

ARGONAUTA

The Newsletter of



**The Canadian Nautical
Research Society**

Volume XVI, Number One
January 1999

Argonauta

Founded 1984 by Kenneth S. Mackenzie
ISSN No. 0843-8544

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ARGONAUTA is published four times per year in January, April, July and October.

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Annual Membership including four issues of *ARGONAUTA* and four issues of *The Northern Mariner*: Individuals, \$35; Institutions, \$60; Students, \$25.

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Editorial

Midwinter is a good time to be planning summer delights. The site of the 1999 CNRS conference at Cornerbrook and points as far north as Labrador this August will provide food for the intellect, some adventure and colleagues to remember - and a "short sea" crossing. The response from an international roster of speakers has been what we would all want it to be - rich in content. There is extensive information posted on the CNRS web site at www.mun.ca/mph/cnrs.htm. If you need information via another medium then contact ye editor.

In this issue of Argonauta Trevor Kenchington, at his provocative best challenges some assumptions about the landfall of John Cabot and

David J. McDougall is back with his fascinating account of the Canadian Customs Preventive Service on the Lower St. Lawrence and the Baie des Chaleurs. Bill Glover is making what we hope will be a feature in these pages, an appreciation of the plenty of Canadian maritime resources. Finally I encourage you to contact the editors. Let us know what you are doing in matters marine or what is happening locally. You have a choice of letter, fax, phone or e mail.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Canadian Nautical Research Society invites nominations for the following positions:

President
First Vice-President
Second Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Councillors (4)

Nominations must be made in writing by two members in good standing of the society (this means individuals or institutions that have paid 1999 dues and have no arrears.) Members may nominate themselves. The individual(s) nominated must also indicate in writing a willingness to serve if elected. All terms of office are for one year.

The positions of President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President will have to be filled at the forthcoming Annual Meeting, since the occupants have all served three consecutive one-year terms in those offices and cannot be re-elected under the by-laws of the Society.

Nominations must be received by the Chair of the Nominating Committee no later than 16 April 1999. Members will receive ballots by mail following the close of nominations if a vote is required.

Please direct nominations and requests for additional information to:

Dr. Faye Kert
Chair, CNRS Nominating
Committee
200 Fifth Avenue
Ottawa, ON
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Fax: (613) 954-6653

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE 1999 CONFERENCE

Preparations for the 1999 Conference, "Merchants and Mariners in Northern Seas," are well in hand. There have been over sixty proposals, including some sessions.

The Local Arrangements Committee are also organizing an opening reception, a Friday banquet, blocks of rooms at local hotels, the excursion bus, hotels, and some meals. Space on the field trip is limited, so that it is imperative that persons wishing to participate indicate their firm intention to do so before 1 April 1999.

Conference Registration fee: \$100 (all prices are in Canadian dollars) This includes the reception on Sunday, 8 August and the banquet on Friday, Field Trip to Red Bay & L'Anse aux Meadows: Participants will visit these two sites of considerable importance and interest to maritime historians. The trip by bus begins early Tuesday morning, heads up the Northern Peninsula in time to catch the ferry to Labrador at noon. It will then proceed to Red Bay before returning to the Northern Lights Motel for the night. A special Labrador dinner will be served at the motel that evening. Very early the next morning, the bus will catch the return ferry to Newfoundland and proceed further north to L'Anse aux Meadows, then on to St. Anthony and the Grenfell Interpretation Centre. A "Viking Feast" will be served in St. Anthony before heading

for the hotel. The next day, participants will return to Corner Brook. The field Trip will cost \$300/person or \$550/couple

MEMBER NEWS

Bill Schleichauf's article *A Concentrated Effort: Royal Navy Gunnery Exercises at the End of the Great War*, an overview of RN practice shoots and 'concentration fire' appeared in the #2 1998 issue of *Warship International*. He is currently working on a follow-on piece, describing a miscellany of gunnery topics.

Victor Suthren has been named as Canadian Representative, HM Bark Endeavour Foundation of Australia. He will sail as Historian/Lecturer and crewman in *Endeavour* replica on Vancouver-Hawaii voyage, October, 1999.

Victor has been named as Event Designer by Halifax Regional Municipality for 'Founding Of Halifax 1749-1999' commemorations in June, 1999. Replica frigate *Rose* and longboats will land troops, settlers, and actor portraying the Honourable Edward Cornwallis.

In addition he has been named Curator for international exhibition opening in 2001 at David M Stewart Museum, Montreal, entitled 'The Discovery Of Paradise: Cook and Bougainville In The Pacific'.

You can reach Victor Suthren at suthren@magma.ca.

FELLOWSHIP IN GREAT LAKES POLICY HISTORY

The Department of History and the Historical Collections of the Great Lakes at Bowling Green State University announce the availability of the Interlake Fellowship in Great Lakes Policy History. The Fellow will pursue research on an M.A. thesis on Great Lakes Policy History, broadly defined, using the collections of the HCGL as one of their main sources. Suitable areas of research include maritime history, transportation studies, Canadian-American relations, business history, economic history, social history, and environmental history of the Great Lakes region after 1840. The Fellowship term is two academic years and carries a stipend of \$7,100 per academic year and a waiver of all tuition and fees. Applicants should have an undergraduate degree in history with work in U.S. or Canadian history and an interest in Great Lakes policy history. Archives experience a plus, although not necessary.

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1st PASSAGE OF THE KINGSTON DRYDOCK

After months of preparation and many hours of volunteer

labour the 110 year old drydock was moved across Kingston harbour to the Metalcraft Marine shipyard. One calm day spliced between two days of westerly blows off Lake Ontario in mid December brought a team of engineers, tug boats, two cranes and a 'laid on' bridge operator together as part of a energetic team that made a 'hurry up and wait' dash across the harbour. The gate is now safe for the winter, poised to be drydocked for repairs in the spring. More information on this project can be found at www.marmus.ca.

MILLENIUM PROJECTS

Replica Steamship

The Muskoka Steamship & Historical Society is developing plans to build a new ship for use on the Muskoka Lakes in conjunction with the historic vessels R.M.S. *Segwun* and the Eaton's *Wanda III* now owned by the Society. *Segwun* now operates at full capacity from June to October and puts in a longer day (up to 11 hours/day) than she did in her historic heydays. Concerns over the stress and strains of this workload have arisen over the past few years and led to the acceptance of *Wanda III* donation and a \$700,000 restoration.

Plans are now in the works for a replica steamship style ship which would work as a sister ship to *Segwun*. At a cost of approximately \$2 million it is an ambitious project, but so

was the restoration of *Segwun* which was completed at a cost of \$1.2 million over 18 years ago. This new ship will be called *Wenonah II* (meaning first born daughter in Ojibwa). More information about the progress of this project will be posted as it develops.

Please contact: Kathleen Christensen, Curator, Muskoka Steamship & Historical Society. smchin@muskoka.net

A Museum Exhibit Based On The Voyages Of The Vikings

A Federal Millennium Grant awarded to the Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, Newfoundland. \$252,000.00

A museum exhibit will be created based on the voyages of the Vikings to the New World and their settlement of L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland around 1000 AD. It will also tell the story of the indigenous people of Newfoundland and Labrador during the same period, and highlight the meeting of the Vikings and the aboriginal people as a uniquely significant point in human history. The exhibit will help contribute to a broader understanding of cultural interactions of the past and present, and encourage people to visit and learn more about L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site as the only authenticated Viking site in North America. In the summer of 2000, the exhibit will be part of the province's

"Viking Millennium" celebrations.

Tall Ships To The Shores Of Nova Scotia

Federal Millennium Grant awarded to Tall Ships Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia, \$1,000,000.00

In July 2000, Canada will welcome back the tall ships to the shores of Nova Scotia as Halifax becomes the Official Canadian Race Port for the Tall Ships 2000 series. The stop in Halifax will be part of a four-month voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, featuring almost 150 world-class tall ships from around the globe. Halifax was designated the Official Canadian Race Port by the International Sail Training Association (ISTA), which is the key organizing body of Tall Ships 2000 along with participating ports. The appointment recognizes Halifax as a world-class destination, and as one of the many ports that has pioneered the sport of Tall Ships racing. It is expected that Tall Ships 2000 will produce the largest ever international fleet of sail training ships. These vessels, crewed by young people, will circumnavigate the Atlantic clockwise. The voyage, beginning in the spring of the year 2000, will include a series of individual races and will create the opportunity for thousands of youngsters from all over the world to meet together and share in the greatest event of the millennium.

HMS Detroit

Federal Millennium Grant awarded to H.M.S. Detroit, Amherstburg, Ontario. \$700,000.00

A full sized sailing replica of the H.M.S. *Detroit*, an important historic vessel for Canada in the late 18th and 19th centuries will be built at the King's Navy Yard in Amherstburg, Ontario. People of all ages are helping to recreate this remarkable Tall Ship which, when completed, will offer Canadians and visitors the opportunity to learn the significance of the role she played in Canadian history. HMS *Detroit's* millennium legacy will be to provide a unique and dynamic learning environment for many educational and community focussed programs.

St. Roch will be recreated

Federal Millennium Grant awarded to the Vancouver Maritime Museum, Vancouver, British Columbia. \$250,000.00

This to celebrate the history of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Two famous voyages of the RCMP schooner St. Roch will be recreated - the first-ever Northwest Passage voyage of 1940-1942, starting in Vancouver on July 1, 2000, with ports of call in northern British Columbia, the Arctic, Halifax, Montreal and Toronto; and the 1950 circumnavigation of North America, with ports of call on the eastern and western seaboard of the United States and possible

stops in Cuba, Panama, and Mexico.

**GERALD E. PANTING
(1927-1998)**

Former CNRS President Gerald Panting passed away at St. Clare's Hospital in St. John's, Newfoundland, on December 3 after a long battle with cancer. Gerry, a long-time history professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland who served as the Society's second President, was 71. He leaves to mourn his wife Margaret and his five children, Geoff, Dave, Chris, Sean and Joanne, and a host of friends and admirers.

A Manitoba native, Gerry came to Memorial in 1959 to teach Canadian history, and aside from a few years off to pursue graduate studies at the University of Toronto, he remained at Memorial until his retirement in 1995. He was active in the community and in provincial politics, even serving for a period as the Leader of the provincial New Democratic Party. But aside from his family, it was the university which occupied the bulk of his time. Gerry served in a variety of administrative capacities at Memorial, including a ten-year stint as Head of the Department of History. During his years as Head the Department made especially rapid strides in two areas: the teaching of the history of Newfoundland and establishing the groundwork

for a centre of excellence in maritime history.

Along with his late colleagues, Keith Matthews and David Alexander, Gerry was a founding member of the Maritime History Group (MHG). Initially, the MHG was especially interested in creating an archive that focussed on Newfoundland and the North Atlantic. Its most important acquisition came in the early 1970s when Gerry and Keith concluded negotiations with the British Public Record Office to have about seventy percent of the British Empire "Agreements and Accounts of Crew" transferred to Memorial. This agreement not only saved some of the most valuable records on the history of merchant shipping since 1860 but also led directly to a successful application to the then-Canada Council to create the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project (ACSP) in 1976. Over the next seven years the ACSP, with Gerry as a principal investigator, played a major role in transforming the study of merchant shipping and shipbuilding in this country. The research also spawned *Maritime Capital: The Shipping Industry in Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914*, a book that Gerry wrote with Eric Sager. This book, which was published by McGill-Queen's University Press in 1990, remains the definitive history of eastern Canadian shipping. It was honoured with a host of awards, including this Society's

Keith Matthews Book Prize. Gerry also served as Chair of the MHG from 1984 until 1986 and later as an active member of its successor, the Maritime Studies Research Unit.

Gerry's contribution was not limited to his scholarly activities. He was a founding member of the Canadian Society for the Promotion of Nautical Research, the rather unwieldy name that was later shortened to CNRS. When his colleague Keith Matthews passed away in May 1984, Gerry assumed the Presidency, guided the Society through its crucial formative years and, with Alec Douglas, CNRS' first Secretary, was chiefly responsible for drafting its by-laws. Along with Ken Mackenzie, he pushed hard for a newsletter, and his confidence that Society was ready for such a publication was vindicated when the first issue of *The Canadian* (later *Argonauta*) appeared in September 1984. After stepping down from the Society's top post, Gerry continued to serve on Council, where his experience was invaluable in guiding CNRS over a series of perilous shoals.

He also showed his willingness to shoulder new burdens when he was elected in 1984 by his international colleagues to a seat on the Executive Council of the International Commission for Maritime History. While he represented Canadian interests well, his voice was never parochial. Because his vision was so

broad, he was elected to the Organizing Committee for ICMH's 1990 Congress in Madrid, which arguably was the most well-planned meeting this organization has yet held. He remained on ICMH Council until 1995.

