

ARGONAUTA



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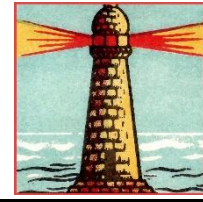


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Editorial

Erika Behrisch



Hi everyone,

As some of you know, I am stepping away from my role as editor of *Argonauta*. It was a difficult decision but one I must make. I have loved reading and editing the articles that came my way from the desks of our readership—from people who have spent their lives in service to the sea, amateur enthusiasts wanting to tell loving stories of boats they grew up on, professionals both in and out of uniform with firsthand accounts of incredible adventure, historians compelled to share amazing details of obscure, bright narrative threads they continue to follow (yes, Derek, I'm thinking of you when I write this!). I have enjoyed them all.

I'm pleased to pass my pen to the incoming co-editors, Meaghan Walker and Ambjörn Adomeit, to whom I'll forward all the wonderful articles still in the *Argo* hopper waiting to be shared.

This last issue under my editorship is filled with what I have liked best about working with *Argo*: original stories well told, and the promise of more to come. Once again Harry Holman reveals for us a fascinating corner of maritime history wrapped up in commerce and nation building; Joel Zemel gives us another incredible tale of fortitude and survival from the Halifax Explosion. The results of the annual book, article, and thesis awards come next, followed by the Call for Papers for the 2024 joint CNRS-NASOH conference and the minutes of the Council Meeting held during the 2023 conference in Newfoundland.

It has been a pleasure to work beside the CNRS's leadership, as compassionate as colleagues as they are passionate about maritime history and culture. I have especially appreciated the steadfast support of Isabel Campbell, who invited me to take over *Argo* in 2019, the empathic ear of Michael Moir, whose presidency coincided with my editorship, and the patience of Kip Scoville, who worked tirelessly with me as publisher. I am also grateful for the editorial leadership of Peter Kikkert, whose courage to open *TNM* to a wider range of maritime research will broaden our collective horizons and ensure the continued vitality as well as currency of our community.

WMP,

Erika



President's corner

by Tom Malcomson

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As this is my first corner I want to begin by thanking my predecessor Michael Moir for his significant contributions as president to the Society. These included organizing the 2022 online conference and finding a new, more economical printer for the journal, not to mention his steady and wise shepherding of ongoing society activity. He now steps into the role of past-president and returns to council as our secretary. Michael will also spearhead the effort to create an endowed chair in maritime history at a Canadian University. This last activity is critical I think to preserving and promoting the study of maritime history in Canada.

The intrepid Meaghan Walker oversaw the CNRS conference this past August at Memorial University, in St John's, Newfoundland. While attendance was modest it was ample, and actively engaged. The hybrid conference allowed those of us who could not attend in person to participate as audience and/or presenters. Dr. Walker is to be applauded for running a tight, successful conference.

At the AGM we learned that the CNRS is in solid financial shape. Our future though depends upon a membership body large enough to sustain the society's material endeavours, namely our journal, *Argonauta*, and our conferences. Maintaining our current community and attracting new members is (as always) a critical goal for us. A robust membership will allow us to continue advancing the interest in and formal study of maritime history.

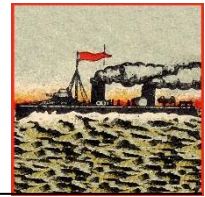
Looking forward: the 2024 conference will be held from June 20 through 22 at Brock University, in St Catharines, Ontario. It is a joint conference with NASOH and Brock's History Department. Organization is ongoing with the submission of one paper proposal already. The conference theme is Inland Seas, Rivers, and Canals. This focus seemed fitting given the location. The 3,700 kilometres of the Great Lakes and St Lawrence River system have always provided a path for exploration and transportation. Across time, different aspects of it have obstructed or facilitated settlement, trade and war. This system, as well as the other rivers and lakes in Canada that flow to the sea, influenced both nation-building and our experience of globalization. Canals were (and remain) the giant engineering projects of their era, altering landscapes and reshaping communities through which they passed. The call for papers comes later in this issue, but I want to take this opportunity to invite CNRS members and others who read *Argo* to attend 2024's conference in St Catharines. If you have an idea for a paper send it in: CNRSNASOHBrock2024conference@gmail.com (along with the other information requested in the call for papers). Registration ought to open by late January, with information about accommodations, receptions, and excursions.

On a personal note: I grew up in Welland, with many lost hours sitting on the bank of the Welland Canal (which use to ran through the heart of the city), watching lake freighters, deep sea ships and the occasional naval vessel in transit. Before heading to university (at Brock) I worked aboard a Misener freighter for part of the summer, sailing through that Welland canal.

As Erika noted in her editorial she is stepping away from *Argonauta*. She has brought not only her professional editing skills to bear on our newsletter but a keen eye for well told stories that has maintained the high standard to which her predecessors had raised *Argonauta*. The council wishes Erika all the best and looks forward to her future involvement with the Society and her own scholarly work in maritime history.

Atlantic Canada's First Research Vessels: The Department of Marine and Fisheries and the many *Ostreas*

H.T. Holman



Like the fishing industry itself, fisheries research in Canada pre-dates Confederation, but much less is known about it. This article focuses on the development of the oyster fishery and details the people, vessels, places, and priorities of this important but much-overlooked aspect of our history as a maritime nation.

In New Brunswick Moses Perley, appointed by the government as fisheries commissioner, undertook a survey of the fisheries of the province in the early 1850s but his work consisted primarily in identifying and measuring the potential for fisheries in the region.¹ Later the same decade Dr. Pierre Fortin, a Quebec magistrate whose mandate was primarily to patrol and protect the Gulf of St. Lawrence fishery using a series of leased vessels and the government steamer *La Canadienne*, took the opportunity to attempt (although unsuccessfully) the development of the oyster industry in the Gaspé district.² There was relatively little change in the level of research after the union of the provinces in 1867. Through the following two decades there was some interest in developing hatcheries, including those relating to the growth of the lobster industry, but during the period much of the work of the fisheries branch consisted of management rather than research.

One exception was in the oyster industry, which was centred in western Prince Edward Island and included considerable activity in New Brunswick and some potential sites in Nova Scotia. The relatively low threshold of cost to enter the industry and the development of access to markets through increased rail transportation saw a large uptick in the number engaged in the fishery prior to 1890.

Ernest Kemp (1860-1939) and his father Frederick were hired by the Dominion government in 1892 to serve as experts on the oyster industry for the Department of Marine and Fisheries. They had ample experience with the lucrative Whitstable oyster grounds in England, but they found that the waters of Eastern Canada had some distinct differences from the English conditions. Beginning their research in Shediac, New Brunswick, they discovered that conditions varied considerably from area to area within the region. Huge tidal flows in the Bay of Fundy made it difficult for fishermen to raise oysters there, but a greater challenge to the industry was the fact that the waters across the oyster grounds of the harbours of Northumberland Strait and Gulf of St. Lawrence froze for several months each year. In itself, the annual freeze was not an issue; the oyster industry was a seasonal one and the oysters were not directly impacted by the ice. However, on Prince Edward Island and in the New Brunswick bays the presence of ice allowed for the dredging of "mussel mud," an industry that had a critical effect on the oyster beds and would have been something the Kemps had not encountered before.

These differences called for a great deal of research into specific localities, and Ernest (Frederick returned to England after one year) spent weeks and months each year for

several decades detailing the conditions and growing techniques in individual harbours and bays across the region.³ Initially leasing or chartering small boats in each harbour, he was soon advocating the acquisition of a specific craft from which to conduct his research and observations. When he finally succeeded, he was charged with the development of what possibly was the first vessel in the Dominion specifically designed for fisheries research.

In 1900, Kemp had made use of the *Davies*,⁴ one of three tugs belonging to the Department of Marine and Fisheries, but the same year he brought the issue to the attention of the Department:

It would be in the interest of the Department to own a boat, as my time is engaged upon the water from the opening to the close of navigation, and two years hire would more than pay for one being built which could be arranged with every accommodation to suit my work. As the area to be looked after covers New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, it is desirable to have a serviceable boat suitable to make a passage in ordinary weather, with a roomy deck, also accommodation for the crew, as there are times when one has to live on board, while making a passage or is stormbound. The chief items are a boat of very good speed, power and shallow draft of water not exceeding four feet, as some of the beds are lying in very shoal water and the channels in these landlocked areas are very intricate. A boat of this description would not cost much to build and would be very economical to run and keep up.⁵

The following year he was able to report that approval had been given to the proposal he had advanced. He was instructed to work with Capt. M.P. McElhinney, the Department's nautical advisor,⁶ who would draw up the plans and specifications for a vessel which would cost no more than \$3,500.⁷ In support of the proposal it was pointed out that at the end of each season, when not engaged in oyster research, the vessel could also perform duties as a lobster patrol vessel. However, "she will be specifically designed for oyster work, not fisheries protection work as she will have very wide back room for dredges and culch barrels." After a prolonged tender process involving the Minister and several Members of Parliament, a contract for the vessel was awarded to the New Burrell Johnson Iron Company of Yarmouth, with the delivery to take place in the spring of 1902.⁸ A late-emerging issue was the question of a name for the steamer. Kemp had suggested one of a number of bird names in keeping with a departmental naming pattern. He advocated "Plover," while at the same time suggesting to Fisheries Commissioner E.E. Prince that he might want to use the name "Prince." Prince demurred on both suggestions, noting that bird names were given to larger and more important vessels. He, in turn, offered the name "Ostrea," the Latin term for oyster, and after being relayed up the line to the Minister's office the name was deemed to be "short and suitable." The vessel completed trials and was accepted in late June 1902. By July 1902 the steamer was in use and its first trip after delivery was to Governor's Island and Point Prim, near Charlottetown.⁹

