the same faithful crew. There are many excellent on line maritime newsletters such as the Society for Nautical Research's *Topmasts* and the National Maritime Museum Cornwall's *Troze* but if we wish to continue with our own *Soundings* I need a steady flow of short articles and news items. I have not ruled out a return to the traditional naval method of impressment!



No Sir- you don't have to fight the French-just write a few words for SWS!

Ray Fordham

ARTICLES

Stavanger port and museums

Most readers will know Stavanger as the leading oil services port in Norway, but it has a long and varied maritime history spelled out at its museums. We visited the Maritime Museum and the nearby canning museum on a short cruise visit; these two museums are easy to find, being right next to the cruise dock. The Maritime Museum is well presented, with exhibits covering the early history of the city as a port, then the 19c. boom in fishing especially herring and sardines, and the growth of coastal and deep sea trade and shipbuilding.

For a time Stavanger was a leading port, and a shipowner's office, furnished in the heavy style of the time, is one of the exhibits, along with a waterfront general store from the early 1900's. There is also the original sail loft with equipment. There are quite a number of models of Stavanger owned and managed ships through the years, based on the collection of the Monsen shipowning family. These include a fine model of the *Stavangerfiord* liner of the Norwegian America line, that ran a service to New York from 1919 to 1963. Conventional shipowning and building seems to have died out in the 70's and 80's, but the oil service work of course remains.

Perhaps the most unusual exhibit is a tide computer, beautifully made in brass and mahogany, from the turn of the 19th century. I'd not seen one before. Apparently the first was developed by Kelvin.

The interpretation on the models and artefacts is in Norwegian with an English summary, but it isn't fully multilingual. The video on underwater archaeology seemed to be only in Norwegian. An audio guide, including English is available, also an English language mini guidebook. World war 2 is mentioned mostly in relation to merchant losses.

The canning museum offers free guided tours of the old factory, showing how the process gradually progressed from simple aids to a degree of mechanisation of both the preparation and canning processes. All the original machinery is there. The number of canneries fell from over a hundred to nil when the last closed in 2008. Now Norwegian sardines are packed in Poland-sparing Norwegian women this tough work that occupied their ancestors for centuries. There isn't a lot on the fishing boats themselves in either museum, but a lot of sardine can labels have been preserved.

Outside of the museum, there is the *Rogaland*, a 1929 coastal steamer used on the run to Bergen and Oslo, wrecked after an explosion in port in 1944, later salvaged, and now owned by a charitable trust. The steamer *Rogaland* features in the recently released film Dunkirk.

There was a temporary exhibition called “sensing the 18th Century”. It mentions that Norwegian trade statistics from the 18th c. now available online at toll.lokalhistorie.no

The museum itself owns two historic sailing vessels. The *Anna of Sand* is a real survivor, a sloop built in 1854. The *Wyvern* was built in 1897 by Colin Archer as a yacht. Both are listed as “national treasures”.

Both museums (and others) have combined entrance of about £6, excellent value.

Ffi. <http://stavangermaritimemuseum.no/en/>

Jonathan Seagrave

Hartland Quay Museum

Many of our members, myself included, spend their holidays visiting maritime museums, often struggling with captions in foreign languages, yet overlooking some of the gems on our own doorstep. I have not seen a guide to maritime museums of the south west and thought it might be useful for readers to send in accounts of what is available in the region. To show willing I offer the following note on the Hartland Quay Museum. This small museum, was designed and built over 30 years ago by Michael Nix and, SWMHS member and marine artist, Mark Myers. It is situated near the quay, in the upper story of the shop opposite the hotel, and is open throughout the the main holiday season.

There are two main exhibition rooms; the first of these, the Shipwreck Room contains documents and images relating to four centuries of local shipwrecks ending with the coaster *Johanna* in 1982. A shipwreck coast model showing the location of over 140 local wrecks together with a viewpoint overlooking the grave of *SS Rosalia*, serve to emphasize the dangers of this stretch of coast

The Hartland Room concentrates on the heritage and natural history of the local coastline. It is difficult today to imagine that there was ever a flourishing quay at Hartland but its history, from its construction in the reign of Henry VIII until its destruction by the sea more than a century ago, are recorded here. Other exhibits describe the area's bygone industries, smuggling, wrecking and rescues.

Younger visitors may be surprised by the absence of computer screens and hands-on displays but the eclectic mix of artefacts, paintings and photographs adequately portray the maritime history of this section of the north Devon coast.

Ray Fordham

Floating about Hampshire with Mike Bender

April 30th :To Selborne, the parish of the famous eighteenth century naturalist, Gilbert White, for a celebration of Theo Rye's life, with some 200 other mourners. It was the second loss of a major figure in yachting history within a few months, the first being Maldwin Drummond.

Maldwin was a major mover and shaker in the higher echelons of yachting and yacht clubs. Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron, Editor of the Royal Cruising Club's *Roving Commissions*, chair of the Sail Training Association, and heavily involved in the building of the three masted schooner, *Sir Winston Churchill*. The only negative in his illustrious career was being involved in the crucifixion of the *Cutty Sark* and then the shrink wrapping of the corpse, but I have it on good authority that his advice was over-ruled.

