

RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM GREENWICH

2009

The Sammy Ofer Wing: improving facilities for research at the NMM

NIGEL RIGBY, *Head of Research*

Just over 70 years after its opening, the National Maritime Museum was delighted to receive a special anniversary gift: the shipping magnate, Sammy Ofer, gave the institution the largest individual donation ever made to a British institution – £20 million – in order to create a brand new South-West Wing ('The Sammy Ofer Wing'), opening in 2012. This extraordinarily generous gift will enable us to offer vastly improved access and facilities to users, with a state-of-the-art library, archive and exhibition centre and a brand new Museum entrance onto Greenwich Royal Park.

A project of this magnitude brings many challenges to the Museum, not least to our ability to maintain our normal levels of service to readers in the interim period when the manuscripts, charts and atlases kept in the South-West Wing are temporarily re-housed in an off-site store. We are working as hard as possible to keep a good service running in this interim period. However, we anticipate that once the new wing opens in late 2011/early 2012 access to our vast manuscript and library collection will be better than ever before. Full details of the Caird Library's current opening times and booking requirements are available on our web site: www.nmm.ac.uk/researchers/library/visiting.

The Caird Library was supported with typical generosity by the Museum's founding benefactor, Sir James Caird, in the 1930s. Interestingly, the Reading Room was originally on the first floor, with the ground floor holding bookcases and display cabinets. In both the original and later conformation it has served us well; in recent years, though, it has struggled to cope with the demands of a growing and increasingly diverse research clientele and has steadily fallen behind the standards expected of a modern research institution. A major rethink of the Caird was long overdue. Within the Wing's new library and archive, retrievals of charts and manuscripts will be much faster and more efficient; the reading room will be more spacious, lighter and technologically better equipped; most prints and drawings will return to the main site for the first time in many years, meaning that readers wishing to study this large and valuable research collection will not have to make a special appointment to view them in a distant store; and enhancing our catalogues of 2- and 3-D collections for 2012

is a priority. The new library and archive will be better able to support curatorial research, family historians, the Caird and Sackler fellowships, Arts and Humanities Research Council Collaborative Doctoral Studentships and research partnerships that have been in place for some years. Sir James Caird would surely have applauded the desire to maintain and build the Museum as a world-class maritime research centre.

Research Projects

SUSTAINING THE EMPIRE: WAR, THE NAVY AND THE CONTRACTOR STATE, 1793–1815

MARTIN WILCOX

Postdoctoral Fellow, Greenwich Maritime Institute

This three-year Leverhulme Trust-funded project, run by Greenwich Maritime Institute in partnership with the NMM, will be drawing to a close at the end of April 2009. Progress over the last year has been very good. Data collection has now largely finished and we are starting to produce some very interesting results.

Roger Knight, the project leader, has focused much of his attention on the port of Great Yarmouth, since a discovery of the Agent Victualler's letter books has allowed him to examine in detail the operational relationship between government and contractor. Martin Wilcox completed the lengthy task of extracting data from the Victualling Board's contract ledgers and abstracts in April 2008, and has since been analysing the fascinating results. Coupled with further work on other records generated by the Victualling Board, this has revealed a great deal about how contracts were made and administered. Contractors' own papers remain somewhat elusive but one significant discovery made by Martin was material relating to victualling in the records of Zephaniah Job, a merchant of Polperro.

The project team – Roger, Martin and James Davey, whose PhD on the supply of the Baltic Fleet in 1807–12 is progressing well – hosted a well-received session on the project at the International Maritime Economic History Association congress at Greenwich in June 2008. All three have given papers at other conferences and seminar series during the year, including the NMM's annual British Maritime History Seminars, and both James and Martin have articles currently in the process of publication.

To mark the end of the project, to disseminate some of our

results and to discuss issues raised, we hosted a conference at the University of Greenwich on 4 April 2009, entitled 'New Perspectives on Resources, War and Government 1750–1815', at which papers were given on subjects ranging from naval hospitals to Army administration and supplies in the mid-eighteenth century. In addition, once the project ends we will be placing our database on the NMM website, along with a summary of our main conclusions and other material.

The other major output will be a monograph (by Roger and Martin), provisionally titled *Sustaining the Fleets: Naval Victualling and the Contractor State 1793–1815*.

Research Centres

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF ART AND TRAVEL

JENNY GASCHKE, *Curator of Fine Art*

The primary aim of the Centre for the Study of Art and Travel (CART) is to support research into the NMM's extensive collections of visual material relating to travel. More widely, it also provides a forum for scholarly exchange and engagement with the subject, both nationally and internationally.

In 2008 the Centre applied successfully for an AHRC-funded collaborative doctoral studentship, to be supervised jointly with the University of Sussex. Using the NMM's substantial collection of historic photographs Charlotte Mullins' thesis 'The World on a Plate: the impact of photography on travel imagery and its dissemination in Britain, 1839–88' will explore how photography initially contributed to and subsequently transformed travel imagery during the fifty years following its invention.

Aiming to develop CART further as platform for scholarly exchange and networking we are collaborating with the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art on a series of lectures to be held in 2009–10. These will highlight perspectives on art and travel in the Mediterranean from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. They will focus on those geographical regions and subjects that have so far received less attention than the more extensive research into the eighteenth-century Grand Tour and the established 'Orientalist' debate.

The Centre also aims to widen public access to travel-related material in the NMM's prints and drawings collection. A current priority for the Centre is therefore to increase the availability of our outstanding sketchbook collection on the Museum's on-line catalogue (nmm.ac.uk/collections), and also to work on a series of printed publications. The first of these,



A lateen-rigged vessel on the Nile, 3 January 1854, by Edward Lear (watercolour) © NMM PAD9093

to be published in November 2009, will focus on the NMM's small but exquisite collection of watercolour Egyptian views by the popular nonsense poet and landscape painter Edward Lear. Throughout his life Lear travelled extensively in Europe, the Middle East and India and became famous for landscape views which have fittingly been described as 'poetical topography'. The aim of the book is to evoke the artist's journeys up the river Nile in 1854 and 1867, reproducing the images – which Lear himself referred to as 'scraps' – at approximately life size, thus recreating the same sense of immediacy as his original sketchbooks.

