The ‘proper means of efficient nautical education’?

The Liverpool Nautical College (1892-1900) and the late-Victorian port city

WAYNE TURNBULL

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2023.

The 'proper means of efficient nautical education'?
The Liverpool Nautical College (1892-1900) and the late-Victorian port city

Contents

List of figures

List of abbreviations

BoT	Board of Trade
DSA	Department of Science and Art (of the Board of Trade)
LAS	Liverpool Astronomical Society
LJMU	Liverpool John Moores University
LMAC	Library, Museum and Arts Committee (of the Liverpool City Council)
LNC	Liverpool Nautical College
LM	*Liverpool Mercury*
LSH	Liverpool Sailors' Home
LSOA	Liverpool Ship Owners' Association
LSSOA	Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association
MMA	Mercantile Marine Act (1850)
MMSA	Merchant Marine Services Association
MSG	Merchant Services Guild
NISC	Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee (of the Library, Museum and Arts Committee)
TIA	Technical Instruction Act (1889)

TISC	Technical Instruction Sub-Committee (of the Library, Museum and Arts Committee)

Abstract

This thesis considers whether the Liverpool Nautical College (LNC) was the 'proper means of efficient nautical education' for the late-Victorian port city from three distinct but complementary research areas. Archival documentary research into governance, staffing and infrastructure constructs a new institutional history of the LNC 1892-1900. Newspaper-based research into the impact and perception of the LNC reveals the relationship between the College and Liverpool's seafaring community. Biographical research is undertaken into the lives of the students of the LNC Boys' School, with detailed comparative consideration of two data-subsets exploring scholarships and kinships.

This thesis explores several critical questions relating both to maritime education in the late-Victorian era and to the late-Victorian port city of Liverpool:

- *What factors led to the foundation of the LNC in 1892?*
  In response to increasing global competition for maritime trade, innovations in shipbuilding and the escalating risk of losses (of life and goods), the Liverpool Council invested public funds in an innovative institution of nautical education, within a 'ladder' of technical study. In creating a new institution, rather than funding an existing entity, the Council exposed the LNC to intense local criticism from the community it was intended to serve.

- *Were the ambitions of the LNC's founders realised?*
  In relation to the training of professional seafarers seeking to secure a licence to serve as a ship's officer, the LNC met if not exceeded expectations. Yet within the first decade of its existence, embedding innovations in widening access, distance learning and higher education would prove more challenging.

- *How is the legacy of the LNC best measured?*
  Through the life stories of those who graduated from the College and the impact of their subsequent careers located between Liverpool and other port cities.

Innovative, multiple methods of investigation are utilised to undertake research into the history of an educational institution. New evidence drawn from archival research informs consideration of the kind of institutional history that can be constructed from multiple microanalyses of contemporary source materials. Studies of contemporary reports and records determine the significance and reveal the implications of the launch of the LNC on technical instruction and the professionalisation of maritime training in late-Victorian Liverpool. Using a multifaceted research method, consideration is given to how an institution's legacy may be narrated and fully evaluated, applying multiple lenses and constructing multiple narratives through which to address the central research question relating to 'the proper means of efficient nautical education'.

From this research the LNC (1892-1900) emerges as a fragile, tenuous, fledgling experiment in designing and delivering an innovate programme of nautical education. I show that it formed a divisive political issue amongst the various maritime communities in late-Victorian Liverpool, disrupting the status quo. It was launched with ambitious goals in relation to widening access, innovative delivery and raising educational standards; each of which proved challenging and remained unfulfilled in the LNC's first decade. Yet the LNC survived, adapted and thrives today as a constituent element of Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

Situated at the junction between maritime, educational, institutional and Liverpool history, this study of the early years of the LNC contributes new intellectual inquiry into each of these various fields. It offers a useful test of the innovative approach upon which it is based and it foregrounds a hitherto lost chapter in the history of a local community which has long been characterised by its relationship to the port and maritime trade. This study therefore illustrates and evaluates the impact of the LNC on the city of Liverpool, its institutions and people.

1 Introduction

At the 1st July meeting of the Liverpool City Council in 1891, Councillor Frederick Smith disrupted the formal business of the municipal authority demanding action to address a long-standing deficiency in providing 'proper means of efficient nautical education' for seafarers. His intervention triggered a rapid series of events that culminated in the foundation of the Liverpool Nautical College (LNC) in the following year. A hundred years later, the evolved form of the LNC was incorporated within Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). This thesis presents original analysis of an archive of materials from the 1890s, telling the story of the LNC's early years in late-Victorian Liverpool and belatedly affording Smith his niche historical footnote. Considering the extent to which the LNC met Smith's demands for efficient nautical education for the port city, this study draws upon the dynamic interrogation of (largely unexplored) primary sources and adopts a multifaceted research approach.

This research is framed within the context of history as a discipline, although sods are excavated from various historical fields. Maritime history has long been considered a broad church, operating within parameters that are approximately drawn.[1] Whilst it can be regarded as a sub-discipline of transport history, David Williams discerns a social underpinning to the study of maritime history that is distinct from that of other transport histories.[2] The interdisciplinarity of maritime history research is demonstrated in publications focusing *inter alia* upon economics, gender and post-colonialism, yet studies of seafarer education are rare.[3] At the turn of the millennium, Alston Kennerley surveyed the content of (189) articles published over a thirteen-year period (1989-2002) by the *International Journal of Maritime History*,

[1] Frank Broeze, 'Introduction', in Frank Broeze (ed.), *Maritime History at the Crossroads: A Critical Review of Recent Historiography* (Liverpool University Press, 1995), ix-xxii.

[2] David M. Williams, 'The Progress of Maritime History, 1953–93', *Journal of Transport History* 14, no .2 (1993): 126-142.

[3] Kris Alexanderson, *Subversive Seas: Anticolonial Networks Across the Twentieth-century Dutch Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2019); John B. Hattendorf, 'Maritime History Today', *Perspectives on History* 50, no. 2 (2012): 34-36; Daniel Vickers, 'Beyond Jack Tar', *William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no .2 (1993): 418-424; Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling eds. *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (JHU Press, 1996).

concluding that only one focused on seafarer education.[4] Valerie Burton's own literature search identifying only two such examples (covering both eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) led her to conclude '[T]here have been few studies of shipmasters'.[5] Noting the dearth of published research into seafarer education, this study of a nautical training college delivering maritime education in the late nineteenth century fills a gap in the scholarship by evaluating whether the LNC provided the 'proper means of efficient nautical education' for the late-Victorian port city.

This study is also congruent with political history, in that it examines governance and institutions, crisis and conflict. It may be viewed as a social history (in that it is interested in societal impact) or as a cultural history, specifically with reference to the sub-sub-discipline of education history. It is a local history (of Liverpool), its periodicity is late-Victorian, its methods are multiple. It contributes to the enduring historiographical discussion, sparked by Edward Carr and Geoffrey Elton in the 1960s.[6] Just as C.P. Snow was contemplating the consequences of division between the humanities and sciences, Carr and Elton began marking territories within history, '[W]hile Carr championed a sociological approach to the past, Elton declared that any serious historical work should have a backbone narrative of political events'.[7] This debate has run for over half a century, although it could be argued that Alan Bennett has answered Carr definitively.[8]

---

[4] Alston Kennerley, 'Writing the History of Merchant Seafarer Education, Training and Welfare: Retrospect and Prospect', *The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord* 12, no. 2 (2002), 2.

[5] Valerie Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession: Shipmasters and the British Shipping Industry', *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada* 1, no. 1 (1990), 98.

[6] Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* (Penguin Books, 1961). Geoffrey Elton, *The Practice of History* (Fontana Books, 1967).

[7] C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1959). Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (Granta Publications, 2012), 9.

[8] 'How do I define history? It's just one fucking thing after another'. Final shooting script of the (2006) film version of The History Boys (by Alan Bennett): The History Boys Movie Script (scripts.com)

As a study of the LNC, which is now part of LJMU, this in an institutional history located in the field of educational history. Whether there is a (sub-sub-sub) field of higher education history, or university history, is moot but if one did exist it may claim Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University* as its earliest text.[9] When Rector of the Catholic University of Ireland, Newman published his lectures on his vision for University education; John Cornwell reflects on the volume's enduring impact, noting 'its adoption by writers and thinkers generations on, and far removed, from the circumstances of nineteenth century tertiary education in Catholic Ireland'.[10] The integral questions to which Newman applied his philosophy have been debated by scholars in the intervening decades, their various perspectives and foci reflecting shifts in the environment and political agenda of the rapidly evolving sector.[11] It is perhaps unsurprising that many such works appear rhetorical in nature (*What are Universities for?)* as the absence of a legal definition in the UK contributes to '[t]he lack of any comprehensive and consistent definition of a 'university' in the English tradition'.[12]

This research draws upon material accessed through digital resources. Whether digital history represents a method, or constitutes a field in its own right, is debateable. Practitioners of digital research in history are at pains to stress the continuity of established historical methods when applied to new technologies. Jon Coburn observes that '[M]any of these [on-line] factors are not new to historians and library staff. Instead, they represent the transference of methodological and user

[9] John Henry Newman, *The idea of the University* first published 1853 (Oxford University Press, 1976).

[10] John Cornwell, *Newman's Unquiet Grave: The Reluctant Saint* (Continuum, 2010).

[11] Oscar Perlmutter, 'The purposes of higher education', *Journal of General Education* 11, no. 1 (1958): 56-60. Clark Kerr, *The uses of the University* (Harvard University Press, 1963). Jan McArthur, 'Reconsidering the social and economic purposes of higher education', *Higher Education Research & Development* 30, no. 6 (2011): 737-749. Wayne Turnbull, *A Brief History of Credit in UK Higher Education: Laying Siege to the Ivory Tower* (Emerald Group Publishing, 2020). Paul Ashwin, 'The educational purposes of higher education: changing discussions of the societal outcomes of educating students' in *Higher Education* 84, no. 6 (2022): 1227-1244.

[12] Stefan Collini, *What are Universities for?* (Penguin, 2012). Gillian R. Evans, ''University': The History of the Search for a Definition in England', *History of Universities* 31, no. 1 (2018), 187.

hindrances from the world of physical archives to the digital realm'.[13] Andrew Hobbs advocates 'following good scholarly practice [in] taking advantage of newspaper digitisation [which] includes such principles as taking nothing for granted, challenging unexamined default positions, methods and sources, and avoiding anachronism'.[14] Stephen Robertson argues that digital historians are driven by 'disciplinary sources, questions and approaches [that] shape their projects, as well as their choice of digital tools'.[15] Yet Robertson also acknowledges that '[m]any of the early practitioners of digital history were social historians and radical historians committed to democratising the creation of the past', recognising that digital searching 'can be a powerful method, disrupting the hierarchies and categories of information established in the past'.[16] Digital access to previously unmined data sources may therefore inspire and sustain an inclusive, empowered generation of researchers who are more interested in making meaningful connections with past than in debating the abstract intricacies of historiography.

My central research question (whether the LNC provided the 'proper means of efficient nautical education' for the late-Victorian port city) is intentionally difficult to answer. The wording is borrowed from Councillor Fred Smith's fateful interjection in demanding 'proper' and 'efficient' nautical education in the late-Victorian port city of Liverpool. These terms are loaded with subjective emphasis around what was deemed to be 'proper' (implying variously that which is genuine, or appropriate or indeed correct) and 'efficient' (limiting costs and maximising benefit, also public accountability). The question is designed to provide a framework through which evidence can be drawn from a range of (often competing) contemporary viewpoints and judged in their necessarily subjective and complex contexts.

---

[13] Jon Coburn, 'Defending the Digital: Awareness of Digital Selectivity in Historical Research Practice', *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 53, no. 3 (2021), 407-408.

[14] Andrew Hobbs, 'The deleterious dominance of *The Times* in nineteenth-century scholarship', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 18, no. 4 (2013), 491.

[15] Stephen Robertson, 'The Differences between Digital Humanities and Digital History' in Matthew K. Gold (ed.) *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 289. See also Wendy M. Duff and Catherine A. Johnson, 'Accidentally Found on Purpose: Information-seeking Behaviour of Historians in Archives', *The Library Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (2002): 472-496.

[16] Robertson, 'Digital Humanities', 292 & 297.

Aligned to this, my thesis also explores several critical questions relating both to maritime education in the late nineteenth century and to the late-Victorian port city of Liverpool (including: What factors led to the foundation of the LNC in 1892? Were the ambitions of the LNC's founders realised? How is the legacy of the LNC best measured?). The thesis utilises multiple methods of investigation in researching the history of an educational institution. New evidence drawn from archival research informs consideration of the kind of institutional history that can be constructed from multiple microanalyses of contemporary source materials. Studies of contemporary reports and records determine the significance and reveal the implications of the launch of the LNC on technical instruction and the professionalisation of maritime training in late-Victorian Liverpool. Using a multifaceted research method, consideration is given to how an institution's legacy may be narrated and fully evaluated. Evidence from three distinct but complementary research areas is analysed within this thesis, applying multiple lenses and constructing multiple narratives through which to address the central research question relating to 'efficient nautical education'.

The material published in section 2 (An institutional history of the Liverpool Nautical College 1892-1900) utilises archival documentary research into governance, staffing and infrastructure to construct a new institutional history of the LNC, 1892-1900. In section 3 (Public impact and debates), newspaper-based research into the impact and perception of the LNC, 1892-1900 reveals the relationship between the College and the political agencies operating within Liverpool's seafaring community. In section 4 (Legacy) biographical research is undertaken into the lives of the students of the LNC Boys' School, 1893-1902, with detailed comparative consideration of two data-subsets (separately examining the stories of scholarship boys and also the operation of kinship networks within the late-Victorian port city).

In each of the following sections, this research is underpinned by adherence to the microhistorical method as a means of reconstructing lost historical narratives. Carlo Ginzburg, founder of microhistorical enquiry, pioneered a technique that was 'interested in what was dead in history not in what was alive… [the] gaps in history…

I mean things which were really dead'.[17] Perhaps we die twice; firstly when we stop breathing and again when our name is mentioned for the very last time. Not just gone but forgotten, in Ginzburg's term *really dead*. However, through microhistorical enquiry, the lives of the really dead can be reconstructed and their forgotten stories told anew, as with Ginzburg's original subject, the sixteenth-century miller Menocchio.[18]

Giovanni Levi, an early advocate of Ginzburg's method, concedes that few historical approaches have resulted in as many misunderstandings and variations as microhistory.[19] Whether subverting positivism in favour of the narrative form (as in the Italian *Microstoria* of the 1970s), or focusing on history from below (as in the German *Alltagsgeschichte* movement of the 1980s), microhistories reveal 'the lived experience of individuals within dense, complex networks of social and political relations'.[20] Although emerging from social history as a subfield in which 'studying objects on a smaller scale will reveal phenomena…that would otherwise evade historians', the scope of microhistory extends and overlaps with other academic disciplines, fields and genres.[21] For example, in her microhistorical study of the life histories and social networks of young offenders in the early Victorian period, Helen Rogers highlights the parallels between microhistory and crime history drawn from 'the adversarial claims of prosecution and defence; all pored over by the press before

[17] Carlo Ginzburg, quoted in Keith Luria and Romolo Gandolfo, 'Carlo Ginzburg: An Interview', *Radical History Review* 35 (1986), 105.

[18] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller* (JHU Press, 1976).

[19] Giovanni Levi, 'Microhistory and the Recovery of Complexity', in Marjatta Rahikainen and Susanna Fellman (eds.), *Historical Knowledge: In Quest of Theory, Method and Evidence* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012): 121-132.

[20] Brad S. Gregory, 'Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life', *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (1999), 101. For a discussion of (subversive and post-modern) twenty-first century interpretations of microhistory at the Centre for Microhistorical Research at the Reykjavik Academy, please see Sigurdur Gylfi Magnússon, 'Social History as "Sites of Memory"? The Institutionalisation of History: Microhistory and the Grand Narrative', *Journal of Social History* 39, no .3 (2006): 891-913.

[21] Daniel R. Meister, 'The Biographical Turn and the Case for Historical Biography', *History Compass* 16, no. 1 (2018), 5.

the court of popular opinion'.[22] Indeed, Ginzburg's genre-defining work *The Cheese and the Worms* is structured around (and draws evidence from records of) an inquiry into Menocchio's heretical beliefs.

Jill Lepore considers the prevalence of 'the literal embodiment of the judgmental outsider' in many microhistories, juxtaposed by the microhistorian's role as 'detective'.[23] Lepore also explores the relationship between microhistory and biography, drawing a distinction between the biographer's interest in 'the singularity and significance of an individual's life and his contribution to history' and the microhistorian's motives in 'how that individual's life serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole'.[24] This study of the LNC draws upon Lepore's approach, analysing multiple lives and articulating multiple microhistories within a collective narrative, through which the history of the early years of an overlooked institution has been reconstructed. It also recognises emerging interest in employing the microhistorical method in the maritime context, in which microhistory 'highlights local conditions and human agency at work [revealing] myriad complexities, the intimate, unexpected, and otherwise invisible interconnections'.[25]

It is recognised that there are diverging views amongst historians regarding the specific characteristic attributes of the microhistorical method.[26] Microhistorians may not all focus on small histories but may employ forensic analysis of materials (via 'historical microscopy') to explore 'how identity and human agency emerge, how they are circumscribed by larger forces and affected by contingency and by

[22] Helen Rogers, 'Making Their Mark: Young Offenders' Life Histories and Social Networks', in David Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday (eds.), *Law, Crime and Deviance since 1700: Micro-studies in the History of Crime* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 239.