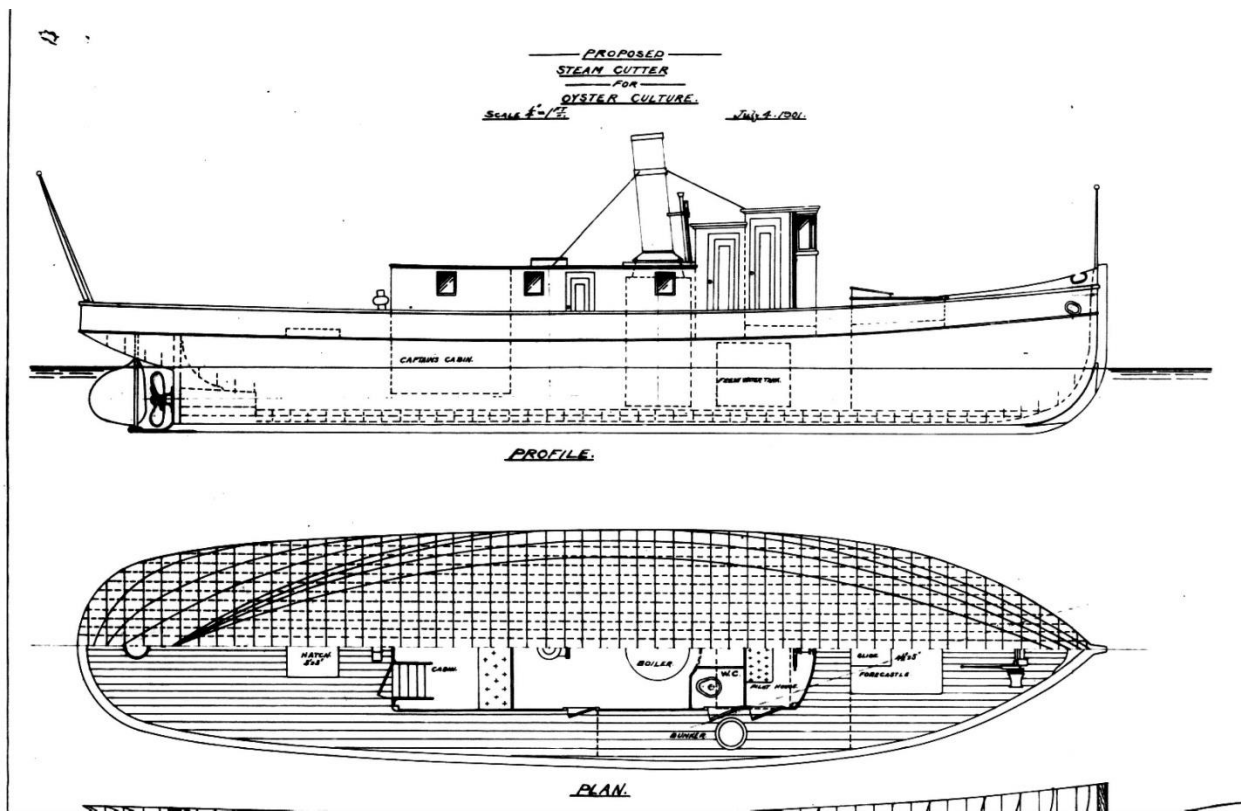


Figure 1 Oyster Culture Steamer Ostrea. LAC RG23 Department of Marine and Fisheries Vol 333 File 2868 Pt.1

The vessel was of an extremely plain and simple design, and was clearly a working craft. Kemp wrote of his satisfaction with the steamer, which he praised as “amply adapted for the work in which she is specifically engaged.” The wooden vessel was 50 feet in keel (53 feet overall) with a 13-foot beam, drawing 4 foot 6 inches. Although equipped for sailing, it also had a vertical steam boiler and simple engine which could drive at 7 miles per hour.¹⁰ The cost of the vessel was \$3550—only slightly over-budget.¹¹ Kemp expressed pleasure that the vessel had been named the *Ostrea*, the name “being closely connected with the work in which she is engaged.”¹² The following year, the *Ostrea* was in use by oyster scientists in conjunction with the oyster research station newly established on Malpeque Bay.¹³ In addition, Kemp used the *Ostrea* on trips to Shediac, Pictou, and other Northumberland Strait ports to monitor oyster operations and potential in those areas.

Other than Kemp’s description of the vessel and a drawing in Departmental files, the rest of the first *Ostrea*’s existence is a bit of a mystery. Unless it was listed under another name, it does not appear on the shipping registers, which is somewhat unusual. In Yarmouth, Charlottetown, and Ottawa shipping registries, nothing matches the boat’s description for the period, yet the *Ostrea* did exist and was the site of Kemp’s work across the region for the next decade.¹⁴

In spite of his early satisfaction with the boat’s design, the *Ostrea* obviously did not meet all of Kemp’s needs because in 1915, work on a new research vessel commenced at the government shipyard in Sorel, Quebec. The new ship was considerably larger than the

original *Ostrea* with an overall length of 85 feet, a width of 18 feet and drawing 4 feet 9 inches. It was composite construction with steel framing, including 5 steel watertight bulkheads but having planking of rock elm, oak, and BC fir. The engine was supplied by the John Ingles Company of Toronto and the boiler was built at the shipyard.¹⁵ One major working improvement was a steam winch, which would be used to hoist the dredges, a job done by hand on the older boat. Slight delays caused by a wartime shortage of materials prevented the boat's delivery until mid-September 1916, when Capt. Kemp took command at Sorel and made his way to Charlottetown where the new steamer was laid up for the winter. Again, Kemp was well pleased: "She is roomy and fitted with all modern conveniences and I am in hopes that much more effective work will be done in this one than in the former boat, which was much smaller."¹⁶ This vessel, too, was named the *Ostrea*, but unlike the smaller boat was duly registered. The first *Ostrea* was then offered for sale with the proviso that the new owner would be required to change the name of the vessel.¹⁷



Figure 2 Steam Cutter Ostrea. Canadian Railway and Marine World. January 1917 p.37.

The second *Ostrea* continued to be in the Dominion government service until 1930, although after 1920 the oyster industry was decimated by disease and almost disappeared, not recovering for two decades.¹⁸ In the second half of the 1920s, the vessel remained on the hard in Charlottetown and was maintained by departmental staff.¹⁹ On a few occasions it was used for other departmental activities such as fishery patrols, monitoring the lobster industry, or buoy maintenance. With the dramatic decline in the oyster industry, the size of the vessel and its operating expense may have been too much for the task at hand. In 1929 David R. Dodge, an experienced Rhode Island oyster farmer engaged in 1928 to prepare a

special report on the oyster fishery of Richmond Bay, PEI, complained about the oyster culture on Prince Edward Island that “the real needs are a proper oyster boat and a good-sized power tender” which would allow for service on the small beds in the rivers, impossible to visit with the current *Ostrea*.²⁰ The next year the vessel was sold to J. Simon of Halifax. Simon later incorporated the Hochelaga Shipping and Towing Company and, in 1935, the *Ostrea* was transferred to the company.²¹ In September 1934, while engaged in a salvage contract, the *Ostrea* struck the end of an underwater portion of a pier in Port Morian, Cape Breton. The damage appeared to be minor, but about twenty minutes later and after travelling about 3½ miles, the steamer sank. A legal action was commenced on the basis that the pier was a hazard to navigation and the federal government was found on appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada to be liable for the loss.²²

A third vessel in the oyster service—unhelpfully named the *Ostrea II*—was built of wood in Tancook Island, Nova Scotia in 1930 and fitted with a semi-diesel engine. The vessel was registered in Charlottetown in 1932 and was subsequently placed in service in Richmond Bay. It was described as a “small craft” and was smaller than both of predecessors, having a length of 44 feet and gross tonnage of 33 tons.²³ Its registration was transferred to Marine Industries Limited of Sorel, Quebec late in 1945, and it was described as a “Wood Crude Oil Scow” at the time. Although it was not taken off the registry until 1961, it is likely it had been broken up some years before.

Unfortunately, to date no photographs showing the first or third *Ostreas* have been located. The small, primarily wooden vessels operated by the several divisions of the Department of Marine and Fisheries carried out tasks which saw the Department have a presence in many ports, harbours, and areas of the Dominion which today seldom see any vessels, let alone those of the government of the country. While warships and icebreakers are recognized as important symbols of the country, these more common steamers—patrol vessels, tugs, tenders, and other auxiliaries—tend to be overlooked. Like the *Ostrea*, however, they enabled the government to carry out its responsibilities and they, too, deserve to be celebrated as part of our marine heritage.

¹ William Welch, “Moses Perley and the Fisheries” *Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* Vol. XXIII No.1 (January 2013) pp. 21-34.

² Kenneth Johnstone, *The Aquatic Explorers: A History of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada* Ottawa: 1977.

³ Included in Kemp’s work was the impact on the oyster beds of the practice of digging “mussel mud.” Joshua D. MacFadyen “Drawing lines in the ice: Regulating mussel mud digging in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence” Claire E. Campbell and Robert Summerby-Murray. *Land and Sea: Environmental history in Atlantic Canada*. Fredericton: Acadiensis Press 2013 pp. 99-119.

⁴ This vessel was likely named for Louis Henry Davies, who was minister of the Department of Marine and Fisheries from July 1896 to September 1901. The boat’s crew was supplied

from the *CGS Acadia* and *CGS Osprey*. Annual Report Fisheries Protection Service for 1900. 1901 Sessional Paper No. 22 p. 259.

⁵ Oyster Culture – Annual Report Fisheries section Department of Marine and Fisheries for 1901. 1902 Sessional Papers No. 22 p. 267.

⁶ McElhinney is consistently referred to as the Nautical Advisor although this does not seem to have been an official designation. He is credited with the design for a number of Dominion government vessels, including the icebreakers *Stanley*, *Minto*, and *Montcalm*.