He was also a Renaissance man, with a wide range of talents. His publications can do the talking. He published *Salt- Water Palaces* (1979), about luxury yachts in the years between 1840 and 1914; on wildlife in *The Yachtsman's Naturalist*, with Paul Rodhouse (1980); *The Riddle*, providing the background to *The Riddle of the Sands*, and its political plot of an intended German invasion.

He told me a nice story about writing *The Riddle*. He'd gone down West to see the Pophams who'd edited Childers' writings about his sailing days (*A Thirst for the Sea*, 1979), and as he was leaving, his host said casually 'Oh, by the way, would you like to borrow Childers' actual log book of his Baltic & Frisians voyage?' Of course, he said 'Yes' and was so thrilled by the loan that, as he was driving back to Fawley, he pulled over a number of times into lay-bys so that he could stroke it. Having had a heart bypass operation a few years ago, he was very pleased that he saw the updated second edition appear.

Maldwin was also a talented artist and his most enjoyable book is *After You, Mr Lear* (Seafarer, 2007). As well as a limerick and

humorous poet, Lear was a painter, good enough to tutor Queen Victoria, and painted during his years travelling and living in the Mediterranean (1847-1849). Maldwin followed, on land and by sea and visited the sites of Lear's paintings. If the idea appeals to you, buy the hard copy as the publishers shrank the size of the paintings for the paperback, which seriously lessens the impact and pleasure.

I had been in communication with Maldwin about Erskine Childers, because I had the idea for an article that Childers was actually spying, or at least charting the depths around the Frisian islands in case the British needed them, for example, as bases from which to monitor and perhaps blockade German shipping movements, either from Wilhelmshaven or through the ports served by the Ems-Jade canal. This would have been similar to Ewan Southby-Tailyour, the Marine and yachtsman, who charted the islands when commanding the Royal Marine Detachment in the Falklands in 1978-1979. His charts were invaluable for the landing of the British troops during the Falkland War, and published after the war in *Falkland Islands Shores*, 1985. My main supporting evidence was that Childers' actual voyage in *Vixen* was from August to mid-December. This seemed incredibly late in the season, so that he was sailing around very shallow waters with short day light hours and higher risk of gales. Maldwin didn't agree, but he had very kindly invited me to lunch, when, three days before, I sadly heard that, after a very short illness, he had died.

Theo Rye was much younger, but already an internationally leading figure in yacht restoration, especially classic yachts, and he passed some of his knowledge of Victorian and pre-World War Two techniques on in articles in the yachting press, most frequently for *Classic Boat*, of which he was a consultant editor. He had got wind that I was working on *A New History of Yachting*, and was most encouraging, agreeing to read a late draft. This was an honour, and an opportunity for constructive criticism not to be missed. When Theo told you you were wrong, you knew he knew ten times more about yachting than you did; and he did so, characteristically, by pushing back his steel-rimmed glasses and speaking with a smile, so you

couldn't take offence. But before he was able to give me that feedback, he e-mailed me apologising for the delay, saying that he'd had a ridiculous accident falling off his bike

I was attending a committee meeting of the Association of Yachting Historians in September last year. It was held on the balcony of the Royal Southampton. I was sitting there enjoying the sun, when Martin Black told us that Theo Rye had an inoperable brain tumour and would almost certainly be dead within three months. I looked out across the expensive plastic toys and trophies of the rich and life didn't seem fair, for Theo was only 48.

It was obvious to me that had he lived and wished to, he had a *magnum opus* in him on how classic boats were built and not just the hulls, but the rigging, the spars, etc. in short, every aspect of a boat. And Theo had the ability to make the technical interesting and relevant. To give one example, he told me that he was writing a double article on glues. Which didn't sound terribly exciting, but, when the articles came out, Theo explained that these glues were developed to go with hollow masts. Hollow masts were lighter than solid, shaped tree trunks, so gave racing boat with them an advantage. But of course, you couldn't just drill out a 150 foot mast. So you constructed from a number of pieces of wood, hence the need for suitable glues.

The next morning saw me heading West to Padstow for my annual presence at the 'Obby 'Os celebrations. The drinking starts the night before. I was in the Harbour Inn, the home of the Blue 'Os, the 'Os of my friends, which was created after the 1914 War to remember the dead, in competition with the time-immemorial Red 'Os.

I was up early on May Day' as I wanted to see the Junior 'Obby 'Os parade at 0800. It was raining badly and by the time I got down to the Harbour I was soaked. My mood was not improved by hearing a bunch of open, white shirted, middle-aged men, under a plastic shelter, singing 'I'm bound for South Australia', in the very meaningful,

soulful way that people who don't know their pushpit from their pulpit, do. I was reminded of David Bone, in his introduction to his *Capstan Bars*, 1931, a nicely produced analysis of shanties, getting angry with composers like Benjamin Britten, making them songs for concert singers, when they were actually important adjuncts to work.

As I moved away, I thought, ill-temperedly, that it was appropriate that they sang a shanty which didn't make sense "Round Cape Horn, we're bound for South Australia", when of course, on the way out, they would have used the Westerlies and gone round the Cape of Good Hope. But I left them to their singing and grunting, the latter, of course, essential to providing authenticity.