Gerry's international contributions also included a seminal role in the creation of the International Maritime Economic History Association (IMEHA), the group that publishes the *International Journal of Maritime History* (IJMH) and *Research in Maritime History*. Gerry was present at the meeting in Berne, Switzerland, at which the Maritime Economic History Group, the predecessor of the IMEHA, was founded, and he played such a decisive role in shaping the organization that when the IMEHA elected its first executive, Gerry was chosen by acclamation as Secretary-Treasurer. Predictably, he also was the driving force in writing the Association's Constitution and played a major role in the creation of the IJMH, which began publication in 1989. Indeed, he was the Secretary of the Editorial Board from 1989 until 1992.

But as cosmopolitan as he was, Gerry always remained a Canadian first. It was this perspective which led him in 1989 to answer the call once again from CNRS to be become co-editor of *Argonauta*. Building on the superb foundation created by Ken Mackenzie, Gerry helped

to guide its expansion into a world-class publication. And when the time was right, Gerry assisted in securing approval for the founding of *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord*. He served as co-editor with Olaf Janzen and me from 1991 to 1993, and then was Honorary Editor until his death. During this time he remained as generous as ever with advice and helpful suggestions.

In 1993, his friends and colleagues presented him with a special issue of *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord* on the occasion of his formal requirement from Memorial. At that time I was asked to write a personal tribute that placed Gerry's contribution into some sort of context. Among other things, I wrote that he "deserved the ultimate credit for...the success of maritime history in this country." If anything, I am more certain today than I was then that this judgement was correct. I also wrote that he was "a national treasure" whose "counsel was indispensable." As a friend and colleague of Gerry's for almost a quarter century, I am saddened that his voice has been silenced. He will be missed by all of us. Yet as a maritime historian who, like the rest of the CNRS membership, has benefited so much from his magnificent accomplishments, I am grateful for what he has done for our field and for having had the opportunity to know him as a decent man and an important scholar.

Lewis R. Fischer
St. John's, Newfoundland

HELGE W. NORDVIK
(1943-1998)

Professor Helge W. Nordvik, a long-time member of CNRS, a two-term member of the ICMH Executive Council and an officer of the Norwegian Commission for Maritime History, passed away on Sunday, October 18, 1998, in Oslo. At his death, Helge was Professor of Economic History at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH). He leaves to mourn his wife, Brit; daughter, Hilde Karin; and numerous close friends.

After studying at the University of Oslo, the NHH, and the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, Helge accepted in 1969 at the University of Bergen. In 1986 he returned to his spiritual home, the NHH. Aside from a two-year hiatus during which he taught at the Norwegian School of Management, Helge remained at the NHH until his death.

Helge's scholarly writings reflected the breadth of his vision, spanning topics such as banking, economic history, and business studies. But maritime history was his first love. Both alone and with a series of collaborators, he produced some of the finest maritime economic history of the last

two decades. And because of his ability to function in a number of languages, his writings are among the most international in the field. This international orientation was also shown by his membership in CNRS. He placed great value on our Society, presenting papers to annual conferences on four occasions and attending meetings in Canada whenever he could.

Helge served on the ICMH Council for ten years and seldom missed a meeting. For the past three years he was a member of the Organizing Committee for the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Oslo and was the principal local organizer of the ICMH session scheduled to be held during the Congress.

Since 1986 Helge has been especially involved with the International Maritime Economic History Association (IMEHA), an important affiliate of ICMH. He was a member of that organization's initial governing body and co-editor of its newsletter, which began publishing in 1986 and which tied together more than 800 maritime historians around the globe. When the newsletter grew into the International Journal of Maritime History in 1989, Helge was a founding co-editor. He remained an editor of the IJMHS up until his death.

With his many activities and wealth of contacts, Helge was to many the symbol of maritime history in

Scandinavia. He was the personification of what a scholar ought to be: learned, generous with advice and always willing to lend a hand where needed. His death was a devastating loss to maritime history. But his legacy, which maritime historians will be able to see virtually everywhere they look, will always remind us of how fortunate we were to have known him.

Lewis R. Fischer
St. John's, Newfoundland

STURTON MATHWIN
"SAM" DAVIS

He was known to many as Sam and probably to most as Admiral Davis, C.D., M.Eng., MA, M.Ed., Ph.D. Rear Admiral (Retired) and Adjunct Professor at Queen's University. His was a formidable presence when he chose but underneath there was a deep understanding of the human condition and nearly always a twinkle in his eye. There was no patience for cant but a great deal of patience for those who worked hard. He was deeply committed to intellectual endeavour and to the CNRS with papers published in the Northern Mariner.

He was born in Birkenhead, England, April 18, 1919 and died in Kingston, Ontario, October 28, 1998. A member of the Royal Corps of Naval Constructors during World War II. After the war he was

recruited by Bill German to work for German & Lambert a firm of naval architects based in Montreal. A graduate of the Royal naval college Greenwich, and the Universities of Liverpool, Carleton, Queen's and the Royal Military College. Served in the Royal Canadian Navy, ultimately as Director General (Ships) and as Commandant of the National Defence college, Kingston from 1969-1974. Subsequently as Executive director of the Kingston Health Sciences Complex and, since 1985, in the School for Public Administration at Queen's. His wife Lois died in 1995. He is remembered with affection by his daughters Diane and Deborah.

Articles

The Canadian Customs Preventive Service on the Lower St. Lawrence and the Baie des Chaleurs.

David J. McDougall

Gasp's first British Customs House was established at Peninsula Point, Gaspé Bay in June 1764¹ and from then until the 1840's the main concerns of Customs officers on the Gaspé coast were collecting duties and preventing the landing of goods which were contraband under the British Navigation laws.² In 1855 the Reciprocity Treaty reduced Customs duties between the British North American provinces and the United States and from 1860,

until the treaty was abrogated in 1866, the Port of Gaspé was a Free Port. Customs inspections were lax during those six years with the result that Gaspé Bay became an entrepot for contraband goods. Duty-free cargoes cleared for sub ports of the Free Port area (Perce, Carleton, Anticosti, Seven Islands, the Magdalene Islands) were often diverted to St. Lawrence river ports and fishing boats smuggled substantial amounts of duty free liquor from the sub ports along the Baie des Chaleurs to the Province of New Brunswick.

When the Canadian Department of Marine and Fisheries was established in 1871 one of the responsibilities of the Fisheries Protection cruisers was to prevent landings of contraband goods much of which was from "French St. Peters", the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In 1893 Marine and Fisheries placed the new 185 gross ton steam powered Fisheries cruiser *Constance* at the disposal of Philip O'Keffe, the Chief Customs Preventive Officer for the Maritimes. Under the command of Captain George M. May, the *Constance* began patrolling the Gulf and estuary of the St. Lawrence river from a base at Gaspé Bay, initially in conjunction with the Fisheries Protection cruiser *Acadia*.

In 1897 the Department of Customs created the Customs Preventive Service with a Chief Preventive Officer who controlled the deployment of

the Preventive Service vessels. The *Constance*, technically still a Fisheries cruiser, continued to patrol the Gulf under the command of Captain May, a steam launch, based at Rivière du Loup, patrolled the lower St. Lawrence river and from 1900 to 1911 the sloop *Puritan* patrolled the upper end of the Baie des Chaleurs. In 1908 the *Constance* was replaced by the chartered 140 gross ton *Christine* which in turn was replaced in 1910 by the chartered 355 gross ton *Laurentian*. The first cruiser to be owned by the Customs Preventive Service was the 756 gross ton *Margaret*, built in England and delivered to the Department of Customs at Halifax in April 1914. During to the ice-free months of May to 5 November all four of these cruisers were based at Gaspé Bay, and drew many of their crewmen and officers from communities around that bay.³

The *Constance* routinely boarded and searched dozens of vessels suspected of carrying contraband and over the next few years her cruises were enough of a deterrent to smugglers that only a few seizures were reported in the Gulf and lower St. Lawrence. In her first season in 1893 the *Constance* seized a number of yachts and boats with small lots of liquor and a schooner with a full load of contraband spirits from St. Pierre in the estuary of the St. Lawrence. The same summer the Fisheries cruiser *Acadia* seized the schooners *Willie* and *Mary Rose* between Anticosti and Bic, each with cargoes of contraband liquor. From then until *Constance* was returned to

Marine and Fisheries in 1908 the only seizures reported were three barrels and five kegs of spirits valued at \$200 in 1897; the schooner *Gold Hunter* at the Madeleine islands with nine barrels and kegs of liquor in 1900; and the schooner *Acacia* at Gaspé Bay in 1903 with a cargo of St. Pierre liquor. Part of *Acacia*'s cargo had been smuggled ashore at Bois Brule on the south side of Gaspé Bay and the schooner's owner, George C. Doggett, was traced to Fox Bay, Anticosti, arrested and taken to Quebec City where he was fined \$200 and sentenced to one month in jail. By 1904 Captain May was of the opinion that the threat of inspection by the *Constance* had either brought rum running to a halt around the gulf or was in such small quantities that it could not be detected.

Shortly after Great Britain (and Canada) declared war against Germany in August 1914 the *Margaret* seized the barque *Bellas* of Hamburg in the lower St. Lawrence as a war prize⁸ and in February 1915 the *Margaret* was transferred to the Department of Naval Services as an auxiliary patrol ship. During the war years the Customs Preventive Service replaced her with other vessels - the *Westport III* in 1915, *Dollard* in 1916, *Restless* and *Canso* in 1917 and *Lisgar* in 1918. Except for the *Canso* all were commanded by Captain Alfred La Couvee who had been Captain May's First Mate from 1906 to 1914.~ Late in 1918 the Department of Naval Services returned the *Margaret* to the Customs Preventive Service and in the spring of 1919 Captain La Couvee

resumed patrolling the Gulf and Atlantic coast in the *Margaret*. In addition to Captain La Couvee and his First Mate Russell Coffin many of his crew were from Gaspé Bay, the majority of whom were still in their "teens".¹⁰ (See Note No. 1)

Until 1923 the Gulf of St. Lawrence was considered to be part of the territorial waters of Canada, vessels suspected to be carrying contraband could be stopped and searched anywhere in the Gulf. That year, however, the Department of Customs and Excise ruled that most of the Gulf was the "high seas" and Customs Preventive cruisers could only stop vessels inside the three nautical mile territorial limit. Late in 1926 this was modified to allow Preventive vessels to seize the cargoes of rum running vessels "hovering" outside the "limit" and from 1928 to 1931 the territorial limit for "Canadian" vessels was increased to twelve nautical miles.

In the early 1920's the laws governing the importation and sale of liquor became more restrictive in both Canada and the United States with the result that there was a dramatic increase in rum running in both countries. In 1920 the National Prohibition Act became law the United States and in 1921 most Canadian provinces (including New Brunswick and the other Maritime provinces) adopted laws prohibiting the import and sale of alcohol. Quebec's liquor laws were less strict, and, although that province had tight controls on importation and sale, beverage alcohol could be freely purchased by

individuals. The laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol began to be repealed in provinces west of Quebec in 1923 and in September 1927 New Brunswick replaced its prohibition laws with a liquor law similar to that of Quebec. Quebec had created a provincial police force to enforce its liquor legislation in 1921 and New Brunswick followed its example by creating the New Brunswick Provincial Police in 1927 part of whose duties were to enforce the provincial liquor laws. By about 1928 smuggling to supply local bootleggers in New Brunswick and eastern Quebec had begun to decline but for several years after the American Prohibition Act was repealed in 1933 the American market continued to be supplied with liquor smuggled through both provinces.

1920—1926

During the first half of the 1920's, probably because of better means of transportation between the coast and the U.S. border, there appears to have been more rum running activity around the Baie des Chaleurs than on the lower St. Lawrence river. The main railway line from the East Coast to Quebec City and Montreal passed the head of the bay at Campbellton, New Brunswick, a line across northern New Brunswick linked Campbellton with communities on the St. John river, both sides of the bay were served by rail lines and several roads led from the coast to the American border. On the lower St. Lawrence river, however, there were no

railways east of Matane and no all-weather road on the north coast of the Gaspé peninsula until 1929.

At the very beginning of American Prohibition liquor from St. Pierre began to be landed on the Baie des Chaleurs coasts of both New Brunswick and Quebec and smuggled into the state of Maine. Some of the contraband was stopped by Canadian Customs officers and in September 1920 seven barrels of contraband liquor were seized at Oak Bay, Quebec near the head of the Baie des Chaleur. The following spring 180 cases and 20 barrels of liquor were seized on the Maine border at St. Leonard, New Brunswick, reported to have been the property of a B.R. La Violette. This was probably a misspelling of the name of Albanie Violette, of St Leonard, better known as "Joe Walnut" who controlled most of the bootlegging in the northern parts of New Brunswick and the State of Maine. Under his direction, schooner loads of liquor were smuggled into northern Maine by both train and motor vehicles from the coasts of the Baie des Chaleurs.