⁷ LAC RG23 Department of Marine and Fisheries Vol 333 File 2868 Pt.1. This file includes detailed specifications for the vessel.

⁸ The company was a major industry in the Yarmouth region. Actual building of the vessels appears to have been often sub-contracted to others, but the Ironworks supplied the engines and completed the vessels. The company was the contractor for a number of other ships which provided coastal services in the Maritime area including the *Magdalene* and the *Harland*.

⁹ Charlottetown *Guardian* 8 July 1902 p. 5.

¹⁰ Some of the details concerning the vessel are found in the notice offering it for sale after it became surplus to requirements. Charlottetown *Guardian* 22 November 1916.

¹¹ Auditor General Report 1901-1902. Sessional Papers 1903. p. 156.

¹² Oyster Culture. Annual Report of the Fisheries Section Department of Marine and Fisheries for 1902. 1903 Sessional Papers No. 22 p. 266.

¹³ Charlottetown *Guardian* 30 September 1903.

¹⁴ Is it interesting to note that a vessel with the same name was used in the 1890s for oyster research in Queensland Australia. Jeff Hopkins Wise “A history of the service and loss of the Queensland Government Steamer Llewellyn 1884-1919.” *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 4(1) 29-51 2006.

¹⁵ “Canadian Government Vessel Building at Sorel” *Canadian Railway and Marine World*. December 1916 p. 505.

¹⁶ “New Oyster Steamer *Ostrea* Has Arrived” Charlottetown *Guardian* 31 October 1916. One feature remarked on by the *Guardian* was a lifeboat with a “detachable gasoline engine.”

¹⁷ *Canadian Railway and Marine World*. January 1917 p. 37.

¹⁸ For more on the growth of the industry and its decline see Ed MacDonald “Shell Games: The Marine Commons, Economic Policy, and Oyster Culture on Prince Edward Island 1865-1928.” Claire E. Campbell. Edward MacDonald and Brian Payne, eds. *The Greater Gulf: Essays on the Environmental History of the Gulf of St. Lawrence*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens Press 2019 pp.192-223.

¹⁹ Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries p. 72.

²⁰ Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries (Fisheries) p. 212.

²¹ There appears to be a conflict in some of the records. The court documents show that in 1934 the vessel was owned by the Hochelaga Shipping and Towing Company while vessel records appear to have a 1935 date. See the Mills List at

<http://db.library.queensu.ca/marmus/mills/>

²² The King v. Hochelaga Shipping and Towing <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/8490/index.do>

²³ Charlottetown *Guardian* 9 June 1930. The vessel had official number 154888.

Charles John Mayers: The Real-Life Story Behind ‘*The Flying Sailor*’

Joel Zemel



This article has been updated from the original version published on 6 March 2023 for my online historical newspaper column HalifaxYesterday.

The common phrase “truth is stranger than fiction” is applied to incredible real-life stories which defy belief. What happened on the morning of 6 December, 1917 to a 22-year-old merchant mariner named Charles John Mayers (1896-1959) is as true as it is incredulous: a man, swept up by the explosion in Halifax Harbour and carried high through the air for nearly half a mile, was thrown back to earth and survived.



**Figure 1 Charles John Mayers
ca. 1919, provided by Hugh
MacLean.**

An award-winning National Film Board (NFB) film entitled *The Flying Sailor* was an Oscar nominee for this year’s Best Animated Short Film. It is a creative interpretive work that combines animation with real-world images and an appealing musical score to tell the tale. Despite its lack of historical precision, the project has generated some well-deserved interest in the real-life story of Charles John Mayers, to whom the film is dedicated. This article offers a more factual account of Mayers’s harrowing experience and details situations which occurred after the film leaves off, providing context around this incredible story.

Although reporters of the day never personally interviewed Charles Mayers, versions of his story found their way into local newspapers. The following information is primarily from Mayers’s eyewitness testimony given on 21 December, 1917 during the wreck commissioner’s inquiry in the Exchequer Court of Canada. The goal of the inquiry was to

determine the cause of the collision between two ships in Halifax harbour which led to the explosion. The proceedings took place in Courtroom #1 (now #4) on Spring Garden Road, Halifax.



Figure 2 Courtroom #4, Joel Zemel Collection.

The SS *Mont-Blanc* (France) and SS *Imo* (Norway) collided on the morning of 6 December and resulted in a fire aboard the French ship. *Mont-Blanc's* manifest listed tons of picric acid, guncotton, and T.N.T., as well as 494 barrels of inflammable benzol on the open decks. Numerous rounds of ammunition for the ship's two guns were also stored fore and aft. At the point of collision on *Mont-Blanc's* starboard side, *Imo* pierced the forward Hold No. 1 containing the picric acid. When the vessel extricated itself, the sparks ignited a fire in the French ship's hold. The flames moved up quickly from the waterline to the decks above via spilled benzol flowing overboard from broken barrels.

Only a handful of naval personnel in Halifax were aware of the T.N.T. aboard *Mont-Blanc* except for the ship's crew, who also knew the entirety of the ship's contents. Virtually no one else in the city had any idea of the other extremely dangerous, more volatile explosives that constituted the bulk of the cargo.

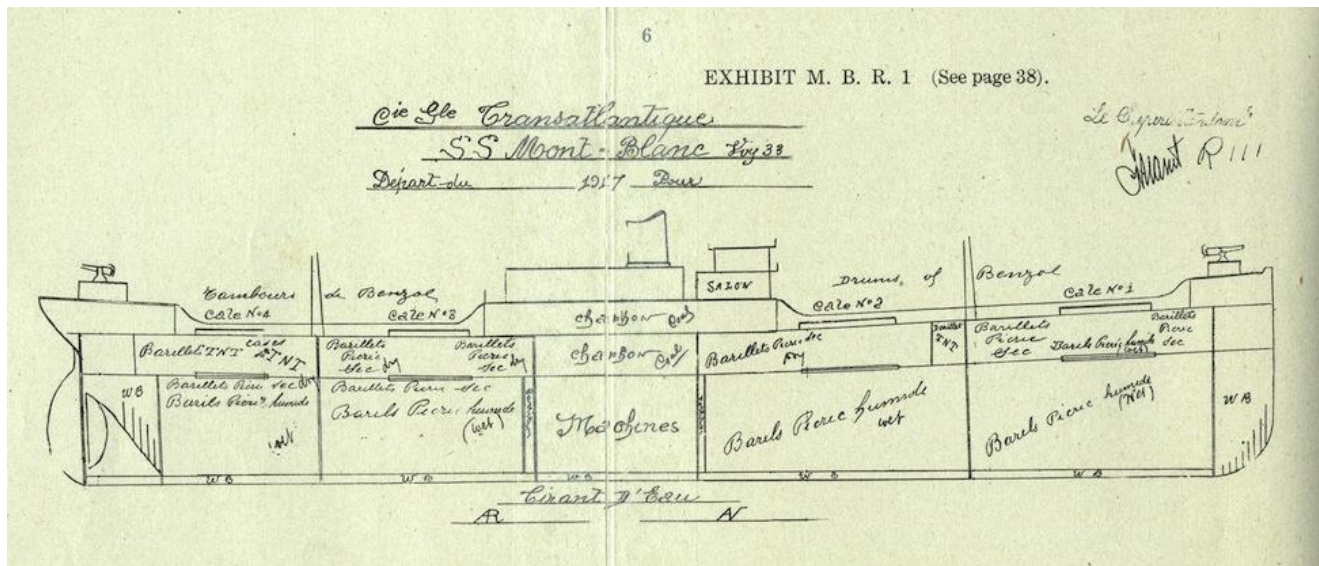


Figure 3 SS Mont-Blanc side view, cargo distribution, Mont-Blanc v. Imo, Exhibit M.B.R. 1, Joel Zemel Collection.

The British freighter SS *Middleham Castle* (Master, Captain Kelly) had arrived in the port of Halifax on 24 November 1917 and was slated to depart for New York on 25 December following an overhaul at the Dry Dock. Charles Mayers, originally from Seaforth, Lancashire, was the third officer on his first voyage with this vessel. He observed the collision and resultant fire from aboard his ship, which was rafted together with two others off the Graving Dock approximately 200 yards from Pier 6. Following the collision, *Mont-Blanc* made its way to the south side of the pier on its own power and beached on the shore, broadside to *Middleham Castle*. On a whim, Mayers left the relative safety of his vessel to assess the situation.

During his inquiry testimony, Mayers told the Court that he began to feel extremely ill at ease as he approached the stricken vessel. He would have noticed several loud explosions of overheated benzol drums bursting on deck and taking off into the air like fireworks. When he was within 100 yards of *Mont-Blanc*, he decided it would be best to seek shelter because he had witnessed ships explode in the past. He quickly turned around and ran as fast as he could in the direction of *Middleham Castle*.

Upon reaching his ship, he made his way to the port side where he stood with the second mate and continued to observe the intense fire. Without warning, *Mont-Blanc* evaporated in a violent, powerful 2.9 kiloton blast. A sudden updraft swept Mayers from his position and carried him aloft. The vessel's lone fatality was the chief steward, Charles D. Silva. The second mate with whom Mayers stood only a moment before was uninjured.