RESEARCH IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GLORIA CLIFTON

Curatorial Head of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich

Three main themes have dominated curatorial research in this field in the past year. Richard Dunn has been focusing on the history of the telescope in support of programmes for the International Year of Astronomy, 2009 (IYA2009) via a new display of the telescope collections at the Observatory; a planned conference ('The Long View' in July 2009) and his recent book *The Telescope: A Short History* (NMM, 2009). See page 8 for his reflections on writing this. Meanwhile, David Rooney has been focusing on time distribution systems and published his book *Ruth Belville, the Greenwich Time Lady* (NMM, 2008) to highly favourable reviews in the national media, followed by TV and radio interviews, talks to popular and specialist organizations and articles in the press. He also gave the prestigious 2008 Wheatstone Lecture at the Institution of Engineering and Technology 'Time by wire: 175 years of the Greenwich Time Service': see their website for a recording, <http://tv.theiet.org/channels/news/1569.cfm>.

Finally, Rebekah Higgitt and Gloria Clifton have been researching the history of the Observatory buildings and their significance in the work carried on at Greenwich. Both have given talks and papers on this theme and are preparing to publish their findings. See Rebekah's piece on page 7.

Our student research intern programme continues to be popular. In 2008 we chose five candidates, who carried out a wide range of research projects, from the early use of photography in astronomy and the influence of the Observatory buildings on astronomical practice, to studies of the donors who presented large telescopes to the Observatory, the Chinese compasses in the collections, and the story behind the invention of some unusual log glasses. During 2009 the *British Journal for the History of Science* will be publishing three articles by former interns, based on their research in the Museum's collections, in a section guest-edited by Richard Dunn.

CENTRE FOR IMPERIAL AND MARITIME STUDIES

ROBERT BLYTH, *Curator of Imperial and Maritime History*

ASIAN SEAS: EXPLORING AND UNDERSTANDING INDIAN OCEAN WORLDS

The Centre for Imperial and Maritime Studies (CIMS) is embarking on a major series of activities exploring the history,

legacy and contemporary relevance of Britain's long engagement with Asian seas. The Museum has extensive and diverse Asian and Asian-related collections covering, among other things, the operations of the East India Company and the opening of their trade with China. It is only more recently, however, that their full potential has begun to be realized. Through the generosity of John Swire and Sons Ltd in 2008, the Museum was able to bring Professor May-Bo Ching of Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, to Greenwich for a three-month period of intensive research into the Museum's Chinese collections. Her work, hopefully to appear on Collections Online, has provided invaluable insights into this fine collection of artefacts and manuscripts. Swire's also generously funded a reciprocal visit by two NMM curators to key academic and heritage centres in South China, helping us to develop links with this important region. This focused research and the new networks it has established are vital to the development of the Museum's Asian seas strategy.

Four strands form the central structure of the Asian seas project, integrating the work of CIMS into the Museum's wider programmes. Firstly, the Museum will host an international conference in July 2010 on understanding the British Indian Ocean world. Secondly, CIMS hopes to be involved in a proposed research project with external academic partners, examining islands and empires. Thirdly, the Museum will publish an illustrated maritime history of the East India Company. Finally, a new permanent gallery, scheduled for 2011, will be opened to showcase the Museum's Asian and Asian-related collections and the discoveries of ongoing research. These projects build on the Museum's earlier Atlantic-focused research, display, interpretation, education and community outreach activities.

Exploring Asian seas is the second phase in CIMS's overarching oceanic approach to British, maritime, imperial and global issues. In due course, the Centre will turn its attention towards the broad horizons of the Pacific, in this continuing circumnavigation, which seeks to reassess the British maritime world.

Research Fellowships

The NMM is fortunate to have a number of complementary fellowship programmes, some of which have been established for many years. The Caird Fellowship programme was named after the Museum's founder, Sir James Caird, whose original bequest provides core funding. Senior and Short-Term Caird Fellowships are now offered, in addition to a joint fellowship offered annually with the John Carter Brown Library (Providence, Rhode Island). This, the Caird North American Travelling Fellowship, enables scholars to spend up to three months undertaking research in the north-eastern United States. The Sackler Foundation generously supports a fellowship for research into the history of the navigational and astronomical sciences; the Foundation also supports the Sackler-Caird Fellowship, a higher-value award aimed at supporting mid-career scholars working in any field of the Museum's interests. The Crown Estate generously supports the Crown Estate-Caird Fellowship, which encourages research using historical sources to shed light on contemporary

marine environmental interests.

These fellowships support a wide range of research into our collections. Museums are not constrained by the usual academic boundaries and so we particularly welcome proposals of an interdisciplinary nature. For further details on the fellowship programme and how to apply, please see our website: nmm.ac.uk/fellowships – or contact the Research Administrator (contact details on the back page). For a full list of Fellows, see page 11.

Fellowship Reports

A PORTRAIT OF QALASIRSSUAQ

INGEBORG HOVIK, *University of Edinburgh*
Short-term Caird Fellow, 2008



Qalassirssuaq (Erasmus Augustine Kallihirua), probably 1851, British school (oil on canvas) © NMM, BHC2813: Greenwich Hospital Collection

Sometime in the late nineteenth century, Admiral Sir Erasmus Ommanney presented an oil portrait to Greenwich Hospital. This painting, now part of the Greenwich Hospital collection held at the NMM, is today entitled *Qalassirssuaq (Erasmus Augustine Kallihirua)* and was probably painted between 1851 and 1855. It shows an Inughuit from Cape York, Greenland, who was brought to England on Ommanney's ship in 1850. Qalassirssuaq was originally employed as an 'interpreter' (despite knowing no English) to assist Captain H. T. Austin with his expedition's search for John Franklin's missing ships and men. Qalassirssuaq ended up in England due to 'the state of the ice', which apparently made it difficult to reach Cape York on the expedition's return journey. Having received no promise of a return passage home, Qalassirssuaq was enrolled at St. Augustine's Missionary College in Canterbury. Here he studied for four years before being sent to St. John's, Newfoundland, for further religious training, where he died in June 1856.