As soon as the Blue 'Os came out, I went in. In the evening, it has cleared up so I followed the Blue 'Os. The master of ceremonies, the teaser, led the band down the breakwater, which apparently hasn't happened for some years, and by now, after all the rain, there were only the Os' followers, in their white outfits with blue scarfs and belts, surely drawing on a naval costume. To see the 'Os and a maiden whirling around and the 'Os' followers dancing to the music of the drum and accordion band, in the sunlight, with the aquamarine Camel behind, was something special. Then I hastened to the Harbour Inn, which they came into complete with 'Os (anything breakable is put away, leaving only a few benches against the wall). I've heard 'Summer is a'coming in' thousands of times over the years, but to hear it filling a room with a low roof, an accordionist bashing it out two feet away from you, so that it vibrates down into your toes, is something else.

The next morning, I rode the ferry across to Rock and paid for a coffee at the Blue Tomato – overpriced, but the view up the Camel and across to Padstow, is to die for. Back in Padstow, I passed the Red Lion, home of the Red 'Os, I heard male voices singing 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' very meaningfully. I popped to check whether they were the same group of middle-aged men in open white shirts that, when last seen, had been heading for South Australia but I couldn't be sure. I

reflected it was a wise career move, as unless they were very unlucky and landed on a cannibal island (and surely the rulers of the Empire had exterminated them in the name of the advance of civilisation - cannibals, I mean, not missionaries), they were more likely to succeed as missionaries than as deckhands on a commercial sailing vessel.

As I walked back up the hill, I saw a sign for the church, so I made my way to St Petroc's and decided to light a candle for a member of my family, and then I lit one for Maldwin and Theo too.

Mike Bender

Submarines at Torquay

For many years I have cherished a photograph of a number submarines moored in Torquay harbour in about 1910. It is a glimpse of the very dawn of British operational use of that revolutionary weapon. Last year I was given a book called “The Evolution of the Submarine Boat, Mine and Torpedo” published in 1907 and written by the charismatic and visionary Royal Navy submarine pioneer Commander Murray Sueter. He served in early submarines and rose to high rank during and after WW1. Now I had to hand a contemporary account of the very submarines shown, describing all the newness of this strange vessel, how it was being developed and used, and, intriguingly how the author foresaw its future. A stimulus indeed to research the story behind the photograph.



The photograph is taken on a summer's day from Beacon Quay and looking across the outer harbour to the Princess Pier. The Bay is beyond with the Grand Hotel on the far side. Outside the pier can be seen three Brixham Trawlers under gentle sail. Within the harbour there are moored pleasure craft and a pilot cutter, and in the foreground are three C Class submarines moored abreast, two of which can be identified as C12 and 14. On her own mooring a little distance away we see a D Class submarine, indeed the very first trailblazing vessel of

this class, D1. The C boats are moored abreast with gang-planks between them and hatches open. Crew can be seen on deck in various states of repose or domestic activity. On C14 there is a petty officer and four crew in their submariners' white jerseys. One is about to empty a wooden bucket, another is putting dishcloths on the guard-wires to air and the others are just taking in the view, and on the deck one can see a clean metal cooking pot or "fanny" in naval parlance. On C12 three crew watch as a naval steam pinnace pulls away assisted by boat hooks fore and aft.. On the unidentified C boat, an officer steps onto the gang-plank that will take him aboard C14. On D1 we can see eight crew sitting at the fore hatch in relaxed conversation, whilst just abaft the conning tower are three officers.

Despite determined opposition by traditionalists the Royal Navy introduced submarines from 1901 – starting with five of the rudimentary but promising Holland Class of US origin. Then between 1902 and 1905 fourteen boats were built of Admiralty-designed Class A which introduced the conning-tower, followed between 1904 and 1906 by the eleven boats of the B Class with the innovation of hydroplanes. This last was a very successful class, so the decision was made to make minor improvements, and the C Class was born. Thirty-eight were built between 1906 and 1910. They were 135 feet long, 13.5 feet in beam and the hull excluding the tower was 12 feet in depth. They displaced 290 tons surfaced and 320 tons submerged and had a complement of sixteen. A single petrol engine gave 600 hp and drove the boat at 13 knots on the surface with a range of 1500 nautical miles at 8.5 knots, whilst the single 200hp electric motor rendered a speed of 8 knots submerged. They had two periscopes.. Finally it was armed by two 18 inch torpedoes in bow tubes. The D Class was a significant leap forward and in many ways created the pattern for all future British diesel-electric submarines. This class of eight boats was built between 1908 and 1912; the small number because there was a shortage of finance and the next class overtook it. They incorporated saddle-tanks

for the first time instead of internal ballast tanks. And this class was the first to be fitted with the safer, more reliable and powerful diesel engines, and had two propellers. The conning-tower was significantly bigger and these were the first boats designed from the outset to use a wireless, though the wireless mast had to be raised and lowered by hand from the tower. Our D1 in the photo clearly shows this apparatus. Some of the class were the first submarines to have deck-guns. Dimensions were 162 feet by 20.5 feet by 14 feet (excluding tower) and a displacement of 604 tons surfaced and 620 tons submerged (which shows it had very little reserve buoyancy). It had two 1200hp engines driving it at 16 knots on the surface with a range of 2500 nautical miles at 10 knots. The two 550hp electric motors were supplied from bigger and more efficient batteries and propelled it at 9 knots submerged. It had a complement of 25 and two 18 inch torpedoes in bow tubes and one in a stern tube.

