

ARGONAUTA

The Newsletter of



**The Canadian Nautical
Research Society**

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ARGONAUTA

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Our Website: <http://www.marmus.ca/CNRS/>

In this Issue

<i>Editorial</i>	1
<i>Council Corner</i>	2
<i>Call for Nominations</i>	4
<i>Letters</i>	4
<i>Research Queries</i>	5
<i>Notes of Interest</i>	6
<i>2000 CNRS Award Committee Report</i>	7
<i>Call for Papers, CNRS 2002 Conference</i>	9
<i>Articles</i>	
- Robin H. Wyllie "Maritime Provinces Steam Passenger Vessels"	8
- William Glover "Nautical Nostalgia"	13
<i>Members' News</i>	15
<i>Notice to Amend the Bylaws of the CNRS</i>	16
<i>Advertisements</i>	

Editorial

Many among us will remember the heady days of high interest rates in the early 1980s. "Six and five" was the hue and cry of the Liberals then in power in Ottawa and voluntary restraints were being debated in all of the nation's newspapers. In fact I can remember my political masters arguing that they could not give me a raise due to 6 and 5. Well "six and five" are back with us this time due to the work of the CNRS Council and President, Bill Glover. Unlike the controversial early 80's the CNRS Council is fully committed to their version of 6 and 5. The planning is tight and the CNRS finances even more so, but if all goes well each Member of the CNRS will receive six issues of *The Northern Mariner* in 2002 and five issues in 2003. Now if you think you are being asked to do something to help this good ship make its way to windward off a lee shore then you are right. When the CNRS renewal notices arrive, please send in your subscription as soon as possible. Think about signing up

another member or maybe giving a gift subscription to a friend, or perhaps a student who has come to your notice.

I do not think anyone needs an excuse to visit Halifax but if you must, then consider our Annual Conference and General Meeting to be held 20-22 June. There is a constant parade of ships in the harbour, the Marine Museum of the Atlantic has 1st class exhibits and the programme organizer, Richard Gimblett is working hard to ensure a strong programme. With winter upon us and armchairs beckoning what better time to plan a visit to the east coast of Canada.

Finally has anyone noticed the lack of good nautical lingo on television newscasts and in our newspapers? Gargantuan sailors are still throwing anchors over the side of 25,000 ton ships and worst of all, the vessels that the great Basil Lubbock would describe as "small fry" in *The Last of the Windjammers* are being touted

as tall ships. And of course windjammer and clipper are used interchangeably. It is not too late to fight this perfidious evil.

MS

Council Corner

Members of Council met in Kingston on 19 January for the semi-annual meeting. The agenda included a review of the web site, publications, money of course, and the nominating committee. Before the business began there was a special presentation. Members who attended the annual general meeting will remember that Faye Kert, reporting for the Awards Committee, had to postpone the announcement of the Keith Matthews Book Award winner for 2000. The decision has now been made and on behalf of Faye I was able to present the award to Roger Sarty, who was at the meeting as the new chair of the Editorial Board. The prize was awarded to *Guardian of the Gulf: Sydney, Cape Breton and the Atlantic War*. It was jointly written by Roger and Brian Tennyson. Congratulations to them both for a fine piece of work. We then got down to work.

The web site has been constructed by Bill Schleihau, our secretary. It is hosted by the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes at Kingston, and the web address is www.marmus.ca/CNRS/. It has been available at this address since last July. Websites, like newsletters, are only as good as the material that is provided. When you go to the site you will see that you can respond directly to Bill as the webmaster if you have ideas, comments, or

new material. [Bill notes that the very first item on his wish list is material en français.]

The Editorial Board does an important part of the behind-the-scenes work getting *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* out to the printer. Each year at the January meeting the Council appoints six members of the board for a three year term. In addition to the normal retirement of members of the board, there will be some changes made as it reflects the needs of a new editor. In the last newsletter I announced that Roger Sarty had accepted nomination as chair of that board. Jim Pritchard has been the vice-chair, but in anticipation of becoming the president of the society, and therefore an *ex officio* member of the board, he has stepped down. I am pleased to announce that Michael Hadley, a member of the Editorial Board since 1997 and well known to all members of the society, has agreed to serve as the vice-chair. With this issue of *Argonauta* you are also receiving the April 2001 issue of *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord*. (In my last column I had said the April issue of *NM* would be mailed in early January. I certainly received it from the printer in time for that, but the obvious ability to save mailing costs but combining it with this issue made sense. I also decided to hold this issue of *Argonauta* until after the Council meeting so I could report on that.) The July 2001 issue should be going to the printer in February followed by an issue every other month until we hope to be mailing the July 2003 issue in that month. Wherever possible we will combine the mailing with an issue of *Argonauta*. However, as six issues of *NM* must go to the printer in this calendar year and five next year as we move back to our old mailing schedule, and in 2001 we had three mailings of

Argonauta without the journal, we will obviously be facing higher mailing costs for a few years. This leads easily to a brief review of our financial position.