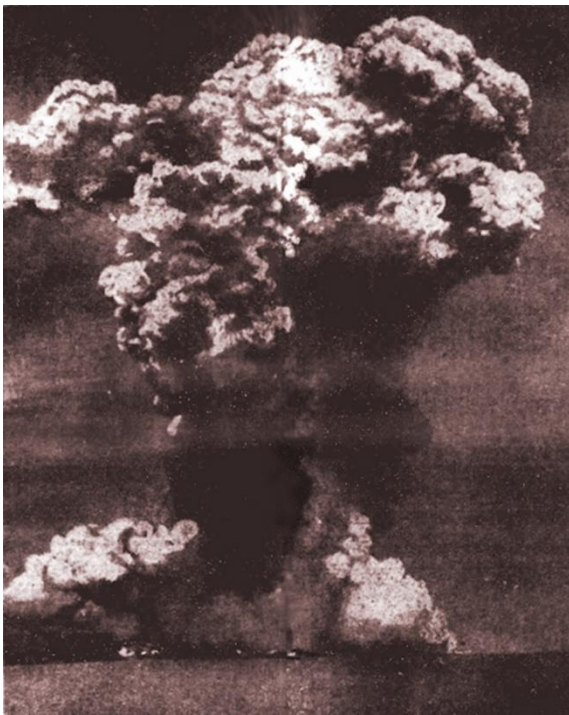


Figure 4 Explosion Blast Cloud, Harbour view to Bedford Basin, Joel Zemel Collection.

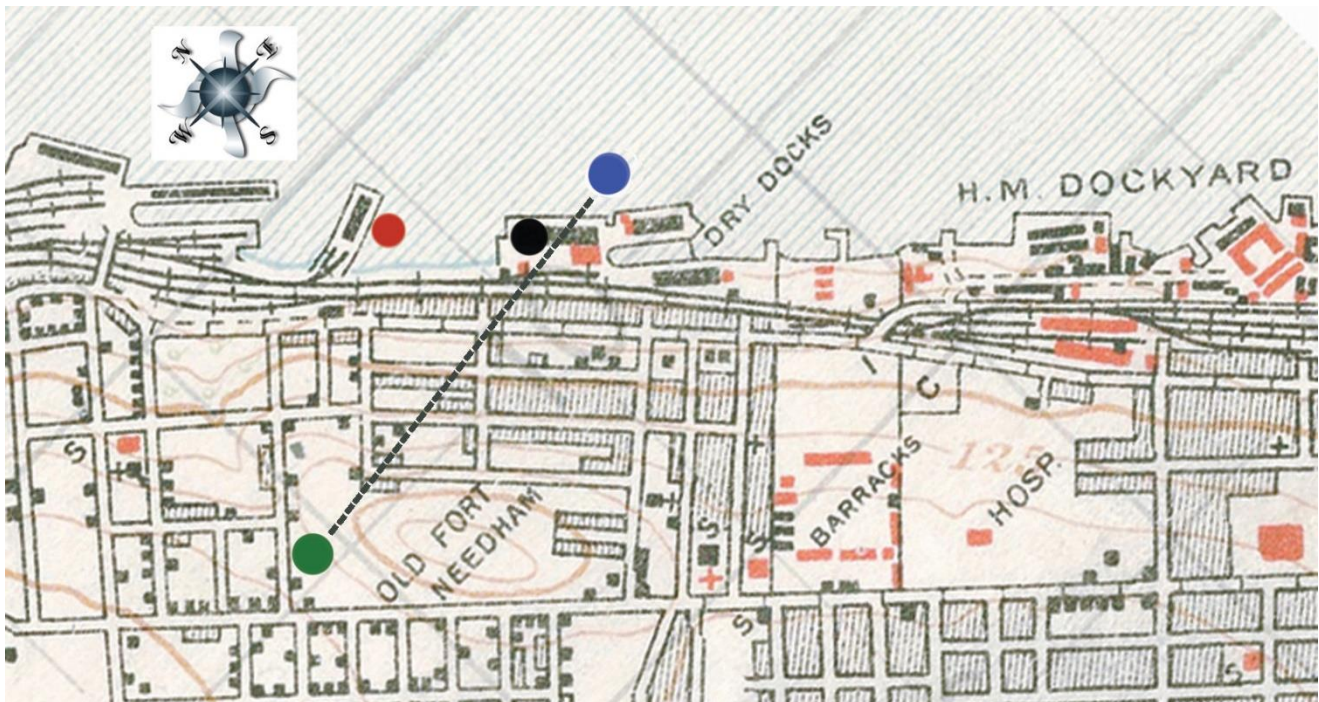


Figure 5 An approximation of Mayers's trajectory: SS Mont-Blanc (red), SS Middleham Castle (blue), the Acadia Sugar Refinery (black), the area where Mayers may have landed (green). Distance approximately 700 metres. Joel Zemel Collection.

Incredulity toward and disbelief of Mayers's experience flying through the air and landing atop Needham Hill was already well known by the time the inquiry took place. The stigma of the event unfortunately followed him into the courtroom. The following is an exchange between Crown counsel William Alexander Henry Jr. and Third Officer Mayers:

Q - *Any sound of the explosion?*

A - Not that I remember; everything went dark.

Q - *Describe your experiences?*

A - I don't feel proud of it altogether.

Q - *You were hurled through the air a considerable distance?*

A - Yes, I was on top of Fort Needham hill, about a half a mile from the ship.

Q - *You were fully dressed at the time going up?*

A - Yes, heavy coat on, and when I realized where I was I had nothing on but just my boots.

Q - *Everything went black?*

A - Yes.

Q - *And you had a sensation of revolving?*

A - Yes, revolving sensation; I tried to throw myself back and could not.

Q - *And also of knocking against something?*

A - Yes, I remember hitting something with my left side.

Q - *And you were going through the air you had the sensation?*

A - I remember meeting pieces of timber and wood; I was quite conscious; I felt the water; I thought I was under the bottom of the sea somewhere.

Q - *You had the sensation of being under water?*

A - Yes, I was wet when I came down.

Q - *You fell on your left side.*

A - Yes.

Q - *And that stopped you?*

A - Yes.

Q - *You were pretty badly injured?*

A - Very badly cut; nothing broken.

Q - *Your face was pretty well cut all over?*

A - Yes, I picked nails and pieces of wood out of my face.



Figure 6 SS Middleham Castle (left) and SS Picton, photograph taken by James Burns Russell, Nova Scotia Archives. Rubble in the background is the remains of the Acadia Sugar Refinery.

At the heart of the inquiry and all subsequent civil proceedings (besides determination of responsibility for the collision) was a \$2,000,000 damages claim. If *Mont-Blanc* had been the cause of the accident, the ship's owners La Compagnie Générale Transatlantique would be awarded the money. If *Imo* were at fault, the payment would go to its owners.

By all accounts, Charles Mayers was a credible witness who appeared to possess an almost photographic memory. He had witnessed the circumstances leading up to and following the collision, from the time *Imo* came down the harbour from Bedford Basin and The Narrows until the accident took place just across from Pier 9 near midstream. He clearly recalled the exchange of whistle signals between the two ships as well as their positions. His testimony was succinct and truthful. Throughout, the young man remained unflappable.

The public had shown much contempt for Captain Aimé Le Médec and Pilot Francis Mackey of *Mont-Blanc*. The Halifax *Herald* newspaper amplified this disdain back to its readership. Many in the city were prejudiced against French-Canadians for their stance against the rest of Canada going to war for Britain. That the ship's officers and men were from France did not seem to matter. Also, people were well aware that the French ship's crew abandoned their vessel and escaped to Dartmouth (with one casualty on land), and allegations that they warned no one of the imminent danger persisted.

Despite all the negativity directed at *Mont-Blanc* for entering Halifax Harbour in the first place, *Imo's* responsibility for the collision seemed apparent. The fact that the Norwegian ship kept signaling her intention to remain on *Mont-Blanc's* starboard side, despite the prevailing Rules of the Road, made no sense. There were seven fatalities aboard *Imo*, including Captain Haakon From, First Officer Iverson, and local Pilot William Hayes. Some controversy arose during the inquiry regarding the unwritten rule that it went against British fair play to speak ill of the dead. Due to this, and mainly because the captain, first officer, and pilot had died in the explosion, the reasons for *Imo's* erratic actions went unanswered.

The Norwegian ship's owners, the Southern Whaling Co. Ltd., contended that the accident took place on the Halifax side. Conversely, Mayers, who had keen eyesight and a good understanding of navigation, stood firm in his belief that the collision took place on the Dartmouth side of the line. His testimony strongly indicated *Imo* was to blame, much to the chagrin of Charles Jost Burchell, counsel for the ship's owners.

Burchell was particularly hard on the third officer. He attempted to completely discredit Mayers's testimony regarding signals and locations. He went so far as to hammer the young man with invective and bring up inane subjects such as how many steps did he count coming into the courtroom and whether he read fantasy as a child such as *Deadeye Dick** or books by Jules Verne. Counsel remarked that Mayers's experience was considered a joke by his crew mates to which the third officer replied, "A good many people do."

Q - *You said you were ashamed of it?*

A - No.

Q - *I thought you said you were ashamed?*

A - I was not proud of the experience of being blown in the air.

Q - *When you came to you were not quite yourself?*

A - No, my mind was affected.

Q - *And you saw some horrible sights?*

A - I did; I did see some horrible sights; I remember them.

Q - *A woman badly mangled giving birth to a child?*

A - I did in a field.

Q - *You wandered around and didn't know where you were?*

A - I didn't know until I was picked up by a blue jacket from the Niobe and taken to the hospital.

Q - *And been under medical treatment since? The doctor fixed you up?*

A - Yes, at the house.

Q - *You went to the hospital first and then to a private house?*

A - I did.

Burchell then bluffed by suggesting he could produce a witness who said Mayers did not go back to his ship but rather ran up a hill just before the explosion. The third officer categorically stated he did not do such a thing and that he would be surprised if such a witness was produced. Counsel backed down. Mayers was next examined by Humphrey Mellish, representing the owners of *Mont-Blanc*, who wanted to know more about his ordeal:

Q - *You stated you had no clothing after the explosion?*

A - None whatever.

Q - *And you were found on a hill?*

A - In a field amongst burning houses.

Q - *And you were taken care of then?*

A - I could not properly walk from the pain in my feet.