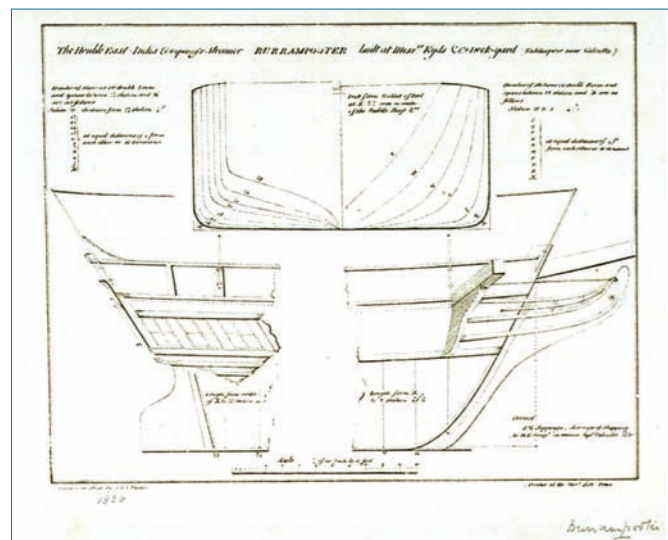
The portrait displays the sitter both *en face* and in profile, as if placed next to a mirror, on a brown neutral background. Dressed in a dark suit, white shirt and black scarf tied according to contemporary fashion, Qalassirssuaq is calmly and confidently meeting the viewer's gaze. With combed hair and shining face, the serene representation seems to be either that of a distinguished individual or the portrait of a family member or cherished friend. At the same time, the rigid profile image suggests a link to nineteenth-century ethnographic studies of non-Western peoples, raising questions about what the portrait said at the time about Qalassirssuaq's identity and place within British society, and how it relates to other contemporary images of Arctic indigenous peoples.

In addition to the painting, the NMM holds several documents connected to this historical character, including *The Parliamentary Blue Books* concerned with the 1850–51 Franklin searches, officers' accounts of Austin's expedition and reproductions of *The Aurora Borealis* and *The Illustrated Arctic News* – two newspapers published on board Austin's ships. The Canterbury Cathedral Archives include a collection of manuscripts related to Qalasarssuaq – such as his letters and drawings – and there may be additional material in St. John's, Newfoundland.

This captivating and complex portrait forms a significant part of my PhD thesis on visual representations of the Arctic in nineteenth-century Britain, titled 'Arctic Images 1823–96: Problems of Representation and Imperialism'. In addition to images of Arctic indigenous peoples, I research portraits of explorers and representations of Northern landscapes, real and imagined. Most of this material derives from the NMM's vast collection of Arctic text and images, which comprises prints, drawings, oil paintings and photographs.

MARGINAL CENTRES: SUBALTERN BIOGRAPHIES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD

DR CLARE ANDERSON
Sackler-Caird Fellow, 2007–09



In 1850 the Panjabi general Narnain Sing led a mutiny on board the *Kaleegunga* – in tow to the East India Company's Steamer *Burrampooter* (pictured above; Plan 1830) – as it carried its convict cargo to Calcutta for embarkation to one of the East India Company's penal settlements in Burma.
© NMM, PAD6676

This research project aims to interrogate and reconsider the meaning of colonial categories of social difference across the Indian Ocean, c. 1800–75. Historians of the region commonly invoke categories such as 'race', caste, class, and gender as a means of understanding and interpreting representations and experiences of identity. Marginal Centres proposes to examine them in the light of subaltern perspectives of social difference.

I am reconstructing snapshots of the lives of six individuals who until now have been completely or largely written out of

Indian Ocean history. They include: an African theatrical performer/convict who travelled in India, Burma, and Australia; a Punjabi military general exiled to Burma for treason after the Anglo-Sikh Wars of the 1840s; a Muslim cleric who saved the life of a captured Franco-Indian woman during the 1857 Indian Revolt; an Andaman Islander kidnapped by a British survey party and taken to India in 1858; and an American brigadesman who served in the Indian naval force that occupied the Andaman Islands in 1858. I am using their experiences as a window into everyday social worlds that are often difficult to access or to represent historically. My research seems to indicate the existence of multiple, overlapping individual identities, as well as the significance of the Indian Ocean as a connected space. Social codes based around shared colonial/subaltern views on the significance of gentlemanly conduct and honour (in the context of the sexual violence that underlay colonization) were also important.

So far I have presented my research at several conferences and seminars, and at the end of last year secured funding from the British Academy for a small 'Indian Ocean biographies' workshop in June 2009. This will bring together historians with related interests with a view to publishing an edited collection that draws out the Fellowship themes. Meanwhile, I have published articles in various journals and am currently working on a research monograph under the same title as this brief summary.

LETTERS FROM THE SEA: LITERATURE, NAVIGATION AND IDENTITY IN THE WRITINGS OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY MARITIME WOMEN

DR SOPHIE GILMARTIN
Caird North-American Fellow 2008

Mary Ann Patten was nineteen and Rebecca Burgess twenty-two when they both (separately) had to navigate their husbands' ships in the severe southern winter of 1856, during the incapacitating illness of their captain husbands. Upon safely bringing the ships into port, Mary Ann was hailed as a heroine by the British and American newspapers, while Rebecca became a local heroine in her Cape Cod community. Neither of these two New England women wanted this new-found fame – indeed, quite the contrary – but in the aftermath of their terrible voyages they both had to negotiate an interface between their actual experiences and those of the fictional heroines of whom their culture was so enamoured. One objective of my study was to ascertain the ways in which Victorian maritime women engaged with contemporary literary models of femininity in their work of self-fashioning, as they broke with convention to accompany their husbands to sea. Their sea journals and letters often include lists of books read on the voyage, or engage with a particular novel or literary character. The heroines of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray are prevalent, as well as those of now-forgotten romances and adventures of the periodical press. The study of navigation among a significant number of these women informed my second and third objectives: to investigate personal accounts of the marital relationship on board ship for any evidence of shared work and activity above and below deck, and to explore both the pride these women took in their

navigational skill and how the appropriation of navigational metaphors into their writing about themselves could perform a literal and metaphorical self-positioning.

The John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island provided an excellent research base, its archives yielding helpful material on early to mid-nineteenth-century medicine at sea, the construction of American clippers, the Cape Horn voyage and, very notably, a young man's heavily annotated mid-century edition of Richard Henry Dana's *The Seaman's Friend*, which proved invaluable to my understanding of the potential for imaginative as well as practical investment in navigational study. Although I have been working on this project for some time, the Caird fellowship has given me the very welcome opportunity to complete my research and a book is currently underway.

