

The Canadian Nautical Research Society

2007 Keith Matthews Awards Committee Report

The committee to judge the best book was made up of the following members: Ian Yeates, Michael Hadley, and Serge Durlinger (Chair).

More than 30 publishers were invited to submit works for the 2007 Matthews Prize for best book. The committee reviewed 19 books, more than in any recent year. Eleven publishers were represented in the selection, though none from Canadian academic presses. The only academic work was submitted by a publisher in the Netherlands, the only non-Canadian entrant. Two other clearly academic books were published by Canadian commercial presses. All the books were written in English. A list of entrants is attached to this report. The most common genres were seafarers' reminiscences followed by west coast exploration and settlement, while other entrants covered such varied subjects as ship or ships' histories, the salmon fishery, the Great Lakes, naval biography, marine art, Newfoundland's maritime culture, and other topics. While the majority of the entrants were popular accounts, some were very professionally crafted.

The committee remained flexible in judging publications of differing approaches and intentions. The primary motivation in selecting a winner was to choose the book which made an important contribution to knowledge, exerted a strong impact in its field, encouraged maritime history in Canada or by Canadians, displayed literary merit, was likely to stimulate public interest in maritime history and publishing, had physical appeal, and was of the greatest overall use to nautical researchers.

It was the unanimous decision of the committee that the winner of the 2007 Keith Matthews Prize for best book be awarded to W.A.B. Douglas, Roger Sarty, Michael Whitby, et. al., *A Blue Water Navy: The Official Operational History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, 1943-1945*, Volume II, Part 2, Vanwell Publishing.

The winner of the 2007 Keith Matthews Prize for best book

W.A.B. Douglas, Roger Sarty, Michael Whitby, et. al., *A Blue Water Navy: The Official Operational History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, 1943-1945*, Volume II, Part 2. Vanwell Publishing.

A collaborative effort by several of Canada's best naval historians, *A Blue Water Navy* is a work of massive research on Canadian Second World War naval operations and organization. In reflective, penetrating, and uncommonly

informative text, supplemented by numerous rare images of Canada's naval war, the authors carefully detail, in addition to the navy's ongoing anti-submarine warfare role, the many other meaningful and wide-ranging achievements of the RCN in the final years of the war. An organizational triumph, the whole is skillfully interwoven into evolving strategic, institutional, and technological contexts. The authors engagingly recount a complex and important history of success and, occasionally, under-achievement. *A Blue Water Navy* has immediately become an indispensable, authoritative, and influential source for anyone researching Canada's wartime naval history.

Honourable Mentions:

- Barry Gough, *Fortune's a River: The Collision of Empires in Northwest America* (Harbour Publishing)

Fortune's a River is a wonderfully written, impressively researched account of a complex topic of major historiographical importance. Using the coveted Columbia River watershed as the basis of his study, Gough richly details early nineteenth-century US expansionism in the Pacific Northwest and deftly places the related hotly contested international territorial rivalry in sweeping geostrategic and commercial contexts. In challenging popular misconceptions of the famed Lewis and Clark expeditions, Gough offers compelling approaches to state formation and the origins of Anglo-American co-habitation in North America. *Fortune's a River* is a quick-flowing, expertly interwoven collage of exploration, settlement, trade, entrepreneurship, biography, and international relations.

- Dionisius A. Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean* (Brill – Netherlands)

Classic Ships of Islam is a work of penetrating scholarship linking the nature of watercraft construction and commercial undertakings in the Western Indian Ocean, including the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, and major river systems, from the 7th to the 16th centuries to broader seaborne cultural exchanges and technological transfers. Employing a complex integrated research approach borrowing from iconography, archaeology, ethnology, and linguistics, Agius provides a detailed assessment of the building processes of numerous vessel types and the multitude of communities of which they were a reflection. Impeccably researched and well illustrated, *Classic Ships of Islam* is also a superb production value.

- Hilda Chaulk Murray, *Of Boats On the Collar: How it was in One Newfoundland Fishing Community* (Flanker Press)

Part history, part nostalgic recollection, *Of Boats On the Collar* reignites the fading memories of Newfoundland's fishing and boat-building culture as it existed in generations past in the remote outport community of Elliston. Murray's highly detailed, lovingly rendered, and profusely illustrated work is a testimony to the

versatility, creativity, and courage of the local craftsmen and fishers who were so deeply engaged with the sea. *Of Boats On the Collar* is about Elliston, community, family, cod, the sea, and a lost way of life. It is an important contribution to understanding Newfoundland's history and folklore.

A cash prize of \$1,000 was provided to W.A.B. Douglas to be divided among the authors of *A Blue Water Navy* and certificates suitable for framing were sent to all the winners.