Q - *Some people took care of you?*

A - I helped myself; I got a pair of trousers from a house and a mackintosh coat.

Q - *And a blue jacket assisted you?*

A - Yes, to a conveyance; a motor car.

Q - *And since then you have been provided with clothing from the Relief Committee?*

A - I have what remains on my own ship.

Mr. Mellish went on to establish that Mayers had stayed at the hospital for 13 hours and then recuperated at the house of Mr. Hart of the Green Lantern Building. Mayers verified that he had also been interviewed prior to his testimony by Mr. Mellish himself, Mr. Gaboury, French Consul and the chairman of the Relief Committee, and Mr Burchell.

Despite much evidence to the contrary, the biased three-man inquiry panel concluded that *Mont-Blanc* was fully to blame for the collision. The government counsel, William A. Henry, expressed great surprise in a letter to the deputy minister of Fisheries, Alex Johnston, stating that most people thought *Imo* was to blame for the collision. One of the panel's members, Judge Arthur Drysdale, oversaw the first of the civil litigations. To no one's surprise, he issued a decision finding *Mont-Blanc* solely responsible. This led to appeals and a cross-appeal by the ship's owners to the higher courts.

Ultimately, the location of the collision was made irrelevant due to decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada (19 May 1919) as well as the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (22

March 1920). Both panels determined *Mont-Blanc* and *Imo* were equally responsible for the collision, voiding the \$2,000,000 damages claim altogether. One statement regarding Mayers's testimony appeared within the Privy Council's decision: "though one may not have the same confidence in his evidence as if he was free from his delusion, yet his testimony ought not to be put aside as entirely untrustworthy."

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There is evidence that during his tribulation atop Needham Hill, Mayers briefly saw and spoke to a sobbing girl. He told someone, "There was a little girl near me and I asked her where we were. She was crying and said she did not know where we were." This was likely 14-year-old Barbara Orr, who had been watching the fire at a location near her home on Albert Street and, just like Mayers, had been carried by the explosion through the air to the hill nearby—though the distance of her flight was much shorter than that of the third officer.



Figure 7 Barbara Orr, Janet Kitz Collection.

Historian Janet Kitz wrote, "Barbara had a feeling of somersaulting through the air. She came to near the top of Fort Needham, one of her high tightly laced boots gone. She was covered with a black, wet, oily substance. There were people around staggering, bleeding ... She struggled to her feet. Where her house had been, she saw only smoke and flames. Sometimes walking, sometimes crawling, she managed to reach her aunt's house on Gottingen Street, where there was serious damage, but no fires." Barbara Orr survived the explosion, but unfortunately lost her entire family.

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Archival photographs show the damage to *Middleham Castle*'s stoved-in funnel as well as a view looking aft of the ship's port side from where Mayers was taken from the deck by the blast. By the time his ship was ready to leave Halifax for New York, he had sufficiently recovered from his injuries. After undergoing repairs from the explosion, *Middleham Castle* left on Christmas Day with a new master, Captain Hawkin.



Figure 8 SS Middleham Castle following explosion / view port side to aft, taken by Lt. Victor Magnus, Joel Zemel Collection.

Third Officer Mayers worked on other merchant ships after his tenure on *Middleham Castle*: *SS Egremont Castle* and *SS Andorhina*. By 1919, he had reached the position of second mate and received mercantile awards for his WWI service. In July 1920, he received his first mate's certificate. Not much more is known about the real life "flying sailor" following his ordeal in Halifax except that Charles John Mayers reportedly died in 1959, age 63.

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*Charles Burchell was likely referring to *Dick Deadeye*, a character in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, a comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan.

Sources: Testimony from *Imo vs Mont Blanc Volumes 1 & 2*; *Scapegoat, the extraordinary legal proceedings following the 1917 Halifax Explosion* by Joel Zemel (2016); additional biographical information and photograph of Charles John Mayers courtesy of Hugh MacLean; *Halifax Explosion Remembrance Book*, Nova Scotia Archives; Notes by Janet Kitz; various online resources.

Notes: According to historian Barry Cahill, the actual name of the Acadia Sugar Refinery was the Richmond Refinery. The structure, owned by the Acadia Sugar Refining Company

Limited, was destroyed in the 1917 explosion. The original name appears to have been superseded over time.

Suggested: *Halifax Explosion Remembrance Book* online at the Nova Scotia Archives website: <https://archives.novascotia.ca/remembrance/>

The NFB animated short film *The Flying Sailor* can be viewed at the following URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Rj3FG8vFtk>

Canadian Nautical Research Society CNRS awards announcements for 2023

Keith Matthews Book Award for a book published in 2022:

Honourable Mentions:

Robert G. Allan, with Peter A. Robson, *Workboats For the World: The Robert Allan Story*. Maderia Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2022.

The story of a naval architectural firm established by a Scottish immigrant to Canada, with training in naval architecture and made successful worldwide by himself, his son, and grandson, receives an honourable mention. The book is Robert G. Allan's, with Peter A. Robson, *Workboats for the World: The Robert Allan Story*. This book chronicles Robert Allan's establishment of the family firm in 1927, through the leadership of son Robert Jr. and finally the grandson Robert Gordon. The company's origin and growth are described, as is its current global presence. A sharp, precise writing on each of the fifteen different types of working craft—from fishing boats, costal craft through to fireboats, research vessels and tugboats—makes for solid overviews of each craft design and their subtle variations. The technical detail and line drawings add to the depth of the descriptions. Allan and Robson situate the naval architectural firm's technical innovations within the broader research on ship design and building. The book has an outstanding aesthetic appeal due to the high quality of production, from its paper stock to the numerous coloured photographs and ship drawings. This large format volume is a valuable resource for those interested in workboats, the evolution of a naval architect firm, and the development of workarounds in ship and machinery to meet difficult contexts. More company histories are needed, and Allan and Robson have provided a good model to follow to produce such stories.

Erika Behrisch, *Discovery, Innovation, and the Victorian Admiralty: Paper Navigators*. Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

Our second honourable mention for books published on a maritime theme in 2022 goes to Erika Behrisch's *Discovery, Innovation, and the Victorian Admiralty: Paper Navigators*. The book examines naval surveying, the Niger Expedition, the Admiralty's own manual of scientific enquiry, and the Admiralty's interactions with inventors and innovations. In each area we see Admiralty direction checked by the reality of the task, conditions that undercut performance, the challenge of balancing economy with the development of innovations, and frustrated naval officers and civilian inventors. The individual opinions held by Admiralty Board members, their small supporting workforce, and the volumes of mail, reports, and requests, on all matters from critical to insignificant paints a picture of an efficient system always on the verge of being overwhelmed. Yet surveys were done, flora and fauna collected, magnetic readings accumulated, and innovations applied. The system did grind slow for those looking for compensation, but Behrisch shows it still moved forward. The book is the result of prodigious research work in the archive and a precise cobbling together of multiple stories of the British Admiralty's dealings in the worlds of science, surveying, and innovation with Victorian naval and civilian inventors and explorers. Behrisch provides a far

more nuanced perspective on the Admiralty's willingness to engage new scientific ideas and inventions than has previously existed in the literature.

Keith Matthews Book Award winner:

Russel A. Potter, Regina Koellner, Peter Carney, & Mary Williamson, *May We Be Spared To Meet On Earth: Letters of the Lost Franklin Arctic Expedition*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022.

This is a collection of the letters written by the men who sailed in the *Erebus* and *Terror* into the Arctic in search of the Northwest Passage and perished. While a few letters are from the time when their authors first learned they were going on the expedition, most were written from their last stop in Britain, off the Orkney Islands, and finally, Disko Bay, Greenland, the last port of call from which letters were sent home. These are filled with the hope of success and promotion, thoughts of returning home at the end of a hard journey, insights into life aboard these ships, the social relationship and some of the early plant, insect, and sea life collected by the officers, the expedition's scientist, and crew. The last section contains the letters written by family and friends, including a large number by Lady Franklin, that were sent out with expeditions searching for the lost Franklin Expedition. They are filled with the hope of finding their loved ones alive, well, and headed safely home. They are full of pathos and the reality that the sender's life has gone on, notwithstanding the absence of a family member. They were returned after each attempted rescue expedition, unopened.

This is an exceptional collection of letters, offered complete, with exhaustive endnotes for most, explaining terms, expanding on the subject matter, adding details concerning the sender or receiver, and tying letters to others in this collection and/or other archives. The opening essay is an excellent synopsis of the present historiography of the Franklin Expedition and the numerous efforts to find them. It details the twists and turns in telling the story from the disappearance up to present day. Touching on historical and fictional accounts, the essay reminds the reader of the cultural impact the story of this misadventure has had. *May We Be Spared To Meet On Earth* is an essential source for future historians and other writers exploring the Franklin Expedition.

Keith Matthews Award for best article in *The Norther Mariner/Le marin du nord*, 2022 volume 32:

Honourable Mention:

Carolyn Kennedy, "Traveller Impressions of Lake Champlain Steamboats, 1827-1842." *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* 32.1 (Spring/Printemps 2022), 21-38. This article describes the experience of taking passage on the steamboats that sailed on Lake Champlain from the 1820 through the 1840s, during a time of rapid technical advancements and refinements in ship construction. Kennedy employs voyage descriptions by passengers which reveal the growing luxury on board steamboats and important renovations over time. These narratives of travel play a pivotal role in understanding the archeological record

contained in the sunken hulls of the vessels which Kennedy has explored. This is a well-told story based upon a strong methodology.