In 1921, a new Preventive Service cruiser, the ex-steam whaler *Grib*, under the command of Russell Coffin (previously First Mate of the *Margaret*), began patrolling the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia which allowed the *Margaret* to concentrate on patrolling the Gulf⁴ In the spring of 1922 the motor schooner *Patrol Boat No.1* (the ex rum runner *Marona*) with a crew of four

from Gaspé Bay, began patrolling the Baie des Chaleurs under the command of Captain Edwin Miller who had been Second Mate of the *Constance* in 1906 and then First Mate of the Fisheries Cruiser *Princess* until that vessel was sold in 1919.

However, from 1923 until late in 1926 rum runners could, remain outside the "limit" almost as far into the Baie des Chaleurs as Dalhousie, New Brunswick and Maguasha, Quebec. The efforts of the Customs Preventive Service to stop smuggling around the bay was almost completely frustrated by the "three mile limit" and by the late summer and fall of 1923 substantial amounts of contraband liquor were being landed. That year *Patrol Boat No.1's* only seizure was a motor schooner, known to have made three rum running trips into the bay that season, which was seized at Carleton, Quebec in late August when it could not get outside the "limit" because of motor trouble. Less than a week later another schooner which had been off Caraquette, New Brunswick for three successive nights with liquor for "Joe Walnut" was prevented from landing its cargo by the combined efforts of Customs officers New Brunswick liquor inspectors and *Patrol Boat No. 1*. In early October the steam tug *Sadie Mac* landed 143 cases of liquor and several barrels of alcohol at Oak Point, New Brunswick and Customs officers across the Miramichi river at Chatham could only advise the *Margaret* that the liquor had been landed. A few days later the *Margaret*

brought the *Sadie Mac* into Gaspé Bay with a cargo of 121 cases and 40 barrels of liquor (part of which was alcohol) but, because the tug had been stopped outside the three mile limit, both the vessel¹⁶ and its cargo were released to the owners about two months later.

In early December 1923 another schooner-load of liquor for "Joe Walnut" was landed at Beldune near Jacquet River, New Brunswick and stored over-night in a barn. The next day, under the direction of "Joe Walnut", three hundred cases of liquor were put in each end of a freight car and hidden by a few cords of pulp wood stacked at the door. Although "Joe Walnut" had tried to stop them by firing at them with his gun, some men from Jacquet River, New Brunswick had found the liquor temporarily unguarded and had stolen a few cases. The secret of the landing remained well kept until Customs officers and New Brunswick liquor inspectors became aware of a drunken party at Jacquet River.

Four days after the landing James Duncan, the Customs Preventive officer at Dalhousie, New Brunswick, sent a telegram to Hubert Coffin, Chief Officer of the *Margaret* at Gaspé Bay, saying that the smuggler's schooner was on its way out of the bay and should be seized. Unfortunately the *Margaret* was at Sorel having her coal burning engine replaced by an oil burning one, *Patrol Boat No. 1* was laid up for the winter, and the only other available cruiser, the *Sagamore*, was at Sydney

Nova Scotia, the schooner got away and was never identified. However, at Campbellton Customs officers Watts and Stewart of Chatham, New Brunswick learned that the freight car had been routed from Jacquet River through Campbellton and Mont Joli to a man named Gagnon at "St. Rose" (this was probably Ste. Rose de Degel, now called Degellis, about forty-five miles southeast of Riviere du Loup and ten miles from the New Brunswick border). By hiring an automobile the two Customs officers get to Mont Jolie ahead of the slow moving freight train where they seized the freight car and its cargo.¹⁷

Because they could not be touched outside the "limit" by Preventive Service vessels, rum running vessels began operating openly within sight of land on the Baie des Chaleurs. Throughout the summer of 1925 a schooner was off Chandler, Quebec selling "white whisky", in July Customs officers found several caches of liquor at Caraquette, New Brunswick and in November nine hundred gallons of "white whisky" were found by smell at Chandler, Quebec after some cans broke open in a freight car load of dried and salted cod. That year the only seizure by *Patrol Boat No. 1* was at the end of August when a fishing boat was caught landing liquor at Grande Riviere, Quebec. The following summer two schooners from Nova Scotia were anchored off Ste.-Adel, de-de-Pabos, Quebec, selling all types of liquor at low prices..

Although most of the

smuggling activity appears to have been on the Baie des Chaleurs from 1920 to 1926, in 1924 several cargoes of liquor from St. Pierre were reported to have been landed between Rimouski and Riviere du Loup on the south shore of the lower St. Lawrence. In May and June Quebec Liquor Police seized several automobiles with cargoes of liquor on roads south and east of Quebec City and during a Federal by-election in early September, hundreds of gallons of "hooch" were reported to be for sale at Rimouski for \$6 a gallon. Early that fall a number of rum running vessels were said to have been seen off the Gaspé coast and the *Margaret* was incorrectly reported to have made a number of seizures. In October Customs officers stopped and searched three vessels from Nova Scotia at the pilot station at Father's Point (Pointe au Pere) near Rimouski, Quebec but found no contraband.

In early November a St. Pierre schooner was observed transferring a cargo of liquor to the *A. Tremblay*, a St. Lawrence river motor barge, off Ste.-Anne-des-Monts, which was seized a few days later by Quebec Liquor Police near Montreal.

The "laissez faire" attitude of the Department of Customs and Excise towards smuggling in the Baie des Chaleurs and the lower St. Lawrence began to change in 1926. A new Minister of Customs and Excise had been appointed late in 1925 and in the summer of 1926 a Royal Commission began an investigation of the

department. The Preventive Service began to acquire new vessels including the purchase of the fast motor boat *Vimy* in May 1926 to patrol the Miramichi river and the charter of the 112 gross ton yacht *Mayeta* in September to replace *Patrol Boat No. 1* on the Baie des Chaleurs and the north coast of New Brunswick. Under the command of Captain Edwin Miller (previously master of *Patrol Boat No. 1*) the *Mayeta*, with a speed of sixteen knots, carried a crew of sixteen, almost all of whom were from Gaspé Bay.

1927—1930

The Royal Commission's investigations of the Department of Customs and Excise led to a number of changes in the organization of the Preventive Service, one of which was the partial relaxation in the spring of 1927 of the regulations on seizures. That summer the *Margaret* stopped four vessels from St. Pierre in the Baie des Chaleurs and the lower St. Lawrence. The 40 ton schooner *Roland B.*, (owned by Thomas Nowlan of Kent County, New Brunswick and reregistered at St. Pierre as the *Regina*) was found hovering at the entrance of the Baie des Chaleurs on May 18th and towed into Gaspé Harbour where 236 packages of liquor was taken out and the vessel laid up. The French-registered ketch *Ariel*, with 1419 packages of liquor, was stopped about three miles off Amherst, Magdalene Islands on June 30th and the 33 ton schooner *Petawawa*, with 266 packages of liquor, was stopped twenty-four miles off

Birch Point, Miscou Island on July 11th. Both were towed into Gaspe Harbour, their liquor seized and the vessels released. The motor schooner *Free State*, with 287 packages of liquor, was stopped ten miles off Ste. Anne des Monts in the estuary of the St. Lawrence and brought into Gaspe Harbour on September 17th but because it had been stopped outside the territorial limit, it was released the following day.

Although the changed regulations had made it easier for the Preventive Service to make seizures, some contraband continued to be landed on New Brunswick's Baie des Chaleur coast. In early August a cargo of two-and-a-half gallon tins of alcohol were landed near Bathurst, New Brunswick and New Brunswick Provincial Police intercepted four automobiles with Quebec licence plates, one at Chatham with forty tins (100 gallons), two at Tide Head, each with forty-six tins (230 gallons), and one at Campbellton with thirty-four tins (85 gallons).

The *Mayeta* had begun having problems with its engine late in 1926 and, although it was re-chartered in the spring of 1927, it continued to have mechanical problems and was towed to Quebec City by the *Margaret* and returned to its owners in August. In the late summer of 1927 a new Preventive Service vessel, the 76 gross ton *Baroff* (the ex American submarine chaser *Bo Peep*) was taken into service. The crew of the *Mayeta* was transferred to the new vessel at

Halifax and it arrived at Gaspe Bay in mid-August under the command Captain John MacDonald, previously a mate on the *Margaret*. Refitted with three 80 horsepower diesel engines, the *Baroff* had a speed of 18 knots and was equipped with both radio and wireless, a long range search light and a deck mounted three-pounder gun. Under its new master the *Baroff* went aground in Shippigan Harbour on August 29th and after being refloated, went to Gaspe Harbour and then to Pictou for repairs under the command of the First Mate, James Ascah.

Command of the *Baroff* was transferred from MacDonald to Captain Gordon Roberts of Gaspe Bay who began patrolling the Bay Des Chilleurs on May 6th 1928. On May 22nd the *Barf* brought the rum running motor schooner *Petawawa* into Gaspe Harbour but because the schooner had been stopped outside the three mile limit, it was released. On June 11th 1928 the territorial limit for vessels registered in Canada was increased to twelve nautical miles and on June 22nd the *Barf* chased and captured the 41 gross ton motor launch *174* with a cargo of 457 five-gallon cans of alcohol and 135 cases of assorted liquor. This motor launch, with a speed of 21 knots, was a contact boat for the rum running schooner *Marion L. Mason* hovering outside the twelve mile limit (see Note No. 2) which that early in the summer had already landed several cargoes of contraband. When it was captured the *174* had gone aground near Heron Island, New Brunswick but the

crew, except for the engineer and a sailor, were able to escape in a dory with the ships papers and were picked up by a motor launch from the Quebec side of the bay. Later that year the *174* was purchased by the Preventive Service, renamed *Scaterie*, and stationed in Northumberland Strait.

Despite the efforts of the masters and crews of the Preventive Service vessels liquor continued to be smuggled ashore. The New Brunswick Police force chased a number of automobiles suspected to be carrying liquor one of which got away across the Quebec border and another escaped when the driver of the police car lost control of his vehicle. In July Preventive Service and New Brunswick Police officers seized a cache of about \$10,000 worth of liquor (most of which was whisky) on Miscou Island.³⁰

Early in 1929, in part because the Preventive Service had become more effective against smuggling in the Maritime provinces and in part because of the opening of an all-weather highway around the Gasp peninsula, rum runners became more active on the lower St. Lawrence and the north coast of the peninsula. A new cruiser, the 155 foot cruiser *Fleurdelis*, under the command of Captain Hubert Coffin, began patrolling the lower St. Lawrence and seized two rum running schooners, the *Francis Smith* with 1495 five-gallon kegs of rum and the *Iolanthe* with 183 kegs of rum. The 38 foot motor launch *Fernand Rinfret*, with a speed of eighteen to twenty miles an

hour and armed with a mounted machine gun, was transferred from Montreal Harbour to patrol the St. Lawrence between Quebec City and Riviere du Loup under the command of Captain Albert Ascah. The entrance to the Baie des Chaleurs was patrolled by the *Margaret*, the *Baroff* patrolled within the bay from its base at Gaspé Bay and the motor boat *Vimy* had been replaced by the motor launch *Neguac*, stationed at Chatham, New Brunswick under the command of A. Paquet, to patrol Miramichi Bay.³² However, liquor continued to be smuggled ashore on the Baie des Chaleurs and in October, five hundred cases of assorted liquor were found hidden under a load of lathes in a railway car at St. Charles de Caplan, Quebec

In June 1930 the Preventive Service took delivery of the 75 foot cruiser *Madawaska* with a speed of about twenty miles an hour and a crew of six, under the command of Captain Albert Ascah (previously master of the *Fernand Rinfret*). On its maiden trip to Rimouski in July, the *Madawaska* seized a schooner carrying 1200 gallons of alcohol and 10 kegs of rum and a few days later salvaged a keg of rum from a schooner whose crew had escaped in a small boat after setting their vessel on fire. In August the *Madawaska* seized a schooner at Portneuf river (about half way between Tadousac and Baie-Comeau) with 170 cases of five-gallon bottles of whisky, 90 bags of half gallon bottles of gin, two cases of Gordon's gin, one case of

benedictine, one case of absinth, two five-gallon barrels of rum and 5000 cigarettes. Before the end of the season the *Madawaska* made two more seizures, one of 850 gallons of rum and 1130 bottles of assorted liquor and another of 1092 gallons of alcohol and 120 gallons of malt whisky.