The 2007 Keith Matthews Prize for best article in *The Northern Mariner*

The committee to judge the best article in *The Northern Mariner* was made up of the following members: Ian Yeates, Roger Sarty, and Serge Durlinger (Chair).

It was the unanimous decision of the committee that the prize be awarded to Christopher Paul Magra for "Beyond the Banks: The Integrated Wooden Working World of Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts' Cod Fisheries," which appeared in Vol. XVII, No. 1, 1-16.

"Beyond the Banks" is an important contribution to 18th century US labour, commercial, colonial, and maritime history, clearly demonstrating the manpower overlap and seafaring connections in the fishing and fish-export trades. Christopher Paul Magra takes us behind the scenes of the late 18th century working and hiring practices of Massachusetts deep-sea fishers and export merchants to show that the same vessels, often with the same crews, plied both ends of this highly lucrative trade. It is a well-researched, highly detailed, convincingly argued piece.

A cash prize of \$250 and a certificate suitable for framing was sent to the author.

The 2007 Jacques Cartier MA Prize in Nautical History

The committee was made up of the following members: James Pritchard, Ian Yeates, and Serge Durlinger (Chair). Approximately 20 Canadian universities were advised of the Cartier Prize and requested to disseminate information about it through their internal communications channels.

Two submissions were received: 1) Erin Weir, "The Nazi Submarine Blockade: A Near Victory of Economic Warfare?" (University of Calgary) and 2) Julie Redstone-Lewis, "The Creation of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service and its Role in Canadian Naval Intelligence and Communications, 1939-45" (Wilfrid Laurier University).

It was the unanimous decision of the committee that Erin Weir be awarded the 2007 Jacques Cartier Prize.

The winner of the 2007 Jacques Cartier MA Prize

Erin Weir's "The Nazi Submarine Blockade: A Near Victory of Economic Warfare?" is an ambitious and fascinating challenge to the accepted views of the effectiveness of the German submarine campaign during the Second World War. Adopting an economic model of investigation rather than the more traditional battle-focussed analysis, Weir argues that despite the enormous volume of Allied tonnage sunk, British seaborne imports during the Second World War remained more than adequate to sustain Britain and allow it to wage war – even taking into account the resources devoted to combatting the submarine menace. Weir's convincing use of wartime economic indicators and statistical analysis strongly suggests that Germany never came close to winning the Battle of the Atlantic. It is a well-researched, highly organized, cogently argued, and thought-provoking thesis.

A cash prize of \$500 and a certificate suitable for framing was sent to the author.

I would like to thank Ian Yeates, Michael Hadley, Roger Sarty, James Pritchard, Faye Kert (who arranged for the certificates), Walter Tedman, and Richard Gimblett for their valuable assistance to this committee.

Serge Durflinger, Chair
2007 Keith Matthews Award Committee
July 2008

CNRS KEITH MATTHEWS AWARD 2007 – BOOK ENTRANTS

<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Books</u>
Thomas Allen	1. Marq de Villiers, <i>Witch in the Wind: The Story of the Legendary Bluenose</i>
Heritage House	2. Anthony Dalton, <i>Alone Against the Arctic</i>
	3. Peter Vassilopoulos, <i>John M. Horton: Mariner Artist</i>
Flanker Press	4. Maura Hanrahan, <i>The Alphabet Fleet</i>
	5. Hilda Chaulk Murray, <i>Of Boats on the Collar</i>
Viking Canada (Penguin)	6. John Chipman, <i>The Obsession: Tragedy in the North Atlantic</i>
Harbour Publishing	7. Heather Harbord, <i>Desolation Sound: A History</i>
	8. Barry Gough, <i>Fortune's A River: The Collisions of Empires in Northwest America</i>
	9. Doreen Armitage, <i>Tales from the Galley: Stories of the Working Waterfront</i>
Nightwood Editions	10. Tim Bowling, <i>The Lost Coast: Salmon, Memory and the Death of Wild Culture</i>
HarperCollins	11. James Raffan, <i>Emperor of the North: Sir George Simpson and the Remarkable Story of the Hudson's Bay Company</i>
Dundurn Press	12. Wayne Kelly, <i>Capturing the French River</i>
	13. Herb Pohl, <i>The Lure of Faraway Places</i>
	14. Tom Koppel, <i>Ebb and Flow: Tides and Life on our Once and Future Planet</i>
Hendry	15. James Goodwin, <i>Our Gallant Doctor: Enigma and Tragedy – Surgeon Lieutenant George and HMCS Ottawa, 1942</i>

16. Don Bamford, *Freshwater Heritage: A History of Sail on the Great Lakes, 1670-1918*

McClelland and Stewart

17. Adam Mayers, *Beyond Endurance*

Vanwell

18. W.A.B. Douglas, et. al., *Blue Water Navy*

Brill (Netherlands)

19. Dionisius A. Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*