Keith Matthews Award:

The winner of the Keith Matthews Award for best article appearing in 2022 is David Murray's "The 46th Reconnaissance Squadron: Arctic exploration and Questions of Sovereignty in the Early Cold War." *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* 32.1 (Spring/ Printemps 2022), 39-70. The article explores one aspect of the Cold War activity of the Americans to respond to potential Soviet aggression in the high Arctic. This response necessitated American overflights of the Canadian Arctic region, and engagement in maritime aerial exploration. These flights involved the mapping of Arctic territory within Canadian borders by our ally, and the collecting of weather and magnetism data. America's perspective of acceptance of certain Canadian claims to Arctic islands yet opposition to Canadian sector claims reveals our major ally's ambivalence to our overall Arctic sovereignty claim.

This story reminds us that sovereignty over the Arctic is not guaranteed by our claimed borders. It is the ability to be present, in a significant way, that enables control over who has access—which is the real expression of sovereignty. Control over the Northwest Passage's maritime routes, the access to oil, natural gas, and metal deposits on and under the Arctic Ocean floor, and defence issues make Arctic sovereignty a critical issue for Canada. The article warns of the dangers of an unbalanced alliance, where one partner can launch reconnaissance over the other's territory without pre-authorized agreement, leaving the weaker partner having to spin a favourable reaction. The connection to contemporary issues is direct and valuable.

James Pritchard Student Article Prize: The best student penned article in the 2022 volume. \$300 prize to the author.

David Niddam-Dent, "The Best VR in the Whole Flaming Navy": The Life and Career of Lieutenant Commander Clifton R. 'Tony' Coughlin." *The Northern Mariner/ Le marin du nord* 32.2 (Summer/ Été 2022), 129-174. The article explores the naval career of Canadian Volunteer Reservist Lt. Com. Clifton Coughlin, one of the most successful officers in the RCNVR during the Second World War. The article involves a marvelous use of an extensive collection of personal correspondence between Coughlin and his wife Martha to provide a deeper understanding of life aboard ship, the group of officers who trained and worked together, and Coughlin's service biography. It provides a unique look at one reserve officer's leadership development and the impact of his growing sea experience. It is clear that Coughlin was well liked and deeply respected by his crew and fellow officers, and that his talents were recognized by his superiors. His death in 1944 and the fact that without this article his naval achievements would have disappeared from the record are both to be lamented. This is a useful addition to the literature of Canada's Second World War at sea, clearly establishing the reliance on reservists of varying backgrounds making, in Coughlin's case, a highly successful transition to naval life. Niddam-Dent is to be commended for bringing this story to life and rescuing from obscurity a remarkable figure.

The Jacques Cartier MA Prize: \$500 prize to the author.

This year's recipient of the Jacques Cartier MA Prize for a masters thesis or substantial work is Lieutenant-Commander Malcolm A. P. Butler (RCN retired), "A Plan In the Making: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Pacific Theatre." MA Thesis - Naval History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Portsmouth, UK, 2022. The thesis explores the necessity of planning for exceptional conditions both in terms of ship and machinery as well as personnel. Butler details the Canadian planning for sending naval ships and personnel to serve in the Pacific Theatre as the war in Europe draws to a close. He does a remarkable job at weaving together a variety of naval reports with the political dynamics between allies and the political pressure within the country to demonstrate Canada's efforts to gain equal footing with its allies in determining the use of its armed forces. Though only one ship arrived in theatre before the war's conclusion, the story behind the chain of activity leading to that deployment provides important insight into the planning process for special deployment.

In his thesis, Butler draws on a wide range of primary and secondary sources to gain insights into contemporary concerns and responses, as well as to connect to broader scholarly analysis. As a good masters thesis or substantial work does, this thesis broaches an overlooked area and generates further avenues for exploration, potentially leading to a doctoral dissertation. One example from the thesis is the call for volunteers to serve in the Pacific Theatre, a subject having a significant place in naval history and which could lead to comparisons with the call for volunteers from within the Canadian forces to participate in the Canadian contingent of the UN's forces in the Korean War.

**CFP: CNRS/NASOH/Brock conference 2024:
Inland Seas, Rivers, and Canals
Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario June 20-22, 2024**

With the conference held in the Niagara Peninsula, it is fitting that the overall theme for the event concerns the Great Lakes, rivers, and canals that allow the movement of ships from the ocean into the heart of the North American continent. The route has played a crucial role in exploration, transportation, trade, and war across both the region and time. Throughout Canada, rivers allowed the movement of raw materials from wood and wheat to iron ore and the goods they made, nationally and globally. The inland waterways were the sites of settlement for First Nations and later settlers, serving as the link to supplies, commerce, and invasion. Canals, for both defence and trade, were the giant engineering projects of their age, reshaping the land and communities through which they passed.

CNRS/NASOH invite people to submit proposals for papers at the 2024 conference on the topic of maritime history in relation to inland seas, rivers, and canals. Potential areas include but are not limited to exploration, ship building, canal construction, waterways and conflict, shipping in relation to a specific trade, harbours, the freshwater fishing industry, and more.

The conference conveners are also open to proposals on maritime-related subjects beyond the conference theme. Proposals that have an interdisciplinary approach are most welcomed.

Session and individual paper proposals should include:

- A) title
- B) abstract, not exceeding 500 words
- C) a 250-word biographical statement
- D) contact information, including phone number, address, affiliation, and email

Please submit this information as a single Word document, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and not as a PDF. Accommodations for PowerPoint presentations will be provided; any other requirements, including audio-visual equipment, special outlets, or accommodation for disabilities should be included in the proposal. Please note that all participants must register for the conference.

Panel proposals of no more than 3 papers are highly encouraged.

This conference will have hybrid capabilities for international presenters (not including the United States or Canada). If you are international and wish to present via zoom, please indicate this in your proposal. There will be additional opportunities to attend virtually as well.

The deadline for proposal submission is February 1, 2024. Please submit proposal packets electronically to the Program Committee care of Thomas Malcomson at CNRSNASOHBrock2024conference@gmail.com

Student travel grants

Students may apply for a Chad Smith Travel Grant to assist in travel to present a paper at the conference. Additionally, each year NASOH bestows the Clark G. Reynolds Student Paper Award to the author of the best graduate student paper delivered at the conference. Please see the awards section of the NASOH website for details: <https://nasoh.org/student-awards>. Students wishing to be considered for either award must indicate so as part of their paper proposal.

Canadian students are encouraged to apply for the CNRS's Gerry Panting Award for New Scholars to assist with expenses associated with traveling to the conference. Details for this award are available at https://www.cnrs-scrn.org/books_and_awards/panting_e.html.

Students cannot apply for both the Chad Smith and the Gerry Panting Award.

**Draft Minutes of the Council meeting
held at the Maritime History Archive,
Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's
using videoconferencing software, Friday, 18 August 2023**

Present: Michael Moir, President; Richard “Rich” Gimblett, Past President; Meaghan Walker, Councillor; Richard Goette, Secretary; Roger Sarty, Chair of the Editorial Board; CNRS members present: Christopher Willmes, Chris Bell, Chris Madsen, Wes Cross

Present Online: Tom Malcomson, First Vice President; Isabel Campbell, Second Vice President; Treasurer; Ian Yeates, Associate Treasurer; Faye Kert, Honourary Member; Walter Lewis, Jeff Noakes, Chris Perry, Winston “Kip” Scoville, Councillors; CNRS members present online: Harry Holman, Paul Adamthwaite, Malcolm Butler

Calling to Order

Michael Moir called the meeting to order at 1602 hrs.

Approval of Agenda

Motion that the agenda for the Annual General Meeting of 18 August 2023 be approved as amended.

Chris Madsen moved, Chris Willmes seconded. Carried.

Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 19 August 2022

Motion that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 19 August 2022 as distributed with the agenda be approved.

Chris Madsen moved, Wes Cross seconded. Carried.

President's report

Michael first thanked Meaghan for organizing a very interesting and stimulating conference, and for all of her wonderful hard work. He also commented favourably on how well the hybrid approach worked for the conference. Michael observed the positive production of the journal, noting the important effort to get it caught up to the yearly production schedule. It has been a difficult year for him personally due to service commitments for him at York U. He was hoping to have more progress on an endowed chair in maritime history. He has had preliminary conversations at York and also with Kimberly Monk at Brock University, noting in particular the advantages of the latter with its maritime archaeology program and location near the Welland Canal and Lake Ontario for the study of maritime history. He observed that this is the last year of his three-year term as president, noting that he has left the society in relatively good shape as he turns the presidency over to Tom Malcomson. He thanked Rich Gimblett for his advice, Chris Madsen for his council, all of his colleagues on Council for attending meetings and being active in the society—and also for Richard Goette for being secretary, Roger Sarty for being chair of the editorial board. He commented on the harmonious working of the Council.

Discussion:

Roger Sarty spoke highly of Michael's term as president, stating that he believes he is speaking for everyone. Rich Gimblett concurred, observing that Michael is leaving the organization stronger than when he began, noting in particular getting a new publisher and editor for the journal.

Motion by Paul Adamthwaite to thank Michael to thank him for all he has done for the CNRS. Rich Gimblett seconded. Carried.

Michael observed that his success is due to the good position his predecessor put him in and that he is confident in Tom's capabilities in taking over as president.

Treasurer's report

In Erollyn's absence, Ian Yeates spoke to the financial statements. In answer to the possible question if we have enough funds to produce six issues of the journal, he said yes. It will be a bit of a financial hit to get caught up but the society will still be in good shape and we will resume with four issues next year.