1931 and 1932

In the lower St. Lawrence the *Madawaska* seized a speed boat between Montmagny and Malbaie in early June 1931 and recovered twenty-eight cases of alcohol which its crew had thrown overboard. The motor launch *Fernand Rinfret*, now commanded by Captain J.A. Brisbois, seized a power boat near Ile aux Coudres with 800 gallons of alcohol and fifteen dozen bottles of liquor. At English Bay (present day Baie-Comeau) the crew of a motor boat set it on fire when it was about to be seized by the *Madawaska* and a short time afterwards the *Madawaska* found a cache of 800 gallons of alcohol on shore. During the year the *Fleurdelis* was transferred to Halifax, Nova Scotia and in November another new Preventive cruiser, the 117 foot *Alachasse*, with a speed of 15 knots and crew of thirteen under the command of Captain Albert Ascah was stationed at Matane on the lower St. Lawrence.

During the summer and fall of 1931 although Preventive Service vessels had been able to prevent some landings on the lower St. Lawrence, contraband continued to be landed around

the Baie des Chaleurs but the only reported seizures were made on land by Customs officers, Quebec Provincial Police and New Brunswick Provincial Police. In August two automobiles were seized at Cape Cove on the Gaspé's Baie des Chaleurs coast, each loaded with more than 500 gallons of "white whisky" and in September a number of five and ten gallon drums of rum, whisky and other liquors were found at McLeods Siding New Brunswick. In the summer of 1932, possibly because of the transfer of the Preventive Service vessels to the R.C.M.P., no reports have been found of seizures by patrol vessels. On land seizures of caches of liquor were reported near the head of the Baie des Chaleurs at Maguasha, Quebec and near Shippigan, New Brunswick.³⁷

On April 1st 1932 the vessels of the Customs Preventive Service and most of its officers and men were transferred to the Marine Section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. By September the Marine Section's headquarters had been moved from Ottawa to Moncton, New Brunswick and changes had begun to be made in the location of the patrol vessel. The *Margaret* was taken out of service and sold and the cruiser *Alachasse*, under the command of Albert Ascah was transferred to Shediac, New Brunswick to patrol Northumberland Strait (see Note No. 3). The only patrol vessels remaining on the lower St. Lawrence were the small cruiser *Madawaska*, based at Riviere du Loup, and

the motor launch *Fernand Rinfret*, based at Quebec City. The Quebec and New Brunswick shores of the Baie des Chaleurs were patrolled by the small cruisers *Baroff*, under the command of Gordon Roberts and the *Ulna* (transferred from Sydney, Nova Scotia) under the command of J.P. Fraser. The entrance to Miramichi Bay was patrolled by the motor launch *Neguac* under the command of J.A. Orr, based at Shippigan, New Brunswick.³⁸

NOTES

Note No 1.

Before, during and after World War I many of the *Margaret's* crew were young men in their late "teens" whose homes were around Gaspé Bay. The attraction these young, uniformed sailors had for the "teen-age" girls of Gaspé Harbour was memorialized in the doggerel verse of "When the *Margaret* Comes In", written anonymously in 1919. (Much of the "poem" is repetitive and in the following the original eighteen verses have been reduced to nine.)

I got a letter yesterday
And it fairly made me grin,
It was mailed in Pictou Tuesday
That the *Margaret* is coming in.
I hope there'll be a social, A dance
or some other thing, And we'll do
our best for the sailors When the
dear old *Margaret* comes in.

The girls will all enjoy them
And do them for all, they can
And tell them that they love them,
When the dear old *Margaret* is in.

When she's been out 8 or 10 days,
That's the most she ever stays,
Some of the girls commence to

sing
I wonder if the *Margaret* is in.

All a fellow has to do
Is wear a white top or a blue Just
to hear the girls all sing O Joy!
The dear old *Margaret* is in.

If anyone hears a noise
Of talking and laughing of men
and boys,
The girls then all begin to sing,
I bet the darling *Margaret* is in.

I wish it was not so far to walk
Away up to the South West,
For if they could come to see our
girls,
They too would do their very best.
When the *Margaret's* out, they
run about
And grab every boy they can.

If he's two feet short or six feet
long,
It doesn't matter if he's a man.
But soon the bay will be frozen
o'er
When the *Margaret* sails no more.
You girls will think its a desperate
thing
When the *Maggie* can't come in.

Note No. 2.

The rum runner *Marion L. Mason* was well known to the Preventive Service. In October 1927 she had been seized off the west coast of Prince Edward Island by the *Margaret* and during a blizzard in Northumberland Strait had escaped from a second seizure Just before Christmas 1927.~'

Note No. 3

The disappearance and unsolved murder of two "teen age" girls named Ascah at the end of August 1933 was generally believed in Gaspé to have been

carried out by rum runners with the intention of intimidating Chief Skipper Albert Ascah. His home was at Peninsula (also known as Penouille) on the north side of Gaspé Bay. In that small community one quarter of the one hundred and twenty-six adults of voting age were surnamed Ascah⁴¹ who, in addition to Chief Skipper A.R. (Albert) Ascah included Skipper J.F. (James) Ascah and Chief Skipper J.E.G. (Watson) Ascah, all, of whom were officers in the Marine Section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and had previously served in the Canadian Customs Preventive Service.

Seventeen year old Marguerite Ascah and her fifteen year old cousin, Isabella Maud Ascah, had been last seen walking along the shore of the bay near their home in the evening of August 31st 1933. They were at first thought to have been kidnapped in an automobile but people living on the north coast were unable or unwilling to confirm that any except local automobiles had passed along the highway. Two months later local fishermen found a dismembered foot which her family identified as Marguerite's because of a deformed toe and a few days later the badly decomposed body of Isabella Maude. The younger girl had been gagged with a piece of her clothing, struck on the head with a heavy object and was still alive when thrown into the water.

The Quebec Provincial Police held a local eighteen year old named Nelson Phillips was held on suspicion of murder because he had no witnesses to his whereabouts later that evening. In prison a private detective named Maloney, known for his strong arm methods, extracted a

confession from him and in February 1934 he was found guilty of murder and sentenced to be hung. However, in part because his confession had been obtained by force, the sentence was appealed and he was released.

The murders were never solved but residents of Peninsula continued to believe that those responsible were criminals associated with rum runners who were not familiar with the community of Peninsula. The father of the older of the murdered girls was another Albert Ascah and it was assumed at the time that the murderers had misidentified her as part of Chief Skipper A.R. Ascah's immediate family. In addition at about the time it was known that the girls had been murdered, the editor of the Campbellton Graphic denounced as "evil" those people who placed the blame for the murders on rum runners and the almost hysterical wording of his editorial suggests that he had probably been threatened with physical harm. Early in 1934 the Marine Section transferred Chief Skipper Albert Ascah to Vancouver, British Columbia and it can be speculated that the move was to take him as far a possible from the East Coast. He remained on the West Coast until June 1938 when he was returned to Halifax as assistant to the Officer Commanding the Marine Section of the R.C.M.P.)

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Nautical Nostalgia

by William Glover

Canada's Maritime Heritage

In this first of what is planned to be a regular column in *Argonauta* on "Nautical Nostalgia," it seems appropriate to celebrate Canada's maritime heritage. After all, if we, the members of the Canadian Nautical Research Society, are not interested, who else should be? The work of the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board - the institution charged with the designation and identification of artifacts and places, people, and events of national significance - is a good first subject. We are all familiar with their red plaques. In writing this, I have been generously supported by Mr. Don Boisvenue, research assistant at the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings. Over 1700 designations have been made, and most of them have been "plaqued." Mr Boisvenue gave

me the results of a computer search that provided a list of well over 300 maritime-related entries.

Seven ships have been designated as National Historic Sites. At Halifax there are two: the SS *Acadia* and HMCS *Sackville*. *Acadia*, a very pretty little ship, was launched in 1913 for the Canadian Hydrographic Service, a service ten years older than the Royal Canadian Navy. In 1917 she was taken up by the navy as a patrol vessel. She returned to hydrographic work in 1919 until 1940, when she was again called to war. She was finally retired from the CHS in 1969, and is now open to the public at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. With her at that museum is the corvette, HMCS *Sackville*. The last of the famous wartime Tribal class destroyers, HMCS *Haida*, is at Toronto. This ship has suffered at the hands of insufficient funding. If she is to be preserved, very costly repair work needs to be done, made more expensive by her permanent berthing arrangement at Ontario Place that will have to be dismantled to get her out. The remaining four ships are in western Canada. First, at Vancouver's Maritime Museum, is the famous RCMP vessel, *St Roch*, the first ship to sail the northwest passage in both directions. The other three ships, all very important in Canadian maritime history, are not vessels that might immediately spring to mind. At Kaslo, in the interior of British Columbia, is the SS *Moyie*.

Now more than 100 years old, she was built by the Canadian Pacific Railway for service on Kootenay Lake, as a vital link in their Crowsnest Pass rail service. Her biography has been written by Robert Turner. At Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory the SS *Klondike* has been preserved as an historic site. Built in 1937, 210 feet long, with a beam of almost 42 feet and a displacement of 1362 tons, she was the largest of the Yukon River steamers. Farther north at Dawson, the SS *Keno*, built in 1922, is also preserved.

These inland steamers serve to remind us that only with the advent of railways did the rivers begin to lose their importance for transportation. It is in this connection that Alberta, one of our two landlocked provinces, has a "maritime" historic site. At Elk Point, (where Highway 42 crosses the North Saskatchewan River) there is a plaque to William Tomison, "inland master" of the Hudson's Bay Company, and responsible for the establishment of trading posts and the river transportation system. It is the fur trading company that also gives Saskatchewan some "maritime" sites. The fur traders famous Methye Portage is a 12-mile carry over the height of land to the Arctic drainage basin. Churchill Manitoba's Prince of Wales Fort was the subject of a land/sea "battle", when two famous explorers met. Hearne surrendered the fort to La Pérouse in 1782.

There are many other marine-related commercial and industrial sites. In addition to naval dockyards (including Kingston, Ontario), all with fine collections of buildings, there is shipbuilding. Corvettes were built in the 1890 drydock at Kingston. Eileen Marcil's *Tall Ships and Tankers* is the biography of Davie Shipbuilding at Levis, Quebec, now an historic site. Ships brought immigrants to Canada. Halifax's Pier 21, the "highly specialized" immigration shed, is designated. The Irish immigration is commemorated both at Grosse Île in the St. Lawrence, and at Partridge Island in Saint John Harbour.

For a safe landfall and navigation all ships depended on lighthouses. Many of these are historic sites, including the Cap-des-Rosiers light, built in 1858. At 112 feet high, this is the tallest Canadian lighthouse. Explorers, the earliest navigators, are also well commemorated. Combining exploration with commercial adventure, Martin Frobisher's 1578 mine, ostensibly for gold, on Kodlunarn Island (Countess of Warwick Island), off Baffin Island has been designated (but the familiar red plaque has not yet been put up). Even earlier than Frobisher, L'Anse aux Meadows at the northern tip of Newfoundland, the only authenticated Viking settlement on North America, is an historic site. So too is Red Bay, the Basque whaling station, roughly contemporary with Frobisher's endeavours. Our 1999 conference at Corner

Brook will include a visit to both these important places. From whaling and Newfoundland, it is an easy crossing to Prince Edward Island, and the Acadian fishing settlement, a designated site, at Brudenell Point.

The National Historic Sites commemorate more than artifacts, events, and places. They also recognize people - such as Captain Savalette, "pioneer of sedentary fisheries of Acadia", and Donald McKay, "world renown designer and builder of clipper ships," including *Flying Cloud*. The Board has designated only "548 Persons of National Historic Significance," yet neither of these two men are in the voluminous *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

This only serves to make my point. If we, members of the CNRS, do not take an active interest in our maritime past and heritage, can we expect anyone else to do it for us? This summer include a Maritime National Historic Site in your plans!

I am compiling a Maritime Anniversary Calendar, with dates of "firsts," "openings," birthdays and creations, disasters, and anything else that seems interesting. "In course" it should appear in these pages. If you have any suggestions, please send me details at: PO Box 481, Manotick, Ontario, K4M 1A5.

On John Cabot ~ An Hypothesis

by

Trevor Kenchington

Introduction

In the early summer of 1497 the Venetian adventurer known to his English sponsors as John Cabot sailed from Bristol aboard the *Matthew* in search of a westward route to the Orient. Crossing the ocean, he made landfall in what became known as the New Found Land. This voyage, perhaps following earlier ones by other Bristol ships¹, opened the fisheries of the northwest Atlantic to Europeans and thus led, albeit indirectly, to the settlements that in time grew into Canada and the northern United States. Thus much is well established and has been so, if not from Cabot's own time, then at least since it was stripped of the deliberate obfuscation created by John's son Sebastian².

¹ G.J. Marcus "The Conquest of the North Atlantic" Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1980.