[23] Jill Lepore, 'Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography', *Journal of American History* 88 no. 1 (2001), 139-140.

[24] Lepore, 'Historians Who Love Too Much', 133.

[25] Boyd Cothran and Adrian Shubert, 'Maritime History, Microhistory, and the Global Nineteenth Century: The Edwin Fox', *Global Nineteenth-Century Studies* 1, no. 1 (2022): 75.

[26] John Brewer, 'Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life', *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 1 (2010): 87-109. Filippo De Vivo, 'Prospect or Refuge? Microhistory, History on the Large Scale: A response', *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 3 (2010): 387-397.

intersubjective experience'.[27] Building upon Ginzburg's original ideas and the evolution of more recent developments, Karl Appuhn offers a compelling definition of the microhistorical method.[28] Specifically, this interpretation of microhistory presents and promotes a detailed rediscovery of lived experience in relation to broader economic, demographic, and social structures. Appuhn focuses on the assembly of (apparently trivial) documentary evidence through which individual motivations, beliefs and ideologies may be discovered. It is Appuhn's belief that microhistory represents the absence of any specific method, in favour of recognition that analysis of each historical dataset demands a unique approach, with the data dictating the analytical method to be employed. Thus, the research underpinning each of the sections of this thesis adopts an approach that is most suited to the analysis of each dataset, congruent with the principles of the overall microhistorical method.

Improved access to digitised historical records has transformed the ability of researchers to connect directly to 'the fundamental experiences and mentalités of ordinary people' who are *really dead*.[29] The 'quotidian' ease with which 'disorderly evidence' can be accrued from digital resources presents both opportunities and challenges to the microhistorian.[30] Julia Laite's work demonstrates the potential of undertaking microhistorical analyses based upon digital resources, interweaving approaches such as public, creative and family history.[31] Considering the potential of microhistories facilitated by digital technologies, Laite argues that historians must re-appraise the relationship between sources of evidence and how such evidence is

---

[27] Pat Hudson, 'Closeness and Distance: A Response to Brewer', *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 3 (2010), 381.

[28] Karl Appuhn, 'Microhistory', in Paul Stearns (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of European Social History, vol. 1.* (Scribner's, 2001): 105–112. Appuhn pays homage to Ginzburg in Karl Appuhn, 'Politics, Perception, and the Meaning of Landscape in Late Medieval Venice: Marco Cornaro's 1442 Inspection of Firewood Supplies', in John Howe and Michael Wolfe (eds.), *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe* (University Press of Florida, 2002): 70-88.

[29] Lepore, 'Historians Who Love Too Much', 131.

[30] Lara Putnam, 'The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast', *The American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (2016), 383. Giovanni Levi, 'The Uses of Biography' in Hans Renders and Binne de Haan (eds.), *Theoretical Discussions of Biography* (Lewiston, 2013), 62.

[31] Julia Laite, *The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey: A True Story of Sex, Crime and the Meaning of Justice* (Profile Books, 2021).

used in constructing a narrative of the past.[32] Jo Guildi and David Armitage take a broad view of access to digital data resources as a means of achieving 'the reconstruction of the histories of forgotten communities and overlooked peoples'.[33] In arguing that 'a training capable of weaving [data] together into one inter-related fabric of time' is 'desperately needed', they tacitly reference the advances made in the microhistorical method.[34]

Microhistory as a methodological approach seeks to depict lost or obscured histories through a forensic study of recovered materials in the context of their appropriate milieu. The broader context of late-Victorian Liverpool is referenced throughout this thesis in relation, for example, to contemporary newspaper analysis and to the life-course research into the careers of the students of the LNC boys' school. As Rogers demonstrates, the potential for 'reconstructing the outline of a life from scraps of evidence… can yield more than isolated anecdotes and disembodied voices'.[35] Whether drawn from interrogation of previously inaccessible documents (the LNC archive in section 2), critiques of published sources (newspapers in section 3) or constructed from disparate demographic datasets (the microbiographies in section 4), new stories are told of the people who designed and delivered the LNC and the late-Victorian socio-political milieu in which they lived. This thesis therefore demonstrates how detailed, forensic analyses congruent with the microhistorical method can deliver a rounded, evidenced narrative documenting the early years of the LNC.

Noting Brad Gregory's cautionary advice that '[T]o be consistent with their own empiricism, systematic microhistorians must recognise the restricted character of their work', I seek to recover and share as much of the LNC's story as possible, to

---

[32] Julia Laite, 'The Emmet's Inch: "Small" History in a Digital Age', *Journal of Social History* 53, no. 4 (2020): 963-989.

[33] David Armitage, contributing to the debate in the BBC Radio 3 series *Free Thinking* broadcast 22nd October 2014, transcript at http://historyworks.tv/projects/2014/10/22/the-history-manifesto/#bbc-debates-the-history-manifesto.

[34] Jo Guildi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 112.

[35] Rogers, 'Making Their Mark', 27.

promote a better understanding its history and that (latterly) of LJMU.[36] Such an approach requires cognisance of the principles, expectations and values of those who initially captured the records comprising my primary dataset and also the purposes to which those data were initially put. Such engagement demands the immersion of the researcher within the detail of the records, evaluating and appreciating the historical contexts and motives with which the data were initially captured. Beginning with the archival materials in the LJMU Special Collections, this microhistorical study extends to detailed consideration of wider digital sources including newspaper reports and demographic data (for example, census returns, parish registers and maritime records). Each record, whether accessed in digital form or where only physically present in an archive, contributes a different piece of an inter-locking puzzle which can help to recover a history hidden through accidental oversight, rather than by design.

Specific approaches to data collation and analysis pertinent to each aspect of this investigation are discussed in each of sections 2-4 below. Most of the data underpinning sections 2 and 3 are sourced from material held in the LNC archive and from contemporary newspapers; the emphasis shifts between section 2 which is archive-led but supported by evidence from the local press, whereas section 3 uses the archive to support a study based upon articles and letters within contemporary local newspapers, which publish the first draft of history. The dataset underpinning section 4 is wider, encompassing biographical data sourced from the General Register Office, UK census returns and parish records. Data drawn from specialist maritime records (including original Board of Trade shipmaster certificates and crew lists), trade directories, electoral registers and military records have been interrogated to construct biographies of LNC students and their families. To scaffold the research undertaken in section 4, I constructed a database comprising biographical profiles of each of the students enrolling in the LNC Boys' School and created a detailed ancestral narrative for each of the six families who sent more than one of their children to study at the LNC.

[36] Gregory, 'Is Small Beautiful?', 108.

John Arnold's view that 'there is little more seductive in social history than the promise of access to the "voices" of those normally absent from the historical record' resonates.[37] This research has produced a narrative through which the nature of the LNC, its impact and place within Liverpool's late-Victorian port city may be explored. This thesis therefore re-assesses and re-positions the history and legacy of the LNC through innovative, multimodal scholarship and immersion in contemporary sources of evidence, offering an original contribution to knowledge in the areas of institutional and maritime history. Historians (micro- or otherwise) are privileged to be custodians of the past, but also have an obligation to forge their narratives in evidenced historical fact (record by record). They may also be motivated, in the words of Arnold, by 'a desire, ultimately, to cheat the silence of death.'[38]

Throughout the Victorian era the mercantile marine fleet was transformed from a collection of sail-powered wooden vessels to a fleet of steam-powered iron hulks, a revolution that necessitated transformation of the maritime 'labour force and the type of tasks and work required of it'.[39] Whereas generalist able seamen had been equipped with sufficient skills to staff sailing ships, specialists with technical knowledge were needed to run the mechanised merchant fleet; from Jack of all trades to master of one. Ship crews also became increasingly internationalised, employing skilled sailors and engineers from across the world.[40] Kennerly reflects on the contrasts between crews of different vessels in the late nineteenth-century mercantile marine. Ship officers included mates (deck) and engineers, chief stewards and senior pursers. Passenger liners carried hundreds of crew across deck (ratings), engine-room (including firemen, trimmers and greasers) and the

[37] John H. Arnold, 'The Historian as Inquisitor: The Ethics of Interrogating Subaltern Voices', *Rethinking History* 2, no. 3 (1998), 382.

[38] Arnold, 'The Historian as Inquisitor', 382.

[39] David Williams, 'The quality, skill and supply of maritime labour: Causes of concern in Britain 1850-1914', in Jacobus R. Bruijn, Lewis. R. Fischer et al.(eds.), *The North Sea: Twelve Essays on the Social History of Maritime Labour* (Stavanger Maritime Museum and the Association of North Sea Societies, 1992), 281.

[40] Boarders from 30 different countries are recorded in the LSH census returns 1861-1911. The dataset is dominated by transatlantic travellers (with 46 seafarers born in the USA or Canada) and Scandinavian seafarers (of whom there were 48). Of particular interest is the data pertaining to German seafarers, representing the joint-third largest single grouping, but who are wholly absent in 1911 (perhaps indicative of 'noises off' at that time).

steward's department whereas ‘tramp-steamers’ had fewer crew balanced between the deck and engine room. Kennerly notes how ‘greater divergence generated many more, variable job titles and more complexity in the backgrounds, vocationally and educationally, from which seafarers were drawn.’[41]

Notwithstanding the professionalisation of the roles of ships’ officers and technological advances throughout the nineteenth century, a narrative of the ‘decline in the quality and supply of British seamen’ persisted and conditions aboard ship remained difficult: ‘Food, accommodation, general conditions afloat, and terms of service were all seen to be crude and unattractive in an age of reform and advancing standards’.[42] Legislation in the early twentieth century would begin to address this issue, but the ethos of shipping (and powerful shipowners) in the late-Victorian era was characterised by:

> cost competitiveness, the security of capital, and above all the maintenance of the free market as their articles of faith. This creed was apparently successful, as the British mercantile marine continued to dominate world shipping. Politically, therefore, neither government and administration nor ideology and the perceived outcome of policy were likely sources of a positive response.[43]

To evaluate the impact of the LNC in the twilight of the nineteenth century, it is first necessary to place this initiative in context, drawing upon contemporary source materials. An overview of the development of British nautical education, in relation to the professionalisation of technical qualifications for British shipmasters and -mates, toward the close of the Victorian era sets the context in which to consider the broader research questions. Consideration is hereby given to the practical implementation of such policies in Liverpool, from ‘self-help’ to civic activism and municipal investment,

---

[41] Alston Kennerley, ‘British Merchant Seafarers and Their Homes, 1895–1970’, *International Journal of Maritime History* 24, no. 1 (2012), 118.

[42] David Williams, ‘Mid-Victorian attitudes to seamen and maritime reform: The society for improving the condition of merchant seamen, 1867’, *International Journal of Maritime History* 3, no. 1 (1991): 238. Williams, ‘Causes of concern’, 284.

[43] Williams, ‘Causes of concern’, 290.

through scrutiny of contemporary local newspaper reports of municipal business and (resulting) political debates.

For over two hundred years prior to the foundation of the LNC, nautical education institutions were located in a variety of British ports including London (The Royal Mathematical School, founded 1673), Portsmouth (Naval Academy, 1729) and Hull (Trinity House School, 1786). By the turn of the nineteenth century, a 'mix of proprietary and charitable nautical schools and teaching' was available to aspirant seafarers, although 'in merchant ships this [education] was supposed to happen through the apprenticeship system'.[44] Kennerley explores the divergence of naval and merchant marine training, noting that in the early years of Victoria's reign there was no requirement to qualify in order to work as a mate or master in the merchant service.[45] With little incentive to pursue formal training, demand for (and therefore provision of) nautical education classes was minimal.[46]

As the first industrial nation, the British economy flourished in the nineteenth century with mined and manufactured commodities exported to every continent and raw materials imported to fuel emerging industries.[47] Although forged in the heat of industrial revolution, the success of the British economy depended upon the transportation of goods overseas.[48] Whilst imports and exports had flowed through

---

[44] Alston Kennerley and Percy Seymour, 'Aids to the Teaching of Nautical Astronomy and its History from 1600', *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 36, no. 1 (2000), 164-165.

[45] By 'the 1850s, the Navy recognised the need for a professional manpower able to make a lifelong career in the Navy, and established its own training system using the increasingly redundant sailing warships as pre-sea training bases'. Alston Kennerley, 'Ratings for the Mercantile Marine: The Roles of Charity, the State and Industry in the Pre-service Education and Training of Ratings for the British Merchant Navy, 1879-1939', *History of Education* 28, no. 1 (1999), 31.

[46] 'This was the era of self-help and state involvement was minimal'. Alston Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education in Liverpool and the Nautical College of 1892', *International Journal of Maritime History* 5, no. 2 (1993), 105.

[47] Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: The Economic History of Britain 1700–1914* (Methuen, 1969).

[48] Kenneth Berrill, 'International Trade and the Rate of Economic Growth', *Economic History Review* 12, no. 3 (1960): 351-359. Nicholas Crafts, 'Forging Ahead and Falling Behind: The Rise and Relative Decline of the First Industrial Nation', *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 12, no. 2 (1998): 193-210.

Britain's ports for centuries, dramatic increases during the nineteenth century in the scale of trade and in the value of the traded goods provoked public concern about the capacity and capability, efficiency and effectiveness of the merchant marine. In 1836, 'following three years during which 1,702 British vessels were lost, 1,714 people drowned and property valued at £8,510,000 was destroyed', a *Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Causes of Shipwrecks* was convened.[49] Chaired by social reformer and Sheffield MP James Silk Buckingham, the Select Committee was 'responsible for one of the most incisive and speedily produced parliamentary reports'.[50] Notwithstanding the Committee's efficiency, its recommendations, which focused on ensuring the competency of officers (particularly masters) of mercantile vessels, through formal education and professional licensing, took time to implement.[51]

The Mercantile Marine Act (MMA) of 1850 was a watershed in Victorian maritime policy, transferring responsibility for 'the general superintendence of all matters having reference to the British mercantile marine' from the Admiralty to the Board of Trade (BoT).[52] Those engaged in debating the various (elementary) Education Bills passed between 1870 and 1899 believed (despite the entreaties of Carlyle and the Chartists at the dawn of the Victorian era) they were drafting the first legislation in British history that dealt with education on a national scale.[53] Although producing competent ships' masters and mates (in line with the MMA) was not

[49] John King, 'An Inquiry into the Causes of Shipwrecks: Its Implications for the Prevention of Pollution', *Marine Policy* 19, no. 6 (1995), 470.

[50] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 106. See also David Williams, 'James Silk Buckingham: Sailor, Explorer and Maritime Reformer', in Stephen Fisher (ed.), *Studies in British Privateering, Trading Enterprise and Seamen's Welfare* (University of Exeter, 1987): 99-120.

[51] Delays were due, in large part, to the intransigent opposition expressed by the influential shipowning interest: 'British shipowners took an extreme *laissez-faire* position and usually made a point of calumniating government intervention'. Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 100.

[52] The Mercantile Marine Act, 1850. The Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 extended the remit of the legislation to cover domestic shipping, delegating authority to the BoT to certify competency of officers of coastal (or home trade) vessels. Jane H. Wilde, 'The Creation of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade', *Journal of Transport History* 4 (1956): 193-206. Clifford Jeans, 'The First Statutory Qualifications for Seafarers', *Transport History* 6 (1973): 248-267.

[53] Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism* (Chapman and Hall, 1842).

considered an ‘educational’ matter, there are in fact striking parallels between the 1850 MMA and the 1870 Education Act; both were national in scope, both were compulsory in nature and the Marine Boards (1850) may be considered prototype School Boards (1870). Furthermore, Kennerley observes that the MMA was ‘ahead of its time, since Parliament was not really concerned with technical education until it appointed the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction in the 1880s’.[54] The battle for compulsory elementary education being won, Victorian educational reformers turned their attention to tertiary or technical provision (covering a range of seemingly interchangeable terms including *further* or *higher* or *adult* education).[55] Many local Mechanics Institutes and similar fora (for example, the Liverpool School for the Encouragement of Arts, Science, Trade and Commerce founded in 1804) had flourished in the nineteenth century.[56] However, Robert Ensor argues that these independent beacons of good practice survived in spite of the indifference of municipal authorities, in a climate where the policies and practices governing technical education in late-Victorian Britain were fractured and disorganised (both geographically and professionally).[57]

From 1851, the BoT required that new masters and mates of foreign-going vessels must be licensed as competent following assessment by local Marine Boards, which were locally appointed (by shipowners) but accountable to the BoT.[58] As Burton notes, while ‘unprecedented and quite without parallel in any other industry’ at the time of securing royal assent, the state-supervised professional licensing of shipmasters and mates would later be replicated in other contexts

[54] Kennerley, ‘Merchant Marine Education’, 106.

[55] John W. Adamson, ‘English Education: 1789-1902’, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 14, no. 2 (1966): 223-233.

[56] Ian Inkster, *Science and Technology in History: An Approach to Industrial Development* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 1991).