Discussion:

Paul Adamthwaite observed, similar to last year, that the society membership is not well advised on how the profits of the CNRS rise by \$5,000 every year. Referring to last year, he observed that the issue regarding membership has been mentioned but not addressed. The journal has been late, but the membership pays for four issues a year. We followed Erollyn's very correct financial statements—and he gave praise for Erollyn—but he believes that the CNRS executive would be advised to make the finances of the society more understandable. It is not a question of profit or loss or memberships lost or gained, but one of the number of printing bills per year. It is something he has mentioned constantly, but it is still not addressed. Do we cash membership renewals ahead of time to pay for the publishing of the journal? This will give us a better idea of where we sit financially. Ian Yeates addressed Paul's concerns and indicated that the issue was getting caught up with the publication of the journal. He suggested that a verbal/written explanation/narrative of the financial statement should be provided, and that he and Erollyn need to address that. Paul Adamthwaite thanked Ian for his comments. He is happy to hear the printing costs are going down, but reiterated that a financial statement to the society membership should explain to the members that some memberships, including NASOH members, have paid memberships for future issues and that they are not a profit, but a liability. Chris Madsen observed that 2021 was a catch-up year, which explains the deficit. Even with the potential for seven issues, NASOH is paying 55% of that cost (i.e., in American funds) according to the numbers in the financial statements. Rich Gimblett also noted that the monetary awards for awards that are not given out also adds to the extra funds. Paul Adamthwaite indicated he was having difficulty understanding who is speaking, despite Michael's efforts to verbally identify the speaker.

Motion by Ian Yeates that the financial statements for the period ending 31 December 2022 be accepted. Tom Malcomson seconded. Carried.

Membership report

In Sam's absence, Michael reported that membership has been stable, though we have lost one institutional member. There is always a desire to recruit more members, notably younger and early career researchers.

Michael turned to the motion in the agenda package.

It is moved by Thomas Malcomson, seconded by Richard Gimblett that the Society adopt the following membership categories and annual rates effective 1 January 2024:

Individual – Canadian	\$80.00
Individual – International	\$95.00
Institutional – Canadian	\$95.00
Institutional – International	\$110.00
Digital	\$40.00
Student	\$25.00
NASOH (Dual Membership)	\$35.00

Discussion:

Michael explained the NASOH membership: where CNRS members can provide \$35 for a NASOH membership and get a discounted rate to attend the NASOH conference. If you join from the CNRS, you get TNM but not the NASOH membership, and vice-versa.

Motion carried.

Publications reports

Roger Sarty noted that Peter and Faye have been working hard on *TNM* to get caught up and we are getting close. Pete has some heavy work commitments, and Roger has told him to not work himself too hard. Roger, Peter, and Rich have discussed that we will have a special issue of *TNM* dedicated to proceedings for this year's 2023 conference in St. John's. We have done this in the past. It is a great way to bring in material without a lot of editorial work.

Roger noted that the following will be reappointed to the editorial board:

1. Olaf Janzen and Roger Sarty reappointed to the Editorial Board for three-year terms as representatives of the Canadian Nautical Research Society;
2. Alicia Caporaso and Ingo Heidbrink reappointed for three-year terms as representatives of the North American Society for Oceanic History;
3. Andrew Cook be reappointed for a three-year term as a representative of the maritime historical community outside North America; and
4. Roger Sarty be reappointed as Chair and Richard Gimblett reappointed as Vice-chair for 2023-2024.

Discussion:

Michael thanked Erika for her role as *Argo* editor. He noted that she has now stepped away as editor and we are working on finding a replacement. He also thanked Paul Adamthwaite

for his work with the website to provide information for members. Sam MacLean will move from membership secretary to communications as a Council member.

Nominating Committee report

Rich Gimblett noted that this is a significant year in that there are major changes but no new members on Council after asking for nominations in *Argo*.

Motion that the slate of candidates recommended by the Nominating Committee be elected as officers and councilors at large of the Society for 2023-2024:

President	Thomas Malcomson
First VP	Isabel Campbell
Second VP	Richard Goette
Secretary	Michael Moir
Treasurer	Errolyn Humphreys
Associate Treasurer	Ian Yeates
Membership Secretary	Winston Scoville
Councillor (Communications)	Sam Mclean
Councillor	Ambjörn Adomeit
Councillor	Walter Lewis
Councillor	Sebastien Harper
Councillor	Jeff Noakes
Councillor	Christopher Perry
Councillor	Margaret Schotte
Councillor	Meaghan Walker
Past President	Michael Moir

There were no nominations from the floor.

Rich Gimblett moved, Chris Willmes seconded. Carried.

Tom took over chairing the AGM as the new President.

Future conferences

Tom noted that we have been working well with Kimberly Monk for the 2024 conference to be at Brock University, which will be a joint conference with NASOH. The NASOH members are excited about a conference in the Niagara Peninsula. Dates will be 20-22 June 2024. There will be a CFP in early November, after a Zoom meeting of conference committee members (Tom, Richard, Ambjörn, Sam, and Kimberly). We are still waiting for names from NASOH on who will be coordinating with us.

Richard Goette noted that for 2025, there is an interest in having the meeting in Port Hope at the local library and that it would also be hybrid. Rich Gimblett and Walter Lewis will do a preliminary reconnaissance, especially regarding the IT facilities.

Tom noted that for 2026, we are looking into the possibility of having a conference in Western Canada. Chris Madsen mentioned that it could be in North Vancouver. Chris Perry also suggested Campbell River.

Awards

Tom Malcomson made the following CNRS awards announcements for 2023:

Keith Matthews Book Award for the book published in 2022:

Honourable Mentions:

Robert G. Allan, with Peter A. Robson, *Workboats for the World: The Robert Allan Story*. Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2022.

The story of a naval architectural firm established by a Scottish immigrant to Canada, with training in naval architecture and made successful worldwide by himself, his son, and grandson, receives an honourable mention. The book is Robert G. Allan's, with Peter A. Robson, *Workboats for the World: The Robert Allan Story*. This book chronicles Robert Allan's establishment of the family firm in 1927, through the leadership of son Robert Jr. and finally the grandson Robert Gordon. The company's origin and growth are described, as is its current global presence. A sharp, precise writing on each of the fifteen different types of working craft—from fishing boats, costal craft through to fireboats, research vessels and tugboats—makes for solid overviews of each craft design and their subtle variations. The technical detail and line drawings add to the depth of the descriptions. Allan and Robson situate the naval architectural firm's technical innovations within the broader research on ship design and building. The book has an outstanding aesthetic appeal due to the high quality of production, from its paper stock to the numerous coloured photographs and ship drawings. This large format volume is a valuable resource for those interested in workboats, the evolution of a naval architect firm, and the development of workarounds in ship and machinery to meet difficult contexts. More company histories are needed, and Allan and Robson have provided a good model to follow to produce such stories.

Erika Behrisch, *Discovery, Innovation, and the Victorian Admiralty: Paper Navigators*. Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

Our second honourable mention for books published on a maritime theme in 2022 goes to Erika Behrisch's *Discovery, Innovation, and the Victorian Admiralty: Paper Navigators*. The book examines naval surveying, the Niger Expedition, the Admiralty's own manual of scientific enquiry, and the Admiralty's interactions with inventors and innovations. In each area we see Admiralty direction checked by the reality of the task, conditions that undercut performance, the challenge of balancing economy with the development of innovations, and frustrated naval officers and civilian inventors. The individual opinions held by Admiralty Board members, their small supporting workforce, and the volumes of mail, reports, and requests, on all matters from critical to insignificant paints a picture of an efficient system always on the verge of being overwhelmed. Yet surveys were done, flora and fauna collected, magnetic readings accumulated, and innovations applied. The system did grind slow for those looking for compensation, but Behrisch shows it still moved forward. The book

is the result of prodigious research work in the archive and a precise cobbling together of multiple stories of the British Admiralty's dealings in the worlds of science, surveying, and innovation with Victorian naval and civilian inventors and explorers. Behrisch provides a far more nuanced perspective on the Admiralty's willingness to engage new scientific ideas and inventions than has previously existed in the literature.

Keith Matthews Book Award winner:

Russel A. Potter, Regina Koellner, Peter Carney, & Mary Williamson, *May We Be Spared To Meet On Earth: Letters of the Lost Franklin Arctic Expedition*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022.

This is a collection of the letters written by the men who sailed in the *Erebus* and *Terror* into the Arctic in search of the Northwest Passage and perished. While a few letters are from the time when their authors first learned they were going on the expedition, most were written from their last stop in Britain, off the Orkney Islands, and finally, Disko Bay, Greenland, the last port of call from which letters were sent home. These are filled with the hope of success and promotion, thoughts of returning home at the end of a hard journey, insights into life aboard these ships, the social relationship and some of the early plant, insect, and sea life collected by the officers, the expedition's scientist, and crew. The last section contains the letters written by family and friends, including a large number by Lady Franklin, that were sent out with expeditions searching for the lost Franklin Expedition. They are filled with the hope of finding their loved ones alive, well, and headed safely home. They are full of pathos and the reality that the sender's life has gone on, notwithstanding the absence of a family member. They were returned after each attempted rescue expedition, unopened.

This is an exceptional collection of letters, offered complete, with exhaustive endnotes for most, explaining terms, expanding on the subject matter, adding details concerning the sender or receiver, and tying letters to others in this collection and/or other archives. The opening essay is an excellent synopsis of the present historiography of the Franklin Expedition and the numerous efforts to find them. It details the twists and turns in telling the story from the disappearance up to present day. Touching on historical and fictional accounts, the essay reminds the reader of the cultural impact the story of this misadventure has had. *May We Be Spared To Meet On Earth* is an essential source for future historians and other writers exploring the Franklin Expedition.

Keith Matthews Award for best article in *The Norther Mariner/Le marin du nord*, 2022 volume 32:

Honourable Mention:

Carolyn Kennedy, "Traveller Impressions of Lake Champlain Steamboats, 1827-1842." *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* 32.1 (Spring/Printemps 2022), 21-38. This article describes the experience of taking passage on the steamboats that sailed on Lake Champlain from the 1820 through the 1840s, during a time of rapid technical advancements and refinements in ship construction. Kennedy employs voyage descriptions by passengers

which reveal the growing luxury on board steamboats and important renovations over time. These narratives of travel play a pivotal role in understanding the archeological record contained in the sunken hulls of the vessels which Kennedy has explored. This is a well-told story based upon a strong methodology.