So what were the stories of our submarines? Firstly they were at the time all attached to the 2nd Submarine Squadron based alongside a parent ship HMS Forth at Devonport. The other early submarines squadron bases were at Portsmouth, Sheerness and Dover. There was a training base at Harwich. A squadron would normally have nine submarines, usually of different classes. Both C12 and C14 were built by Vickers of Barrow-in-Furness and both were launched in 1907 though C14 was a more advanced development of its class – for instance our photograph shows C12 has an ordinary standard ships compass mounted outside the hull aft of the tower, whereas C14 has moved on to a larger tower and one of the newly-available gyro compasses. C12 was operational as a coastal submarine in WWI and very nearly survived it, but whilst operating in the North Sea on the 6th October 1918 she suffered an engine failure, losing all power and was driven by the tide into the Eastern Jetty at Immingham, where she was holed and sank with no reported loss of life. When she was raised, she was scrapped. On the evening of 10th December 1913 C14 was

returning to Plymouth when it collided with Government Hopper No27 in Plymouth Sound. Holed aft she immediately started taking in water and, slipping below the waves by the stern, sank in ten minutes. Fortunately the accident occurred close to land and all the crew were rescued. The submarine was later salvaged and returned to active service. There is no official record of it subsequently foundering so we may safely assume that it continued a full and active operational life until it was eventually retired and scrapped. D1 was also built by Vickers in Barrow and has its own place in British submarine history, for on Fleet manoeuvres in 1910 it successfully “torpedoed” two “enemy” cruisers – a timely demonstration of the submarine’s potential as a serious weapon against capital ships at sea rather than a limited Harbour Defence Vessel. It remained operational until nearly the end of WW1, and her final contribution was a useful one - she was sunk as a target on the 23rd October 1918.

So we enjoy looking at our submarines and their relaxed crews, knowing that, unlike so many of their peers, they all survived the hazards of service and conflict.

And how did Commander Sueter see the future of his beloved submarine? Certainly in the short-term, all too aware of practical limitations “submarines and their weapons will form the chief protection of our coast-lines and adjacent narrow waters in our next naval struggle.” Yet he also anticipated in the more distant future the dangers to trade by “attacks in groups of submarines” on moving shipping; the Wolfpack of WW2.

David Bowen

Rock of Eye

The following record, from the Vernon C Boyle Collection in North Devon Maritime Museum archive, is from a conversation with W J Slade, master mariner of Appledore. The record is dated 1953 but provides a much earlier insight to the days of sail:

“I believe they used to build some of our old vessels without any moulds at all. They'd just stand and rock their heads and move off to another place and see if the thing looked alright; some lines level; two curves equal, other curves fair, and all parts balanced. This way was called “by rock of eye”

The Ulelia, my father's ketch, Cornish-built, was so built, I heard. She was one deck-plank wider one side than the other, and I know (for I steered her as a boy) that whilst on the starboard gybe, she had a lot of weather helm, on the port side the tiller had to be amidships and I remember I could jam the tiller there by putting a chock (called the tiller chock) under it and resting on the skylight.

It was no doubt to partly counteract this lop-sided sailing of the Eulalia that her two topsails were set both on the same side instead of on opposite sides as in all other ketches”.

Vernon Boyle (1895-1954), artist and scholar, was a leading authority on the history of ships and harbours of north Devon.

A small team of volunteers at the museum are gradually cataloguing his large collection of notes, sketches and newspaper cuttings.

The museum is closed during the winter but the archive can be consulted by prior arrangement on Monday and Wednesday mornings throughout the year. Contact:

archive-research@northdevonmaritimemuseum.co.uk

Ulelia was built in Truro in 1877, owned by the Slade family from 1899-1916 and wrecked off Ireland in 1930. I have been unable to locate a photograph of her.

Ray Fordham

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

SWMHS Meeting at *The Globe*, Topsham 10 June 2017

This meeting followed the usual format, but without the formal AGM, which will be at the September meeting at the same venue.

Tom Coia explained the importance of Truro as a port throughout history until the end of the 19c. Tin mining and later, smelting, were the drivers for the early growth of the town and achieving borough status in 1189. Its fortune rose and fell with the tin trade. Truro benefited from its inland location, which reduced shore side transport costs, but didn't save it from the ravages of the Black Death and the French in the medieval period. Later, merchants built homes and warehouses along the riverbank, reclaiming land in the process. In the 19c. industry came to the town, and industry lined the river banks. Later Lemon Quay was built, but Falmouth sucked away much trade. The town prospered, though increasingly as an administrative and commercial centre. Much of the tin trade was financed from Truro. The waterfront has much changed, at first through reclamation. In the postwar period, almost all traces of maritime trade have been lost, as supermarkets and the new main road have razed the old factories and warehouses.