[57] Robert C.K. Ensor, *England, 1870-1914* (Clarendon Press, 1936), 127.

[58] Conrad Dixon describes the Marine Boards as ‘a splendid example of governmental ambivalence - of an administration waving the free trade banner with one hand and passing parental legislation with the other’, Conrad H. Dixon, ‘Seamen and the Law: An Examination of the Impact of Legislation on the British Merchant Seaman's Lot, 1588-1918’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of London (1981), 105. See also Conrad Dixon, ‘Legislation and the Sailor's Lot, 1660-1914’, in Paul Adam (ed.), *Seamen in Society (proceedings of the Conference of the International Commission on Maritime History, Bucharest, 1980)*: 96-106.

(evident in statutory regulation of the work of mine managers, railway inspectors and midwives) 'although in none of these cases was the system so comprehensive as for masters and mates'.[59] This professionalisation of the role of the British mercantile officer triggered an expansion in the number of providers of nautical education, from independent tutors (working from their homes) to institutions such as the Navigation School operating from the Sailors' Home in a nascent Merseyside metropolis.

Figure 1 Nineteenth century population growth in English cities

Date	London	Birmingham	Liverpool	Manchester
1801	959,000	74,000	80,000	90,000
1861	2,804,000	296,000	443,900	338,300
1881	3,814,600	400,800	552,400	341,500
1901	6,339,500	522,200	702,200	543,900

Source: 'The Census, 1801-1901: Statistical Reports'. The National Archives.

Liverpool's civic renaissance pre-empted its acquisition of city status (in 1880) as evidenced by investment, in the early years of Victoria's reign, in splendidly symbolic neo-classical structures such as the Customs House and St George's Hall.[60] Throughout the nineteenth century, Liverpool was consistently ranked amongst the most populous locations in England (figure 1). As with all these locations (all of which would be designated cities by the close of the nineteenth century), in Liverpool 'middle-class elites… distant from the metropolis and largely

[59] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 100. See also Alexander M. Carr-Saunders and Paul A. Wilson, *The Professions* (Clarenden Press, 1933).

[60] Joseph Sharples, ''The Visible Embodiment of Modern Commerce': Speculative Office Buildings in Liverpool, c. 1780–1870', *Architectural History* 61 (2018): 131-173. Kate Hill, '"Thoroughly Embued with the Spirit of Ancient Greece": Symbolism and Space in Victorian Civic Culture', in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain 1800-1940* (Manchester University Press, 1999): 99-111. See also the illustrations of the emerging city in William G. Herdman, *Herdman's Liverpool* (The Gallery Press, 1968). Linda Colley observed that Liverpool's patrician elite celebrated the golden jubilee of George III as if their town was 'the Rome of the North', Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale University Press. 2005), 224.

divorced from traditional centres of power and prestige, began to claim stewardship over a new society'.[61]

The city's wealthy shipowning dynasties held the levers of political and civic power in the early part of the nineteenth century, in what Nicholas Foggo describes as a 'nepotistic oligarchy'.[62] Whilst eager to invest in the commercial development of the Docks, David Rees notes a reluctance by the city's civic leaders to commit spending upon social projects or public works.[63] Yet co-ordinated public investment in Liverpool was eventually required to address the causes and effects of epidemic illness, the virulence of which was exacerbated by mass immigration (largely from Ireland in the 1840s) and the consequent over-crowding of Liverpool's poorest folk within insanitary slum conditions.[64] Liverpool's Victorian social revolution thus began in the 1850s and was built upon principles of health, housing and hygiene; Thomas Burke argued that '[N]o man can understand aright the Liverpool of the second half of the nineteenth century who does not seriously study the dreadful incidents of these years'.[65] Neil Collins states that '[C]ivic consciousness, the belief in a collective moral duty, was a widely accepted part of the philosophy of government by the 1850s'.[66] Asa Briggs begs to differ, '[T]he corporate wealth of cities like Bristol and Liverpool permitted their corporations to do many things which less wealthy

[61] Howard M. Wach, 'A "Still, Small Voice" from the Pulpit: Religion and the Creation of Social Morality in Manchester, 1820-1850', *The Journal of Modern History* 63, no. 3 (1991), 425.

[62] Anthony N. Foggo, 'The Radical Experiment in Liverpool and its Influence on the Reform Movement in the Early Victorian Period', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Liverpool (2015).

[63] David B. Rees, *Local and Parliamentary Politics in Liverpool from 1800 to 1911* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1999).

[64] Stephen Halliday, 'Duncan of Liverpool: Britain's first Medical Officer', *Journal of Medical Biography* 11, no. 3 (2003): 142-149. Liz Stewart, *Courts and Alleys: A History of Liverpool Courtyard Housing* (Liverpool University Press, 2019).

[65] Thomas Burke, *Catholic History of Liverpool*, 1910 quoted in Rees, *Local and Parliamentary Politics,* 54-55.

[66] Neil Collins, *Politics and Elections in Nineteenth-century Liverpool* (Scholar Press. 1994), 57.

bodies could not have afforded to do. [Yet i]n Liverpool… there was fierce resistance to the attempt to levy an improvement rate in 1853'.[67]

Whereas Joseph Chamberlain's Birmingham City Council preached a 'civic gospel [that] was intended to establish a new social order and a new morality for the modern manufacturing city… a 'New Jerusalem' [sic]', local government in Liverpool appeared reactive and reluctant.[68] In 1874 the *Times* thundered that 'Liverpool is a town whose leading inhabitants are negligent of their duties as citizens' and in 1886 the *Liverpool Review* noted that 'Local Liberalism (is) so limp that it is hard to believe that the spirit of life remains within it'.[69] Neil Collins describes the particular social and economic conditions of Liverpool that explained this phenomenon, '[I]ts lack of industry and reliance on the port facilities, which marked it off from other large cities, also deprived it of a middle class of manufacturers that elsewhere tended to be Liberal and to give a political lead to their employees'.[70] Rather than a socially stratified hierarchy in which political parties contested national issues, Liverpool's political structure was a complex parochial web. The *Manchester Guardian* bemoaned the absence of organised opposition to Liverpool's Tory elite, commenting that 'divisions are religious rather than political, and they take us right away back to the seventeenth century'.[71] This most singular of port cities thus embodied Sailortown's 'throwback to an earlier age and contravened the municipal schemes in

---

[67] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Pelican, 1968), 39. To place this debate in context, see Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 1992) and Hamish Fraser, 'Municipal Socialism and Social Policy', in Robert Morris and Richard Rodger (eds.), *The Victorian City: a Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914* (Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd, 1993): 258-280.

[68] Roy Hartnell, 'Art and Civic Culture in Birmingham in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Urban History* 22, no. 2 (1995), 230.

[69] *The Times*, 26th December 1874 and *The Liverpool Review*, 26th March 1886, both quoted in Collins, *Politics and Elections*.

[70] Collins, *Politics and Elections,* 22. See also Graeme J. Milne, 'Maritime Liverpool' in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History* ed. John Belchem (Liverpool University Press, 2006): 257-309.

[71] *Manchester Guardian*, 1910, quoted in Henry Pelling, *Social Geography of British Elections 1885–1910* (Springer, 1967), 247.

civic enlightenment and citizenship that were the hallmark of towns such as Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds'.[72]

Reflecting such civic reticence, Liverpool's initial forays into maritime education were episodic and largely altruistic. The earliest of these were charitable concerns through which destitute seamen and their families could receive an elementary education. An endowed Liverpool Marine Free School was established in 1815, followed by a Liverpool Seamen's Friend Society School in 1823, but both enterprises were short-lived and were mostly focused on remedial literacy tuition.[73] With regard to technical training, the static training ships on the Mersey were charitable (*Akbar, Clarence, Indefatigable*) or commercial (*Conway*) and other (land-based) navigation tutors offered their commercial services within the city.[74] Such municipal reserve was not a consequence of financial shortcomings, as Liverpool for much of the nineteenth century was a maritime boomtown. By 1895 over 15% of all trade in England and Wales passed through the port of Liverpool, which was second only to London (23%) as the predominant Victorian trading port.[75] Philip Waller estimates that the (50) members of the Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association (LSSOA) owned fleet with a capacity of a million gross tons and notes that members of the Association, who were also prominently represented within Liverpool's civic governance, actively (and successfully) opposed legislative and regulatory restrictions upon their *laissez-faire* ideals.[76]

---

[72] Brad Beaven, 'The Resilience of Sailortown Culture in English Naval Ports, c. 1820–1900', *Urban History* 43, no. 1 (2016), 85. Sailortowns catered for visiting populations of transient seafarers and were characterised by a proliferation of pubs, boarding houses and brothels in dockland areas.

[73] Alston Kennerley, 'Seafaring Missionary Societies and Maritime Education and Training, 1815–1914', *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 35:sup1 (1999): 244-257.

[74] Wayne Turnbull, 'Illuminating the History of the Training Ship *HMS Conway* through Stained Glass Windows', in Emma Roberts (ed.), *Art and the Sea* (Liverpool University Press, 2022): 179-206. See also Phil Carradice, *Nautical Training Ships: An Illustrated History* (Amberley Publishing, 2009).

[75] Data taken from Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers (BPP), Annual statement of navigation and shipping 1895: Net tonnage entering and clearing England & Wales, quoted in David J. Clarke, 'Liverpool Shipowners: 1820-1914', unpublished PhD thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland (2005).

[76] Philip Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism: A Political and Social History of Liverpool 1868-1939* (Liverpool University Press, 1981).

Although opposed to the introduction of the MMA in 1850, with its imposition of state-licensed ship officers, a number of Liverpool shipowners indirectly facilitated this process in their charitable support for a Sailors' Home 'whose promoters included nautical education in their aims'.[77] The BoT, via its Marine Department and Department of Science and Art (DSA) 'entered into an agreement with the Committee of the Liverpool Sailor's Home [sic] in 1853 to provide subsidised teaching' via a bespoke navigation school.[78] Not only did the Act instigate an expansion of nautical education, it also fundamentally changed its nature. Since Samuel Pepys had been Governor of the Royal Mathematical School in the 1670s, nautical education had focused on the first principles of navigation (advanced arithmetic, astronomy, mathematical theories).[79] However, the DSA soon expressed concern that 'the instruction that is given to… masters, mates, etc., is almost, if not entirely confined to the "cram" required to pass the Board of Trade examination' and that it was 'of a very elementary nature such as it is scarcely within the province of this Department to communicate'.[80]

Kennerley considers the impact of the MMA upon navigation tuition provided in port cities that housed Local Marine Boards responsible for examination and certification of shipmasters and mates, as the Board of Trade 'promoted the formation of navigation schools in most ports where there were LMBs'.[81] By 1862 the DSA funded sixteen nautical schools in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and

---

[77] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 110. Alston Kennerley, 'British Seamen's Missions and Sailors Homes 1815 to 1970: Voluntary welfare provision for serving seafarers', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Plymouth (1989). Sailors' Homes provided board, lodgings and recreations for seafarers outwith the temptations of sailortowns.

[78] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 111.

[79] Thomas W.C. Vasey, 'The emergence of examinations for British shipmasters and mates, 1830-1850', unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University (1980). 'Navigation' in this context is a term that requires careful disambiguation, for which Kennerley provides a comprehensive, longitudinal definition: see Alston Kennerley, 'Nationally-Recognised Qualifications for British Merchant Navy Officers, 1865–1966', *International Journal of Maritime History* 13, no. 1 (2001): 115-135.

[80] Captain Donnelly, DSA Inspector for Science, Tenth Report of the Science and Art Department (1863), quoted in Alston Kennerley, 'Early State Support of Vocational Education: The Department of Science and Art Navigation Schools, 1853–63', *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 52, no. 2 (2000), 218.

[81] Kennerley, 'Early State Support', 212.

Ireland, of which the Navigation School of the Liverpool Sailors' Home (LSH) was the largest when measured by student enrolments. An annual average of 761 students were enrolled in the LSH Navigation School 1854-1862, more than twice as many as the second largest provider (Sunderland with 378).[82] The schools were geographically distributed between Ireland (four), Scotland (four) and England with three in London (Poplar, Sailor's House and Shadwell) and others in Hull, Newcastle, Plymouth, Sunderland and Yarmouth.

Although similarly branded and funded, these institutions were differently constituted, managed and populated. Some were long-established, such as the charitable, devout Trinity House schools in Hull and Newcastle that 'educated their pupils in Christian morality, as those who had been introduced to Christian principles were less likely to lead debauched lives'.[83] In comparison, both the Liverpool and Sunderland navigation schools had been newly configured following liaison in the early 1850s between the Board of Trade and the respective local sailors' homes. Composition of their respective student bodies also varied, with some specialising in the provision of pre-service tuition for boys keen on a career at sea and others providing in-service tuition for seafarers (for example, whereas all the students at Trinity House Hull were boys, only 18 of the 664 students enrolled in the Liverpool navigation school in 1859 were boys).[84] Few of these navigation schools survived into the twentieth century. When LNC Headmaster Merrifield convened the inaugural Conference of Navigation Schools in 1917 only Aberdeen, Bristol, Greenock, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Plymouth and South Shields were represented.

When tracing the evolution of schools and colleges of nautical education through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, comparisons may be drawn between the LNC and institutions with similar objectives in Liverpool and elsewhere. Bovill notes similarities between the curricula offered at the LNC and the South Shields Marine School (founded in 1861) and contends that the LNC 'had copied the

---

[82] Analysis based upon data taken from Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education'.

[83] Donald G. Bovill, 'Education of Mercantile Mariners in the North East Ports (1840–1902)', unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University (1987) 62.

[84] Analysis based upon data taken from Kennerley, 'Early State Support'.

South Shields scheme'.[85] It may also be argued that the LNC in turn provided the blueprint for later developments in port cities with similar socio-cultural characteristics, notably Glasgow.[86] Established in 1910, the Glasgow School of Navigation offered a Boys' School, tuition for aspirant officers of the mercantile marine and awarded their own college certificates. Like the LNC, the Glasgow school was well-equipped with the latest technology, offering students hands-on tuition via a roof-mounted revolving bridge simulator (Deviascope) and a training vessel *Vivid* (which was wrecked on its maiden training voyage). Reflecting the ambition with which the LNC had been launched two decades earlier, it represented, 'a substantial element in the network of Glasgow's civic and industrial institutions… that network where the civic, academic and maritime worlds of Glasgow intersected'.[87] Notwithstanding Bovill's contention, the history of the LNC is most closely rooted within the work of the Navigation School of the Sailors' Home in Liverpool whose famous gates offered Jack Ashore access to more than just rest and recreation.

Classes at the LSH Navigation School, which prepared aspirant ship officers for the BoT exams, were delivered over almost forty years (1852-1891). In the first ten of these years, DSA subsidies covered 38% of total operating costs but the withdrawal of the subsidy after 1862 inevitably resulted in an increase in fees. Whereas subsidised fees had been fixed at six shillings per week (with classes offered free to apprentices), revised fees increased to eight shillings per week (and a charge of four shillings was levied on apprentices).[88] The LSH Navigation School was therefore, from the mid-1860s, competing in a commercial market and where some nautical education institutions were closed during this period the LSH

[85] Bovill, 'Education of Mercantile Mariners', 79.

[86] See Michael Fry, *Glasgow: A History of the City* (Bloomsbury, 2017), Andrew Gibb, *Glasgow: The Making of a City* (Routledge, 2021), Tom Gallagher, 'A Tale of Two Cities: Communal Strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914', in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in the Victorian City* (Routledge, 2021): 106-129.

[87] David Pritchard, *The Loss of the Vivid. The Biography of a Shipwreck*. Third public version, revised 25 July 2015, 2. http://personal.strath.ac.uk/david.pritchard/vivid.pdf

[88] Figures quoted from Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 111-112.

Navigation School survived despite suffering a decline in student numbers.[89] The longevity of the Navigation School of the Liverpool Sailors' Home (including a programme of public evening classes, costing sixpence) was testament to its reputation and regard for the expertise of its teaching staff, especially its Principal James Gill, who had initially been appointed as assistant master of the LSH Navigation School in 1857. [90]

It is a dichotomy that whilst technical proficiency of mercantile marine officers in the mid-nineteenth century was regarded with such importance (masters and mates were the only professions whose technical competency was state-regulated before the 1880s), the standard at which the competency threshold was set was deliberately low.[91] Such was the need for a regular supply of certified officers to run Britain's rapidly expanding maritime fleet that any impediment or interruption to trade caused by a shortage of qualified masters and mates following widespread failure of the BoT exams would not have been tolerated. Yet, however calibrated, the threshold competency standard had to be met and aspirant officers (save for those benefitting from DSA subsidies in the late 1850s) had to seek support for tuition in an unregulated commercial sector. Until the last decade of the nineteenth century governments took the view that the shipping industry should finance any required training, notwithstanding that shipowners failed to do so and despite 'a plethora of evidence of the benefit of state-funded preparation in other countries'.[92]

By the 1880s the instruction of merchant service officers became intertwined with broader national debates around technical education. A number of (largely devolved) legislative milestones marked (albeit uneven) progress with technical

[89] 'The Sailor's Home Committee became seriously concerned at its indifferent success'. Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 113.