Keith Matthews Award:

The winner of the Keith Matthews Award for best article appearing in 2022 is David Murray's "The 46th Reconnaissance Squadron: Arctic exploration and Questions of Sovereignty in the Early Cold War." *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* 32.1 (Spring/ Printemps 2022), 39-70. The article explores one aspect of the Cold War activity of the Americans to respond to potential Soviet aggression in the high Arctic. This response necessitated American overflights of the Canadian Arctic region, and engagement in maritime aerial exploration. These flights involved the mapping of Arctic territory within Canadian borders by our ally, and the collecting of weather and magnetism data. America's perspective of acceptance of certain Canadian claims to Arctic islands yet opposition to Canadian sector claims reveals our major ally's ambivalence to our overall Arctic sovereignty claim.

This story reminds us that sovereignty over the Arctic is not guaranteed by our claimed borders. It is the ability to be present, in a significant way, that enables control over who has access—which is the real expression of sovereignty. Control over the Northwest Passage's maritime routes, the access to oil, natural gas, and metal deposits on and under the Arctic Ocean floor, and defence issues make Arctic sovereignty a critical issue for Canada. The article warns of the dangers of an unbalanced alliance, where one partner can launch reconnaissance over the other's territory without pre-authorized agreement, leaving the weaker partner having to spin a favourable reaction. The connection to contemporary issues is direct and valuable.

James Pritchard Student Article Prize: The best student penned article in the 2022 volume. \$300 prize to the author.

David Niddam-Dent, "The Best VR in the Whole Flaming Navy": The Life and Career of Lieutenant Commander Clifton R. 'Tony' Coughlin." *The Northern Mariner/ Le marin du nord* 32.2 (Summer/ Été 2022), 129-174. The article explores the naval career of Canadian Volunteer Reservist Lt. Com. Clifton Coughlin, one of the most successful officers in the RCNVR during the Second World War. The article involves a marvelous use of an extensive collection of personal correspondence between Coughlin and his wife Martha to provide a deeper understanding of life aboard ship, the group of officers who trained and worked together, and Coughlin's service biography. It provides a unique look at one reserve officer's leadership development and the impact of his growing sea experience. It is clear that Coughlin was well liked and deeply respected by his crew and fellow officers, and that his talents were recognized by his superiors. His death in 1944 and the fact that without this article his naval achievements would have disappeared from the record are both to be lamented. This is a useful addition to the literature of Canada's Second World War at sea, clearly establishing the reliance on reservists of varying backgrounds making, in Coughlin's

case, a highly successful transition to naval life. Niddam-Dent is to be commended for bringing this story to life and rescuing from obscurity a remarkable figure.

The Jacques Cartier MA Prize: \$500 prize to the author.

This year's recipient of the Jacques Cartier MA Prize for a masters thesis or substantial work is Lieutenant-Commander Malcolm A. P. Butler (RCN retired), "A Plan In the Making: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Pacific Theatre." MA Thesis - Naval History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Portsmouth, UK, 2022. The thesis explores the necessity of planning for exceptional conditions both in terms of ship and machinery as well as personnel. Butler details the Canadian planning for sending naval ships and personnel to serve in the Pacific Theatre as the war in Europe draws to a close. He does a remarkable job at weaving together a variety of naval reports with the political dynamics between allies and the political pressure within the country to demonstrate Canada's efforts to gain equal footing with its allies in determining the use of its armed forces. Though only one ship arrived in theatre before the war's conclusion, the story behind the chain of activity leading to that deployment provides important insight into the planning process for special deployment.

In his thesis, Butler draws on a wide range of primary and secondary sources to gain insights into contemporary concerns and responses, as well as to connect to broader scholarly analysis. As a good masters thesis or substantial work does, this thesis broaches an overlooked area and generates further avenues for exploration, potentially leading to a doctoral dissertation. One example from the thesis is the call for volunteers to serve in the Pacific Theatre, a subject having a significant place in naval history and which could lead to comparisons with the call for volunteers from within the Canadian forces to participate in the Canadian contingent of the UN's forces in the Korean War.

Other business

Roger noted that since Tom as taking over as President, Tom has to give up his position as chair of the awards committee. Roger lauded him for his excellent work and the work of Ian in assisting him.

Paul Adamthwaite mentioned that he is concerned about the philosophical future of the CNRS. For many years, the main asset of the society is *TNM*. We have gone through a number of editors throughout the years and Peter is doing a grand job. However, he read in the last editorial (32, 4) that we want to publish gender, indigenous, economic, and other similar topics. He respects women's rights but feels that ships should still be referred to as "she" as has been in practice for hundreds of years. There are social tendencies to values that are changing. These changes are good for some parts of the world but are also divergent from heritage, historical, old-fashioned values. He would like to suggest to the CNRS review where we can compare history, which is one of the interests of the society, with writing about history and what we want to leave as a legacy with the *TNM*. The legacy should be that we respect good, proper research, and we have done it in a matter that reflects everybody's opinion but does not get artificially biased towards some sort of minority

opinion about whether a ship is a “she” or is an “it.” It is problematic with him. Paul wanted to bring this to the attention of the members during the AGM. He is not trying to be offensive in doing so. Are we a nautical research society or just spreading our wings and going out to the general public and publishing based on something on Facebook to get a number of hits? Roger noted that Paul and he discussed this in detail. Roger noted that he is confused because he and Paul had agreed that this was an issue of the editorial board and not one for the AGM. He reassured Paul that the editorial board is discussing the issue. Tom agreed and said he has complete faith in the editorial board. He thinks we have one of the best, if not the best, nautical journals. He likes the broadening of the topics and thinks it is a positive development. Chris Madsen is not a member of the editorial board, but as a general CNRS member he is open to anyone submitting anything so long as it adheres to the editorial board’s remit. If something has a maritime flavour, it should be considered. He is positive of how the society has advanced in recent years. Paul Adamthwaite mentioned that there are some articles he likes and some he does not like. He mentioned that this is a nautical research society, not a gender research society.

Tom thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the AGM.

Adjourned 1728 hrs.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Goette
Secretary

Attachments:

Draft minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 19 August 2022

CNRS Comparative Balance Sheet and Income Statement as at 31 December 2022

Notice of Motion to Revise Membership Categories and Rates

Argonauta guidelines for prospective authors

Argonauta aims to publish articles of interest to the wider community of maritime research enthusiasts. We are open to considering articles of any length and style, including research articles that fall outside the boundaries of conventional academic publishing (in terms of length or subject-matter), memoirs, humour, reviews of exhibits, descriptions of new archival acquisitions, and outstanding student papers. We also publish debates and discussions about changes in maritime history and its future. We encourage submissions in French and assure our authors that all French submissions will be edited for style by a well-qualified Francophone. Articles accepted for publication should be easily understood by interested non-experts.

For those producing specialized, original academic work, we direct your attention to *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord*, a peer-reviewed journal appropriate for longer, in-depth analytical works also managed by the Canadian Nautical Research Society.

Except with proper names or in quotations, we follow standard Canadian spelling. Thus, the Canadian Department of Defence and the American Department of Defense may both be correct in context.

For ship names, only the first letter of the names of Royal Canadian Navy ships and submarines is capitalized, and the name appears in italics. For example:

Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Protecteur*

Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Preserver*

Class of ship/submarine: *Victoria*-class submarines (not VICTORIA Class submarines)

Former HMCS *Fraser* rather than Ex-*Fraser*

Foreign ships and submarines:

USS *Enterprise*

HMS *Victory*

HMAS *Canberra 3*

Following current industry standard, ships are considered gender neutral.

Although *Argonauta* is not formally peer-reviewed, the editors carefully review and edit each and every article. Authors must be receptive to working with the editors on any revisions they deem necessary before publication; the editors reserve the right to make small formatting, stylistic, and grammatical changes as they see fit once articles are accepted for publication.

Articles should conform to the following structural guidelines:

All submissions should be in Word format, utilizing Arial 12 pt. Please use endnotes rather than footnotes. All endnotes should be numbered from 1 consecutively to the highest or last number, without any repeating of numbers. We strongly encourage the use of online links to relevant websites and the inclusion of bibliographies to assist the younger generation of

emerging scholars.

Each image must be accompanied by a caption describing it and crediting the source, and indicating where the original is held. Images will not be reproduced without this information. Authors are responsible to ensure that they have copyright permission for any images, artwork, or other protected materials they utilize. We ask that every author submit a written statement to that effect. Please indicate clearly where in the text each image should go. All authors are also responsible to ensure that they are familiar with plagiarism and that they properly credit all sources they use. *Argonauta* recommends that authors consult the Royal Military College of Canada's website on academic integrity and ethical standards at this link: <https://www.rmcc-cmrc.ca/en/registrars-office/academic-regulations#ai>

We encourage our authors to acknowledge all assistance provided to them, including thanking librarians, archivists, and colleagues if relevant sources, advice, or help were provided. Editors are not responsible for monitoring these matters.

With each submission, please include a brief (5-7 sentence maximum) biography.



The Canadian Nautical Research Society

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<http://www.cnrs-scrn.org>

CNRS membership supports the multi-disciplinary study of maritime, marine and naval subjects in and about Canada. Members receive:

- **The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord**, a quarterly refereed open access journal dedicated to publishing research and writing about all aspects of maritime history of the northern hemisphere. It publishes book reviews, articles and research notes on merchant shipping, navies, maritime labour, marine archaeology, maritime societies, and the like.
- **Argonauta**, an online CNRS membership quarterly that publishes articles, opinions, and news and information about maritime history, fellow members, and the Society.
- An Annual General Meeting and Conference located in maritime-minded locations, where possible with our US colleagues in the North American Society for Oceanic History (NASOH).
- Affiliation with the International Commission of Maritime History (ICMH).

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