ART AND OUR CHANGING COASTLINE

DR ROBIN McINNES
The Crown Estate-Caird Research Fellow 2008

This research project was entitled 'How art can assist our understanding of long-term coastal change'. It examined works of art (paintings, drawings and prints) executed between 1770 and 1920, and demonstrated their value, alongside other scientific methods, as a tool to assist coastal engineers in understanding coastal evolution and change from before the invention of photography. The results of the study, which examined the coastlines of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, were presented (with co-authors Jonathan Potts of Portsmouth University and Lindsey Bates of Chichester District Council) at the Littoral 2008 Coastal Conference in Venice last November.

The study examined the works of 325 artists, comprising over 1100 images, together with a further 380 book illustrations. A ranking system was developed in order to prepare a shortlist of twenty artists whose works could be relied upon to give an accurate portrayal of the coastline at that time. These works can be used by coastal engineers and planners to examine coastal evolution as well as environmental change and development patterns since 1770. Furthermore, works of art such as these form a non-technical resource that can be readily appreciated by stakeholders seeking to understand coastal change and processes.

The Crown Estate is sponsoring a further study of the coast of East Anglia, comprising the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, another dynamic coastline which has been well illustrated by artists over the last 200 years'. The new study will be completed this summer.

For the full fellowship report see thecrownestate.co.uk/mrf_general_studies

Collaborative Doctoral Studentships

Since being awarded Independent Research Organization status by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in 2006, the Museum has successfully applied for eight collaborative doctoral studentships, with several universities. In addition to the students who started work in 2006–07, a further five commenced in 2008–09. The often interdisciplinary research being undertaken by these doctoral students

complements that of the Fellowships programme, and extends the Museum's ability to develop research on its collections. For a full list of students and their doctoral research subjects see page 12.

Doctoral Students' Reports

THE ROYAL NAVY AND THE SUPPRESSION OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE, 1810–65
MARY WILLS, *University of Hull*



Capture of a Slaver, the Brigantine Paulina 30 April 1853 in the Rio Ponga, West Coast of Africa, by the boats of HMS Linnet, by Henry Need (watercolour)
© NMM D9665

The Royal Navy's suppression of the Atlantic slave trade, after abolition in 1807, was a major component of nineteenth-century British imperial policy and naval strategy. Yet while the political and diplomatic histories of the Navy's anti-slavery role are well known, the voices of those engaged in suppression remain largely unheard. There is a substantial collection of suppression-related material at the NMM, such as the watercolours of life on the West African coast by Henry Need of HMS *Linnet* (pictured). These sources are complemented by a number of written accounts – diaries, journals, letters, logs and others – in published and manuscript form, in libraries and archives around the UK.

First-hand accounts of suppression contribute much to our understanding of the complex nature of British anti-slavery post-1807. The Royal Navy was at the forefront of the shift in British ideology and the perceptions of its personnel offer an insight into the nature of Britain's moral campaign. Arguably, many in the service did not set out on an anti-slavery crusade, yet men far removed from the politics of abolition found themselves on the frontline of Britain's relations with the slave trade and West Africa. As such, these narratives are approached as ways to explore and understand ideas, attitudes and anxieties about slavery, racial identity and the nature of

empire. Key themes and questions of this study include: anti-slavery beliefs in the Navy; conditions and experiences on the West African coast; methods and success of suppression; anti-slavery and the British presence in Africa; and racial attitudes in the Navy.

ANTI-SLAVERY AND THE ROYAL NAVY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, 1860–90

LINDSAY DOULTON, *University of Hull*



Boarding a slave dhow, c. 1885, albumen photographic print
© NMM ZBA2608

The Royal Navy's suppression of the East African slave trade during the later nineteenth century took place during a period of great change in terms of Europe's relationship with Africa. To varying extents a humanitarian, diplomatic and military presence, the anti-slavery squadron stationed off East Africa became increasingly bound up with imperial concerns, culminating in the European 'scramble for Africa'. The Navy was predominantly concerned with ending the long-standing slave trade between the Sultan of Zanzibar's dominions in East Africa and Arabia, but it also continued to encounter European slave traders who were still active in the western Indian Ocean.

This research project examines the suppression of the East African slave trade through the lens of race, empire and identity. During this late stage of the moral fight against the slave trade and slavery, how, for example, did Britain and its 'representatives' in the Royal Navy, perceive itself in terms of its responsibility to Africa and Africans? And how, in the context of increasing imperial influence, were the Islamic or 'Arab' slave traders, and their superiors, viewed both at home and by Britons based in East Africa?

The first stage of this project has involved locating sources both within the NMM and beyond. Archives in the Caird Library have proved to be richer than initially supposed. Some private letters and journals of Royal Naval officers – not previously recognized as being connected to anti-slavery activities – have proved enormously illuminating. The letters

of Tristan Dannreuther, who served as a teenage midshipman off Zanzibar during the late 1880s and later rose to Captain, for example, provide a fascinating insight into his very immediate attitudes and experiences in the anti-slavery patrols.

This period of anti-slavery activities bridged a period of transition in the technology and culture of communication that brought the Empire closer to Britain. I therefore plan to research objects and documents in the Michael Graham-Stewart collection, such as photographs and newspapers, which are especially rich in reflecting the portrayal in Britain of the East African slave trade and its suppression.

THE CULTURE OF CRUISING: POST-WAR IMAGES FROM THE NMM'S FILM ARCHIVE

PHIL RICH, *University of Sheffield*

The NMM's film archive is a rich resource, containing hundreds of hours of nautical footage spanning several decades. My research has focused on a plethora of films in the collection that feature images of oceanic cruising. Mostly sponsored by the likes of Orient Line, P&O, Union Castle and Cunard, these short works occupy an interesting middle ground between promotional film and entertainment piece. Most balance a portrayal of the luxurious experience offered on board ship with footage of the foreign ports and towns that are visited as part of the voyage.

Although a sometimes disparate and diverse collection, the cruise films found in the NMM archive can be positioned as a product of an expanding British film-making tradition. *Liner Cruising South* (1933) was an Orient Line-sponsored film directed by Basil Wright. Produced by the government-sanctioned Empire Marketing Board Film Unit, the film was made under the guiding hand of John Grierson. Featuring footage taken aboard Orient Line's *Orford* and picturesque scenes from the West Indies, *Liner* can be viewed as both part of the British documentary movement and an important, prototypical cruise film.