[90] 'At Liverpool there is a class at the Sailors' Home conducted by Mr Gill, a very efficient teacher…' The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), 'On the Instruction at Present Supplied in This Country, in Practical Astronomy, Navigation, Route Surveying, and Mapping', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 4, no: 5 (May 1882).

[91] Board of Trade, Notice of examinations of Masters and Mates 19 December 1850, quoted in Bovill, 'Education of Mercantile Mariners', 154-155.

[92] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 103.

education ('[A]s a matter of principle, Whitehall thrust every type of administration onto elected bodies').[93] Although the 1870 Education Act sought to achieve baseline elementary education provision via local School Boards and local expenditure, there was no effective 'liaison between elementary, secondary and technical education'.[94] Furthermore, 'in Liverpool especially, compared with some other places, the means of providing an adequate and efficient supply of secondary education were sadly wanting'.[95] Indeed, state-supported education provision 'was suspect in a country where the establishment of religious freedom was a recent memory, and every form of governmental interference was open to doubt. Compulsory education appeared to be an attack on the liberty of the individual'.[96] Variations in local policy exacerbated the uneven provision of technical education, despite an emerging national 'fear that England's industrial pre-eminence was being challenged and in danger of being eclipsed by her Continental and American rivals'.[97] Many aspirant officers were prevented by lack of funds from studying for the BoT competency exams. Hartley Cook notes receipt of a letter by the Seafarers Education Service which was representative of many others: 'An ordinary seaman is very anxious to pass the qualifying examination for an officer and wonders whether he can borrow the necessary and expensive technical books or any of them'.[98]

In 1878, frustrated educational reform campaigners in Liverpool sought to 'commend to the public notice the examples shown by Sheffield, Nottingham, Leeds, Manchester and other larger towns where the expenses of the evening science

[93] Harold J. Hanham, *The Nineteenth-century Constitution 1815-1914: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 373.

[94] Ensor, *England 1870-1914,* 147.

[95] William Hewitt, *The Technical Instruction Committee and Its Work; 1890-1903 a Chapter in the History of Education in Liverpool* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1927), 31.

[96] Llewellyn Woodward, *The Age of Reform, 1815-1870* (Oxford University Press, 1962), 477.

[97] Ian R. Cowan, 'The Technical Instruction Committee in Salford from 1889 to 1903', *The Vocational Aspect of Education* 18, no. 40 (1966), 121.

[98] Hartley Kemball Cook, *In the Watch Below: The Books and Hobbies of Seamen* (JM Dent & Sons, 1937), 80.

classes are met'.[99] Debates such as this led to the appointment of a Royal Commission on Technical Instruction (1881-1884), the eventual outcome of which was the Technical Instruction Act (TIA) of 1889. Following from the Local Government Act of 1888 (which designated powers to County and Borough Councils such as Liverpool), the TIA made such councils responsible for technical instruction. It also permitted a levy of 1d on local rates to fund such instruction and allowed municipal authorities to convene Technical Instruction Committees to oversee the process.[100] Thus, a legislative and fiscal framework provided nascent municipal authorities with the means to develop schemes of technical instruction that addressed issues and areas of local need. Yet in Liverpool the proposed levy was opposed by a range of parties, including the representatives of workers in the form of the Trade Council (the largest such organisation outside of London, by 1890) for whom the 'Technical Instruction Act was received with considerable anxiety'.[101]

Adopting a position that would foreshadow future tensions in the provision of nautical education in Liverpool, the Trade Council's prevailing concern was to preserve (thereby restricting access to) technical instruction within the traditional system of apprenticeship and to therefore protect the economic position of those currently qualified in their trade. A correspondent of the *Liverpool Mercury* (*LM*) noted in 1891 that 'the most strenuous opponents to the better and cheaper education of our sea officers are to be found in the ranks of those who themselves managed to become captains'.[102] The call for improved technical education or, specifically in Liverpool's context, nautical education, arose in response to the threat of international economic competition over a period in which 'the Liverpool shipping

[99] Gordon.W. Roderick, and Michael D. Stephens, 'Approaches to Technical Education in 19th-century England: Part II: The Liverpool School of Science', *Vocational Aspect of Education* 22, no. 53 (1970), 151-152.

[100] Kennerley notes that 'despite the theoretical adherence to the principle of *laissez-faire*, the state was increasingly becoming involved with social matters', Alston Kennerley, 'Welfare in British Merchant Seafaring', *International Journal of Maritime History* 28, no. 2 (2016), 361.

[101] Geoffrey C. Fidler, 'The Liverpool Trades Council and Technical Education in the Era of the Technical Instruction Committee', *History of Education* 6, no. 3 (1977), 310. See also Paul L. Robertson, 'Technical Education in the British Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Industries, 1863-1914', *The Economic History Review* 27, no. 2 (1974): 222-235.

[102] 'Technical Education for Sea Officers, Letter from Adelante', *LM,* July 9, 1891, 7.

industry… [suffered] decline in the face of competition both from abroad and from other British ports, particularly in the North Atlantic ports'.[103] Furthermore, training for future masters and mates was provided at no cost to the industry ('a covert subsidy to the British ship owner, the like of which existed in no other maritime nation').[104] Through the looking glass of Liverpool's distorted Victorian politics, the wealthy merchant shipowners concerned for their profits therefore promoted the benefits of technical education for seafarers in the face of opposition from seamen's representative bodies.

Whilst (characteristically) the Liverpool Council demurred from levying the permitted penny on the local rates for technical instruction, such investment came from a different source. Public concern about excessive drunkenness led to the imposition of an additional duty on alcohol in the Local Taxation Act of 1890, which in turn 'made the proceeds of an increased duty on beer and spirits available to councils, recommending its use to promote technical education'.[105] Yet even when in receipt of dedicated funds directly from the Treasury, the Liverpool Council initially expressed reluctance in committing such *whisky money* to investment in technical education.[106] Approval for the allocation of financial grants for technical education in Liverpool was secured only on the understanding that, should the whisky money be withdrawn, there would be no recourse to ratepayer subsidy to meet the costs of continuing to fund subsidised activities (under the TIA).

Such risk aversion proved over-cautious as Liverpool received between £15,000 and £25,000 *per annum* throughout the 1890s from the Exchequer for technical instruction.[107] William Whyte notes that:

---

[103] Fidler, 'The Liverpool Trades Council', 317.

[104] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 100.

[105] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 113.

[106] An article in the *Leicester Chronicle* published in 1891 may include the first recorded use of the term 'whisky money' in respect of the Local Taxation Act of 1890. 'Councils should set aside part of Mr Goschen's "whisky money" to provide county scholarships to enable girls to attend scientific classes at the universities or colleges for women'. 'Local Notes', *Leicester Chronicle*, March 28, 1891, 8.

[107] Figures quoted from Hewitt, *The Technical Instruction Committee*, 6.

> City councils were… unpredictable. By the late-1890s, the overwhelming majority were raising taxes to pay for technical education, with only one – Preston – holding out and refusing to levy a rate. But the amount they were willing to spend differed widely, as did the ways in which they spent it.[108]

Municipal funding for technical institutions triggered both the establishment of new colleges (some in ports, like Bristol and Portsmouth) and the construction of bespoke civic buildings in which the colleges could be accommodated (including buildings still standing as monuments to municipal investment in places like Halifax, Leeds and Wolverhampton). Lacking the crusading zeal of some local authorities, the Liverpool Council's decision proved pivotal to instigating the development of nautical education in Liverpool but also placed significant financial, legal and infrastructural constraints upon the LNC in its earliest years.

Invoking the TIA, the Liverpool Council convened a bespoke committee to oversee the allocation of financial grants for technical education, initially established as a sub-committee of the Council's powerful Library, Museum and Arts Committee (LMAC). However, the importance of technical education increased throughout the decade to the extent that LMAC's Technical Instruction Sub-Committee (TISC) would later be reconfigured as a Technical Instruction Committee, afforded the same (standing committee) status as the LMAC.[109] The leading figures in the LMAC and its TISC played crucial roles in the advancement of nautical education in Liverpool, although appearing as late converts to the cause over the course of an eventful few months in 1891. From its inception, the TISC was chaired by local architect William Edward Willink, an independent councillor initially elected on a temperance platform (although latterly returned as a Conservative). The LMAC was chaired in 1891 by Tory grandee Sir William Bower Forwood, a former and future Lord Mayor of Liverpool (and brother of Liverpool's Conservative leader). LMAC's report to the Council on 1st July 1891 included the initial allocation of grants for technical

[108] William Hadden Whyte, *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain's Civic Universities* (Oxford University Press, 2015) 142.

[109] Hewitt, *The Technical Instruction Committee,* 12.

instruction, as proposed by the TISC.[110] This report was presented in Forwood's absence by the committee's Deputy Chair, the venerable Liberal civic dignitary Philip Henry Rathbone, although matters did not proceed as planned.

In moving approval of LMAC's report, Alderman Rathbone formally sought the Council's endorsement of the recommendations of the TISC for the allocation of grants for technical instruction. However, Councillor Frederick Smith proposed an amendment to the motion, arguing that the grants should not be approved until adequate provision was made therein for nautical education in Liverpool (beyond the token £200 specified in the proposal). The constitutionality of Smith's proposed amendment was disputed before being ruled in order by the Mayor, having taken the advice of the Town Clerk.[111] Although it may have been overlooked or disregarded as a tiny bureaucratic detail, this decision was crucial in facilitating all that was to follow. Indeed, it was to be just the first in a series of judgements and knife-edge decisions that would ultimately determine the future of nautical education in Liverpool.

Debate joined, Councillor Willink argued that the TISC was only able to fund existing teaching institutions and that there was no nautical teaching institution in Liverpool that could legitimately receive public funding. Taking the floor and the moral high-ground, Councillor Smith responded in defence of his proposed amendment that 'it was high time' that the fact that 'a city like Liverpool (that) had no institution for the teaching of our seamen… had the serious attention of those who were dealing with the money'.[112] Forty-two Aldermen and Councillors voted on Smith's amendment that afternoon and when the votes were tallied it was found that 21 votes had been cast in favour of the amendment and 21 votes cast against. This stalemate was broken by the casting vote of the Lord Mayor, which went in favour of the amendment and the history of the LNC took a decisive turn. Had just one of the

[110] 'City Council', *LM*, July 2, 1891, 7.

[111] Strictly speaking, Councillor Smith's proposal sought to amend the TISC report rather than the LMAC report, which was the subject of the Council's business on 1st July 1891. The TISC report had already been approved (by LMAC). Thus, the incipient LNC project narrowly avoided being vetoed by bureaucratic pedantry.

[112] 'City Council', *LM*, July 2, 1891, 7.

members of the Council who voted for Smith's amendment been absent from the Council Chamber when the vote was taken, the history of the LNC could have been very different. In its amended form, the substantive motion was subject to further debate. A series of alternative potential recipients of nautical instruction funding were proposed, particularly the Liverpool branch of the Mercantile Marine Services Association (MMSA).[113] Dismissing such preferential pleading, Willink moved a further amendment to the substantive motion to remit any further debate to LMAC,

> if on inquiry the committee find that there is no public institution existing in the city for the development of nautical education, the committee shall then be at liberty, without further authority, to make the grants in accordance with their recommendation; and that the committee do also report upon the best means of promoting nautical education in Liverpool.

Whilst some of the assembled elected members of the Council were sceptical about Willink's motives in moving his clever amendment, the majority (by 32 to 11) voted in favour and the substantive motion was carried. There were two parts to this amendment. Firstly, LMAC would determine whether there was a 'public institution existing in the city for the development of nautical education' as a means of informing the allocation of grants for technical instruction in 1891/2. With a view to the longer term (and implicitly assuming that the answer to the first question would be 'no'), the committee would also 'report upon the best means of promoting nautical education in Liverpool'.[114]

However, before LMAC could re-convene, the debate over recognition of public institutions for nautical education in Liverpool was instigated through correspondence

---

[113] 'The Mercantile Marine Service Association was founded in 1857 to provide private organisations and individuals employed in the merchant marine a voice to counteract the government's powerful Board of Trade. Open to any master or officer sailing from any British port it was founded in association with shipowners and merchants and did not define itself as a trade union. It had a strong interest in the education and professional development of merchant navy officers and in their welfare especially on retirement from the sea'. Mercantile Marine Service Association, 1866 – 1996, National Museums Liverpool website: (https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/artifact/mercantile-marine-service-association) accessed 12th December 2022.

[114] 'City Council', *LM*, July 2, 1891, 7.

published in the pages of the local press, amongst representatives of competing interests (including the *HMS Conway*, the LSH Navigation School and the disgruntled MMSA). During debate in the Council, the respective merits of the Seaman's Orphanage and the MMSA were proposed as prospective 'public institutions' for nautical education worthy of receipt of public funds, amongst other candidates. Writing to the *LM* in a letter published on 6th July 1891, A. Norman Tate (who styled himself 'Honorary Principal, Liverpool Science and Art Classes') described navigation classes given to the boys stationed on the (charitable) school ship *Indefatigable* as an example of supported nautical instruction. He argued that Councillor Smith's amendment and the consequent delay in making grants for technical instruction had 'materially retarded' and 'seriously interfered' with the technical instruction already provided in the seafarer's interest in Liverpool.

Tate's conclusion, that 'It would be far better to aid existing institutions already giving instruction in the direction needed than to start new schemes', was flatly contradicted by an editorial piece published in the same newspaper on the same day. The tone of the editorial mixed incredulity with outrage ('It is almost impossible to believe that in a seaport like Liverpool, which owes its very existence to its maritime trade, there is no thoroughly adequate institution') and criticism of the 'basic standards' at which the shipmaster and mate competency requirements were set (by the BoT). The article claimed that 'officers of our mercantile marine' could be characterised as 'barely able to write and totally ignorant of grammar or spelling' and display 'a lamentable ignorance tending to lower the prestige of the service'. In consequence, British shipowners look to 'foreign masters and officers' who 'hold certificates which signify a far higher knowledge of nautical astronomy and navigation' to safeguard 'huge steamer(s) carrying hundreds of souls and a valuable cargo'. The newspaper article stated that 'our merchant navy is being overrun by foreigners' because a number of countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Norway and Sweden) were 'ahead of us'. The article concluded that Liverpool needed 'a thoroughly good nautical college', the absence of which 'is a gross injustice to our sailors who, unable to compete with their foreign brethren, are greatly handicapped'.[115]

[115] 'Nautical Instruction in Liverpool, letter from A. Norman Tate', *LM*, July 6, 1891, 6.

LMAC was promptly convened and concluded that there was 'no public institution existing in the city for the development of nautical education to which the Council could legally grant funds under the provisions of the Technical Instruction Act, 1889'. It agreed to remit the issue of the 'best means of promoting nautical education in Liverpool' to a special sub-committee, which gathered expert views throughout July from the Local Marine Board, the MMSA, the Liverpool School of Science and Technology, the Liverpool Science and Art Classes and the LSH. In an important milestone moment for the history of the LNC, the sub-committee quickly resolved that efforts and resources for nautical education in Liverpool should be 'concentrated on one important institution' rather than 'distributed among a number of minor establishments'.[116] The final act of LMAC's special sub-committee was to recommend the formation of a further sub-committee, to develop a detailed scheme (addressing governance, location, organisation, curriculum and likely cost) for a nautical education institution in Liverpool.

This 'composite committee' would include representatives from the Local Marine Board, the LSSOA, the Sailing-ship Owners' Association, the MMSA, the Sailors' Home committee, the Liverpool School of Science and Technology, the Liverpool Science and Art Classes, a nautical assessor, the Bidston Observatory, University College Liverpool and the members of the TISC. Such a discordant chorus would prove difficult to manage, but this inclusive compromise would enable all the (competing) interests of the city's maritime community to actively participate in discussions about the future model of nautical education in Liverpool. Although the MMSA was included among the membership of the proposed 'composite committee', it lobbied (both ahead of and during) the 5th August 1891 Council meeting against LMAC's proposal. The governing committee of the MMSA sought funding for their own scheme to offer young seamen 'ample facilities for thoroughly grounding themselves in the principles of scientific navigation by a free course of studies open to all'.[117] The MMSA invested in a 'pamphlet', which summarised their proposed

[116] 'Nautical education in Liverpool', *LM*, July 31, 1891, 7.

[117] With reference to the subsequent actions of the MMSA in respect of the LNC, this 'scheme' for 'a free course of studies open to all' appears barely credible. Not only would it be prohibitively expensive to run, it could have resulted in a significant influx of (subsidised)

scheme and formally submitted this to Willink's TISC, although this was not formally acknowledged and the MMSA was further aggrieved to learn of LMAC's proposal (and their envisaged role in that proposal) 'from the public press'. Before the August Liverpool Council meeting, the MMSA sought to correct LMAC's 'manifest error' by lobbying the Lord Mayor directly and publicising their rival proposal.[118] When their proposed deputation to present their case to the Council was rejected, the MMSA switched their strategy to lobbying individual councillors to speak and vote against LMAC's motion during the resulting debate.