The projection of a "normal year - four mailings of the newsletter and journal - our membership dues appear very nearly to equal our printing and mailing costs. Office overheads, such as buying envelopes, postage as necessary, and photocopying, have been met to date by contributions. The conference in 2001 was very nearly self-funding. We anticipate a shortfall for the book review editor's mailing subsidy that was approved at the annual general meeting, and of course for the extraordinary mailing costs through 2003. However, as was agreed at the AGM, we have money in the bank to cover deficits, and we will review the expenditures regularly.

The challenge of maintaining and increasing membership will always be ever present. Some late renewals for 2001 are still trickling in but it would appear that the net total of members for 2001 remains steady. The renewal forms for 2002 will be mailed with the July 2001 issue and a second renewal notice will be sent with the October issue. It would be a great help to the finances of the Society if members renewed promptly and we had a complete mailing list for 2002 when the January issue will be ready for mailing. (That is projected for the summer.)

At our next annual meeting, in Halifax in June, we will be electing a new council. Our by-laws limit the president and the two vice-presidents to three one-year terms and both Jim Pritchard and I will have completed them. Ed Reed, our past-president, the chair of the nominating committee, will be issuing a call for

nominations [*which may be found later in this issue*]. Please give that serious thought. In addition to the executive officers, we elect four members of council.

Our conferences are an important part of the work of the Society and I am pleased to report that through 2004 we have an interesting schedule. As I wrote in my last column, this year's conference is in Halifax and will look closely at that port in peace and war. I am pleased to be able to report that the executive of the International Commission for Maritime History at its meeting in Fremantle in December accepted our invitation to meet with us next year in Vancouver. The conference dates will most likely be in mid-August. The theme is "Ships: Their Lives, Work, and People." The 2004 conference has also been announced. It will be held in Ottawa to celebrate the centenary of the creation of the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

In this column I have described a number of things that "I have done. Anyone who wishes to ask me in more detail about anything discussed here may reach me most easily by e-mail at the address below. I look forward to meeting with as many of you as possible at Halifax in June.

Bill Glover

President, CNRS

williamglover@sympatico.ca

Call for Nominations

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

President
First Vice-President
Second Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Councillors (Four to be elected)

Nominations must be made in writing by **three** members of the Society in good standing individuals or institutions that have paid their dues for 2001 and that have no arrears. The individual(s) so nominated must also be members of the Society in good standing and must, in addition, indicate in writing a willingness to serve if elected. All terms of office are for one year.

Nominations must be received by the Chairman of the Nominating Committee no later than **Thursday, 18 April 2002**. *A mail ballot will be held shortly following the close of nominations if a vote is required.*

Please direct nominations and requests for additional information to:

Mr. G. Edward Reed
Chairman, Nominating Committee
The Canadian Nautical Research Society
517 Hillcrest Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario, K2A 2N1
Phone: (613) 722-4379 (H); (613) 782-8182 (O)
Fax: (613) 782-8184 or (613) 782-7707
E-mail: ereed@bank-banque-canada.ca

Letters

From Fraser McKee

In the October 2001 *Argonauta* on pp. 22-23 Olaf Janzen notes the increase in criticism and attention to the recoveries of treasures from sunken wrecks as rather supported by the *National Geographic*, to the great annoyance of marine archaeologists.

Well let me play Devil's Advocate. As neither a diver, an archaeologist nor a treasure-seeker, but an historian I'm not at all sure this preservation of wrecks, wreck sites and underwater archaeology in situ is in the general interest, or even the general good at all. I even have some serious reservations about the vociferous support for complete untouched maintenance of sunken ships as "memorials" or "grave sites" for those who died therein. *Titanic* and HMS *Edinburgh* for

example. Even land cemeteries allow burials in plots "on top of much earlier family members after a varying period of as little as 35 years, on the theory that there is relatively nothing left anyway. The plot itself is sacred ground, and there is, quite rightly, strong oppositions to moving or ploughing over abandoned cemeteries in the name of progress and civic expansion.