² The confusion surrounding the elder Cabot's voyages developed within fifteen years of his death: Polydore Virgil, writing in about 1512, confounded the 1497 and 1498 voyages and thus denied that Cabot had discovered anything. A number of popular accounts of Cabot's life and times appeared in conjunction with the quincentenary of the 1497 voyage and provide convenient, if not always accurate, sources of background information. They include:

What is not known, with any certainty, is just where the men of the *Matthew* found their new lands – the firm pronouncements of assorted tourism promoters notwithstanding. Scholarly opinions have placed Cabot's landing everywhere from Maine to Labrador, while less serious suggestions have ranged at least as far south as the Bahamas. Even some conclusions as to his landfall that were purportedly based on scholarship have been severely tainted by political agendas³. Thus, a Canadian and Bristolian school once sought to place the landing in Nova Scotia so that Cabot, a surrogate Englishman, could be said to have reached the continental shore of the

Brian Cuthbertson "John Cabot & the Voyage of the *Matthew*" Formac Publishing, Halifax, 1997.
Peter Firstbrook "The Voyage of the *Matthew*: John Cabot and the Discovery of North America" McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1997.

Ian Wilson "John Cabot and the *Matthew*" Breakwater Books, St. John's, 1996.

The only serious study to be published in the last few years (and which contains extensive citations of earlier material) is:

Peter Pope "The Many Landfalls of John Cabot" University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1997.

The definitive edition of the various documents relating to Cabot remains however:

James A. Williamson "The Cabot Voyages and Bristol Discovery under Henry VII" The Hakluyt Society, 2nd Series, Volume CXX, Cambridge, 1962.

³ See Pope *op.cit.* for a full account.

Americas before Columbus reached the mainland on his third voyage of 1498 – and more especially well before Cartier reached Québec. A United States school, in contrast, has sought to direct Cabot to Newfoundland, restoring the symbolic significance of their own Italian hero in his posthumous role as champion of anti-British republicanism. Newfoundlanders, for their part, have simply wanted to keep their own discoverer, Cabot, for themselves. The folly of such arguments is perhaps best shown by the Canadian school's insistence, in the face of cartographic certainty, that a landing on Cape Breton Island constitutes arrival on the mainland and by the equally-misguided suggestion that a landing in Labrador does not!

In the face of such special pleading, the most recent reviewer of these conflicting hypotheses⁴ has declined to advance one of his own, preferring to leave Cabot's landfall unknown and even unknowable, while examining the motivations that cause people to argue passionately for one site or another in the absence of (or even in the face of) evidence. That is perhaps wise. After all, the place of the 1497 voyage in the history of North America depends on its role in encouraging others to follow across the Atlantic, not on just where Cabot was standing when he claimed the

New Found Land for King Henry of England. Nevertheless, despite its lack of real historical significance, the location of the landfall is of abiding interest. It is also less uncertain than it may appear. While the limited documentary and dubious cartographic evidence have been dissected at length, none of the landfall hypotheses yet advanced, whether scholarly or farcical, has been founded on all of the available information.

In my judgement, an analysis that combines the available documentation with what can be deduced from weather patterns and the distributions of other natural features, while avoiding *a priori* conclusions, does allow the identification of a landfall in insular Newfoundland that is, if neither absolutely certain nor geographically precise, then at least highly probable and more than close enough to settle many an old argument. The purpose of this brief essay is to set out such an analysis of the route that Cabot and the *Matthew* took throughout the 1497 voyage, leading to a firmly-founded hypothesis of the location of his landfall. In view of the misunderstandings and misrepresentations that entered the record so soon after Cabot's death, on his 1498 voyage, I confine my analysis to documents dating from the year between the two events – the few known examples of which were all written by individuals who had apparently spoken with, or heard from, Cabot directly.

⁴ Pope *op.cit.*

While I suggest that dismissing Cabot's landfall as unknowable is overly pessimistic, it should be clearly understood that there is no absolute proof of where he landed and hence any conclusions can only be based on a balance of probability. Some may choose to believe that Cabot spent the summer of 1497 in Iceland and only claimed to have discovered a new land. Others may think that he sailed via the Azores and the Trade Winds to the Bahamas, later misrepresenting his route to avoid conflict with Spanish interests. If so, neither position could be entirely rejected and nor could any number of less extreme views. To accept them, however, would be to discard the surviving contemporary evidence and thus any pretence of historical analysis. I argue here that such a policy of despair is unnecessary; indeed that, with the exception of two obvious quantitative errors, all of the known documentary material from 1497-98 dealing with Cabot's second voyage is consistent with his having taken one, highly-probable route that led him to a landfall somewhere between Bonavista and Twillingate⁵.

⁵ The now-popular "traditional" Newfoundland identification of Bonavista as the landfall was in reality begun by a German scholar in 1784, who did no more than speculate (as others have since) that "Bona Vista" was an appropriate name for the Venetian to have bestowed on the first land that he saw. Taken up by other historians, this "tradition" only gained widespread acceptance

Knowledge of the World in 1497

To understand the 1497 voyage, it is essential to see the world as Cabot saw it. To begin with, he was well aware that the Earth is a sphere. Aristotle had established the point long before and, while that wisdom had once been lost to Christendom, by the late fifteenth century no educated man in Europe doubted that he lived on a round world. What

during the quadcentenary celebrations of the voyage in 1897 and indeed only eclipsed all other local Newfoundland claims by government fiat in the 1990s (Pope *op.cit.*). However, its champions have shown that it does have some early documentary support. Most notably, a map of 1625 identifies "C. Bona Vista a Caboto primum reporta", which is to say "Cape Bonavista, first reported by Cabot", with the headland that now bears the name recognizably portrayed. This is clearly not a highly-reliable source and it has necessarily been rejected by proponents of other landfall hypotheses. However, one charge levelled against it does seem over-stated, that being that Newfoundland was not settled before 1610 and thus cannot have local traditions reaching back to 1497. In reality, there has been near-continuous seasonal occupation of the northeast Newfoundland coastline since the 1490s. It is not impossible, though also not probable, that one of the members of the 1497 crew (having avoided the fatal 1498 voyage) went to Newfoundland aboard a fishing ship a few years later, identified the earlier landfall to his companions and so started an oral tradition within the multi-national community of European fishermen which frequented that shore over the next two centuries and more.

was not so sure was how large the sphere might be. Seventeen centuries earlier, Eratosthenes had actually produced an estimate that was only some 15% too large but most late-Medieval cosmographers preferred a later figure, actually too small by nearly a third, produced by Ptolemy, whose work had appeared in a Latin translation in 1406. Those same gentlemen also knew that much of the northern hemisphere was occupied by the Eurasian landmass. They even had some idea of how large that was, based on estimated distances along the Silk Road provided by the few European travellers who had passed that way; Marco Polo in particular. By deducting the estimated width of Eurasia from the supposed distance around the globe in various latitudes, the cosmographers could hypothesize the width of the water, the Ocean Sea, in between.

Thus, educated opinion was agreed that a ship sailing westwards from Europe would eventually reach "Cathay", China as we know it today, if the crew survived the voyage. Therein, however, lay the problem. If the Earth was as big as Eratosthenes said, or even just the size that it really is, if Eurasia was as small as we now know it to be and if there was no land between them in the Ocean, then no fifteenth-century ship could carry the supplies to sustain her crew on the westward voyage. Nor could any eighteenth-century ship, come to that.

There were, of course, many legends of islands in the oceans. The Portuguese discovery of the Azores, added to earlier knowledge of the Canaries and of Iceland, confirmed that some existed. Few mariners, however, would have risked their lives, and fewer merchants their ships, on a gamble that relied on finding a series of such "stepping stones" along the westward route.

On this round world, the richest trade reaching Europe came from the Orient. It involved mostly spices but included silks, pearls and other luxuries. They came by camel train through Asia or by sea across the Indian Ocean, passing through many hands and reaching ever higher prices as they flowed west, eventually reaching the Arab-controlled markets on the Mediterranean shore. There Christian merchants, particularly those of Venice, bought them for shipment to Europe. As the population and the economy on the latter continent recovered following the Black Death, demand for these oriental products rose. Merchants were naturally interested in tapping nearer to the source, in order to secure better supplies and lower prices. The pressure to do so became more acute as the power of the Ottoman Turks spread, interfering with the comfortable business arrangements that the Venetians had enjoyed with the Arab rulers of Egypt and the Levant.

The obvious commercial alternative, utilizing Europe's fast-improving nautical technology, was to sail around Africa and thence direct to the islands where the spices were thought to grow. The Portuguese developed that option from the 1420s onwards, though a sea route from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean was not proven to exist until the voyage of Bartholomew Diaz in 1488 and no European ship reached India before Vasco da Gama's in 1498. Cathay and what is now the Indonesian archipelago were not finally achieved until the 16th century; the Portuguese reaching Canton only in 1513.

In the meanwhile, no doubt many pondered the possibility of a westward route across the ocean. Its evident impracticality dissuaded most from turning their attention that way but, in the absence of firm knowledge, theoreticians could and did convince themselves that the world was small and Eurasia large, thus bringing the two shores of the Ocean Sea closer together. Driven perhaps by wish-fulfilment, maybe by deductions from Icelandic memories of Vinland or Bristolian observations of the Newfoundland shore, and just possibly by the report of some storm-tossed Portuguese sailor who had seen the Bahamas, Columbus indeed persuaded himself that the two sides drew close enough for a ship to cross. If he was not the only man to do so, he was at least the only one to attract practical

support and put his vision to the test. To bring the two shores within practical reach of one another, however, the Genovese had to take the most optimistic estimate of the extent of Eurasia, apply the wrong units when interpreting an Arabic under-estimate of the circumference of the globe and arbitrarily discard eight degrees of longitude. He also chose to further shorten his voyage by aiming, not for the mainland of eastern Asia, but for "Cipango", Japan, which according to Marco Polo lay 1,500 miles east of the shores of Cathay and which the cosmographers placed in tropical latitudes⁶. Polo, whose experience in the Orient dated from the 1260s, never visited Cipango but he extolled its virtues nevertheless; to such a degree that some theorists (Cabot among them⁷) came to believe that it was the ultimate source of all the world's spices and jewels. As such, it was a commercially-attractive destination as well as, supposedly, an achievable one. Just possibly, Queen Isabella may have been swayed into supporting Columbus' westward ambitions by the audacity of a route that turned the hidden secrets of the uttermost east, whose very unattainability led to their being magnified by Polo and others, into the most accessible

⁶ Placing Cipango somewhere near Guam. Polo's distance was right, if not his direction: Tokyo is over 1,500 miles northeast of Canton, though only about 1,000 from Shanghai.

⁷ Soncino (see footnote 11).

destination of the entire Orient.

Before his 1492 voyage, few would have agreed with Columbus' reasoning and more knowledgeable sovereigns than Isabella refused their support. However, the discovery of land, albeit only islands, where the explorer had said it should be gave credibility to his deductions about the size of the world. Even if Cuba and Hispaniola were not parts of Cipango, anyone hearing of the new discoveries could readily suppose that the world really was small and the western ocean crossable. Cabot certainly either drew that deduction or used Columbus' discoveries to reinforce his own preconceptions. He probably also used them to persuade the Bristolian merchants to support his vision of a different route to Cipango.

Columbus had chosen a route that used the Trade Wind system, discovered by the Portuguese in their voyaging to and from West Africa, to carry his ships into the west on the latitude where he believed Cipango to lie. Being at low latitudes, however, that route required him to sail many miles for each degree of westing (over 55 nautical miles per degree, by modern calculations). Cabot seems to have realized that he could shorten the mileage into the west (to some 35 miles per degree) by taking a high-latitude route, even though he would then need to sail southward to reach Cipango – reaching across the westerlies

of the mid-latitudes. For that route to be sensible, however, there would have to be land in the northwest, at which a ship bound for Japan could take on water and along which she could coast until within reach of her ultimate destination. Without such land, the northern track would require an impractically-long ocean crossing, while imposing the insuperable navigational problem, in an era when longitude could not be measured, of deciding when to turn south.

The general opinion was that there was no such land, the cosmographers commonly sketching the eastern coast of Asia as running roughly north from the vicinity of Shanghai before turning west in Arctic latitudes. Cabot, however, seems to have been dimly aware that the Siberian shore actually trends generally northeast⁸. At least, when he eventually reached a northern land far to the eastward of the longitude at which even Columbus placed Cipango, let alone Cathay, Cabot blithely declared it to be "the country of the Grand Khan"⁹.

The purpose the 1497 voyage therefore appears to have been

⁸ More likely because of some dim understanding of the coastline of North America, perhaps derived from reports of the Vinland voyages or maybe from recent discoveries of Bristolian fishermen, than from any reports of the eastern shores of Siberia – lands that remained unknown to Europeans until the time of Bering.