Alderman Forwood (Chair of LMAC) championed the case for public investment in nautical education in Liverpool at the Council meeting of 5th August 1891. Echoing the arguments earlier expressed by Councillor Smith, Forwood agreed that 'it would be a very proper thing for Liverpool to take the lead in establishing a nautical school, and that no better work could be done by these funds than improving the facilities for nautical education in this city'. Critical of the BoT's maritime competency certification system, Forwood envisaged investment in a public institution built around the principle of continuous education for well-educated ship officers. He also dismissed the MMSA's counterproposal, which he felt 'could not be called in any sense a school or a college' and was therefore underserving of (and ineligible to receive) public funds. In opposition, owner of the Cunard Steamship Company, Alderman David MacIver railed against LMAC's proposal, expressing 'absolute amazement' and 'intense opposition' to the 'absurd scheme'. MacIver argued that, beyond learning navigation, the instruction of future shipmasters 'could only be learned by practice and not at a college' with shipowners valuing 'practical experience' rather than 'college studies'. In MacIver's view, foreshadowing much of the debate over the LNC in the ensuing decade, such an institution would be 'mischievous' as '[T]heoretical education was too highly esteemed, and the most valuable education of all, practical experience, too largely disregarded'. Yet numerous councillors voiced support for 'any scheme by which British seamen might be educated up to the highest standard', arguing that as high standards of intelligence and education were expected from

qualified ship officers, the very 'evil' that the MMSA and similar organisations so dogmatically opposed.

[118] 'The Marine Service Association & Nautical Training', *LM,* August 6, 1891, 7.

‘clerks and solicitors’ then nothing less should be expected of those ‘who took charge of our lives at sea’.[119] The LMAC proposal was (comfortably) passed.

Having successfully navigated the turbulent tides of institutional bureaucracy, the idea of the LNC became reality. 5th August 1891 may thus be considered the ‘birthdate’ of the LNC. From this point, notwithstanding heated debate and criticism, the discussion shifted from whether Liverpool should have a new state-supported nautical college to the type of institution that would best deliver the ‘proper means of efficient nautical education’. Its impact would be both global and local, although its first decade (1892-1900) would not be plain sailing. Civic leaders of the late-Victorian port city of Liverpool represented a different generation from the merchant oligarchs whose profits were derived from the slave trade, a difference that they sought to demonstrate through a *renaissance* of investment in the city’s infrastructure. Viewed in this context, the city was changed and improved by municipal investment in the LNC, underpinning the delivery of services to seafarers and aspirant seafarers in which credible nautical education challenged the validity of established ‘training courses’. The LNC also illustrated how the municipal authority of the port city could target investment in the local maritime economy, carry both practical and symbolic significance much further afield.

[119] ‘Liverpool City Council’, *LM*, August 6, 1891, 3.

2 An institutional history of the Liverpool Nautical College 1892-1900

2.1 Preliminary comments

As a means of addressing complexity through the imposition of order and structure, institutions in the view of Douglass North represent 'the rules of the game'.[1] Expanding on this point, Gail Bossenga considers that institutions are 'frameworks by which individuals make sense of the world', which also act as 'sources of resources that both constrain and empower people to act in order to realise socially-defined purposes'.[2] Writing institutional history is therefore important, but can be contentious; while some commercial institutional histories carry inherent academic credibility, those of academic institutions have tended to fare less well.[3] Academic institutional histories may be regarded with scepticism as being 'devoid of any pretension to objectivity [and] filled with saccharine celebration of the triumphs of the institution'.[4] Frequently commissioned and self-published by in-house presses, university and college histories may be devised as commemorative or hagiographic, their foci lingering admiringly upon the great men (and it is usually men) that assumed leadership positions or published significant works.[5] Their content may even be considered celebratory in seeking to present their subject in the most positive light, photoshopping the blemishes from their history, as '[I]nstitutions

---

[1] Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 3.

[2] Gail Bossenga, 'Institutions as a Mode of Historical Analysis', *Journal of the Western Society for French History* 44 (2016), 9.

[3] Nicholas White, 'Liverpool Shipping and the End of Empire: The Ocean Group in East and Southeast Asia, c. 1945-73', in Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas White (eds.), *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester University Press, 2008): 165-187.

[4] Thomas Dyer, 'On the Writing of College and University History', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 113, no. 3 (1989), 440.

[5] In correspondence with an anonymous 'historian of higher education', Jean-Pierre Hérubel was advised: 'The short answer to your inquiry is that there is no obvious connection between quality and institutional histories published by their own presses. The fact is, no other presses are interested in publishing such works'. Jean-Pierre Hérubel, 'University, College Institutional Histories, and University Presses: General Observations of a Unique Publishing Phenomenon', *Publishing and Research Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2019), 355.

systematically direct individual memory, and channel our perceptions into forms compatible with the relations they authorise'.[6] To avoid such distortion, this study articulates an evidenced-based narrative constructed from detailed analysis of the events of the time and the lived experiences of the people who were there. This population comprises a combination of players including students, their families, the governing body, the faculty, local journalists and politicians, all of whose voices and roles are important in the narration of a rich institutional history.

A chapter on 'The Nautical School and College and Maritime Education' in Roger Webster and Shonagh Wilkie's book on the history of LJMU illustrates how the LNC was a precursor institution to the twenty-first century university.[7] Kennerley's work places the LNC in the context of merchant marine education in Liverpool.[8] Both offer, from their different perspectives, context to the institutional history of the LNC outlined herein. Comparable published institutional histories of nautical colleges in other Victorian cities are few and far between, with the exception of Donald Bovill's work on the education of mercantile mariners in the ports of North-East England in the latter half of the nineteenth century and Ann Shortern's similar focus on Australian maritime education during this period.[9] Closer geographically, if not in disciplinary detail, historians including Grayson Ditchfield, David Jones and Thomas Kelly explore the Victorian roots of local higher education institutions in the North West of England.[10] This study builds and expands upon such institutional

[6] Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse University Press, 1986), 77. See also Steve Weinberg, 'Biography, the Bastard Child of Academe', *Chronicle of Higher Education* 54 no. 35 (2008): 1-5 and Mark Salber Phillips, 'Histories, Micro- and Literary: Problems of Genre and Distance', *New Literary History* 34, no. 2 (2003): 211-229.

[7] Roger Webster and Shonagh Wilkie, *The making of a modern university: Liverpool John Moores University* (Third Millennium Publishing, 2017): 60-67.

[8] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education'.

[9] Bovill, 'Education of Mercantile Mariners'. Donald Bovill, 'The Proprietary Schools of Navigation and Marine Engineering in the Ports of the North East of England, 1822-1914', *History of Education Society Bulletin* 44 (1989): 10-25. Donald Bovill, 'The Education of Boys for the Mercantile Marine: a Study of Three Nautical Schools', *History of Education Society Bulletin* 47 (1991): 11-22. Ann Shortern, 'A School for the Mercantile Marine: A Survey of Initiatives in Maritime Education in Australia, 1869-1923', *Critical Studies in Education* 21, no. 1 (1979): 56-92.

[10] Grayson Ditchfield, 'The Early History of Manchester College', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 123 (1971): 81-104. David Jones, *The Origins of Civic Universities: Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool* (Routledge, 2019). Thomas Kelly, *For*

histories, presenting a narrative of the formation of an educational establishment that is informed by detailed documentary analysis and contextualised by its immediate and longer-term impact.

Viewed from a twenty first century perspective, an institutional history of the Liverpool Nautical College (LNC) may appear to fall within a neat narrative arc of the establishment of the LNC, its eventual integration with the city's Central Technical School and the subsequent aggregation of a range of colleges (including 'the Tech') into the Liverpool Polytechnic in 1970 culminating with 'the Poly' becoming Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) in 1992. Indeed, the LJMU Maritime Centre, with its state-of-the-art bridge and engine room simulation suites, has come a long way from the erection of a ship's mast by the LNC in the yard of the Royal Exchange building (for the purposes of navigational instruction) in 1892. Yet reading history 'backwards' risks distorting complex, convoluted and contested events into a contrived, constructed chronology. For example, my research has shown that when the LNC was founded in 1892 there was no guarantee that such a disputed and risky experiment in the design and delivery of maritime education would prove successful.

Within this thesis section, a new institutional history of the early years of the LNC is constructed from hitherto unexplored records with reference to the college's governance, staffing and physical infrastructure. As discussed in the Introduction, the LNC survived a turbulent gestation of dispute and dissent among Liverpool's political and mercantile elite in 1891. Eventually (certainly cautiously, perhaps reluctantly) a compromise was reached that commanded the support of the City's Council whose stewardship of the institution would be crucial to its chances of success. Focusing upon the governance of the early years of the LNC addresses the concern raised by Sheldon Rothblatt that '[T]he organisation and governance of universities, the structure of leadership and management, the inter-relationship between government and bureaucracies and academic senates and faculties... are not highly developed aspects of the writing of university history'.[11] The sub-section I

Advancement of Learning: The University of Liverpool, 1881-1981 (Liverpool University Press, 1981).

[11] Sheldon Rothblatt, 'The Writing of University History at the End of Another Century', *Oxford Review of Education* 23, no. 2 (1997), 160.

present on staffing reflects the view of Thomas Dyer who stresses the importance of faculty in influencing 'the social effects of a college education'.[12] Lucinda Matthews-Jones emphasises the importance of place within institutional history and the impact of the physical environment on both staff and students, noting that 'Institutions were embodied spaces that were experienced day by day'.[13]

The LJMU Special Collections archive contains a treasure trove of documentation pertaining to maritime education in Liverpool in the 1890s, primary source material from which a new and comprehensive history of the foundations of the LNC has been constructed. As a precursor institution to LJMU, the university has inherited a wealth of material pertaining to the LNC's early years, particularly the period 1892-1900 when James Gill served as the college's founding Headmaster. The LNC archive includes admissions registers, minute books and reports, correspondence and documentary ephemera, the selection of which material may owe more to serendipity than to forethought or design. LNC founding Headmaster Gill died in office in 1900 and much of the material in the LNC archive covering the period 1892-1900 appears to have been cleared from his desk and preserved by his successor, Headmaster Merrifield. This collection of material was therefore indirectly curated by Gill, as he initially thought that it was too important to throw away.

This account of the foundation and early years of the LNC (1892-1900) emerges from researching and narrating discrete (micro)histories within an overall patchwork of institutional history, aligned with the view of Venkat Srinivasan *et al* that '[N]arrating institutional histories is very much about trying to understand the layers and context'.[14] As Anton Froeyman further notes:

---

[12] Thomas Dyer, 'Institutional Research and Institutional History', *Research in Higher Education* 8, no. 3 (1978), 284.

[13] Lucinda Matthews-Jones, 'Settling at Home: Gender and Class in the Room Biographies of Toynbee Hall, 1883–1914', *Victorian Studies* 60, no. 1 (2017), 49.

[14] Venkat Srinivasan *et al*, 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at Institutional History: A Model for Digital Exhibitions from Science Archives', *Circumscribere International Journal for the History of Science* 21, no. 71 (2018), 76.

> Just as the use of a microscope can make the biologist change his or her hypothesis about the workings of an organism, a closer look at a certain historical situation can reveal previously unknown information about its workings, and lead eventually to the formulation of new hypotheses.[15]

In keeping with this method, the development of a discrete and manageable dataset has been key to scaffolding the detailed, immersive research that has allowed this thesis to 'touch historical reality itself and at the same time experience the irrevocable rupture between past and present [which] gives rise to the specific nature of historical experience, or historical sensation'.[16] As such, this research is carefully bounded by time and by subject, cognisant of and sensitive to Sheldon Rothblatt's caution concerning the 'vast number of sources available for the writing of university history and the impossibility of any single author being able to command the documents covering all aspects of an institution's history'.[17]

In its early years, the LNC was governed by a Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee (NISC) of the Liverpool City Council's Library, Museum and Arts Committee (LMAC). The NISC minute book is an archival object which provides a formal record of the governance of the early years of the LNC, detailing discussions and decisions from the most significant to the most mundane issues. It documents in detail a long-forgotten internal institutional history of the early years of the LNC, covering governance, staffing and the college's physical infrastructure. The NISC minute book also documents the evolving relationship between the governing body and the LNC's Headmaster, highlighting episodes of (often public) discord which reveal much about the perception of the college and of nautical education more broadly in the late-Victorian era. The NISC minutes offer the researcher a glimpse behind the scenes, as 'the minutes of governing boards often disclose a picture of

[15] Anton Froeyman, 'Reading Microhistory: Three Layers of Meaning', in Julian Wolfreys (ed.), *New Critical Thinking: Criticism to Come* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 100.

[16] Froeyman, 'Reading Microhistory', 111.

[17] Rothblatt, 'The Writing of University History', 154.

institutional development at variance with traditional images and the conventional wisdom regarding an institution's past'.[18]

Whereas the formal minute book documents decisions and milestones in the history of the LNC, a complementary (if not always complimentary) narrative can be found in James Gill's own hand. The Headmaster's report book captured and communicated Gill's arguments and suggestions to inform the deliberations and decisions of the NISC, to which body he was accountable. By reading the report book alongside the official record of LNC governance in the NISC minutes, Gill's narrative also highlights issues that the NISC chose not to discuss and, on occasion, Gill's frank reactions to NISC's decisions or lack thereof. Writing with reference to the symbolic and practical importance of the Exchequer and Audit Act of 1866, Warwick Funnell considers governance of Victorian institutions, 'at the heart of which was financial stewardship in which economy was a pre-eminent concern'.[19] Embracing this spirit of accountability, Gill was assiduous in reporting all his management decisions to the NISC, logging his accounts (financial and otherwise), capturing and communicating arguments and suggestions to inform the deliberations of the NISC, reflecting Thomas Dyer's view that:

> [I]ndividual manuscript collections of key figures in a college's history often lucidly and candidly explain considerations that went into the formation of a particular policy decision… Moreover, the discovery of a journal kept by a president, dean or professor can reveal a great deal about the springs of policy implementation.[20]

Gill's horde of newspaper clippings (or 'rippings' as he appeared not to own scissors), correspondence and heavily annotated early drafts of reports add idiosyncratic detail and rich personal character and context to the formal contents of the report book.

---

[18] Dyer, 'Institutional Research and Institutional History', 285.

[19] Warwick Funnell, 'Victorian Parsimony and the Early Champions of Modern Public Sector Audit', *Accounting History* 9, no. 1 (2004), 52.

[20] Dyer, 'Institutional Research and Institutional History', 285.

This institutional history, comprising a detailed summation of the LNC's staffing and financial affairs, is based upon archival materials supported by triangulating evidence from contemporaneous sources such as newspaper-based accounts of events. Indeed, the narration of the 'pre-LNC' period, in which the college emerged in concept if not yet in physical form, owes much to contemporary newspaper accounts of the events that led to the eventual governance, staffing and physical environment of the LNC in the latter years of the nineteenth century (for further consideration and discussion of local newspapers please see section 3). The archived documents upon which this institutional history is built have remained largely unexamined for over a century and are used here as research materials for the first time. Forensic examination of these untouched sources generates a unique evidence base and a new perspective from which to view the discussions, decisions and corresponding events relating to nautical education in the late-Victorian port city, as explored in the following narratives.

2.2 Governance of the LNC, 1892-1900

In this sub-section I establish and analyse the arrangements for the governance of the LNC in its first decade, through a combination of contemporary newspaper reports and evidence drawn from archival materials. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, the Liverpool City Council agreed in 1891 to establish a composite committee on nautical instruction and on the afternoon of Thursday 8th October 1891 it was convened for the first time with W.S. Graves in the chair.[21] Councillor Willink attempted to set the tone for the business of the meeting by providing an overview of the composite committee's remit to devise a new scheme for nautical instruction in Liverpool. However, immediately thereafter Captain Bremner of the Mercantile Marine Services Association (MMSA) took the floor to address the meeting and argued that rather than devising a new scheme for nautical instruction, the composite committee should instead commit public funds to the work of the MMSA. He proposed that the Mersey-based training ships *Indefatigable* ('for lads in humble circumstances') and *Conway* ('for better class boys') could be utilised 'for all elementary purposes'. Bremner argued that 'officers and sailors who wished to improve themselves' should be instructed by 'experienced navigators aided by professors' and that 'there was no body more qualified to undertake this work' than the MMSA.[22] From the Chair, Graves subsequently called various members of the composite committee to speak and in turn they each made pitches in support of the organisations and interest groups that they represented.

Eventually, an exasperated Alderman Forwood halted the 'desultory' conversation and proposed that, to achieve progress, the composite committee should split into two sub-committees. One sub-committee would consider the governance, organisation and funding of a bespoke nautical institution, whilst the other would focus on the issues of location and curriculum. Forwood, Alderman Rathbone, Willink and a number of high-profile shipowners formed the first

[21] Forwood described Graves, who had been made a partner in the White Star shipping company in 1881, as 'highly honoured in this city, and one always identified with the mercantile marine'. 'The promotion of Technical Education in Liverpool', *LM*, October 9, 1891, 7.