Jake Perry, an Exeter student, then told us of the rise of the Australian navy prior to and during WW1. Australia is very much dependent on sea trade. The early view of the Admiralty was that a small RN squadron of elderly vessels was sufficient. Gradually a more nationalist view in Australia led to the 1897 Act which committed a squadron to Australia, but this wasn't enough for many Australians, especially after the creation of the Commonwealth from the six colonies, some of which had limited forces of their own. A modest RN squadron offered no training opportunities, and tension increased, as the Admiralty wouldn't fully commit the force to the protection of Australia, regarding it as just one part of wider Imperial defence. Australia wanted to pay for modern destroyers, but expected control.

The tension led to the Fisher proposal for a “Fleet Unit” for each of the Commonwealth countries, which would resolve the tension. Each unit would consist of a battlecruiser, 2-3 cruisers, and around 6 destroyers, which would be able to offer effective local protection from any likely enemy, but could also be deployed in an integrated fashion with the RN battlefleet. Australia opted for this, but insisted on local control. New Zealand paid for the battlecruiser *New Zealand*, but was content to leave her under RN control, though she was largely Kiwi manned. Canada didn’t buy the concept. To enable effective integration with the RN required the Australian unit to adopt RN procedures and discipline, which didn’t fit too well with the more relaxed Australian outlook. When WW1 came, though, the unit did come under the command of the RN China squadron.

The Australian decision proved a good one. In the first few weeks of war, 40 German merchant ships were seized, SMS *Emden* was sunk by *Sydney* and telegraph stations destroyed. Von Spee’s squadron fled East away from the battlecruisers. After the Eastern seas were clear, HMAS *Australia* joined the Grand Fleet. To the crew’s disappointment she played no part at Jutland after a collision left her in dock. The valuable part played by the young naval service was rather overshadowed by the agonies of Gallipoli.

John Day worked at Devonport in a range of roles, leaving in 1986 before the start of full privatisation. He is trying to piece together more of the postwar history. He explained how the change to gas turbines and diesels greatly reduced the need for major refits in the yard. He queried the assumption in the 70s and 80s that the dockyard couldn’t compete with private yards in new construction.

He is anxious to find out more, what people did, stories of the yard. He has hundreds of oral history tapes and is looking for help in transcribing them. He is interested in papers relating to the work, before they are lost, and any other information.

Ray Fordham then told us the story of the ketch *Haldon*, which had a long and eventful career. He came to this, not through family history, but because his wife bought him a Chappell painting as a present. *Haldon* was built by Hawke Bros at Stonehouse in 1893, possibly from wood from Haldon Forest trees blown down in the great blizzard of 1891. A typical trading ketch, she was owned by Holmans for 9 years, then was sold to Scottish owners, being the largest trader in the Orkneys for some years. Ray has a copy of her cargo book for 1911-41, a fantastic find. Sold to Norway in 1947, she survived till 1962. For more details, we eagerly await Ray's full write up!

Jonathan Seagrave

The meeting continued after lunch with the following talks:

Sheilah Openshaw. A story of a South Devon Shipbuilding Family-the Redways of Exmouth and Dartmouth.

David Jenkinson. Brave New World- The Renaissance Ship and Early Modern Times.

Nigel Pearce. Survival at sea. Up to date research results and their application to life saving,

Charles Tolcher. Origins of drop keels and centreboard craft.

Mutiny 3

Conrad Humphreys sailing master of *Bounty's End*, round the world sailor and graduate in ocean science was the guest speaker at Plymouth University 's Marine Institute Spring Lecture. Conrad was later joined by fellow crew member Freddy Benjafield, also of Plymouth, who helped answer questions from the audience.

The presentation titled '*Mutiny – recreating Captain Bligh's Epic Voyage of Survival*' was based on a re-enactment of the voyage which had been produced and filmed by Windfall Films and broadcast as five, one hour episodes on Channel 4 during March 2017.

Captain Bligh's journey and that of 18 crew members was undertaken in 1789 following the mutiny on *HMS Bounty*. The journey involved a 3,600 mile passage across the Pacific between a point south of Tofua Island and Timor, the nearest outpost of European influence at the time.

The re-enactment was undertaken in a 23 foot replica of the longboat carried by *HMS Bounty*. The replica boat was named *Bounty's End*. *Bounty's End* was built by Mark Edwards, who born of a Cornish boatbuilding heritage is a traditional boat builder located at Richmond upon Thames. The boat was as near authentic as possible, of clinker built construction, and with two masts carrying a lugger rig. The only compromise in design was to safety. It included the provision of an extra upper strake to ensure greater freeboard and protection from the seas. The crew numbers were limited to a maximum of nine persons.

The re-enactment of the voyage was as historically accurate as it was possible to make. It followed the track followed by Captain Bligh almost two hundred and thirty years earlier. Conrad showed comparison diagrams to illustrate the closeness of the two voyages. Both voyages included the dangerous navigational passage through Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

At the commencement of the re-enactment voyage the crew were provided with the same victuals per person as had been distributed to Captain Bligh's crew. From the point of departure the crew were to be totally self-sufficient. The daily rations included ship's biscuits providing just 400 calories per person per day. Water was limited in supply but it was anticipated could be collected en-route in heavy tropical showers. Crew members were encouraged to supplement their rations through catching fish whilst at sea and foraging on islands at which they called.