⁹ Pasqualigo (see footnote 11).

to confirm the existence of this north-eastern extension of Asia or perhaps (as argued below) to find a way around its already-known mountains towards Cipango – both being necessary precursors to the opening of a northern trade route to that island. While this is speculation, it is otherwise difficult to understand what Cabot thought he was doing in the northwest Atlantic on his way to Japan.

The Evidence

Within this broad context, it must be said that almost no contemporary evidence survives of Cabot's specific 1497 voyage. There are a number of documentary records which confirm that one John Cabot set out from England in search of new lands and was rewarded for their discovery after his return but those tell us nothing of where he went. Otherwise, there are no archaeological remains and no reliable notion of the form of his ship from which estimates of its sailing abilities could be judged¹⁰. There is no near-contemporary cartographic evidence, save such vague sketches as the

¹⁰ Recent claims that the *Matthew* was a caravel are purely speculative and, indeed, improbable – a caravel then being a regional vessel-type of southern Portugal and the adjacent part of Spain. In view of what little is known of contemporary English ships, particularly the supposed remnant of the *Sovereign*, it seems more likely that the *Matthew* was of lapstrake construction with a shape derived from northern models.

famous Juan de la Cosa map – which can be interpreted to support any hypothesis but to refute none. No oral tradition survived among the native peoples whose lands Cabot saw until it could be recorded by Europeans. Indeed, there are no surviving reports from anyone directly involved in the 1497 venture – unless one counts a map that Sebastian Cabot prepared in 1544 and, his claims notwithstanding, it is doubtful that he was aboard the *Matthew* in 1497 (while the map itself clearly incorporates much later knowledge and probably some deliberate misrepresentation).

All the evidence that does survive, or at least that is known, and which cannot have been corrupted by errors introduced after Cabot's death are four brief contemporary accounts from people who spoke to the Venetian or attended his presentations to King Henry's Court. Those four are:

- A letter sent to his brothers from London by the Venetian Lorenzo Pasqualigo on 23 August 1497, in which he provided a few details of the voyage based on the reports Cabot gave after he reached the English capital.
- A very short, and in part highly improbable, anonymous report sent to the Duke of Milan from London on 24 August 1497.
- A second, longer letter sent to the Duke by his

ambassador, Raimondo de Raimondi de Soncino, on 18 December of that year.

- A detailed account prepared by one John Day for a Spanish patron, who was most likely Columbus himself, at some unknown time between Cabot's return from his 1497 voyage and the departure of his fatal 1498 expedition. This last was found only in 1955 and has revolutionized knowledge of the voyage¹¹.

There are of course innumerable later writings, reaching into modern times, that describe the 1497 voyage. However, most of what has been said of Cabot's discoveries since his death has been built on these four sources and the great majority of additions to their content have been purely speculative. The

¹¹ Letter from Lorenzo Pasqualigo, preserved in the *Diarj* of Marin Sanuto, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, MSS Ital. Cl. VII, Cod. 417 (vol. 1), fol. 374v.

Anonymous letter, preserved in the Milan Archives, Potenze Estere: Inghilterra.

Letter from Raimondo de Soncino, preserved in the Milan Archives, Potenze Estere: Inghilterra.

Letter from John Day, preserved in Archivo General de Simancas, Estado de Castilla, leg. 2, fol. 6.

The translations quoted in this article follow Williamson (*op.cit.*), who provided details of their sources.

possibility remains that some of the sixteenth-century accounts were informed by eye-witness reports or other manuscripts now lost. Even a superficial perusal of them shows, however, that whatever nuggets of useful extra information they may contain are so entwined with obvious errors as to defy their distillation. Thus, the only reliable documentary evidence is contained in the four contemporary items. Aside from them, all that survives to guide a reconstruction of Cabot's voyage are the coastlines of the Americas, the wind patterns of the North Atlantic and other immutable features of our world – not least the human spirit.

The Voyage

Cabot's departure point is well known. Late in May 1497, he left the King Road, off the mouth of the Bristol Avon, and headed down Channel. As the crew of the modern *Matthew* found during their 1997 re-enactment, it would have been easy to reach western Wales with the aid of the fierce ebb tides, while anchoring in suitable shelter to wait out the intervening floods. Westwards still further to the Irish coast would have been a struggle against the prevailing wind but at least the ship could readily lie in the lee of some headland while awaiting a favourable slant. In any case, thus far the voyage was no different to hundreds that Bristolian ships had made in the Irish trade. The questions facing a

reconstruction of Cabot's voyage begin when his track passed the Fastnet Rock.

The problem for any ocean navigator in the centuries before Harrison's invention of the chronometer was that, while he could readily determine his latitude (from the altitude of the Pole Star and, later, that of the Sun at noon), he had no way to estimate his longitude save by trying to keep a reckoning of distance run to west or east. The solution frequently adopted was "latitude sailing": On departure, the navigator took his ship north or south to the latitude of his objective and then headed east or west. He had little hope of knowing when he was approaching land but at least he knew what sort of coastline to look out for and that, sooner or later, he would arrive.

The prevailing hypotheses for the 1497 voyage have Cabot making his way westwards by latitude sailing. They differ only in disagreeing on whether he sailed directly west from Ireland, and thus reached northern Newfoundland or southern Labrador, or whether he first dropped south towards the latitude where he judged his objective to lie¹². In reality,

Cabot chose no such route and in all probability could not: No fifteenth-century ship could be expected to work her way to the westward, upwind across the North Atlantic, and no experienced mariner would have been foolish enough to try – repeated modern claims of such a course notwithstanding¹³. Cabot, having already tried and failed to sail into the west in 1496, would not have been so misguided as to squander his limited sponsorship on such a forlorn plan.

What he actually did was to follow the route into the west that many in Bristol already knew; a route pioneered nearly a thousand years before by Irish hermits, whose expansion from island group to island group reached at least as far as Iceland on voyages immortalized in the legend of the sixth-century St. Brendan. Erik Raudi, escaping from Iceland around 980, had extended the route to west Greenland. The settlements which he and his followers created then generated a regular trans-ocean trade with Norway; a trade that came to follow a track that was the world's longest regular open-sea route until the Spanish

instituted the Manila galleon voyages across the vastness of the Pacific.

For some four centuries, the Greenland ships had maintained their trade. The fourteenth-century *Hauksók* outlined the route they used by that time: Leaving Bergen in the spring, they would sail west on the 61°N parallel, passing close to the north of the Shetlands, far to the south of Iceland and then make landfall near Cape Farewell, the southernmost tip of Greenland¹⁴. At that time of year, the depressions sweep across the North Atlantic on tracks passing through northern France or southern England. Well to the north of the storm centres, the wind may come from any direction but usually with some easterly component to it. Although these are not the steady "Polar Northeasterlies" of climatic atlases, a ship able to sail with the wind anywhere abaft the beam can make more or less steady progress to the westward in that latitude in the spring. By late summer, however, the depression tracks are further north and the Greenland ships ran back to Bergen, still latitude sailing on 61°N with winds, now westerlies, again abaft their beams.

All this Cabot's Bristolian companions most probably knew well. The regular sailings of the Greenland ships had petered out following the Black Death and in the face of

¹² Aside from the wild claims that Cabot followed Columbus to the Bahamas on the supposed latitude of Cipango, those who have favoured the latter alternative have never specified why they think the Venetian should have anticipated finding his island at any particular latitude between 40°N and 50°N.

Perhaps they have preferred to reason backwards from an assumed landfall to arrive at a latitude for the western voyage.

¹³ Wilson (*op.cit.*), for example, cited Day's report of east north-east winds on the outward crossing but on the same page insisted that the *Matthew* tacked against westerlies.

¹⁴ Marcus (*op.cit.*).

worsening climatic conditions but records of voyages as late as 1410 have survived¹⁵. By then, Bristol ships were sailing to the great northern mart at Bergen and in the decades that followed they opened a regular, if illegal, trade with Iceland. Indeed, through the fifteenth century the English (and probably specifically the Bristolians) seem to have been trading with, and raiding, the fading Greenland settlements – someone from Europe certainly was. Thus, whether by report of Norwegians or by direct experiment, we can be confident that Bristol mariners knew that one could sail west in high latitudes in the spring. This northern route was the only known way into the far west, other than dropping south and riding the Trade Winds as Columbus had done. Modern knowledge of wind patterns confirms that it was also the only practical route to take. More than that, the documentary evidence is quite explicit that it was the route that Cabot took in 1497.

That this was so is explicitly stated in the letter of the Ambassador of Milan to his master, the Duke:

[Cabot] started from Bristol ... passed Ireland ... and then bore towards the north, in order to sail to the east, leaving the north on his right hand after some days.

This passage is confused by Soncino's difficulty in expressing the novel concept that one could sail to the Far East by heading west but the turns to the north and then the west are clear. Day alluded to the same high-latitude crossing when he reported:

the wind was east-north-east and the sea calm going and coming back

in which the "coming back" referred to the calm sea, itself surely an exaggeration, and not to the easterly wind, since he also stated:

they returned to the coast of Europe in fifteen days. They had the wind behind them[.]

What Cabot did, after clearing the coast of Ireland, was to put the prevailing southwest wind on his larboard beam and head between north and northwest until he approached or reached the 60°N parallel, somewhere south of Iceland. From there, he could finally commence latitude sailing into the west. The fifteenth-century mariners would have found this route by experience and by watching the weather but it is the same one followed by the re-enactment of 1997 when, armed with information derived from satellite imagery, the latter-day *Matthew* headed north to catch the easterlies indicated by the isobar charts received on the WeatherFax.

Just how far north Cabot sailed is unsure. However, he left Bristol late in the season when the weather patterns were already tending northwards, compelling him also to seek higher latitudes if he was to find consistent easterlies. It is also uncertain, once he turned west, how long he maintained his latitudinal course. I suggest, however, that he did so until he sighted Cape Farewell or at least knew, from cloud formations or ice blink, that Greenland lay just over his northern horizon. That is probable because an explorer who sails the ocean, out of sight of land and without any way of determining his longitude, not only does not know where he is but, after his return, does not know where he has been. Such a voyage adds nothing to his knowledge, not even places where he can say land does not exist. Cabot knew that Cathay lay far to the west, beyond the waters routinely crossed by the Greenland ships. Until he established that he had passed Cape Farewell, he could not be sure that he was even sailing into the unknown and thus he risked returning to his English sponsors with nothing to report at all.

Whether he sailed so far west at high latitude is, in fact, not of overwhelming importance since any reasonable northerly route leads to the same conclusion: Having once passed south of Iceland anywhere near 60°N, it was impossible for the *Matthew* to shape a direct course for Nova

¹⁵ Marcus (*op.cit.*).

Scotia without her running aground on the shores of Newfoundland – the bulk of the island simply lies athwart the route. Ships can, of course, follow dog-legged tracks, whether by design or stress of weather. However, Cabot's northern route makes a Nova Scotian landfall improbable and the further west he pressed in his latitude sailing, the less likely it becomes. Thus, because of the known wind patterns of the North Atlantic, we can be all but certain that his eventual landfall was somewhere on the shores of northeast Newfoundland or Labrador¹⁶.

If the *Matthew* had pressed on consistently westwards, at around the 60° parallel, her crew would eventually have encountered the coast of Labrador somewhere near Cape Chidley. Before doing so, however, Cabot turned to the southward. The Day letter notes that he experienced a storm shortly before reaching land and perhaps that pushed him south. Maybe he simply encountered the very cold water of the Labrador Current, with its scattered icebergs (though there is no report of them, suggesting that he may have headed south soon after passing Cape Farewell), and decided to edge into more hospitable conditions. The common winds over the Labrador Sea in June are in any case westerly, encouraging a turn off the latitude. Cabot may even have known, from the old saga accounts of the Greenlanders¹⁷, passed on by Bristolians who had voyaged to Iceland or beyond, of the barren lands across the Davis

improbable on the grounds of Cabot's approach route to North America, such dubious evidence as this map cannot be sufficient grounds for a serious landfall hypothesis.

¹⁷ Snorri Sturluson, in fourteenth-century Iceland, had advanced the saga as a literary form. Knowledge of the Vinland voyages may have faded into myth but it was never lost by Icelanders and most likely not in Greenland either. Labrador, as distinct from Vinland, had in any case continued to be visited and exploited by Greenlanders through the centuries following its discovery.

Strait. If so, and remembering that his destination was Cipango, he may have reasoned that it was best to edge southwards, as the winds permitted, once he was sure that he was beyond Cape Farewell.

One other, erroneous explanation for this southward turn that has proven popular with modern writers can be laid to rest. Day wrote:

his compass needle failed to point north and marked two rhumbs below.