[22] 'The promotion of Technical Education in Liverpool', *LM*, October 9, 1891, 7.

committee, leaving the representatives of the city's mercantile marine groups to populate the second committee (where their intransigence and conflicting self-interests could do less harm). The first sub-committee (Chaired by Mr Bushell of the Sailors' Home Committee) proposed 'the provision of nautical education in the city should be undertaken by the Corporation' under the supervision of an expanded TISC, at which the respective agencies active in nautical education in Liverpool would be represented. It was proposed that £2,500 *per annum* (roughly equivalent to £320,000 in 2020) be allocated from excise duties for the school's running costs with a further £1,000 required to cover start-up costs. With regard to the organisation of the school, the sub-committee recommended that 'senior and junior classes should be established' and that connections should be made with 'existing agencies' of nautical instruction in the city, although 'the nature of that connection will be best left to the governing body to determine'. The recommendations of both sub-committees were 'unanimously agreed to' by the composite committee (the recommendations of the second sub-committee are considered in section 2.4 of this thesis). In drafting a formal proposal to the LMAC, Graves advocated that the scheme's governance 'would secure a school at once independent and thoroughly representative'.[23]

It emerges from newspaper reports that Willink positioned the LNC within a wider scheme for technical instruction, defined as 'instruction in the principles of science and art applicable to industries, and in the application of special branches of science and art to specific industries or employment'.[24] He identified attributes of the city that made Liverpool unique, requiring 'a system of technical instruction' that was 'of an entirely different nature from that which meets the particular needs of any of our other great towns'. As Liverpool was a 'commercial centre' rather than a centre of manufacturing, Willink argued that the provision of technical instruction in the city should reflect those priorities. Nautical instruction sat at the heart of the proposal: 'the adequate training of officers for the mercantile marine is to (Liverpool) a matter

[23] 'Nautical education in Liverpool', *LM*, October 21, 1891, 7.

[24] Extract from the Technical Instruction Act, 1889 included in Thomas Edward Ellis, Ellis Jones Ellis-Griffith, *Intermediate and Technical Education (Wales): A Manual to the Intermediate Education (Wales) Act, 1889, and the Technical Instruction Act, 1889* (National Association for the Promotion of Technical and Secondary Education, 1889), 65.

of the first importance'.[25] Willink's vision was based around the notion of an 'educational ladder, leading from the elementary schools through the secondary schools up to the university' (the 'educational ladder' was subsequently popularised by R.H. Tawney; when Leader of the Opposition, former Prime Minister Herbert Asquith championed the concept in Parliamentary debate).[26] The TISC proposed spending £14,500 (almost £2,000,000 in 2022) on a bold and ambitious programme of technical instruction. There were seven 'branches' to the sub-committee's scheme, of which number one was headed 'technical instruction appertaining to the training of men and boys for the mercantile marine service'. It was within this broader context that the outcomes of the composite committee were presented to the LMAC.

Once all seven areas of the proposal (including teacher training, technical instruction in art and 'instruction of girls in cookery, laundry work, and other subjects peculiar to their sex') had been presented, Willink then turned to the issue of oversight. Although not named directly, it is likely that Willink was referring to dynamic municipalities such as those found in Birmingham and Manchester when he stated, 'It is in some towns possible and even desirable that such work as is proposed should be directly undertaken by the local authority'. In keeping with Liverpool's dislocated, patrician tradition ('so much has in the past been done by private endeavour, and so many institutions exist'), his scheme sought to rationalise and co-ordinate extant establishments as well as creating new initiatives, such as a nautical school. He proposed 'in order to secure efficiency, unity of purpose, and proper co-ordination, among the various agencies engaged in the work of technical instruction in this city, the City Council (should) appoint some person of recognised scientific attainments as director of technical instruction'.[27]

[25] 'Technical instruction in Liverpool', *LM*, November 28, 1891, 7.

[26] 'Technical instruction in Liverpool', *LM*, November 28, 1891, 7. Richard H. Tawney, *Secondary Education for All* (Labour Party Advisory Committee on Education, 1922). Hansard, House of Commons Debate March 28, 1922, vol. 152.

[27] 'Technical instruction in Liverpool', *LM*, November 28, 1891, 7 (although they did not initially see eye-to-eye, William Hewitt, Liverpool's first Director of Technical Instruction, would become a valued ally of the Headmaster of the LNC).

Contemporary newspaper reports reveal that at the next meeting of the Council (Wednesday 2nd December 1891), Willink referenced the prevailing anxiety around increased maritime competition, stating that his proposed public investment in nautical education would 'be nearer the standard reached by Continental countries'. More broadly with reference to his wider proposals, Willink pursued an egalitarian argument to provide social mobility through technical instruction. He claimed that '[I]f they could form an educational ladder which would enable the people to go right from the bottom to the top then they would have done a memorable thing in Liverpool and one which would produce most valuable results'. Sir William Bower Forwood as Chair of the LMAC formally moved that the proposals be endorsed by the Council and that the city treasurer make available the required sums in two trenches, £6290 immediately in respect of the 1890/91 fiscal year and a further £8210 at the end of the current fiscal year. This proposal was seconded by Rathbone, thereby initiating an open debate amongst the assembled representatives. Councillor JB Smith focused on the whisky money as 'they had this money given to them, and could utilise it in the reduction of rates'.[28] He cited the proposal's reliance on the whisky money as a risk, as excise duties could fluctuate and in any given year the ratepayers could be called upon to subsidise any shortfall in such funding for technical instruction if Willink's scheme was approved. Although Smith moved an amendment to prevent the release of funds it attracted eight votes with forty-three against, thereby demonstrating a comfortable majority in favour of Willink's ambitious scheme.

Responsibility for the governance of the LNC was invested in a sub-committee of the LMAC of the Liverpool City Council that was convened for that purpose toward the close of 1891. A(n anonymous) journalist writing copy for the *Liverpool Mercury* (*LM*) summed up the circumstances thus:

> The subject of nautical education was deemed of such importance that a special sub-committee was appointed to organise and manage the Nautical College and in order, apparently, to secure the most perfect efficiency, several gentlemen connected with the shipping of the city, and who were known to take

[28] 'City Council', *LM*, December 3, 1891, 7.

> a great interest in the subject of nautical education, were invited to serve as additional members of the special sub-committee. It will be readily understood that the advice and assistance of those members have proved to be of the greatest value, and hence what promises to be an effective scheme has been drawn up during the year and the work of the college inaugurated.[29]

Membership of the NISC comprised both elected councillors who were members of the LMAC and representatives of nautical institutions in the city. To such institutions, membership of the NISC was granted by invitation only and not all the institutions that aspired to membership were successful, as Captain Moore of the Merchant Service Guild (MSG) would later attest. The six institutions given a seat on the NISC and their selected representatives were listed thus in January of 1892:

> Mr. W. S. Graves (the Steamship Owners' Association), Mr. R. H. Dixon (the Shipowners' Association), Mr. H. T. Wallace (the Liverpool Underwriters' Association), Captain A. T. Miller (the Mercantile Marine Service Association), Mr. Charles J. Bushell (the Sailors' Home Committee) and Mr. T. R. Shallcross (the Local Marine Board).[30]

Participation in the work of the NISC, if this can be measured by attendance at meetings, was variable with some members appearing to take their duties in that regard much more seriously than others. For example, Captain Miller of the MMSA (an organisation not wholly sympathetic to the aims of the LNC) attended 70 of the 97 meetings of the NISC held between November 1893 and May 1899, whilst Mr Graves of the Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association (LSSOA) attended only 18 of these 97 meetings despite being the deputy chair of the NISC throughout that period. In mitigation, William Graves had suffered a period of poor health and convalescence following the loss of White Star's *Naronic* in 1892.[31] A special

---

[29] 'Technical Instruction in Liverpool', *LM*, January 30, 1893, 6.

[30] 'Liverpool Corporation Committees', *LM*, January 27, 1892, 6.

[31] 'Mr Graves was so upset and worried about the whole affair that he became very seriously ill and Mrs Ismay comments in her diary: "We were very grieved to see Mr. Graves, I sincerely hope the trip to New Zealand will cure him". Apparently it did so, as he eventually quite recovered'. Joseph Wilton Oldham, *The Ismay Line, The White Star Line and The*

mention is due to Mr Shallcross of the Local Marine Board, who was absent from each and every one of the 89 meetings of the NISC that he was eligible to attend up to the expiration of his membership in October 1898. The Liverpool Underwriters' Association may have 'congratulated' the Council 'upon their resolve to devote a portion of the funds available for technical education towards the founding of a nautical college' but their NISC representative between November 1893 to January 1895 (a Mr Vallance) remained completely absent.[32]

Councillors from across Liverpool's political spectrum were represented on the LMAC and the NISC also comprised both Conservative and Liberal Councillors (also one Irish Nationalist, Councillor Kearney, until October 1895). Yet the Chair of the NISC in the first decade of its existence was occupied exclusively by a sequence of Tory councillors. The inaugural Chair of the NISC was Councillor Willink. As the chair of the TISC of the LMAC, Willink had been instrumental in the development of the LNC. Although Willink had initially appeared reluctant, he soon turned keen advocate of the College once it was situated within the context of an overall civic educational ladder. Demonstrating an active interest in the successful operation of the LNC, Willink (an architect) was invited to deliver a public lecture on the subject of 'Ventilation' at the College. The honour of delivering the inaugural evening lecture was reserved for LMAC Chair and civic grandee Sir William Forwood, on 11th October 1893.[33] Willink simultaneously chaired the TISC and the NISC of the LMAC until April 1894 when he relinquished the Chair of the NISC 'on the grounds that he was not able, owing to other duties, to give what he considered sufficient time to the work of the supervision of the college'.[34] However, Willink not only continued to attend the NISC, but he attended a greater proportion of NISC meetings than any other member (including its new Chair) in the period November 1893 to May 1899 (75%). He also chaired at least 13 meetings of the NISC after he had formally vacated the Chair. Furthermore, when the City Council re-arranged committee

---

Ismay Family Story (Journal of Commerce and Shipping, 1961). Quotation from unpaginated digital edition published in 2012.

[32] 'The Liverpool Underwriters' Association', *LM*, January 16, 1892, 8.

[33] 'Liverpool Nautical College', *LM*, October 12, 1893, 6.

[34] 'Local news: Liverpool Library Committee', *LM*, April 28, 1894, 6.

relationships in 1897, the NISC reported to the new Technical Instruction Committee (TIC), of which Willink was Chair. A religious, teetotal workaholic, Willink left public office in 1906 to concentrate on his architectural business, designing *inter alia* the Cunard Building on Liverpool's Waterfront.[35]

In April 1894 the responsibility for chairing the NISC was passed to a very different character indeed, 'On the motion of Sir W. B. Forwood, seconded by Mr. Picton, the meeting unanimously elected Mr. Maxwell H. Maxwell to the position of chairman of the Nautical Instruction sub-committee'.[36] Born Maxwell Hyslop Jnr in 1862, he acquired the cumbersome moniker of Maxwell Hyslop Maxwell after his father (Maxwell Hyslop Snr) assumed the surname Maxwell as a condition of inheriting the vast estate of his maternal uncle in 1867. Councillor Maxwell was very well-connected, not only by blood (inheriting an impressive portion of Dumfriesshire) but also by marriage (his wife was the cousin of Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States of America). The newlywed Maxwells honeymooned with the Roosevelts in 1888: 'Teddy found Max to be conceited, very commonplace, and not even half the vigorous chap he thought himself to be'.[37]

The (almost) five years of Maxwell's tenure as NISC Chair marked an important phase in the development of the LNC, with the sub-committee maintaining close oversight over the emerging institution the future of which was still uncertain. Although Maxwell would occupy the Chair of the NISC until November 1898 he was very much in the shadow cast by his predecessor (and *éminence grise*). Emerging from the records as something of an enigmatic figure, Maxwell missed over a third of the meetings of the NISC that he was expected to Chair. As discussed in section 3 of this thesis, his relationship with James Gill appeared initially awkward and Maxwell was not averse to postponing consideration of business that Gill would rather have resolved, much to the Headmaster's frustration. Nor was Maxwell's relationship with Forwood, Chair of the LMAC, always smooth (as also discussed in section 3).

---

[35] Peter De Figueiredo, 'Symbols of Empire: The Buildings of the Liverpool Waterfront', *Architectural History* 46 (2003): 229-254.

[36] 'Local news: Liverpool Library Committee', *LM,* April 28, 1894, 6.

[37] Walter E. Wilson, *The Bulloch Belles: Three First Ladies, a Spy, a President's Mother and Other Women of a 19th Century Georgia Family* (McFarland, 2015), 175.

Maxwell evidently struggled with the burden of responsibility for the oversight of an institution that he believed to be undermined and undervalued by representatives of the nautical interest (such as the MMSA and MSG) and by 'the shipowners of the port (who) had not given their support to the Nautical College which the committee felt they had a right to expect'.[38]

There appears to have been a shift in the tone of the relationship between the NISC and the Headmaster of the LNC following Willink's resignation from the chair and his replacement by Maxwell in May 1894. Records such as the NISC minutes and Headmaster's report book held in the LJMU archive indicate that in the 18 months from the launch of the College the NISC offered Gill consistently supportive supervision. Although not apparent from publicly available sources, the NISC began to hold Gill and the LNC to closer account when Maxwell took the Chair. At only Maxwell's third meeting in the Chair, the NISC resolved to hold a 'special meeting' in the following week where the Headmaster would be required to report upon 'the present position and prospects of the Boys School'.[39] Judging by the tone and content of Gill's report, Maxwell's intervention had arisen from concerns over the number of boys in attendance.

Gill duly reported to the NISC *in camera* (away from the enquiring eyes and ears of local journalists) in June 1894. He noted that 16 boys had entered the school since January 1893 'of these nine have gone to sea as apprentices, and one as an ordinary seaman… there are six in attendance at present, of whom 4 intend to be sailors and two marine engineers'. He admitted that 'the numbers are disappointing' but predicted 'an early and progressive increase' in enrolments (an issue discussed in section 4.1). Such optimism was based upon the likelihood that the Board of Trade (BoT) would review (and enhance) the standard of Certificates of Competency for shipmates and masters. In such circumstances:

[38] 'Library extension in Liverpool', *LM*, November 13, 1896, 7.

[39] Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee minute book, LJMU Special Collections & Archives (LJMU history: Byrom Street archive), Liverpool John Moores University, June 22, 1894, 48.

> parents will have a strong inducement to send their boys to the Nautical College for a preliminary course of instruction before sending them to sea…(as) hitherto their parents have not seen the need for special School Instruction, knowing that the Board of Trade standard of requirements was so low that a small amount of study at sea and a few days "cramming" at school were generally sufficient to obtain a certificate.[40]

In defence of the continued operation of the Boys' School, Gill argued that 'the maintenance of this school does not at present require a special staff of teachers. The boys are treated as a separate Class only, which is taught by the masters in turn. The same staff would be required for the different subjects of instruction for the men and apprentices if there were no Boys' School'. Yet Gill's most profound argument was offered in conclusion, as the Boys' School 'encourages merit in a class of boys not otherwise provided for as regards Nautical education, namely, the sons of seafaring men and others having only moderate incomes'.[41] The extension of such opportunities therefore provided a public benefit justification for the continued operation of the Boys' School.

There is evidence to suggest that the formality of the early relationship between Gill and Maxwell mellowed over the years, as in 1898 Gill dedicated his *Text-book on Navigation and Nautical Astronomy* 'by permission to the Chairman of the Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee of the Liverpool Corporation, M.H. Maxwell, Eq., Jr.'.[42] Maxwell was in time succeeded as Chair of the NISC by Councillor Robert Atwood Beaver, a cotton broker who had been elected to the Council only one year before his appointment. Beaver's death in 1901 (at the age of 54) brought to a close the Tory trinity of NISC Chairs in the first decade of the College's existence. Although Beaver's replacement, Councillor (subsequently JP and Lord Mayor of Liverpool) John Japp was a Liberal, the only occasion within the period November 1893 – May 1899 when a meeting of the NISC was chaired by a Liberal councillor (August 1898) was when only two members were in attendance and John Lamport Ellis was the

[40] Nautical College report re Boys' School, NISC minute book, June 29, 1894, 53.

[41] Nautical College report re Boys' School, NISC minute book, June 29, 1894, 54.

[42] James Gill, *Text-book on Navigation and Nautical Astronomy* (Longmans & Co, 1898), iv.

only councillor present. Ellis was the son of a master mariner who had made his fortune through ownership of the Titan Biscuit works. Although not strictly a member of the NISC until November 1897, the records show that Ellis attended meetings of the NISC on four occasions prior to that date. Under the Maxwell regime, a meeting of the NISC could therefore involve councillors who were members of the parent committee and of the sub-committee, councillors who were not members, some but by no means all the institutional members and (from 1895) *consultative members*.

The NISC minute book reveals that two such consultative members were added to the NISC, representing two extremes of Maxwell's judgement. Perhaps to compensate for the poor attendance of some of the NISC's institutional members, Maxwell played a masterstroke in inviting Captain Henry Parsell to join the NISC.[43] An honorary lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve, Parsell brought a wealth of experience having recently retired from a quarter of a century of service with the White Star line where he had latterly been commander of the steamship *Adriatic*. Attending the NISC for the first time in September 1895, Parsell successfully attained his Extra Master Certificate of Competency in the following month (although no record exists of his enrolment at the LNC). Analysis of the NISC minute book reveals that Parsell would prove a committed NISC member, volunteering his time (as an invigilator and as a 'visitor') as well as his experience to support the work of the LNC. Indeed, so valuable was Parsell's contribution that he retained his seat on the NISC after his patron Councillor Maxwell had moved on.