Lack of water became a critical issue in the latter stage of the re-enacted voyage. Unlike Captain Bligh who was beset by storms during his passage in Timor Sea, the crew of *Bounty's End* experienced 'mirror like seas' and no precipitation. Within a couple of hundred miles of the final destination, Timor, the support craft had to intercede and supplement the available water in order to ensure the crew's health.

As with Captain Bligh, a sextant was carried and using the sun and stars Conrad was able to establish the position of the boat 'to the nearest 4 miles' of accuracy. The twenty first century crew had the use of charts – Captain Bligh did not. Literature states that during his passage through the Great Barrier Reef, Captain Bligh fixed the positions and made sketches of various atolls and islands, which in due course were developed as charts.

The story of Captain William Bligh has strong links with Plymouth. The Bligh's family home was Tinten Manor in St Tudy, Bodmin. At the time of William's birth in 1754 his father was working as a Customs Official in Plymouth. As a consequence William was born in Plymouth and was baptised at St Andrews Minster Church. During a life time naval career William Bligh was appointed as sailing master to *HMS Resolution* for Captain Cook's third and final voyage to the Pacific Ocean. The voyage commenced from Plymouth in 1776.

HMS Resolution, a former North Sea collier was initially commissioned as *HMS Drake* – another Plymouth link.

In 1787 William Bligh was appointed Commanding Lieutenant of *HMS Bounty* a small 90 foot three masted vessel, purchased by the Royal Navy for the purpose of collecting breadfruits from the Pacific Islands. The intent was to develop the growing of breadfruits and use them as a source of food for slaves working on the West Indian plantations.

Both the original and re-enactment voyages were completed without loss of life at sea. The original voyage under Captain Bligh took a total of 47 days. The re-enactment voyage took 13 days longer.

Captain Bligh eventually become Vice Admiral of the Red and lived on Lambeth Road, Lambeth, London. He died in 1817 at the age of 63 years with his resting place being the Church of St Mary-at-Lambeth, close to Lambeth Palace. Nearby is the headquarters of The Nautical Institute, an international professional body, part founded in the late 1960s by members of the Plymouth School of Navigation to '*promote the standing of the maritime profession afloat and ashore*'.

The film 'Mutiny' produced by Windfall Films has been criticised by some as neither being a reality show nor a historical documentary. I suggest that it was a skilful blend of the two. The historical narrative connected with viewers who were also reminded of the harshness of life at sea by sailors who did so much to develop our understanding of the world.

Finally Conrad was delighted to state that *Bounty's End* has been purchased for the Island Trust to create a 'living history' legacy project for young persons.



Conrad joined by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, her consort and Dr Nick Higgs of the Marine Institute



Bountys End outside Plymouth's University's Portland Square Building

Paul G Wright

Note: A previous re-enactment of Captain Bligh's voyage took place in 2010 when a 25 foot boat named *Bounty Boat* crewed by 4 persons undertook the same passage and faced the same deprivations as those encountered by the original crew.

World Ship Society 29th Naval meeting 3.6.2017

As ever, we had very good speakers. A theme this year was the IJN. Andrew Choong in a very fluent presentation, took us through the complex history of how Japan moved from British ally in WW1 to interwar rival and enemy after Pearl Harbour. He went through the naval developments, the initial drive for parity, the political effects of the naval treaties which caused huge resentment in Japan, and then the ambition to challenge the US. Throughout, the Japanese were fixated on a big fleet encounter, a rerun of Tsushima. They gave no consideration to other scenarios, and indeed didn't know what to do after their initial successes, nor had they planned how to supply island garrisons. They had no concept of attacking commerce or supply lines, submarines were planned solely for fleet support. They didn't use wolf pack tactics but did have an unusual doctrine of submarine directed submarine attack. On the surface, heavy cruisers or older battlecruisers would break the screen around enemy capital ships giving access to destroyer torpedo attacks. They had no evidence the Americans would play into this scenario.

They expected the US to sue for peace as the Russians had. Few had visited the US, and although weakened by the depression, the US had huge reserves of industry men and resources.

The concept of strategic air power came late. Despite the success of Pearl, the naval staff still saw the battleship fleet as central. The IJN hated the Army nearly as much as the US, and cooperation was weak or non-existent. There was a big commitment to technical superiority. The very successful "long lance" oxygen torpedo was, oddly, inspired by a visit to Whiteheads and a misinterpretation that the British were working on this. The military commitment was bankrupting the country, and wasn't economically sustainable.

We also heard from Mark Brady how the IJN is viewed today. There are huge models, 1 / 10 scale at Kure, (and also Tokyo) of *Yamato*, a massive symbol. Plastic kits from over 60 makers include IJN vessels, including one complete range down to auxiliaries. There are movies, manga and anime with girls representing ships, even a trekkie type! A little more down to earth, the modern and powerful self defence force still uses the IJN flag.

If Pearl was, ultimately, the most disastrous attack, the least effective defence in WW2 was the British attempt to build a mine barrage to the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland, we were told by Richard Osborne. Based on the WW1 North Sea barrage, which did little, it had no hope of success, and was very costly in use of resources. Mines exploded early, or failed, and there simply weren't enough to provide an effective barrier, something that could be calculated quite easily (at least by Richard!). Only one U boat is known to have sunk, quite late in the war after the effort was abandoned, and 7 merchant ships and 3 warships of ours were lost to it. This contrasts with focussed mining on specific small areas, and offensive magnetic mining which sank and damaged hundreds of German vessels.