But if those sites and artifacts now underwater are only to be seen or even studied by diving archaeologists, even with the most comprehensive reporting and beautiful *National Geographic* style photographs, then are we not appealing to only in infinitely small percentage of the population? I have no problem with the concept that any unique items raised from the deep should be preserved in such a technical manner that they do not perish on exposure. Probably the greatest to be seen is the Swedish *Wasa*. I would love deep diving; looking at a video is completely banal, and I appreciate those espousing the raising them would need funding to do so, even if it meant selling off some of the artifacts, as long as others remained with the exhibit.

But if items are in such abundance that their dispersal will in fact aid in future exploration by making these ventures profitable, then surely in the face of any other serious "official support, this should be supported, not decried. I would be delighted to have a *Titanic* dinner plate to mount on the wall, the way I have a framed silver real from the sunken merchantman *John Barry*. The fact that men and women died in these ships' losses is no way diminished thereby. In fact these items tend to enhance the stories, bring

them better into public light, make one think of those that lost their lives in association with these items. Same for gold and jewellery trinkets raised from Spanish treasure ships. Seen in museums or even private collections they make more immediate the days of the Spanish Main, the days of fighting sail or facing gales in unwieldy ships, or of crossing the ocean in "floating palaces .

If I died in a shipwreck, I would hope some tangible remains are brought to the surface to that others may see, even hold or own something that touched my life, and now theirs. The relatively small group of divers and archaeologists should be encouraged to support the preservation of the underwater sites. But they ill serve the cause when they are over protective.

Research Query

Paul Jordan (Vice-President of the Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society of Victoria, B.C.) asks:

I am currently researching the vessel *Princess Louise* (ex *Olympia* 1869). She was a walking beam engine sidewheeler built in New York in 1869, sold to Hudson's Bay Company in 1878 and purchased by the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company in 1879 and renamed *Princess Louise*. The ship worked on the New Westminster to Victoria run and was the first of Canadian Pacific's fleet of Coastal passenger ships in British Columbia. She should not be confused with a later CP coastal passenger vessel of the same name.

I am trying to locate authentic plans and documentation for the vessel and have not had any success in our Maritime Museums in Victoria and Vancouver. I am being helped in my research by the noted author Robert D Turner, but as yet we are unable to locate any authentic ship's plans or general arrangement information. The objective is to eventually build a 1:48 Scale working model of the ship which has not been attempted before.

I am also trying to ascertain the original builder in New York to see if the Smithsonian may have plans of the ship. Since I am trying to explore every avenue, I am writing to you for any advice in conducting my research or the names of any of your members who may share a similar interest in the era and location of this vessel.

Additionally, Paul is interested in the *Fairy* sidewheeler of 1853 (the first American Steamer on Puget Sound) and *Maude* asidewheeler 1872 built for East Coast Mail Line and sold to Canadian Pacific Navigation in 1883. His e-mail address is: paulrjordan@canada.com.

Notes of Interest

HMCS *Haida* – Closer to Hamilton?

As reported in the January and April 2001 issues of *Argonauta*, plans have been laid to move HMCS *Haida* from her berth in Toronto to Hamilton. They are, perhaps, closer to hatching, for on the 18th of December, the Honourable Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage (and MP for

the riding of Hamilton-East), announced a plan for the restoration and relocation of the ship.

She said that Parks Canada will contribute up to \$5 million towards the project which would see her moored alongside the Naval Reserve Division HMCS *Star* in Hamilton Harbour. *Perhaps* the move will be made in the autumn of 2002, with the ship open in Hamilton the next summer. What counts is the long-term survival of the ship: not just over the next couple of years, but for the rest of the century and beyond. Let's hope that *Haida's* repairs are in fact made, and that where ever she ends up residing, that she will be taken care of.

Former HMCS *Gatineau* For Divers?

It was reported in January 2002 that there are plans afoot to scuttle the *Restigouche* class *Gatineau* in Lake Ontario. The organisation Waterfront Alliance Kingston made a proposal to the City of Kingston to have her docked at Block D in May 2002 while being prepared for scuttling, which would occur in June of 2003. As reported in the last issue of *Argonauta*, her cousin *Nipigon* is currently alongside in Rimouski Quebec being readied for her sinking as an artificial reef, also scheduled for the summer of 2003.