The other consultative member of the NISC was once considered to be the most 'dangerous man in Europe'.[44] During the American Civil War, the Secretary of the Confederate States Navy Department despatched a secret agent to Europe to secure ships for the Confederate Navy. James Dunwoody Bulloch arrived in Liverpool on 4th June 1861, aware that his mission was both risky and illegal but also that he would find sympathetic support amongst cotton traders who depended upon

[43] NISC minute book, August 23, 1895, 136.

[44] Wilson, *The Bulloch Belles,* 5. See also Walter E. Wilson and Gary L. McKay, *James D. Bulloch: Secret Agent and Mastermind of the Confederate Navy* (McFarland, 2012).

supplies from southern plantations.[45] Bulloch covertly purchased four vessels for the Confederacy, channelling funds through intermediaries and relying upon the strategic indifference of the British authorities. It was only when Bulloch sought to secure an iron clad warship (toward the close of the conflict) that the British government felt compelled to intervene. Bulloch was subsequently convicted of treason in his absence and remained in exile in Liverpool for the rest of his life, as a cotton trader.

It may be considered unusual that this divisive figure would be invited to contribute to the governance of the LNC in March 1895.[46] However, such was the quixotic caprice of Councillor Maxwell (who had married Bulloch's daughter) that he thought nothing of inviting his father-in-law to join the NISC. Bulloch was regarded by his nephew President Theodore Roosevelt as 'a Tory of the most ultra-conservative school. Lincoln and Grant he could admire, but he would not listen to anything in favour of Mr Gladstone'.[47] Bulloch's extreme political views and chequered history may not have endeared him to all parties, but he proved to be one of the more dedicated members of the NISC, attending over half of the meetings that were held between his appointment and the end of his son-in-law's tenure as Chair (and indeed member) of the sub-committee. However, unlike Captain Parsell who continued to play an active role as a consultative member of the NISC, Bulloch attended only one *post-Maxwell* meeting. Indeed, Bulloch's last appearance at the NISC was at the first meeting chaired by Councillor Beaver. Perhaps the new Chair quietly advised the 'most dangerous man in Europe' that the duration of his welcome at the NISC had expired.

A study of the NISC minute book reveals that the frequency of meetings of the NISC varied over time. Initially, the NISC was scheduled to 'meet every alternate Friday at 2pm at the Municipal Offices', although by 1896 the meetings were held

[45] In the (1939) film version of *Gone With The Wind*, Rhett Butler tells Scarlett O'Hara 'My funds are in Liverpool, not Atlanta'.

[46] NISC minute book, March 22, 1895, 105.

[47] Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiograph*y (Scribners, 1913), published electronically 2013, accessed 6th December 2022 https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=aFqCDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT25&lpg=PT25&dq#v=onepage&q&f=false unpaginated.

monthly 'on the Friday next preceding the meeting of the Library Museum and Arts and Technical Instruction Committee'.[48] The NISC minute book in the LJMU archive covers the (97) meetings of the sub-committee held between 17th November 1893 and 17th May 1899 (inclusive). Over this period, the NISC had 37 different members, of which 26 were councillors (15 Conservative, 10 Liberal and 1 Irish Nationalist). Initially, the NISC comprised 17 members (11 councillors and six representatives of the local maritime interest) and by 1897 this was reduced to 11 members (five councillors, four local representatives and two consultative members). Both the Liverpool Sailors' Home (LSH) Committee and the Liverpool Underwriters Association lost their representation on the NISC in 1897, although the impact of this would have been negligible as neither Charles Bushell of the Sailors' Home Committee nor Williams representing Underwriters had boasted impressive attendance ratios: Bushell attended just 17% of meetings; Williams a mere 2%.

By 1898 councillors regained the majority in the membership of the NISC, as their number increased by two to seven (and the overall number of members increased to thirteen). Such detailed analysis provides both a definitive account of the NISC's operation and also highlights interesting anomalies that may be omitted from hagiographic institutional histories (for example, three of the NISC members did not attend a single meeting, a further six made only one appearance at a meeting and only fifteen of the NISC's members attended the majority of the meetings that they were eligible to attend over the period spanning November 1893 to May 1899). Only three members of the NISC remained *in situ* throughout the 1890s: Councillor Willink (inaugural Chair), Mr William S Graves (a former Conservative councillor representing the LSSOA and Deputy Chair) and Captain Miller (representing the MMSA). Through this research, their contribution to the successful introduction of the LNC is recognised and valued.

[48] NISC minute book November 16, 1893, 2 & November 12, 1896, 228.

2.3 Staffing the LNC, 1892-1900

All staffing matters pertaining to the LNC were subject to the approval of the NISC. Local newspapers in 1891 reported that the first appointment made to the College's staff was that of the Headmaster, acknowledged as the pivotal role in the development and delivery of the Corporation's plans for nautical education in Liverpool.[49] When advertised, the vacancy attracted 43 applications.[50] The NISC reviewed these applications and provided a shortlist of eight male candidates, four of whom were from outside Liverpool (Bolan of Leith, Isaac of Greenwich, Jude of Newcastle and Shurlock of Bristol) while four were local to the city: Beecher (assistant master of the HMS Conway), Gill (Sailors' Home Navigation School) and private teachers Little (of Fenwick Street) and Moore (of Canning Place).[51] The *LM* reported that 'Eventually the choice of the sub-committee fell upon Mr Gill. The salary attached to the office is £400 a year'.[52] In adherence to the bureaucratic hierarchy in which the NISC was positioned, the proposed appointment of James Gill was first subject to the approval of the LMAC of the Liverpool Council. Such approval having been secured, the LMAC was then obliged to formally propose Gill's appointment to the full City Council, meeting on Wednesday 4th May 1892. In the absence of Alderman Forwood (LMC Chair) it fell to Alderman Rathbone (Deputy Chair) to formally move the recommendation. Speaking in support of the recommendation, which was subsequently approved, NISC Chair Councillor Willink noted that (with regard to the Navigation School at the LSH as discussed in section 1) Gill 'had done much good work in this city'.[53]

---

[49] 'Very much must turn on the appointment of the principal, or head master'. 'The morning's news', *Liverpool Echo*, October 21, 1891, 3.

[50] 'Local news', *LM*, April 29, 1892, 6.

[51] 'Local news', *LM*, April 29, 1892, 6. Just over seven years later Mr Bolan, Master of the Leith Navigation School, addressed the Annual Dinner of the Mercantile Marine Association during which he noted that 'Liverpool had done what had not been done anywhere else. They had founded one of the best institutions for the scientific training of the merchant service officers of this day, and as one having had experience in matters of education, he would beg on them not to expect results to follow too early. He hoped the day would never come when Liverpool would lose its Nautical College (Applause)'. 'Mercantile Marine Association', *LM*, May 26, 1899, 7.

[52] 'Local news', *LM*, April 29, 1892, 6. According to 'MeasuringWorth.com', the real wage value (using the Retail Prices Index) of £400 in 1892 compared with 2022 would be £46,280.

[53] 'City Council: The Navigation School', *LM*, May 5, 1892, 6.

The terms of employment proposed within the recommendation of the LMAC for the 'head master of the Liverpool School of Navigation' deserve close attention.[54] In recommending that Gill be 'engaged to perform the duties of head master of the school', LMAC made a clear stipulation that 'he be not placed on the permanent staff of the Corporation'. This stipulation reflects the commitment made by Forwood at the Liverpool Council meeting of 5th August 1891 that the College would be funded solely from exchequer revenue arising from the Local Taxation Act of 1890 and that costs of the enterprise would not be under-written by the city's ratepayers. As such, funding for nautical education would be committed on an annual basis and subject to annual approval, which could be withheld at the Council's discretion. The precarity of the fledgling LNC was thus exposed in the form of a public declaration that its staffing base, including its headteacher, would be contracted on a temporary basis only. Whilst an element of security of tenure was embedded in the requirement that 'six months notice to determine the arrangement' would have to be given by either party to terminate the relationship, this was balanced by the disclaimer 'that the office be not continued by the Corporation if in future they cease to carry on the Nautical College'.[55] Hence, far from being an embedded permanent element of the City Council's educational services, the LNC was initially managed as an ancillary, speculative and vulnerable project. Furthermore, the detail of future appointments to the staff of the LNC reveals that the equivocal relationship between the Council and College was not restricted to the early months of the College's development. Indeed, the terms of employment subsequently offered to the teaching staff of the LNC (alongside the temporary nature of the College's accommodation as discussed below) throughout the 1890s highlights the longer-term impact of such short-term funding.

Newly confirmed in post, Gill acted promptly to build a teaching team by recruiting a senior technical assistant (at a salary of £250pa) and a senior mathematical assistant (£200pa). Two such appointments were confirmed by the LMAC in August 1892: time-served ex-seafarer Captain Ernest William Owens was

[54] 'City Council meeting', *LM*, May 2, 1892, 4.

[55] 'City Council meeting', *LM*, May 2, 1892, 4.

appointed to the post of senior technical assistant whilst nomadic academic James Lockington became senior maths assistant.[56] They may not have felt particularly secure in their roles, being offered the same terms of employment (albeit with a shorter *three-month* notice period) as James Gill. At the meeting of the LMAC in August 1892, Forwood explained, in relation to the appointments of Owens and Lockington, 'that the committee had been very careful to arrange that if the Government grant should at any future time cease the appointments would terminate, and there would be no claim on the part of the holders for superannuation, or anything in the way of compensation'.[57] It is worthy of note that, a year after making his initial assurance that there would be no claim for support for nautical education by Liverpool's ratepayers to make up any shortfall in income from the whisky money, Forwood deemed it necessary to emphasise the point further.

Lockington was a church-school scholar from Warwickshire who had studied at the Exeter Science School and the University of London. He began his teaching career in Liverpool ('for four years he was mathematical master in the Liverpool College'), relocating to London in the 1880s before returning to Liverpool (where in the April of 1891 he was a teacher of classics).[58] However, by September of that year he had quit his Falkner Street digs and crossed the Irish Sea to take up the post of English Master at the Coleraine Academical Institution. Within a year he was to return to Liverpool to briefly take up the post of senior mathematical assistant at the LNC. Yet by 1893 Lockington had left this post and in the following year records show that he opened Summerland House in Litherland, a residential boarding school for boys. James Lockington was replaced at the LNC by Alfred Ebenezer Larkman, who was recruited to the post of 'junior assistant' in the early months of 1893. Larkman retained Lockington's salary, but the terms of his appointment differed in so far as he was subject to a reduced notice period of one month rather than three. A further teaching post, of Assistant Master of the LNC, was created in 1893 and interest generated by the advertised vacancy was significant, with the receipt of 36

[56] 'At the time of his appointment to his present position he [Owens] was captain of the *Netherby Hall* of the Hall Line'. 'Nautical jottings', *LM*, August 13, 1892, 6.

[57] 'Liverpool City Council: technical instruction', *LM*, August 4, 1892, 7.

[58] 'Nautical jottings', *LM*, August 13, 1892, 6.

applications reported to the NISC from which responsibility for shortlisting was remitted 'to the Chairman and Captain Miller'.[59] The selection panel short-listed and interviewed three candidates on 23rd November 1893, of whom 'Mr W. V. Merrifield of Plymouth was chosen for recommendation to the Committee as the most suitable candidate'.[60] The familiar provisos that had been attached to the appointment of Gill, Owens, Lockington and Larkman were also attached to the appointment of Merrifield (including the one-month notice period).[61]

If Jack Ashore had found his chip supper wrapped in the *Liverpool Review* in July of 1894, he may have read an appraisal of the NISC's record in hiring LNC staff.[62] The article in the *Liverpool Review* was complimentary about the College's Headmaster, writing of Gill, 'The gentleman at the head of the teaching department is of proved ability and full of enthusiasm in his work'. It was not only Gill's ability and enthusiasm that met with the favourable appreciation of the *Liverpool Review* as, 'the same can be said of the other gentlemen who ably assist him in that department'. Yet the point of the article was not to congratulate the Council, but to criticise. In the opinion of the *Liverpool Review*, the Council had placed too much responsibility upon the shoulders of Gill, to the detriment of the LNC,

> it is mistaken economy on the part of a wealthy Corporation to attempt to combine the work of administrative details and the direction of instruction in the one individual, however capable that individual may be. Perhaps no other flourishing public institution has been founded on such a system, and the attempt in the present case has, so far, failed.

Such failure was quantified in the article in financial terms; 'it is costing £2,000 per annum for results which are admitted to be disappointingly small'. Yet a solution was

---

[59] NISC minute book November 17, 1893, 6.

[60] NISC minute book November 29, 1893, 7. 'Liverpool Nautical College', *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List*, December 12, 1893, 13.

[61] NISC minute book November 29, 1893, 7-8. 'City Council', *LM*, December 14, 1893, 7. Merrifield 'entered upon his duties' on 14th December 1893.

[62] The Review (abbreviated from 'The Liverpool Review of Politics, Society, Literature and Art') was a weekly publication.

offered by the *Liverpool Review*, 'an addition should be made to the staff of permanent workers, say, of a gentleman whose special avocation it would be to organise and initiate, and whose knowledge of local matters connected with the details of education and the mercantile marine would tend to bring scholars to the institution'. The proposed solution was also evaluated in financial terms, 'for an outlay of a few hundreds more per annum, results of a tenfold nature might be reasonably expected to follow in this great seaport'.[63]

Unlike Jack's chip supper, the content of the *Liverpool Review* article may have proven hard to swallow. Where could the Council find this miraculous 'gentleman' who was capable of increasing the LNC's business tenfold? Apparently, he could be found at the Liverpool Artists' Club where Robert Frederick Finlay had been spending his time since being 'dismissed' from his employment by the Liverpool School of Science and Technology.[64] Finlay had served as Secretary to the School for nineteen years before he was released from his post, arrested and 'charged with having on 23rd February, 1892, fraudulently embezzled a sum of money amounting to £20, received by him from the Corporation of Birkenhead on behalf of his employers, the Liverpool School of Science and Technology'.[65] Finlay appeared before the Liverpool Police Court on Wednesday 4th May 1892 where he entered a plea of 'not guilty'; the case was subsequently adjourned to 6th May pending review of additional evidence. It emerged that Finlay's accounting practices had left a great deal to be desired and his defence counsel contended that the issue of the £20 payment being placed in his personal account rather than that of the School was made in respect of monies owed to Finlay in commission and therefore 'mere irregularity, and there was no felonious intent'.[66] Upon the word of the School's Treasurer that 'he did not think

[63] 'Liverpool Review of Politics, Society, Literature and Art' quoted in 'Local intelligence', *Liverpool Daily Post*, July 10, 1894, 6.

[64] The Liverpool Artists Club is a private members club founded in 1877 and located in Eberle Street since 1889.

[65] 'The Liverpool School of Science and Technology: arrest of the Secretary', *Lancaster Gazette*, May 7, 1892, 7.

[66] 'Arrest of a Liverpool Official', *Liverpool Weekly Courier*, May 7, 1892, 8.

that the prisoner had any intention of defrauding the society', Finlay (now unemployed) was discharged.[67]

The *Liverpool Echo* reported that in August 1892 the aggrieved Finlay sought to 'recover salary and commission' from the School totalling £509 6d. During this case Finlay disclosed that he had not drawn down any commission owing to him by the School since 1887, instead subsisting on his salary and savings. It was only after Finlay's financial position had become precarious, having 'indulged in an unwise and improper speculation' in the spring of 1892, that he promptly sought to redeem the outstanding commission payments from the School. Admitting that 'this was an irregular and wrong thing to do', Finlay maintained that the committee of the School 'behaved wrong and improperly' in referring the matter of the irregular payments to the police and terminating his employment.[68] Perhaps cognisant of the precarious financial position of the School, the parties agreed to settle and Finlay was awarded £50 plus costs. Soon after, the committee governing the School was wound up and its 'properties and liabilities' were duly transferred to the TISC of the Liverpool Corporation. Sorely aggrieved at the 'illegal action' that led to him losing his position, Finlay sought 'amicable rectification of my harsh and illegal treatment' for which the Council was in his view now 'rendered morally, if not legally, responsible'.[69] To that end he sought and secured a reference from the Bank of England in relation to his application for the post of Organising Secretary of the LNC – *a position that did not exist*.

On 15th March 1894 Robert Frederick Finlay wrote to the NISC, applying for the (non-existent) post of Organising Secretary of the LNC. As noted in their minute book, the (bemused) members of the NISC agreed to request that the town clerk advise Mr Finlay that 'there was no vacancy'.[70] Finlay then wrote to the Lord Mayor of Liverpool objecting to this rejection, claiming that 'the Nautical College, after two years trial, is not in as satisfactory a position as it would have been if an organising

[67] 'Liverpool police court', *LM*, May 18, 1892, 8.

[68] 'The Liverpool School of Science', *Liverpool Echo*, August 11, 1892, 4.

[69] 'The case of Mr R. F. Finlay', *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 6, 1894, 7.