Andrew Lambert dissected the relation between Corbett, the admirals and Churchill before WW1 and through the Dardanelles campaign, and his postwar assessment. Corbett was hugely influential, and wealthy so quite independent, and from his prewar role in teaching strategy, had extensive contacts and access. The original concept of a Baltic attack, favoured by Fisher, was dropped for the Dardanelles. Corbett saw everything through the lens of the 18c, Whilst forcing the strait was never really realistic, the land attack if pursued might still have succeeded, the Turks were exhausted at the withdrawal.

Looking further back, we heard from Aidan Doodson about the evolution of the armoured cruiser from its early hybrid incarnation. Primarily used in a colonial role, these ships had relatively heavy guns and carried a lot of coal as coaling points were few. For the colonial

powers they were built as much to impress as to fight. For smaller navies they were a cheap battleship. Until the arrival of high explosive, only the decks were armoured. Some were to eccentric design and had short lives. The Italians built more or less for stock, depending on who had the money to pay.

Thanks must go to Richard Osborne and the speakers for an excellent day.

Jonathan Seagrave

High Tea with the Admiral

Appledore at low tide on a sunny day in April is an unlikely place to find an Admiral but this was a special occasion. The North Devon Maritime Museum Trust was celebrating its 40th birthday along with the recent purchase of its home, Odun House.

Admiral Sir Jonathon Band GCB DL apart from being a past 1st Sea Lord, is the Chairman of the Trustees of the National Museum of the Royal Navy and thus a most appropriate choice to cut the red ribbon and start the party. Honour Guard was provided by the Bideford and District Sea Cadet Corps.



Following the Admiral's speech in which he praised museum volunteers for the achievements made over the past forty years, the party continued with a tour of the displays led by Mike Guegan, chairman of the museum's management committee, followed by lunch and celebratory birthday cake.

The Admiral then took his leave to return to Portsmouth but the party continued with a talk by Mike Guegan on Appledore built ships linked with Newfoundland followed by folk music including traditional sea shanties linking the two regions.

Ray Fordham

BOOK REVIEWS

Venetian Navigators : The Voyages of the Zen Brothers to the Far North Andrea di Robilant pp 261 hardcover. Faber, cover price £14.99, bought remaindered for £5.

A chance encounter with an American tourist and equally chance discovery of a map in the Venetian archives led the author to a lengthy investigation into the claim that the Venetian Zen brothers, Messer and Antonio, sailed to North America in the 14th century well before Columbus. His initial scepticism became curiosity that had to be satisfied.

The claim was made by a descendant, Nicolo the Younger, in a well known book written more than a century later, from notes now lost, but with a detailed map, and over the centuries this claim has been both accepted and derided as fiction.

The author was drawn in and conducted considerable archival research in Venice, and visited the apparent locations in the Norse world. He talks to local historians in Iceland, Greenland and Scotland . So the book is also a Norse travelogue. Some of his identifications of locations seem very plausible, others perhaps less so, he is certainly not afraid to interpret the scraps of evidence and long folk memories into a coherent narrative.

The fairly recent archaeological evidence of Viking settlement in North America makes the original claim much more believable, and de Robilant concludes they probably did in fact touch North America. He thinks the Nicolo the Younger book however was a muddle, which he tries to disentangle.

The traces of the Zen brothers in the archives eventually disappear. He continues with a brief history of the influence of the Zen map and.

Nicolo the Younger's book on others, especially Mercator. The book and map was an inspiration for English voyages to N America in the Elizabethan era, especially Frobisher. In that case it helped fuel a remarkable capacity for deception and self deception. Of course by then Cabot's voyage had proven North America's existence, and indeed the Grand Banks fishing had already started, but the Zen map was still seen as a reliable guide, which it most certainly wasn't.

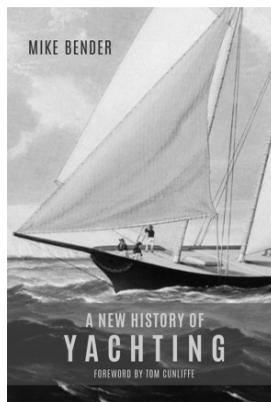
It is an enjoyable read, not just for the history itself, but the characters he encounters, and the tale of research and discovery. I was left with a sense of admiration for the sheer courage of men prepared to brave the North Atlantic on the basis of such flimsy evidence.

The book is very thoroughly referenced, and the scale of this shows how influential the voyages were, however unreliable the subsequent book. A brief but enjoyable read.