World Ship Trust Awards

In December, it was announced that the World Ship Trust presented its Maritime Heritage Award to the "Hanse Cog

(preserved in Bremerhaven) and *Cap San Diego* (Hamburg). The Hanse Cog of 1380 was excavated from the River Weser in the early 1960s, and is representative of an important step in the evolution of cargo vessels.

The *San Diego*, built in 1962, is an example of the common bulk cargo liner that was swept aside by the container revolution.

Demise of *Maritime Affairs*

Sad news came in the latest issue of *Maritime Affairs* (produced by an autonomous division of the Naval Officers' Association of Canada) it will cease publication this summer. This is unfortunate for several reasons. Most importantly *MA* was making a brave attempt at explaining the importance of the sea and maritime commerce and communications to Canada. Despite popular misconception, we *are* a maritime nation. From a historical standpoint, there were regular articles on RCN and maritime history: for example, the Spring 2001 issue provided a useful brief on the history of the container and container ships.

There is hope, however, that fragments of *Maritime Affairs* will survive: an electronic journal is being investigated; a new website devoted to RCN history is being considered; and lastly *Starshell*, the regular publication of NOAC, will expand its role in discussing and broadcasting maritime and naval policy. For now, keep watching the NOAC website:

www.naval.ca

2000 CNRS Awards Committee Results

by Faye Kert

Keith Matthews Award

The Matthews Award Committee consisting of Faye Kert (Chair), Michael Hennessy and Roger Sarty, reviewed 6 books published in the year 2000 and the four volumes of *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* published in that year. Because one of the selected book titles was co-authored by a member of the Awards Committee, President William Glover agreed to review that particular book for the Committee. There were several strong contenders for awards in both article and book categories, but the committee decided as follows:

Best Book: *Guardian of the Gulf: Sydney, Cape Breton and the Atlantic War*

by **Brian Tennyson** and **Roger Sarty**, published by University of Toronto Press (2000).

Best Article: "Grand Admiral Donitz (1891-1980): A Dramatic Key to the Man behind the Mask"

by **Dr. Michael Hadley**

The Northern Mariner/ Le marin du nord, Vol. X, No 2, (April/avril 2000)

Dr. Hadley received his certificate and acknowledgment in the Fall of 2001 but the decision regarding the selection of Best Book was delayed due to difficulties in obtaining review copies and the schedules of the reviewers. Drs Tennyson and Sarty will receive their certificates and letters following the January 2002 Executive Meeting.

Gerry Panting Award

The recipient of this award, named after the late Gerry Panting of Memorial University of Newfoundland, must be in the early stages of his or her career in maritime research. It includes a financial award of \$500 to assist with travel to present a paper at the annual CNRS conference.

The recipient for 2000-01 was Kimberley Monk, a Canadian studying at East Carolina University in North Carolina. Her paper, "A Prince among Welland Canallers ? : Documenting the History of the Schooner-barge *Sligo*" was presented in May 2001 at the joint CNRS -NASOH conference in Kingston, Ontario.

Books Reviewed

Bell, Christopher, *The Royal Navy, Seapower and Strategy Between the Wars*, Stanford University Press, 2000.

Freeman, Dave, *Canadian Warship Names*, Vanwell Publishing, 2000.

Hague, Arnold, *The Allied Convoy System, 1939-45*, Vanwell Publishing, 2000.

Perkins, Dave, *The Canadian Submarine Service in Review*, Vanwell Publishing, 2000.

Tennyson, Brian and Roger Sarty, *Guardian of the Gulf: Sydney, Cape Breton and the Atlantic War*, University of Toronto Press, 2000.

Turner, Robert D., *Those Beautiful Coastal Liners*, Sono Nis Press, 2000.

Maritime Provinces Steam

Passenger Vessels

By Robin H. Wyllie

S. S. Mahone

Specifications:

Official Number:	116515
Builder:	I. Wagner, Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia
Date Built:	1904
Gross Tonnage:	127
Overall Length:	86.0 feet
Breadth:	19.8 feet
Draught:	10.5 feet

The Canadian Nautical Research Society La Société canadienne de la recherche nautique

**Annual Conference and General Meeting:
Halifax & the North Atlantic in Peace & War
20-22 June 2002
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Canadian Nautical Research Society (CNRS) invites paper proposals for its Annual Conference being held in Halifax, Nova Scotia on 20-22 June 2002. The theme for this year's conference is *Halifax & the North Atlantic in Peace & War*. The CNRS is open to paper proposals on a wide range of topics related to the conference theme. The deadline for the Call for Papers is **31 March 2002**. For more information on the CNRS and the upcoming conference, visit <http://www.marmus.ca/CNRS>.