After a sizeable hiatus following the ravages of war, the cruise industry would resume services in a world that had changed socially, economically and culturally. The film material produced during the 1950s and 1960s therefore offers a vital glimpse at an adapting cultural pastime wrestling with an inner conflict. While the tenets and traditions of British maritime endeavour continued to form the central appeal of the cruise, there was a growing need to reflect the vibrant and contemporary preoccupations of a post-modern age.

Staff Research

SHIP MODELS AND THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS AT CHATHAM PROJECT

JOHN GRAVES, *Curator of Ship History*

Several British national museums have world-class collections of ship models and two of these collections, the National Maritime Museum's (NMM) and Imperial War Museum's (IWM), will soon be brought together under one roof at No.1 Smithery at Chatham Historic Dockyard. When refurbishment is complete this Grade II* listed Scheduled Ancient

Monument, will become the 'National Museums at Chatham' (NM@C) and provide 3000 square metres of space for new displays and repositories.

This project has been in development for seven years. With funding from a number of bodies, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, emergency stabilization of the No.1 Smithery was completed in December 2007. The main works to create new galleries and stores began in July 2008 and effectively entails putting a brand-new building inside the old one. No. 1 Smithery is a real gem. Built in 1808 it was a working part of Chatham Dockyard until 1974, when it subsequently fell into disrepair before being added to the English Heritage 'at risk' register. The NM@C proposal has given it a new lease of life and a sustainable new use. The opening of this £13 million project will be phased, with the public spaces opening in the summer of 2010 and the repositories in 2011. Existing facilities at the Historic Dockyard for research and learning will be greatly enhanced.

Alongside a special exhibitions gallery, there will be three permanent galleries: the 'Treasures' gallery, focusing on some of the very best models from the NMM and IWM collections, supported by contextual objects like oil paintings and relics; 'The King's Dockyard' gallery will examine aspects of Chatham Dockyard in the 18th century using artefacts and models, and will feature as a centrepiece a fascinating topographical model of the yard itself, made between 1772 and 1774 for King George III; and the 'Maritime Themes' gallery, which will be a changing display initially focusing on the history of amphibious warfare, the use of models in the shipbuilding design process, and the types of vessels used on the Thames and Medway.

Preparation for the move to Chatham of some 2500 models is now under-way at NMM. From a curatorial standpoint, this includes reviewing documentation of the collection, supervising digital photography of models, and undertaking curatorial research for Collections Online and the Collections Reform Project. The last project is investigating the ship model collection on a case-by-case basis with a view to learning more about object provenance, acquisition details and how each item measures up to the Museum's collections policy. This research is being undertaken both in NMM's own archives and elsewhere, often turning up surprises and overturning previously held convictions.

A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE ROG SOUTH BUILDING: 'THE NEW PHYSICAL OBSERVATORY'

REBEKAH HIGGITT

Curator of the History of Science and Technology

The late-Victorian red brick and terracotta cruciform building at the southern end of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich (ROG), has recently enjoyed revived interest thanks to its refurbishment and reopening in May 2007 as the Weller Astronomy Galleries, Lloyd's Trust Learning Centre and the entrance to the Peter Harrison Planetarium. However in the mid-twentieth century, the 'Town Hall' Victorian architecture of the South Building was deeply unfashionable and it was considered for early demolition once the working observatory had departed.

Fortunately it was retained: the dome being converted as a planetarium and the lower floors used by the Museum's picture conservation department – but the building was not seen as part of the Observatory's history and the meaning behind this substantial part of the site was somewhat lost. Far less famous than Wren and Hooke's original observatory, this building nevertheless embodies the ambitious plans of William Christie, the eighth Astronomer Royal, for the creation of an efficient, modern observatory. In 1899 *The Times* called it a 'handsome building' that was 'now practically Greenwich Observatory, for it houses almost the entire staff'.

Although initial plans had been more modest, the New Physical Observatory eventually provided space for the 'human computers' and grand offices for the Astronomer Royal and his two assistants. The library, workshops, laboratories, dark rooms and stores for observations, calculations and photographs made up most of the rest of the building, while the central, surmounting dome contained three large equatorial telescopes.

Like previous additions to the ROG site, this building answered practical needs and was built piecemeal, as money became available. Unlike them, factors like prestige and public



The New Physical Observatory shortly after completion in 1899
© NMM, P39986

opinion affected the design: it was a physical representation of the ROG's desire to expand into areas beyond its traditional remit and to be seen as a world-class research institution. This was potentially a controversial move for a traditionally utilitarian, government-funded organization and, perhaps to assuage concerns, Christie chose to pay homage to the past strength of the ROG within the building's fabric. A series of plaques over each first-floor window commemorated 'persons specially connected with the advancement of the Royal Observatory as Astronomers, Instrument Makers, Clock and Chronometer Makers'. The result is a very British and practical history of astronomy and instrument-making, fully connected to the navigational problem that was behind the ROG's foundation. It celebrated something strikingly different from the astrophysical research institution that Christie undoubtedly hoped his New Physical Observatory would be.

WRITING A NEW HISTORY OF THE TELESCOPE

RICHARD DUNN

Curator of the History of Navigation

With the autumn of 2008 marking the 400th anniversary of the announcement of a new device for seeing things far away, and 2009 designated the International Year of Astronomy, it has been the ideal time to think again about the history of that most pervasive of instruments, the telescope. One of the results has been a new book, *The Telescope: A Short History*, published by the NMM in March 2009.

Writing the book was, in many ways, a daunting prospect, with several good histories already published. That said, most of these have chosen to tell the story primarily as a history of astronomy, taking readers from Galileo and his groundbreaking discoveries to the Hubble Space Telescope and

beyond. As a curator of navigational history, I was interested in looking at a broader story by also taking into account the telescope's importance as a hand-held device for use on land and at sea. After all, most of the telescopes ever made have been for these purposes.

So seamen, birdwatchers and theatre-goers find their place alongside the scientists.

I also wanted to look at the ways in which the first

instrument to extend one of the human senses had an impact on the imagination: something that extended vision was always bound to have an impact on the visual and imaginative arts. It has been interesting, therefore, to be able to look at the ways in which telescopes and the telescopic viewpoint have found their way into literature, painting and more modern media such as film and television. I hope the result will be a fitting celebration of an invention that has not only led to fundamental breakthroughs in our scientific understanding of the universe, but has also become a common everyday tool in all our lives.