Jonathan Seagrave

A New History of Yachting: An overview of the history of yachting in its social, cultural, political and economic contexts by Mike Bender. Boydell Press 2017. £30

This book, by a leading expert in the field, is the first major history of yachting for over a quarter of a century. Setting developments within political, social and economic changes, the book tells the story of yachting from Elizabethan times to the present day: the first uses of yachts, by monarchs, especially Charles II; yacht clubs and yacht racing in the eighteenth century; the early years of the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes and an analysis of the America Cup challenges; the pioneering developments in Ireland and the exporting of yachting to the colonies and trading outposts of the Empire; the expansion of yachting in Victorian times; the Golden Age of Yachting in the years before the First World War, when it was the sport of the crowned heads of Europe; the invention of the dinghy and the keelboat classes and, after the Second World War, the massive numbers of home-built dinghies; the breaking of new boundaries by risk-taking single-handers from the mid-1960s; the expansion of leisure sailing that came in the 1980s with the use of moulded plastic yachts; and current trends and pressures within the sport. Well-referenced yet highly readable, this book will be of interest both to the scholar and the sailing enthusiast.



Review reprinted from Topmasts August 2017 with permission of SNR

LETTERS NOTES AND NEWS

S Boat or E Boat? Following the review of Hans Frank's book in SW Soundings 104 Tim Bass has sent in a note to tell us that Peter Scott in his *The Battle of the Narrow Seas* (Seaforth 2009), p. 5, states that the term "E Boat" was used as an abbreviation of "Enemy War Motorboat". It was adopted in 1940. Thanks Tim for this helpful feedback.

Sunken ship discovered under sands of the Bristol Channel

A sunken ship has been discovered after more than 100 years buried under the shifting sands of the Bristol Channel. The *Brunswick* sank on Christmas Eve 1900 as it approached Bristol, with the loss of seven lives. Images taken by Bristol Port's hydrographic team have revealed the wreck of the cargo vessel but its secrets are likely to remain protected as it is already being reburied by sand and sediments.

The *Brunswick* was a British screw steamer built in Glasgow in 1898 and ran regularly delivering cargo between Liverpool and Bristol. A report revealed it sank at about 5:30 GMT on 24 December after running aground in thick fog as it approached Black Nore Point, near Portishead.

Source: BBC News 28 July 2017

Cornish Maritime History Conference '17

The 8th conference on Maritime Cornwall will take place at the NMMC Falmouth on Saturday 14 October.

The programme will include the following speakers:

Pru Wells: Samuel Rickard, a 19th century Cornish Master Mariner.

Charlotte McKenzie: Francis Bamford and the slave trade.

Helen Doe: Brunel's *Great Western* steamship and its Cornish connections.

Roderick de Norman: American forces in Cornwall in WW2.

Peter Skidmore: The struggles of Truro in maintaining its river navigation.

Victoria Jenner: The Maritime Cornish Churches Project.

Tony Pawlyn: The Dutch Master Mariners Club, Falmouth 1917.

***Early booking is recommended as this event is always very popular.
Admission 09:30, conference starts 10:00 and ends 16:30***

***COST: Adults £30, Museum Ticket holders £25 (all tickets include refreshments, lunch and admission to the Museum and Library).
Tickets can be purchased from the front desk at the museum or over the phone 01326 313388***

A Tale of Terror

It has been a fascinating story to follow the discovery of the two ships lost from the Franklin expedition who were searching for the north west passage in 1845. *HMS Terror* was built in Topsham in 1813 and her discovery in Terror Bay in 2016 following the discovery of *HMS Erebus* in 2014 has completed the tale. The excellent condition of both ships will be explored further this year and provide not only clues to the fate of the exhibition but a record of life on board at that period.

Topsham Museum has a permanent exhibition about HMS Terror and her fascinating history. Greenwich Maritime museum recently opened an exhibition about the Franklin Expedition showing artefacts raised from *HMS Erebus*.

On 30th November 2017 there will be an open lecture at Matthew Hall Topsham at 7.30pm given by Russell Potter an eminent authority on Arctic exploration entitled "A tale of the Terror"

Tickets are available from Topsham Museum or The Topsham Bookshop. Members of South West Maritime are warmly invited and tickets at £5 each can be obtained online by following the link <http://devonmuseums.net/Topsham-Museum/E-Commerce>. Russell Potter is visiting Topsham following his event at National Maritime Museum at Greenwich

There will be bookstalls as well as a bar available at the event for which doors open at 7pm.

The Society regrets to record the death of

Francis Bennett



SOUTH WEST MARITIME HISTORY SOCIETY

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Life President and Editor Maritime S.W & Monographs	David Clement The Holt, Exton, Exeter Devon EX3 0PN Tel. 01392 875604. Email: dclement1@toucansurf.com
Acting Chairman	Martin Hazell 124 Molesworth Road, Stoke Plymouth Devon PL3 4AH Tel. 07941 603097 /01752 550768 Email: m.hazell7@btinternet.com
SWS Reviews Editor	Jonathan Seagrave 10 Woodlands Rise, Downend Bristol BS16 2RX Tel: 0117 9566127 Email: Jon.seagrave@gmail.com
Editor South West Soundings	Ray Fordham 3 Ashley Court, West Yelland Barnstaple EX31 3SS Email: rmwfordham@btinternet.com
Secretary	Peter Skidmore Email: pfskd@aol.com
Treasurer and Membership Secretary	Phil Northcott 9 Wallford Road Buckfastleigh TQ11 0AR Email: pnorthcott1977@hotmail.com
Facebook /twitter	Jo Thomas Email: joannat@ssgreatbritain.org

COMMITTEE

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