Please note that due to technical problems, paper proposals submitted previously to the CNRS may have been lost. Please contact Dr. Richard Gimblett (613 830 8633 / richard.gimblett@sympatico.ca) to confirm receipt of your paper submission.

**Conférence annuelle et Assemblée générale :
Halifax & l'Atlantique Nord en temps de Paix et de Guerre
20-22 juin 2002
Halifax, Nouvelle-Écosse**

DEMANDE DE PROPOSITIONS DE COMMUNICATIONS

La Société canadienne de la recherche nautique (SCRN) vous invite à proposer des communications qui seront présentées à l'occasion de la prochaine Conférence annuelle qui se tiendra à Halifax du 20-22 juin 2002. Le thème de cette conférence est *Halifax & l'Atlantique Nord en temps de Paix et de Guerre*. La SCRN espère recevoir des propositions portant sur une grande variété de sujets liés à ce thème. La date limite pour présenter une proposition est le **31 mars 2002**. Pour plus d'information sur la SCRN et la conférence à venir, veuillez consulter le site internet <http://www.marmus.ca/CNRS/>.

Veuillez noter que dû à des problèmes techniques, les propositions de communications déposées antérieurement pourraient avoir été perdues. Prière de contacter Dr Richard Gimblett (613 830 8633 / richard.gimblett@sympatico.ca) afin de confirmer la réception de votre proposition.

Engine Builder: Burrell Johnson Iron Co.,
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia
Engine: Compound 2 cylinder
12" and 24" 18",
24 hp
Propulsion: screw

History:

Abraham Ernst of Mahone Bay had the *Mahone* built with a view to establishing a twice-weekly freight and passenger service between Halifax, Chester, Big Tancook Island and Mahone Bay. One of the few flush-decked coastal boats to be built in Nova Scotia, the sturdy little vessel was ideally suited for service among the rock-bound islands and shallow harbours of Nova Scotia's South Shore. Her relatively powerful engine and heavily-constructed bow were designed to facilitate winter operations in harbours which were often icebound in winter, while her flush deck obviated any concerns about freezing spray and the possibility of ice building up on the bow. Both factors played a major part in permitting *Mahone* to operate year-round.

Unfortunately, successful as the design of the vessel might have been, virtually all of the freight and passenger traffic between Halifax, Chester and Mahone Bay was being carried by the recently-opened Halifax and South Western Railway. In addition, Tancook Islanders, a frugal people, whose livelihoods depended upon the fishery, tended to use their own vessels when travelling back and forth to the mainland.

Ernst kept the service going only until 1909, when word was received that the group of businessmen from Rivière du Loop were looking for a suitable vessel, with which to establish a winter ferry service across the St. Lawrence. *Mahone*, with her forty-passenger capacity and generous cargo space, was, it turned out, exactly what they had been looking for.

A service between Rivière du Loop, which was served by both the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific railways, and the North Shore had been established by William Price and Company around 1905. The company's paddle steamers were, however, quite unsuited to winter conditions and operated only during the open season. With this in view, and in the hope of encouraging the growth of local forest industries and the development of the North Shore, a group of local businessmen, supported by the Chamber of Commerce, formed Trans Saint-Laurent Ltée in 1909.

The company inaugurated service on the 24th of June with the paddle steamer *Contest* (1872) which had been chartered until the converted steam yacht *Scionda* (1887) became available. However, on July 2nd, *Scionda* sank near L'Isle-aux-Coudres. No lives were lost and the vessel was eventually salvaged. In September, *Contest* was replaced by the P.S. *Rhoda* until the *Mahone* arrived on the scene in November.

Under the command of Captain Jean "Johnny" Deslauriers, *Mahone* made the conception of winter cross-navigation of the St. Lawrence a reality and completed a record

number of trips on her regular twice-weekly mail, passenger and cargo run between Rivière du Loup and Tadoussac. In 1910, she was requisitioned by the Government for a trip to Port Esquimaux, as a replacement for Holiday Brothers' *General Wolfe*, which had run aground at Harrington. On special runs during the winters of 1910 to 1914, the vessel carried mail and vital supplies to the isolated villages along the Lower North Shore.

Business was so good that, in 1911, Trans Saint-Laurent Ltée was able to purchase the *Thor*, one of the older Price Company paddle ferries, for service during the open season.