PRINTS AND DRAWINGS

RICHARD JOHNS

Curator of Prints and Drawings

This summer, the Museum's collection of drawings by the Willem van de Veldes (father and son) will become the latest selection to be fully catalogued and searchable on-line, thanks to the generous support of the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation. The on-line publication marks the end of a two-year project during which more than 1500 drawings will have been reappraised, catalogued and photographed. Once on-line, the van de Velde project will become one of the most detailed resources on the work of any artist or group of artists on the web. This level of access will continue to inform the conservation, research and display of the collection well into the future, paving the way for new discoveries about the

working habits and studio practice of these two important Dutch artists.

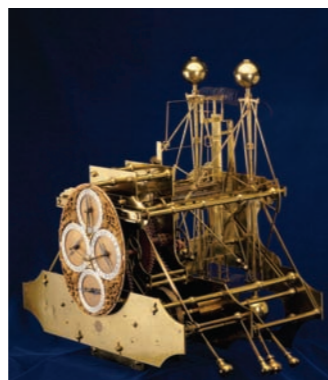
Deciding which parts of the large and rich prints and drawings collection ought to be next in line for the same close treatment has been difficult. With such a varied holding there are many worthy candidates. However, we have settled upon a selection from the Museum's important collection of naval officers' and artists' sketchbooks. Dating mostly from the nineteenth century, the sketchbooks provide an extraordinary source of imagery and information – from the artistic training of naval officers to records of travellers' first impressions of foreign shores and their inhabitants.

With the opening in late 2011/early 2012 of the new archive in the Sammy Ofer Wing, there is an opportunity to bring the whole collection of prints and drawings to the same level of cataloguing, and to publish as much of that information as possible on-line. This spring also sees the beginning of a project to re-house the prints and drawings into new storage boxes, in advance of moving the collection to the new archive in 2011. Much of this work will be carried out by local NADFAS volunteers whose energy and enthusiasm is, as always, greatly appreciated. The new archive and reading room will provide unprecedented access to the Museum's prints and drawings, which will return to the main Museum site for the first time in more than 20 years.

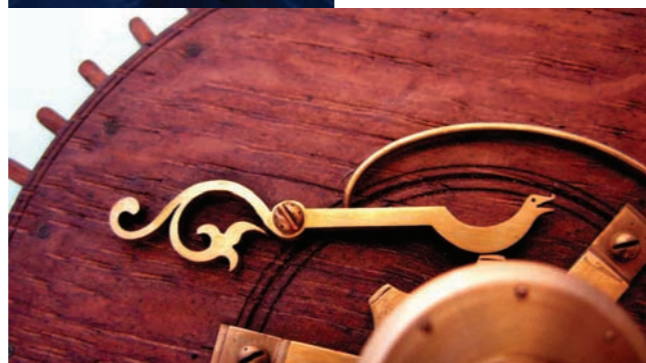
REPAIRING AND CATALOGUING 'H1', THE FIRST HARRISON TIMEKEEPER

JONATHAN BETTS

Senior Specialist, Horology



*Marine timekeeper 'H1'
by John Harrison, 1735
© NMM D6783_3
Detail of H1's 'calendar jumper'
© NMM*



The opportunity to handle and study the most complex and iconic objects in one's field comes along very rarely. In my case, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to examine the delicate workings of one of John Harrison's great timekeepers (known

as H1, H2, H3 and H4) presented itself recently, when H1 (Harrison's first attempt to solve 'the longitude problem' via an accurate marine timekeeper) developed a fault. In order to repair H1 it needed to be dismantled, and while doing this I am taking the opportunity to catalogue the machine in detail. Rarely off display owing to their popularity, the Harrison timekeepers are world-famous. Working on H1 is particularly special for me as one of my great heroes in the Harrison story is the polymath and horologist Lt-Comdr R.T. Gould, who originally rescued the timekeepers from oblivion back in the 1920s and '30s.

Some very interesting information is coming from the study of H1. It was Harrison's first attempt at making an instrument in brass (as opposed to the wood he used in his earlier clocks) and is the only timekeeper made in his home county of Lincolnshire. H1 is surprisingly 'professional' for a first essay in metal. It begs questions about how Harrison learnt his extraordinary skills and whether he received any practical help with the work and, if so, from whom. Evidence also reveals that Harrison's complicated anti-friction designs in H1 are wholly vindicated, as there is almost no wear at all in any of the bearings in this almost 280-year-old clock, which has run without any attention for nearly 50 years.

Elsewhere, I am discovering pleasing secrets about H1: the calendar wheel held a particularly lovely surprise, in that I found Harrison had decorated the little part on the wheel called the 'jumper' with a most beautiful, rather Celtic-style tail and with a front end shaped in the form of a little bird's head. None of this can be seen when the clock is complete, and Harrison must have included it entirely to please himself, and future clockmakers.

Repairing and cataloguing H1 is particularly apposite at this point, given that my current research is focused on the Museum's historic collection of over 200 marine chronometers – the largest and finest in existence – with a view to producing a published catalogue. This entails the careful dismantling of these highly delicate instruments for studying and recording.

A particularly interesting strand of the study is to determine, from the physical evidence within these instruments, the processes, artisans and timescales that were involved in the production of chronometers – something antiquarian horologists are still unclear about. Another element of the catalogue entries will be to record the history of each instrument and its maker, and considerable research is being done in the Observatory's records to be able to describe the context of the object's creation and use.

New Acquisitions

A PORTRAIT OF NAVAL SURGEON ALEXANDER MCDONALD (1817–48)

BARBARA TOMLINSON

Curator of Antiquities

A new opportunity to put a face to one of Sir John Franklin's officers rarely arises. A portrait of Alexander McDonald was recently presented to the NMM by a member of his family following their earlier donation of a prize medal awarded to McDonald by the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh for



*Assistant Surgeon, Alexander McDonald (1817–48)', c.1838,
British school, (oil on board)
© NMM ZBA4548*

his excellent performance in a viva voce examination in 1838. McDonald was a Scotsman, born at Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire. He showed an early interest in the Arctic, beginning his career in 1840 by serving on board a whaling vessel under Captain William Penny – an individual who later played a conspicuous role in the search for Franklin. McDonald wrote an account based on his experiences entitled: *A Narrative of Some Passages in the History of Eenoooloapik, a young Eskimaux*. In 1841 he moved into naval service and in 1845 was appointed assistant surgeon in HMS *Terror*, and was thus part of Franklin's infamous expedition in search of the North-West Passage that was to perish to the last man.