It has been suggested that this error, technically "compass variation" and then the largest ever recorded, caused Cabot to edge southwards while heading west by the compass. Unfortunately for those who have advanced this argument, the magnetic pole at the time was somewhere north of Europe (which was why the existence of variation was such a shock to Columbus and his contemporaries) and Cabot's observation was of an easterly variation. Had he been so ill informed as to trust his compass, his course would actually have drifted north of true west. In fact, Day's account itself eliminates any such possibility. Cabot could not have known of the variation unless he was able to determine the direction of True North, probably by observations of the Pole Star, and to compare it to the compass' indication. Given a conflict between the Heavens

¹⁶ The only serious evidence pointing to a landfall in Nova Scotia is a legend on the "Paris Map", the sole known surviving copy of a world map published in 1544 and prepared by, among others, Sebastian Cabot. What can only be Cape North, at the northern tip of Cape Breton Island, is clearly labelled "prima tierra uista" [sic] or "land first seen". Elsewhere on the map is a longer comment on the "prima tierra vista" which mixes information on the 1497 voyage with observations made on Sebastian's own voyage to Labrador in 1508. While this evidence should not be lightly dismissed, I would set it aside as having been prepared nearly half a century after the landfall by someone who may well not have been present, despite his claims to have been a principal participant in the 1497 voyage, who is noted for anything but his veracity in matters concerning the discovery and who had reason to inflate its significance by placing it on what was then thought to be part of the continental mainland. Since a landfall in Cape Breton is

and the instrument, he would have had no difficulty trusting the former and pressing on westward for as long as the wind held in his favour.

Whatever the reason for his southward turn, on a day in early summer, 24 June by the Julian calendar, and some 35 days after leaving Bristol¹⁸, the captain and crew of the *Matthew* made landfall in their New Found Land. Sailing in to safe anchorage, Cabot and his men went ashore for their only landing of the 1497 voyage. Sadly, we have very little information on the site from which to judge its location. According to the contemporary reports, there were abundant cod in the waters, which is sufficient to eliminate northern-most Labrador but almost nowhere else on the Atlantic coast north of Cape Cod. There was also evidence of human presence but that too would apply anywhere along the shore, at least from southern Labrador southwards. It is also written that there were trees "like those of which masts are made". Past commentators seem to have ignored this observation, perhaps taking it to refer only to the generalized conifers that are so common on this coast. The *Matthew* was, however, engaged in a voyage into the unknown, on which a prudent captain would take at least one man who knew enough to re-fit and re-rig the ship if necessary, shaping replacement spars from whatever timber could be

found. Such a man should have been able to recognize a potential mast tree when he saw one and thus to have known the difference between a pine (*Pinus sylvestris*, the Scot's pine, in Europe or its near relative *P. strobus*, the white pine, in Newfoundland), which was suitable for sparmaking, and the spruces or firs which were not. White pine does grow extensively in Newfoundland but not on the Great Northern Peninsular nor in Labrador. Nor is there any evidence that the species grew in those areas in historical times – evidence which should exist had such strategically-important trees been present¹⁹. Thus, Cabot's landfall and his nearby landing site most probably, though not certainly, lay somewhere along Newfoundland's north-eastern shore, between St. John's and Notre Dame Bay.

To proceed further with Cabot's route, it is paradoxically necessary to consider his departure point at the time of his return; the one fixed location on the Newfoundland coast that can

¹⁹ Pope (*op.cit.*) did address this point but suggested that the trees in question were black spruce, on the grounds that those were later used as mast trees by Nova Scotians. I know of no evidence of spruce being used in spar-making before the nineteenth century and, if it is truly possible to deduce the species from Day's report, I suggest that it must have been pine – the only recommended mast timber in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

be identified with near certainty from the surviving sources. Day is explicit that Cabot found

the cape nearest Ireland is 1800 miles west of Dursey Head which is in Ireland

the quoted distance being presumably in Roman miles and so equivalent to around 1450 modern nautical miles, though it is possible that Day or his informant used the somewhat longer English mile. Pasqualigo's version was that Cabot "discovered mainland 700 leagues away", which is to say 2240 nautical miles if he was using the Mediterranean world's commonest (though not universal) value for the length of a league: four Roman miles of 5000 Roman feet or 3.2 nautical miles in all²⁰.

Day also stated that Cabot departed

from the above mentioned cape of the mainland which is nearest to Ireland[.]

Dursey Head, the southwestern

²⁰ David Waters "The Art of Navigation in England in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Times" (2nd Edition), Modern Maritime Classics Reprint 2, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

The league was not an English unit, where mariners then used "kennings" of 20 miles each. Thus, Pasqualigo was using units that were familiar to himself and his brothers in Venice, rather than those of his hosts in London.

¹⁸ Day (*op.cit.*).

tip of Ireland, lies in about 51° 33'N, close to the latitude of Cape Bauld, at the northern tip of Newfoundland, and there is little doubt that the latter is the cape in question²¹. In reality, Cape Bauld lies some 1860 nautical miles from Dursey Head measured along the parallel of latitude (rather too far for Day's estimate by any mile then in use, which thus appears to be a minor error) and about 2280 from London, where Cabot presented his discoveries before the King and where Pasqualigo received his information – suggesting that the latter's reporting and Cabot's calculations were remarkably accurate.

What has caused some writers to question the identification of Cabot's point of departure as being Cape Bauld is Day's designation of it as being "nearest to Ireland"²². After all, a glance at a modern Mercator chart suggests that that status should go to Cape Spear, near St. John's, and more than 200 miles south of the latitude of Dursey Head – suggesting a far more southerly voyage. Mercator and his projection were, of course, in the distant

future in 1497 but the plane charts of Cabot's day would have given the same prominence to the easternmost point of the Avalon Peninsular, had it been plotted on them, and raised the same doubts. Indeed, some authorities have taken the comparison of the latitudes of Dursey Head and Cape Spear as evidence that either the documentary sources are unreliable or else that Cabot was incompetent at determining his latitude. Neither is a justified charge.

Wherever he had acquired the knowledge, Cabot evidently understood high-latitude ocean navigation. Like his contemporaries, he knew enough not to rely on the grossly-misleading plane charts and instead used a globe. The Duke of Milan was specifically told by Soncino that, on his return

[Cabot] has the description of the world in a map, and also a solid sphere, which he has made, and shows where he has been.

Those who navigate with globes are soon drawn to the notion that the shortest line between two points on the Earth's surface lies on a Great Circle, rather than the parallels of latitude that Mercator's projection makes artificially prominent. Thus, when Cabot declared that a particular cape was closest to Ireland it will be because he had swept an arc across his manuscript globe

with dividers (in the pose that so many navigators, including his son Sebastian, chose for their portraits) and determined which point in the New Found Land lay nearest. It is easier for the modern historian to make the comparison using spherical trigonometry and the latitudes and longitudes from a chart. Such calculations show that Cape Bauld is indeed the closest point to Ireland, being some 1470 miles from Annagh Head, County Mayo, whereas Cape Spear is about 1500. Since Cabot's very presence on the coast of Newfoundland was bound up with his belief that the world was small enough for him to sail to Cipango, his globe will not have shown the new coastline in its true position but further to the west. Such an error would increase the apparent degree by which the northern tip of Newfoundland is its closest point to Europe. In short, there is no reason to question the accuracy of the contemporary sources nor to doubt that the *Matthew* took her departure on the homeward leg from the vicinity of Cape Bauld.

One other point on Cabot's route around Newfoundland can be deduced from the documentary evidence, though with rather less certainty. Day stated:

the southernmost part of the Island of the Seven Cities [one of the legendary isles of the Western Ocean] is west of the Bordeaux River

²¹ Pope insists that it was actually Cape Dégrat. That is too close to Cape Bauld for the distinction to matter to Cabot or to this account.

²² Yet others, led by Morrison, seem to have deduced that the cape "nearest Ireland" must also be the one that Cabot encountered on arriving in the New World. That is a contention which is in no way supported, or even indicated, by the Day letter and which cannot readily be reconciled with the rest of the available evidence.

which places it in a latitude of about 45°35'N. Meanwhile, the first, anonymous letter to the Duke of Milan stated that Cabot had found:

the Seven Cities, 400 leagues from England, on the western passage.

Putting the two pieces of evidence together places the mythical island over the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, northwest of the Azores²³. Perhaps Cabot, like so many others before and since, mistook clouds over the ocean for an island – Lorenzo Pasqualigo's letter did note:

And on the way back he saw two islands, but was unwilling to land, in order not to lose time, as he was in want of provisions.

Yet that homeward voyage was made far to the north of 45°35'N and the outward crossing much further north still, so a supposed discovery of a mid-ocean island in that latitude was not possible. It therefore seems more likely that Day intended his reference to the latitude of the Gironde to refer to the southern cape of an

island near the western shore – and a substantial one, capable of holding seven cities. The question must be: Which island?

Cape Breton Island is in almost exactly the right latitude but no explorer would realize that it was an island unless he probed deep into Chedabucto Bay (which was not consistent with Cabot's intent to reach Cipango) and thus saw the Strait of Canso. That dramatic waterway, a western Scylla and Charybdis before the modern causeway tamed its tides, would not likely have escaped mention in the surviving reports. It would anyway conflict with Pasqualigo's statement that:

[Cabot] says that the tides are slack and do not run as they do here.

For a Mediterranean mariner, the tidal streams of the Bristol Channel would have been a shock. Nothing on the coast of Newfoundland would have matched them but the roaring flow through the Strait of Canso most certainly would²⁴.

Prince Edward Island is another possible candidate for the "Isle of Seven Cities", lying only about 20 miles too far north. However, there is no

indication in the surviving evidence that Cabot penetrated into the unique summer-time environment of the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. He left nothing to compare with the hints of a hidden paradise beyond the seas that are found in the Vinland sagas from 500 years before nor anything like the explicit details of the Baie-de-Chaleur, the "Bay of Heat", in Cartier's later account. Nova Scotia itself has been suggested but its southern tip, Cape Sable, is in the wrong latitude (at around 43°30'N) and is anyway far too far from Cape Bauld. Besides, no-one who had tried sailing so near to the mouth of the Bay of Fundy could have been fooled into thinking that he had found a region of slack tides.

In my view, much the more likely candidates for the "Isle of Seven Cities" are Newfoundland itself and, more probably, its Avalon Peninsular, which could easily be mistaken for an island if one failed to explore the depths of Trinity and Placentia bays. Cape Pine, the southern-most point of both the peninsular and the Province, lies in about 46° 35'N latitude, 60 miles north of 45°35'. One must remember, however, that that was not the latitude as stated by Day. Had he wished to be precise, he could perhaps have described the southern tip of Newfoundland as "west of Île d'Yeu" or perhaps "west of St. Nazaire" but few would have understood his meaning. I suggest that somebody, perhaps Cabot or maybe Day,

²³ Pope (*op.cit.*) has suggested that the "400" may have been a copyist's misreading of "iiii hundred" for "vii hundred", which latter figure would agree well with Pasqualigo's report. That interpretation is, however, unlikely since the Roman numeral for "400" is "cd" or "cccc", neither of which is likely to be confused with "dcc" for "700".

²⁴ There is also the concern that the "Paris Map" of 1544 does not show Cape Breton as an island. While that is far from conclusive, one might have hoped that Sebastian Cabot would have indicated his father's "Isle of Seven Cities" as an island.

simplified a verbal explanation by comparing the latitude of Cape Pine with that of the Gironde, the entrance to the greatest port in western France and a point known to every mariner and merchant on the Atlantic seaboard. The resulting latitudinal error, while important to someone coasting the western shore, was trivial for European cosmographers. Thus, I conclude that Cabot most probably, though not certainly, passed around Cape Pine, and hence also past the more prominent Cape Race, at some point on his voyage.

These reports of the "Isle of Seven Cities" allow some further refinement in the likely location of Cabot's landfall. Finding new islands in the Atlantic was interesting but, building on the Portuguese discovery of the Azores, it did not require any change in contemporary cosmography. What Columbus and Cabot had to do, if they were to prove the viability of a western route to the Orient, was to discover mainland – which implied the Eurasian landmass or, in Columbus' latitude, the substantial bulk of Cipango. On his second voyage, the southerly explorer resorted to bizarre wish-fulfilment to persuade himself and his sponsors (against all reason) that Cuba was part of a continent. Cabot, with more justification, drew the same erroneous conclusion with respect to Newfoundland. Day sent the news, surely at once disturbing and exciting for its

recipient, to Columbus:

it is assumed and believed to be the mainland that the men from Bristol found[.]

Besides simply desiring this to be true, Cabot had followed the coast for some hundreds of miles and had seen the Long Range Mountains running up to Cape Bauld. He may well have supposed that the latter indicated a large land mass behind, rather than simply a narrow peninsular dividing the Atlantic from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. His deduction, while wrong, was not unreasonable.