All went well until the fall of 1914, when the company's success came to the attention of the acquisitive Quebec & Levis Ferry Company Ltd. Then big money and politics entered the picture. First the *Mahone* was condemned by Quebec Government inspectors, who stated that she did not meet the requirements for the winter North Shore ferry service. Then, as Trans Saint-Laurent Ltée no longer had a suitable vessel, the Government transferred the balance of the subsidy the company had been granted to the Quebec and Levis Ferry Company and that was that.

Unable to operate, or to afford a replacement for *Mahone*, Trans Saint-Laurent went out of business. The Quebec Company first tried their old paddle ferry *Pilot* (1884) on the run. She was caught in the ice and thrown on the rocks at L'Isle Rouge in January 1916.

She was not replaced and, in February, by hook or by crook, a group from Tadoussac managed to take over the *Mahone* and operate her on the run until the ice went out. She was then replaced by yet another old Quebec paddle ferry, the *Queen* (1886), which, not surprisingly, managed to run aground at low tide in the shallow waters of Baie Ste. Catherine in October of the same year.

Eventually, the Quebec Government did learn that the winter North Shore ferry run, subject as it is to the vagaries of ice, weather and treacherous currents, was no place for an old Quebec-Levis ferry. Even so, it was not until 1927, thanks to legislation approving new subsidies, that winter ferry service between Rivière du Loup and the North Shore was fully restored.

In the meantime, the redoubtable *Mahone* was sold to a Halifax owner and, as far as can be determined, she spent the rest of her career as a harbour craft in Nova Scotia waters. Her name was finally removed from the records in 1939.

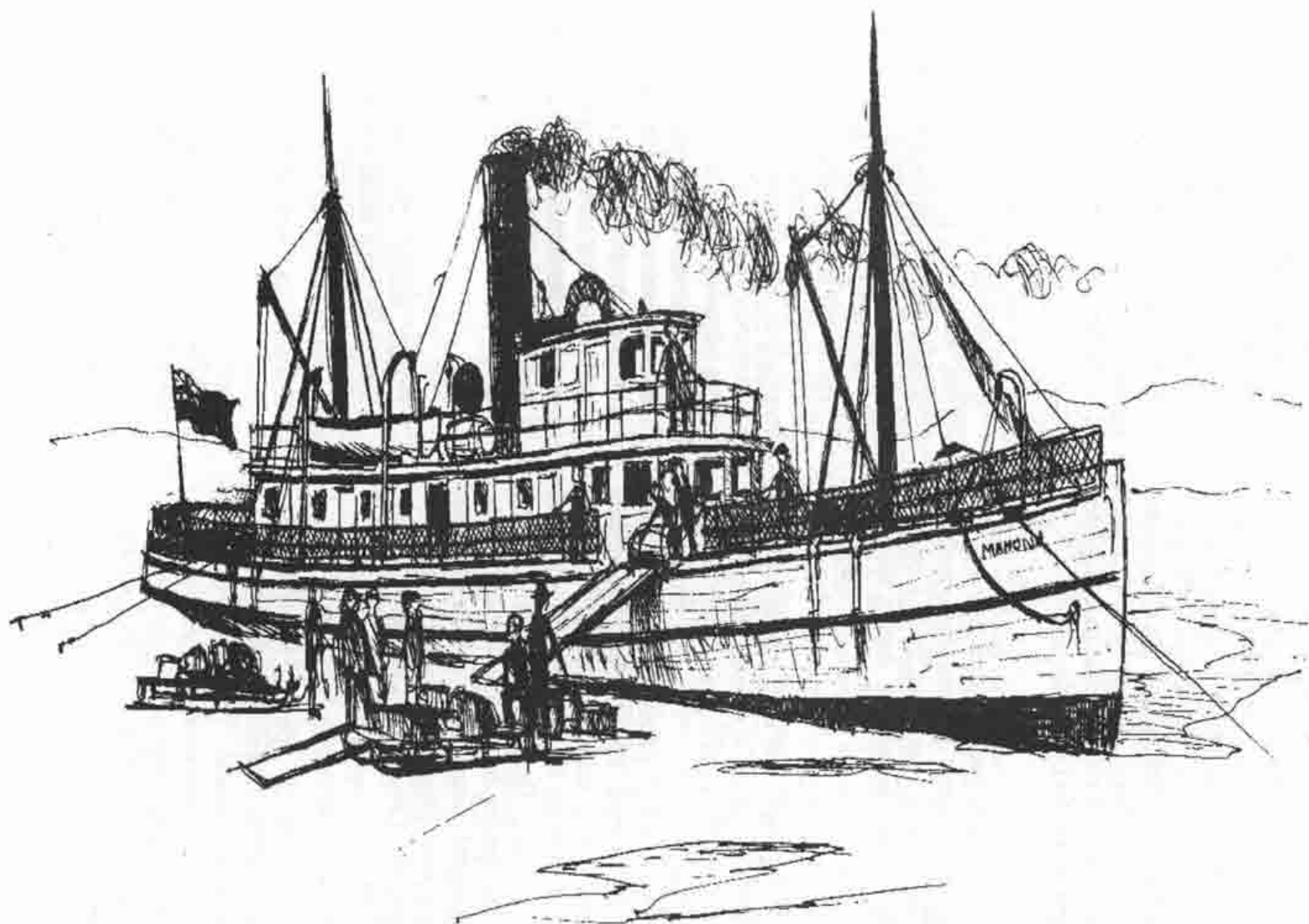
Sources:

Franck, Alain. *La Traversée de Rivière du Loup: 76 ans d'histoire mouvementée*.

L'Escale, mai-juin 1985.

Mills, John M. *Canadian Inland and Coastal Steam Vessels 1809-1930*. Providence, R.I., 1979.

Assorted registers, contemporary timetables, newspapers and almanacs.



S.S. MAHONE AT BIG TANCOOK

ROBIN H. WYLLIE '01

Nautical Nostalgia

by William Glover

Museums must surely be in the forefront of the battle to preserve national culture and identity. With global markets breaking down smaller national markets and fashions and tastes reflecting the "wannabees" desire to copy someone else and be someone else rather than their own national identity, the challenge confronting museums as custodians and preservers of our material past and that identity is all the greater. For maritime museums in a continental country the task is even greater. My recent trip to Fremantle for a maritime history conference afforded me the opportunity to visit several museums. What they are doing and how they are doing it may be of interest to readers of this column.

Singapore was a "first" for me. A harbour cruise gives the tourist a glimpse of the steady stream of large ships in the Straits of Singapore heading for the Straits of Malacca. It must redefine for the resident of southern Ontario familiar with the 401 highway the concept of "busy". We were told that over 800 ships visit the port in a year. In fact the port has six different facilities. At one of them there is the capacity to load twenty-five ships alongside simultaneously. Given the obvious importance of the port to the economy of Singapore one might think that the maritime museum would be quite special. Unfortunately amidst the commercial rush it is rather forgotten. Most of the displays are in buildings that have a roof but no walls. The harmful effects of the climate, bright sun and high humidity, were obvious. Even so the museum did have a very good display on the

development of the modern port. A lone crane used for lifting machinery that was installed in 1879 gives a dramatic picture of the way cargo handling has changed. Its safe working load from a seven foot gauge railway was 6 tons at 28 feet to 10 tons at 17 feet. Handcarts and wagons reinforced the image of how long turn around time must have been. The museum also had an extensive collection of small local craft. Unfortunately poor signage left this North American visitor little the wiser for the differences between them, their use, or their original owners.

As is so frequently the case when one is at a conference, the time to see the maritime museum at Fremantle was limited, even though we had some sessions in one of their rooms. What was new for me were the displays of the Dutch East India Company. After their ships had cleared the Cape of Good Hope, they had a clear sail east across the Indian Ocean until by dead reckoning they thought it was time to turn north. Those who left that decision too late left their bones on the west coast of Australia. The problems of ownership of the wrecks led to the establishment more than twenty-five years ago of an international (Australia and Holland) multi-level (Australia is a federation of states) committee that has done excellent work. Indeed, it has become a cultural properties committee model for the United Nations. The Fremantle museum has the port quarter of the *Batavia* on display. Its preservation presented problems similar to those of the *Mary Rose* and the *Vasa*. I was surprised by the size of the timbers. Perhaps that was because in the complete reconstructions they are not as visible.

The maritime museum at Auckland has the enormous advantage of a superb location on the America's Cup yacht harbour. It is an excellent museum for the interested adult. In addition to the expected galleries of aboriginal craft, early European discovery and the immigration experience, there is an excellent series of collections focussed on water recreation. This included Olympic rowing gold and, of course which the America's cup for yacht racing. (The museum has a replica; the real thing may be seen at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, a short car ride from the downtown area.)