McDonald's possessions played a role in establishing the fate of the missing expedition. In 1859, Francis Leopold McClintock's search expedition found the medal, and a table spoon and fork bearing McDonald's monogram, with other European-made items, in the possession of Inuit near Cape Victoria on the Boothia Peninsula. Another of McDonald's silver forks turned up at the famous boat site in Erebus Bay. The spoon and forks were put on public display and have remained in museum collections ever since, whereas the medal was returned to McDonald's family. Its appearance, however, was recorded in an engraving published in the *Illustrated London News* on 15 October 1859.

The portrait is the only known depiction of McDonald and is one of very few images of naval surgeons before 1850 in the Museum's collections. The status of the profession was rising

during the early nineteenth century and, like McDonald, naval surgeons were taking an important and potentially hazardous part in exploration and other scientific researches.

The painting gives a convincing account of the features of the young man at the time of his graduation in 1838. The sitter is dressed in civilian clothing of about this date so the identification as McDonald seems very plausible.

A DORSET WRECK REDISCOVERED

PIETER VAN DER MERWE

General Editor, National Maritime Museum



The Wreck of the Halsewell, c. 1786, by Thomas Stothard, (oil on canvas) © NMM ZBA4537

The loss of the East Indiaman *Halsewell* under the cliffs at Seacombe, Dorset, is a horrific and well-known story. Outward-bound with troops for India, she was caught in a winter Channel storm, sprang a leak and became unmanageable, and was driven ashore in darkness at about 2 a.m. in the morning of 6 January 1786. Over a hundred people drowned, most when the ship broke up within two hours of striking. About 130 men managed to reach a ledge in the cliff, but only around 70 managed to hold on and be hauled up by local people at daybreak. Those lost included Captain Richard Pierce who, rather than try and save himself, stayed in the ship's roundhouse (cabin) with his daughters Eliza and Mary Anne, his two nieces and the other lady passengers: they all died, as did Pierce's nephew, the ship's first officer. The two senior survivors were the second and third mates, Henry Meriton and John Rogers, who quickly published an account of the disaster, which was widely reported and also prompted many pictures and prints. Most showed the stormy wreck but a very unusual one, suggesting its terrors by implication, was of the scene in the listing cabin with Pierce comforting his daughters, and Meriton and Rogers on the left about to make their escape. This was engraved by Edmund Scott, based on a picture by Thomas Stothard RA (1755–1834) and, though undated, probably appeared shortly afterwards.

In autumn 2007, Stothard's small oil painting of the subject unexpectedly resurfaced. Spotted in Abbott & Holder's gallery in London, the subject and artist were as yet unidentified.

It is all the more interesting because any sort of cabin scene is unusual and at only 12 x 14 inches (305 x 355 mm) – roughly the same as the print – it is a strong painting for its size. Stothard might have done a larger version, with this one either as a preliminary study or a small copy for easier engraving, both fairly common. But there is no obvious record of another, so in this case it is probably the original.

The Research Programme

Research is central to the National Maritime Museum's mission to unlock new information on its collections and subject matter, through an integrated programme of fellowship, doctoral student and staff research, publications and conferences and seminars.

Conferences, lectures and seminars are important in reaching a wider audience, encouraging new research and developing and maintaining contacts within the academic community. In 2008 two major conferences were held – both great successes in terms of attendance and quality of outputs. The first, in May 2008, was a three-day interdisciplinary conference on Richard Hakluyt, the sixteenth-century travel writer, organized in partnership with Nottingham Trent University and the National University of Ireland, Galway, and programmed by Professor Claire Jowitt and Dr Dan Carey of those two institutions respectively. The proceedings will be published as part of the Hakluyt Society Extra Series. Another important outcome has been the creation of a project committee to explore preparing a new scholarly edition of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1598–1600).

The second major conference was *Scientific Voyaging*, a three-day international meeting in July 2008 on relations between maritime exploration and the sciences from the eighteenth century to modern times. This was a collaboration between the NMM, the Royal Society and the University of Cambridge, and was held at both the Museum and the Royal Society.

In October a one-day international conference linked to the Museum's exhibition *Turmoil and Tranquillity: the Sea through the Eyes of Dutch and Flemish masters, 1550–1700* built on the themes raised by the exhibition in the Queen's House.

Meanwhile the 2007–08 series of British Maritime History Seminars, 'The Sea as a Stage', held at the Institute of Historical Research (IHR) focused on re-enactment in maritime history, and this year on 'Ship and Shore'.

Also at the IHR, the second series of Empire Lectures, *The Victorian Empire and Britain's Maritime World: the Sea and Global History, 1837–1901*, took place in October 2008, with papers given by a number of leading academics.

Looking forward, the major conference in 2009 is *The Long View: 400 years of the Telescope*, 16–17 July, to link in with the anniversary of the invention of the telescope and the International Year of Astronomy. See page 12 for more details of all conferences and lectures this year.

Current Research Fellows

SACKLER-CAIRD RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP 2007–09

Dr Clare Anderson, University of Warwick
Marginal centres: subaltern biographies of the Indian Ocean world

SACKLER-CAIRD RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 2009–11

Dr Jan Rueger, Birkbeck College, University of London
Contested island: a history of the Anglo-German relationship

Dr Kirsty Reid, University of Bristol
Australia bound: convict voyages, 1788–1868

CAIRD SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP 2008–09

Dr Nuala Zahedieh, University of Edinburgh
Jamaica and the Atlantic economy, 1655–1720

CAIRD JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP 2009

James Davey, Greenwich Maritime Institute
The victualling of the Baltic fleet, 1808–12: communication times during the Napoleonic Wars

CAIRD NORTH-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP 2009

Dr Marina Carter, University of Edinburgh
American maritime trade with the Île de France (Mauritius), 1790–1808

THE CROWN ESTATE-CAIRD RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 2009