If Cabot thought that the main body of Newfoundland was part of Eurasia and that the Avalon Peninsular was the "Isle of Seven Cities", then Day's comment:

[Cabot] landed at only one spot of the mainland, near the place where land was first sighted[.]

acquires new significance in as much as it implies that the "land first sighted" was not on the Peninsular and thus not far east of Bonavista. While this argument cannot be conclusive, it does seem to eliminate a landfall close to St. John's²⁵.

²⁵ The Duke of Milan's anonymous (and somewhat unreliable) correspondent did state: "[Cabot] found two very large and fertile new islands. He has also discovered the Seven Cities", which might suggest that

Now, Pasqualigo stated that, between his landfall and point of departure, Cabot coasted along the shore of the New Found Land for 300 leagues or, by the same conversion that appeared so precise when used with the distance to Cape Bauld, 950 nautical miles. This would not, of course, have involved following the shore of every bay and cove but would rather have been the length of a track from headland to headland; close enough inshore to have seen a Chinese city if it had been there but far enough off to avoid the many rocks and dangers along that hazardous coast.

Since the *Matthew* was away from Bristol for three months²⁶, took a little over a month on the outward voyage and returned in two weeks²⁷, Cabot had about six weeks for his coasting. Thus, he needed to average only 25 miles a day while on the coast – a reasonable rate of progress for a 15th century ship with her sailors feeling their way along an unknown shore. If they hove to for the short summer nights and occasionally deviated from their 950 mile track to explore a bay, they would have had to

the main mass of Newfoundland was one "island" and the Avalon Peninsular a second, though the implication that the "Isle of Seven Cities" was a third piece of land does not add to the credibility of the account; nor indeed does the notion that northeast Newfoundland is notably fertile.

²⁶ Pasqualigo (*op.cit.*).

²⁷ Day (*op.cit.*).

make good an average of about 2 knots when sailing. Since some time will have been lost in almost-fruitless beating into contrary winds, this implies an average speed through the water of some 3 or 4 knots; a believable value and one that bears comparison with the 6-knot average that, as shown below, the *Matthew* achieved on her homeward crossing of the Atlantic²⁸.

It is clear from the contemporary sources, as well as from the shape of the land, that Cabot did not simply make landfall and then coast 950 miles to Cape Bauld; a voyage that would have carried him from somewhere in Cape Breton. Rather, from his landfall, he first went in one direction and then turned back, ultimately reaching the Cape. Day added the detail that most of the land seen was sighted after turning back. That remark has led some to hypothesize that Cabot first pressed south-westwards in search of Cipango and, after turning for

home, took to exploring all the bays and inlets. I find that improbable. Men, far from home on an exhausting and dangerous voyage, do not willingly engage in tedious and hazardous explorations after the decision is made to call it a day and turn back. A scientific surveyor in a later age, a Cook or Vancouver perhaps, could demand such diligence of his ship's company but hardly a Cabot. Besides, the explorer himself was not looking for fishing harbours. His aim was to reach Cipango. At the very least, in his New Found Land he had discovered a way-station, where ships could stop for their crews to rest and replenish supplies. At best, he had proven that it was possible to reach Asia by extending the old Greenland route. Once he had decided to return to Bristol with this new knowledge, there was nothing to be gained by risking the loss of his ship in some wild and rock-strewn bay on the northern coast. His task by then was to get safely home since anything else would have wasted all his exertions. Thus, I take Day's and Pasqualigo's evidence to mean simply that, after his brief period ashore, Cabot sailed clockwise around Newfoundland for a few hundred miles, turned back, went anti-clockwise for several hundred, and finally reached Cape Bauld after about 950 miles of coasting.

From Cape Race to Cape Bauld, headland to headland, is close to 500 miles. Hence, the other 450 or so of the coasting is available to sail from any

hypothesized landfall to Cape Race and for a return trip westwards from there along the southern coast of Newfoundland. If the *Matthew's* landfall was indeed at the site most commonly claimed by the Province's tourism department, Bonavista, then Cabot could have reached Burin and St. Pierre before turning back. A landfall further west, near Twillingate perhaps, would also fit the evidence, though with a point of return somewhere near Placentia Bay. Unless Pasqualigo's "300 leagues" was a serious under-estimate, however, Cabot could not have reached Cape Ray and the Strait that bears his name even if his landfall was at its most easterly probable point, in the vicinity of St. John's. Nor, of course, could he have reached Cape Breton, which would anyway have involved an open-sea crossing for which there is no evidence in the documentation nor any clear motive.

Armed with this analysis of the documentary evidence, it is possible to suggest not only where Cabot went after he sighted land that morning in June 1497 but why. To do so, we must see the world from his perspective. Sailing south and west from the general vicinity of Cape Farewell, he had encountered what he took to be the Asian shore, in the latitude where we now know Sakhalin Island to lie. He supposed his destination, Cipango, to lie to the south and west of him. However, the mass of Newfoundland lay across his

²⁸ Some authors have suggested that Pasqualigo's 300 leagues was the length of the coast explored, rather than the distance sailed in coasting – the distinction being important since Cabot is known to have retraced part of his route around the New Found Land. That seems to be an unnecessary reading and, moreover, one that requires the *Matthew* to have averaged 5 or 6 knots through the water when coasting, unless Cabot either enjoyed consistently favourable winds or dared to sail an unknown coast in darkness. None of those eventualities is probable.

path and, after a brief landing to claim the territory for King Henry, he had to turn either west or southeast, seeking a route around this obstacle. If he tried the former, he would soon enough have found his way barred by the Long Range Mountains but it seems that he did not go that way. Perhaps seeing the mountain peaks on his western horizon or maybe sensing, from a position eastward of Bonavista, that the mouths of Trinity and Conception bays promised a clear route to the southwest not far away (as indeed they do), he turned the *Matthew* to the southeast and followed the coast.

Once around Cape Race, the setting changed for all on board. No longer was Newfoundland a barrier to progress towards Cipango. Instead, it blocked the direct route home. Cabot seems to have pressed on a little, maybe as far as Burin. However, once sure that the sea route was open to the southwest and the ports of the Great Khan, it was time to turn back for Bristol, bearing news of success. Perhaps persistent westerly headwinds helped the decision. It is even possible that the entire purpose of the 1497 voyage was to establish this route around Cape Race. There is compelling, though not conclusive, evidence that the Bristolians had already found Newfoundland and its cod resources²⁹. For example, Day noted:

It is considered certain that the cape of the [land reported by Cabot] was found and discovered in the past by the men from Bristol who found "Brasil" as your Lordship well knows.

When the Venetian arrived in their city with his wild plans for opening a trade route past the fishing grounds and on to the Far East, the Bristolians may have told him of the mountains that barred the way both west and south. If so, Cabot perhaps deduced that a short sail to the southeast would allow him to round the obstruction but he would have had to prove that supposition to a sceptical audience. The 1497 voyage with but one small ship, wholly inadequate to impress the Great Khan as Cabot must have known, would then make sense as a single, small step rather than an intended voyage all of the way to Cipango.

Rounding Cape Race again on the return from the Burin area may have restored some confidence in the crew or maybe the wind turned to the east for a time and pushed the *Matthew* westwards. Whatever the reason, rather than striking north through open water to the desired latitude, as he had done west of Ireland on the outward voyage, Cabot kept on along the coast, looking perhaps for signs of civilisation or favourable routes to the west. In doing so, he coasted the

entire shore of northeast Newfoundland. Reaching Cape Bauld, now late in the year and low on supplies, and finding himself in the latitude of Dursey Head, a suitable landfall for a mariner approaching Bristol from the far west, he declined to explore the open water beyond. Indeed, he must have seen that the westerly wind which was urging him homeward was not accompanied by a heavy swell north of the Cape: clear evidence that there was a land mass not far over the windward horizon. So, leaving the Strait of Belle Isle's secrets for Cartier to unravel, Cabot turned the *Matthew* for home.

Two weeks (if we are to believe Day's remarkable report – an average of nearly six knots) of what was intended as latitude sailing, with favourable winds all the way, carried him to Europe. Through a navigational error blamed on the crew, however, Cabot made landfall in Brittany. From there, a routine coasting sail brought the little ship to Bristol and a hero's welcome about the 6th of August.

The landfall in Brittany has exercised the imagination of many. Some commentators have tried to re-calibrate Cabot's latitudes, based on his arrival south of the English Channel rather than at Dursey Head, thus moving all of his locations on the western shore some 150 miles southwards. That is unwarranted. The precision of the few surviving reports strongly suggests that

²⁹ Marcus (*op.cit.*).

Cabot enjoyed clear weather at least twice while on the Newfoundland shore, allowing him to estimate the latitudes of Cape Bauld and Cape Pine. His homeward voyage, however, was made at such a speed as to require the strong winds of a series of depressions. With overcast skies and uncertainty about the compass variation (Cabot seeking to allow for it by heading north of magnetic east, his crew disagreeing), an arrival in Brittany is no surprise.

Drawing all of this argument together leads to the conclusion that, if Cabot did not land at the "traditional" site of Bonavista, then he most likely did so between there and Twillingate. No landfall outside that area can be made to fit the available evidence without improbable interpretations, whereas a landing on that stretch of coast does conform with all we know from contemporary sources, save one reported distance that would place the "Isle of Seven Cities" in mid-Atlantic, a second that underestimates the width of the ocean and some minor confusion over the number of islands found in the west. It is not necessary to claim that Cabot's latitudes or distances were inaccurate, nor that he lied to conceal his true track.

Maritime Calendar 1999

April 5-9 The Impact of European Expansion: History and Environment, International Seminar, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal (Information: Atlantic

History Study Centre, Rua dos Ferreiros 165, 9000 Funchal, Madeira [tel.: +351 91-229635; FAX: +351 91-230341; e-mail: avieira@mail.telepac.pt]

April 12-15 "Contemporary Maritime Missions," Fifth International Maritime Mission Conference, Antwerp, Belgium (Information: Stephen Friend, Religious and Cultural Studies, College of Ripon and York St. John, York YO3 7EX, UK [FAX: +44 1904-612512])

July 11-16 "The Cartography of the Mediterranean World," Eighteenth International Conference on the History of Cartography, Athens, Greece (Information: Mr. George Tobias, Eighteenth International Congress on the History of Cartography, National Hellenic Research Foundation, 48 Vassileos Konstantinou Avenue, GR-116 35 Athens [tel.: +30 1-721-0554; FAX: +30 1-724-6212; WWW: <http://www.ihr.sas.ac.uk/maps/confs.html>])

August 9-12 "Eclipse 99: Navigational Stimulus to the History of Science," Conference, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, UK (Information: Dr. P.A.H. Seymour, Principal Lecturer in Astronomy, Institute of Marine Studies, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon PL4 8AA [tel.: +44 1752-232462; FAX: +44 1752-232406])

August 9-14 Joint Conference of the Association for the History of the Northern Seas and the Canadian Nautical Research Society, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Corner Brook, NF (Information: Dr. Olaf U. Janzen, Dept. of History, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Corner Brook, NF A2H 6P9 [tel.: +1 709-637-6282; FAX: +1 709-639-8125; e-mail: Olaf@beothuk.swgc.mun.ca ; WWW: <http://www.swgc.mun.ca/ahns>])

August 14-21 Eleventh General Assembly of the International Cartographic Association, Ottawa, ON (Information: ICA Ottawa 1999, 615 Booth Street, Room 500, Ottawa, ON K1A 0E9 [tel.: +1 613-992-9999; FAX: +1 613-995-8737; e-mail: ica1999@ccrs.nrcan.gc.ca ; WWW: <http://www.ccrs.nrcan.gc.ca/ica1999>])

August Sixth Conference of the North Sea Society, Hull, UK (Information: Dr. David J. Starkey, Dept. of History, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK [tel.: +44 1482-465624; FAX: +44 1482-466126; e-mail: D.J.Starkey@hist.hull.ac.uk])

September 20-24 International Seminar on Sugar's Technological History, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal (Information: Atlantic History Study Centre, Rua dos Ferreiros 165, 9000 Funchal, Madeira [tel.: +351 91-229635; FAX: +351 91-230341; e-mail: avieira@mail.telepac.pt])

October 26th Annual Conference of the Nautical Research Guild, San Diego Maritime Museum, San Diego, CA (Information: Nautical Research Guild, 19 Pleasant St., Everett, MA 02149 [e-mail: genenrg@Naut-Res-Guild.org ; WWW: <http://www.Naut-Res-Guild.org>])

November 9-14 Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers Annual Conference, San Diego, CA (Information: Barbara Trentham, SNAME, 601 Pavonia Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07306 [tel.: +1 201-798-4800 or +1 800-798-2188; FAX: +1 201-798-4975; e-mail: btrentham@sname.org ; WWW: <http://www.sname.org>])