It will probably occasion no surprise that to my mind the unsung hero and first place winner of the museums I had the opportunity to visit was the Vancouver Maritime Museum. It is well worth the effort to leave the beaten track (my cab driver had to ask directions) and see it. Jim Delgado, the director, has combined solid intellectual substance, matters of interest for the casual viewer, **and** children's "discovery centres and play areas in almost every gallery. Thus the museum does become a family event. Its centrepiece is of course the *St Roch* but the green lawns running down to the water with splendid scenery offer a close second. If we are not to forget our maritime past entirely, other museums could do worse than to borrow what they can where they are able from the display ideas of this museum.

All the Museums I saw had a common failing, and I include in this sweeping statement the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. Their stores sold coffee mugs, T-shirts, and other geegaws for tourists, but virtually nothing for the serious student or for

the tourist whose interest had been piqued. Their bookstores, or what passed for bookstores, were almost non-existent. I have been assured by those in the museum world that the bean-counters won't let them sell books because the profit margin is not high enough, that such a store would be a drain on the operating budget rather than a profit centre. But if maritime museums cannot offer a solid selection of related books, where can the serious student go? And if the bean counters are correct, why for example does the National Gallery of Canada have, and has consistently had, such a good book store?

Like so much else, if we believe it is of value and worth preserving, we must be seen doing something about it. I am sure a museum near you would be grateful for an offer to volunteer, to provide your expertise to keep it alive for others, and for your purchases at the museum store. Surely in the end it is worth it, even if it takes time to order in a book. A museum membership will probably give you a discount comparable to a chain book store's loyalty programme anyway! Help our museums work towards their goal of preserving our yesterdays, like the crane at Singapore, and todays, such as the Auckland museum's display of the recreational use of water, for tomorrow's nostalgia of where we have been. And if your are a member of a museum, go and have a critical look. Are the signs viewer friendly for someone with little background and, more important, are the displays family friendly? If not, volunteer your time, knowledge, or money to help preserve our national maritime past and identity.

Members' News

Brian Hill of the Institute for Marine Dynamics of the National Research Council in St. John's Newfoundland, and member **Alan Ruffman** of Halifax, Nova Scotia, have teamed up to compile a *Historical Record of the Incidence of Sea Ice for the Scotian Shelf and Gulf of St. Lawrence 1769, 1805 to 1962* for a group of climate change researchers at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. The presence or absence of drift ice, its time of appearance, or its time of disappearance serve as a proxy for the climate offshore. This proxy is especially important in the 19th century where there are few systematic records of temperature or precipitation recorded at onshore stations for most of the Atlantic Canada.

Brian has previously assembled an historical record of ice and icebergs off southern Labrador, and northeast and eastern Newfoundland. His compilation of collisions with, and deaths from, icebergs is particularly instructive, and can be viewed at the NRC website at www.nrc.ca/imd/ice. In the current compilation which is in progress, a run of Charlottetown, Prince Edward island, newspapers has been extracted for ice information for the full survey period; in Nova Scotia a run of newspapers has been extracted from 1805 to 1941; and all copies of *The Western Star* of Corner Brook, Newfoundland, have been extracted up to the third year of WW II.

A recent research trip by the team to the U.S. National Archives in Washington has located all but 90 issues of the *Hydrographic*

Bulletin which regularly covered ice reports from 1889. An ice reports supplement map of the *Hydrographic Bulletin* was begun in the 1920s, and these were located. As well, a complete run of *The Pilot Chart of the North Atlantic Ocean* was located, and the ice reports extracted from its inception in 1883 through 1925.

Original Hydrographic Office ice index cards have also been located and copied for incorporation. Early original Canadian ice patrol data has been located in the National Archives of Canada, and the superintendents' reports from Sable Island are all being incorporated, along with the few lightkeepers' logs located.

The problem may be too much data, as the number of relevant entries will most certainly exceed 10,000. "Brian and I can handle too much data" says Alan, "but I am not sure I will ever be comfortable with the person on the podium in the oak-lined main reference reading room of the U.S. National Archives on Pennsylvania Avenue being a pistol-packing armed Guard! Needless to say Alan did not dare use a pen when pencils were mandatory!.

Graeme S. Mount at Laurentian University informs us that his recent publications include *Chile and the Nazis*, (Montreal: Black Rose Press), published in 2001 although the copyright says 2002. The book deals with navigational threats during World War II which resulted from Chile's ongoing ties with the Axis powers.

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