Hannah Evans, British Geological Survey
Geomorphic evolution of the Great Yarmouth coastal system

Dr Susan M. Brooks, Birkbeck College, University of London
Coastal change in the past 200 years: linking offshore bathymetric change and cliff recession

Anna Bakare, University College London
Investigating the morphodynamic seabed characteristics of the Norfolk Banks and Channels system

CAIRD SHORT-TERM RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 2009

Dr Alison Cathcart, University of Strathclyde
The maritime history of the Atlantic Archipelago, c.1450–c.1650: an exploration of maritime affairs in the Irish Sea and the North Channel, focusing on the emergence of a 'British' maritime policy

Jeong-yon Ha, University of Edinburgh
The visual representation of the downriver Thames

Catherine Kelly, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of Oxford
Health and medicine in the nineteenth-century Navy

Don Leggett, University of Kent
Ships of science: the cultural construction of naval power 1890–1918

SACKLER-CAIRD SHORT-TERM FELLOWSHIPS 2009

Dr Martina Schiavon, Université Nancy 2 – C.N.R.S.
The Board of Longitude and the Bureau des Longitudes (19th–20th centuries): a comparative study

Publications

The following books have been written by staff and Fellows and published in the last year. Staff also publish journal articles and conference papers.

STAFF PUBLICATIONS

Jonathan Betts
Harrison (NMM, 2008)

Richard Dunn
The Telescope: A Short History (NMM, March 2009)

Jenny Gaschke, ed.,
Turmoil and Tranquillity: the Sea through the Eyes of Dutch and Flemish Masters, 1550–1700 (NMM, 2008)

Margarette Lincoln, ed., and introduction
The Female Shipwright (NMM, 2008)

Margarette Lincoln, ed., and introduction
A Lady's Captivity among Chinese Pirates (NMM, 2008)

Willem Mörzer-Bruyns and Richard Dunn
Sextants at Greenwich (Oxford University Press, June 2009)

Gloria Clifton and Nigel Rigby, eds.,
Treasures of the National Maritime Museum (NMM, 2nd edition, 2008)

David Rooney
Ruth Belville: The Greenwich Time Lady (NMM, September 2008)

PUBLICATIONS IN PROGRESS

Jonathan Betts
Chronometers at Greenwich

Robert Blyth, Andrew Lambert and Jan Rueger, eds.,
The Dreadnought and the Edwardian Age

Jenny Gaschke
Edward Lear: Egyptian Sketches (NMM, forthcoming 2009)

David Haycock and Sally Archer, eds.
Health and Medicine at Sea 1700–1900

Gillian Hutchinson
Under the Keen Eye of the World: the Search for Franklin

Nigel Rigby, introduction
The Pirate Gow (NMM, forthcoming 2009)

Barbara Tomlinson
Safe in Port: commemorating the seafarer

In addition, many papers from NMM conferences, and from visiting scholars who have made use of the library and collections at NMM, continue to be published widely in academic journals, including the Journal of Maritime Research: jmr.nmm.ac.uk

Collaborative Doctoral Studentships

Anyaa Anim-Addo
Jointly supervised by NMM and
Royal Holloway, University of London
*Steam after slavery: the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company
in the post-emancipation Caribbean, c. 1834–70*

Lindsay Doulton
Jointly supervised by NMM and University of Hull
*Anti-slavery and the Royal Navy in the Indian Ocean, 1860–90:
race, empire and identity*

Harriet McKay
Jointly supervised by NMM and University of Kingston
*Accommodating the passenger: interior design for the
Union Castle Line, 1945–77*

John Moyle
Jointly supervised by NMM and University of Leeds
*The telegraphic life: recovering the work of submarine cable
technicians, 1850–1914*

Charlotte Mullins
Jointly supervised by NMM and University of Sussex
*The world on a plate: the impact of photography on travel imagery
and its dissemination in Britain, 1839–88*

Rebecca Pohancenik
Jointly supervised by NMM and
Queen Mary, University of London
Seventeenth-century Fromanteel clocks

Helen Reddick
Hazel Sheeky
Jointly supervised by NMM and
University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
*Popular narratives of exploration in children's literature from
the eighteenth to the twentieth century*

Philip Rich
Jointly supervised by NMM and University of Sheffield
*The culture of cruising: post-war images of oceanic cruises
in the NMM film archive*

Claire Warrior
Jointly supervised by NMM and University of Cambridge
*Exploring histories: polar exploration and the construction of
history at the National Maritime Museum*

Mary Wills
Jointly supervised by NMM and University of Hull
*Anti-slavery and the Royal Navy in the Atlantic Ocean, 1810–65:
race, empire and identity*

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Website: nmm.ac.uk/research

For staff profiles of curators,
see nmm.ac.uk/about/staff-profiles/curatorial

For regular blog entries by curators, Fellows and doctoral
students, see nmm.ac.uk/blogs/collections

The Year at a Glance

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME 2009–10

Up-to-date information and booking details for all events can
be found on our website: nmm.ac.uk/research

January – May 2009

British Maritime History Seminars: 'Ship and Shore':
held at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House
Convenors: Sally Archer, Dr Margarette Lincoln,
Dr Nigel Rigby, Professor N.A.M. Rodger



Detail from 'Dock scene at British port', 1673, by Jacob Knyff
(oil on canvas); ©NMM, BHC0845

1 April 2009

CIMS lecture: 'Secrets, spies and sailors: MI6 and the Royal Navy'
Professor Keith Jeffery: held at NMM

16–17 July 2009

Conference: 'The Long View: 400 years of the Telescope':
held at NMM

18 July 2009

Conference: Society for the History of Astronomy conference:
held at NMM

October 2009 – April 2010

Seminar series: British Maritime History Seminars:
'War and Peace in the Eighteenth Century':
held at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House

26 November, 10 December 2009

21 January, 4 and 18 February 2010

Seminar series: 'Art and Travel in the Mediterranean, 1600–1900':
held at the Paul Mellon Centre

16–17 June 2010

Symposium: 'The Queens' Courts at the Queens House'
(working title)

8–9 July 2010

Conference: 'Britain's Indian Ocean World, 1600–1900':
held at NMM

4–6 October 2010

Symposium: 'International Map Collectors' Society': held at NMM

19–20 November 2010

Symposium: 'Shipwrecks' (working title): held at NMM