[70] NISC minute book March 9, 1894, 32.

secretary had been employed whose special local experience and initiative could bring scholars to its empty classrooms'. Yet his correspondence did not solely focus upon the College, but upon his asserted circumstances in which 'the great strength and wealth of a Corporation' was now being 'used against the efforts of a single loyal and oppressed citizen'.[71] It is unclear whether Finlay found satisfaction from the mayoral office of the Corporation in 1894, although by 1911 the records show that he was employed as an 'education authority accountant'.[72]

In the immediate term in 1894, Finlay evidently poured his frustrations and wild aspirations into the notebook of a grateful journalist employed by the *Liverpool Review*. The Liberal-leaning *Liverpool Review* was openly antagonistic to the local establishment, engaging in 'literary guerrilla warfare with its Conservative opponents in Liverpool'.[73] In particular, the newspaper targeted 'local Conservative grandee, Arthur Bower Forwood, chairman of the Liverpool constitutional association, later MP for Ormskirk and the dominant figure in Liverpool Conservative politics at this time'.[74] Arthur was the brother of Sir William Bower Forwood, the avowed champion of the LNC whose reputation could therefore be besmirched by allusion to the College's failings. Jack's chip supper was therefore wrapped in a falsehood perpetrated by an antagonistic journalist in pursuit of (and seeking to justify) a delusional fantasy. The LNC suffered only collateral damage. As discussed in section 3, this would not be the only occasion in which the biased opinion of an antagonist would be passed off in the pages of the local press as public concern in the business of the LNC. Although he would never succeed in his ambition of being employed by the LNC, by a curious twist of fate Finlay (the son of an Irish Master Mariner, who had been convicted of smuggling tobacco in 1851) was to die in a Liverpool sailors' hostel.[75]

---

[71] 'The case of Mr R. F. Finlay', *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 6, 1894, 7.

[72] The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*.

[73] John Davies, 'Political Satire: Nineteenth-Century Comic Histories of Liverpool', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 157 (2008), 106.

[74] Davies, 'Political Satire', 110.

[75] 'Serious Charge of Smuggling', *Gore's Liverpool General Advertiser*, January 16, 1851, 3-4. Principal Probate Registry, *Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of the High Court of Justice in England*, London, England (1924).

From the continued incorporation of conditions and caveats in the offers of employment to new appointees to the teaching staff, material in the LNC archive suggests that at no time throughout the 1890s were the members of the NISC, LMAC or Council confident that the LNC would have a secure future. It must therefore have been challenging to James Gill and to his staff to work under the constant threat of the loss of their livelihood, contingent as it was upon the direction in which the political wind was blowing. Yet neither the Corporation nor its NISC abused their discretionary powers, in fact the opposite was evident when in June of 1896 Gill requested 'that one month's notice from 1st July be given to Mr A. E. Larkman to terminate his engagement as Junior Assistant at the Nautical College' and the NISC instead agreed to offer Larkman a more generous 'three months notice'.[76]

The reason for Larkman's release from his duties at the LNC, on the recommendation of Gill, was not explicitly stated in the formal record of business captured in the minutes of the NISC. However, insight into these hidden circumstances can be gleaned from a study of the Nautical College Masters' Time Book in the LJMU Archive. The document covers the period 20th January 1896 to 8th April 1899 revealing that (notwithstanding brief periods of closure over Christmas and the summer) the staff of the LNC clocked-into work six days a week before classes began at 9.30am.[77] The Time Book not only reveals that Gill routinely observed (public) meetings of the LMAC in the early months of 1896 but that he also was absent from the LNC for a meeting with the town clerk (the Liverpool Corporation's *de facto* human resources director) three days before the NISC agreed to terminate Larkman's employment. It also records that Larkman was late for or absent from work on four occasions throughout the period February to May 1896. On Monday 2nd March he was 'Absent all day', whereas against his name on Friday 7th May a note reads 'Absent wife sick' and his recorded arrival time on the previous day

[76] LNC Headmaster's report book, LJMU Special Collections & Archives (LJMU history: Byrom Street archive), Liverpool John Moores University, June 5, 1896, 108.

[77] Although entering his own daily arrival times in the ledger from 20th January 1896, James Gill's last entry was 19th June 1896, after which point his daily arrival times were not recorded. It cannot be a coincidence that Gill's engagement with the document ceased as soon as it had served its function in condemning Larkman, although Gill evidently found it a useful discipline to require his staff to continue to record their worktime thereafter.

'09.40' was queried by Gill. On Wednesday 12th February the Time Book records that he had arrived late for work 'bleeding from nose'. It is tempting to conclude that the log was introduced in January 1896 as a means of capturing evidence about Larkman's timekeeping, behaviour and absences to share with the town clerk and NISC. In comparison to Larkman's record, there are no such concerns with the timekeeping of Captain Owens who was absent 'on college business' on 25th February and 'absent by permission' on 29th February. Intriguingly, on Thursday 10th September Larkman's record states that he was late 'for illness' and on the same day Captain Owens' record shows that he was 'absent through sudden illness'; Owens mysteriously remained absent from the College until 28th September 1896, which was the day after Larkman's notice period expired.[78]

Whatever the reason for Larkman's departure from the teaching staff of the LNC, he soon relocated to Southampton where he eventually set up his own school. Larkman was not directly replaced, as Gill sought instead to make two appointments at a lower salary, as noted in the minutes of the NISC,

> A large part of the work is individual teaching and it has been found very difficult with the present staff to give the individual attention necessary, but with an additional teacher this would be easier and it would be possible to make a better subdivision of classes… one of the juniors should be attached to the practical and purely technical work and the other to the scientific part.[79]

A shortlist of five candidates was selected to appear before a selection sub-committee of the NISC, comprising Willink, Miller and Bulloch.[80] The successful candidates were Harold Blenkinsop Bate of Warrington and Henry Clements of Co Down, both of whom were awarded a salary of '£95 for the first year to be increased £100 at the expiration of 12 months'.[81] Neither were 'placed on the permanent staff

[78] LNC Masters' Time Book 1896-1899, LJMU Special Collections & Archives (LJMU history: Byrom Street archive), Liverpool John Moores University.

[79] NISC minute book, June 19, 1896, 204.

[80] NISC minute book, September 29, 1896, 220-221.

[81] NISC minute book, September 29, 1896, 220.

of the Corporation' and in common with the other teaching staff the prospect was raised that the posts could be terminated 'if in future the Corporation cease to carry on the Nautical College'.[82]

Subject to these persistent stipulations, both Bate and Clements 'entered on their duties on 1st October [1896]'.[83] There are no indications in the LNC Staff Time Book of any problematic timekeeping issues for either Bate or Clements, nor any subsequent discussion of their performance in the NISC minutes (to May 1899). It appears that Larkman's turbulent tenure was followed by a period of relative calm among the staff of the LNC. Over the 1896/97 academic year Gill's academic and administrative burdens were shared with his senior (Merrifield and Owens) and junior (Bate and Clements) colleagues, allowing the Headmaster sufficient capacity to write his *Text-book on Navigation and Nautical Astronomy.* Indeed, the contribution of these senior colleagues to the drafting of the book was formally recognised by Gill in its preface, 'The author gratefully acknowledges the valuable assistance given by his colleagues, Captain E. W. Owens and Mr W. V. Merrifield, B.A., in the preparation and working out of the exercises and examination papers'.[84] Yet the composition of the LNC faculty was not static and Gill would soon lose a vital cog from the LNC's delicately balanced mechanism.

Since 1892 Gill had relied on the close assistance and enduring support of the Technical Instructor at the LNC, Captain Ernest William Owens. Owens was an important ally for Gill, particularly as he brought practical nautical experience to his role and to the LNC. Critics of the provision of nautical education by academic landsmen like Gill (as discussed in section 3) could not refute Owens' credentials as a Master Mariner with a quarter of a century of seagoing experience, during which time he was awarded the Albert Medal for gallantry at sea for risking his life to save a shipmate.[85] Owens had played a prominent role in the delivery of the College

[82] NISC minute book, September 29, 1896, 221.

[83] LNC Headmaster's report book, October 16, 1896, 116.

[84] Gill, *Text-book on Navigation and Nautical Astronomy,* vi.

[85] 'Reward for Saving Life', *London Evening Standard*, January 1, 1877, 2 see also 'The Comprehensive Guide to the Victoria & George Cross' at http://www.vconline.org.uk/ernest-w-owens-am/4594868288.

Diploma of Merit, to the extent of continuing to teach his class unpaid when the NISC withdrew funding for the scheme in April 1897 (as discussed in section 3.3).[86] Owens must have felt aggrieved by the NISC's decision (and by their disregard of the impact of their actions upon his students) as soon after he secured alternative employment as a BoT examiner based in London. Gill reported Owens' resignation to the meeting of the NISC of 15th October 1897 'with regret'.[87] Owens' letter of resignation to the Chair of the NISC was curt, comprising only two sentences and closing with due formality, 'Thanking you and the members of the Committee for their unvarying kindness'.[88]

Not only had Gill lost a key ally, but he now had to fill a vacancy for an important position among the LNC faculty. It should be noted that the meeting of the NISC of 15th October 1897 was unusually well-attended, with ten members present (the Chair, six other Councillors and three other members). It was the final meeting of the NISC of that municipal year and it ended with a formal Vote of Thanks 'to Councillor Maxwell Hyslop Maxwell Jnr for his valuable services as Chairman during the past municipal year'.[89] Indeed, a number of changes to the sub-committee's membership were actioned in the following month with the tenure of ten of the NISC's members coming to an end in October 1897. Therefore, had the assembled members of the NISC on 15th October 1897 sought to do so, they could have easily deferred discussion of the matter of the appointment of a replacement Technical Instructor until the sub-committee was reconstituted and reconvened, but they did not.

The NISC minute book records how Gill initially argued that 'no outsider can meet the requirements of the post' and 'that the trouble and expense connected with advertising may be avoided by the Head Master being authorised to look out for suitable candidates'.[90] In practice, there was only one other senior tutor at the LNC

[86] NISC minute book, April 23, 1897, 251.

[87] LNC Headmaster's report book, October 15, 1897, 137.

[88] NISC minute book, October 15, 1897, 278.

[89] NISC minute book, October 15, 1897, 279.

[90] NISC minute book, October 15, 1897, 278.

at that time: Willie Venner Merrifield, but Merrifield was an academic tutor like Gill, rather than an experienced seafarer like Owens. To square this circle, the NISC opted not to seek a like-for-like replacement for Owens, but to enhance Merrifield's role ('on the recommendation of the Head Master… Mr W. V. Merrifield be promoted to the post of Senior Assistant at the College') and to advertise for a new Technical Assistant at Merrifield's former salary (£200 rather than the £250 that Owens was paid).[91] Although it was assumed by all parties that Merrifield's new post would attract Owens' former salary, the city auditor intervened to insist upon formal confirmation of Merrifield's salary and the date of commencement of his new role. Consequently, it was not until 4th February 1898 that the NISC confirmed that Merrifield should 'be appointed Senior Assistant (in place of Captain Owens resigned) at a salary of £250 per annum, the appointment to date from 1st January 1898'.[92]

Gill's response to Owens' departure in 1897 may have been influenced by the sustained local media campaign mounted against the LNC (and against Gill personally) by an anonymous antagonist in 1895/96 (as discussed in section 3.4). It appears that Gill was sensitive to criticism of his lack of seafaring experience and the negative impact of which on the reputation of the LNC. Captain Owens' nautical experience added credibility to the LNC that Gill could not bring, hence his departure from the LNC presented Gill a significant risk, which he sought to mitigate by prompt action. Eager to make an appointment to the post of Technical Assistant before 'the 1st December so that he may gain some experience of the work before the departure of the present Technical Instructor', Gill advertised on 13th November for 'an assistant to undertake the technical instruction at the College', inviting applications from candidates who 'should not be more than 40 years of age, and should have an Extra Master's Certificate and have been in command of a sailing or steam ship'.[93] The deadline for receipt of applications was 20th November, but so keen was Gill to fill the vacancy that he presented the next meeting of the NISC on 19th November

[91] NISC minute book, October 15, 1897, 278.

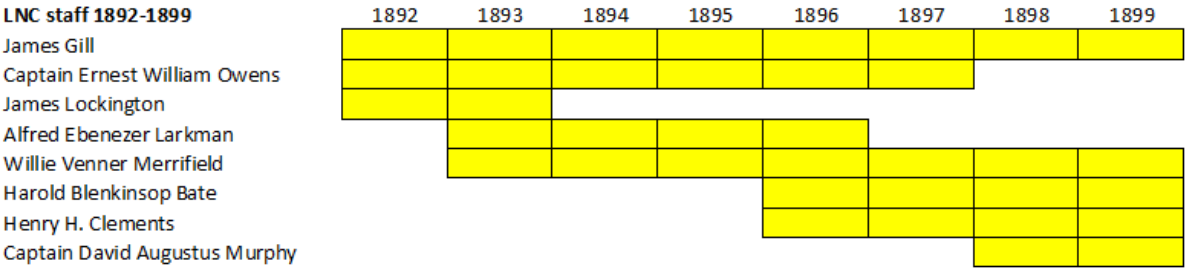
[92] NISC minute book, February 4, 1898, 301.

[93] NISC minute book, November 19, 1897, 284. 'City of Liverpool: Nautical College', *LM*, November 13, 1897, 1.

1897 with all four of the applications received to that date. However, the NISC agreed to postpone consideration of the matter until after the application deadline had passed.

Duly at the meeting of 10th December 1897, the NISC returned to the task. If they had hoped for a better response up to the deadline then they would be disappointed, as in total five applications for the post of Technical Assistant were received by 20th November and considered on 10th December 1897. From these, the Headmaster had shortlisted two candidates who 'appeared before the Committee' on that day.[94] The successful candidate was Captain David Augustus Murphy, a 34-year-old Irishman who had completed his Extra Master qualification in Ireland in 1884. Thus, Gill's initial team of teaching staff (Owens and Lockington) had been replaced by an expanded staffing pool in 1898 and 1899 (comprising Messrs Bate, Clements & Merrifield and Captain Murphy) as figure 2 (LNC staff 1892-1899) refers. Yet by the commencement of teaching in 1900, both Gill and Murphy would be dead, the latter having been granted 'a fortnights leave' on account of illness by the NISC on 21st December 1899.[95]

Figure 2: Summary of LNC staff 1892-1899



Source: Various documents within the LJMU Archives, including the NISC minute book, Headmaster's report book and LNC masters' timebook.

[94] NISC minute book, December 10, 1897, 291.

[95] LNC Headmaster's report book, December 21, 1899, 177.

2.4 LNC Infrastructure: 1892-1900

As discussed in section 2.2, the composite committee formed by the LMAC to devise a scheme for nautical education in Liverpool in 1891 split into two sub-committees. Whereas the first sub-committee reached clear conclusions and recommendations in relation to governance and finance, the outcomes of the second sub-committee (chaired by Professor Hele-Shaw, Chair of Engineering at Liverpool University College) lacked such specificity. With regard to the 'locality of the school', for example, Hele-Shaw reported to the composite committee meeting of 20th October 1891 that 'it is difficult to define the precise locality best suited for a nautical school' and made no formal recommendation regarding location. The sub-committee did however outline some principles that might guide the eventual choice of location; 'the position should be central, accessible to both sides of the Mersey, and not too near the docks'.[96]

Whilst the embryonic notion of promoting nautical education in Liverpool enjoyed general support, there remained toward the close of 1891 a considerable disagreement over the detail of the preferred scheme for implementation. Willink cautiously navigated uncharted and choppy political waters, developing and promoting a scheme for nautical education as part of the city's 'educational ladder' that was deemed acceptable to both civic leaders and by the electorate (over half of the male population of the city) to whom the Council was accountable. Viewed within this context, rental of existing accommodation in which to locate the proposed college was not only cheaper than investing in a new building project but it also represented a much lower risk. In the event that the nautical education scheme would be varied or indeed abolished after implementation, the expiry of a fixed-term rental contract would be much easier to discharge than the white elephant of an abandoned purpose-built structure. Furthermore, the dictum that the initiative would not cost the ratepayers of the city a penny ensured that the solution to any problem would always be found via the cheapest available option.

[96] 'Nautical education in Liverpool', *LM*, October 21, 1891, 7. The recommendation that the 'nautical school' should not be situated 'too near the docks' appears counter-intuitive. However, as the docks were busy, noisy and (maybe) malodorous, too great a proximity of the school to the docks may have proven disruptive to teaching.

It may be argued that the temporary, improvised infrastructure of the LNC in the first decade of its existence symbolised the superficial foundations upon which the nascent scheme for nautical education in the second city of Empire was being built. Indeed, it appears that the choice of location from which to run the College may have been serendipitously informed by the prior associations and interests of James Gill. In addition to his occupation as a teacher of navigation (for many years at the Navigation School of the LSH), Gill was a dedicated member of the Liverpool Astronomical Society (LAS) which had been founded in 1881. He delivered classes in astronomy under the auspices of the Society from 1884 and, for a period in the early 1890s, he took the Chair following a series of deaths and disputes that threatened the society's future success.[97] The monthly meetings of the LAS were held at both the Navigation School of the LSH and at the Royal Institution building on Liverpool's Colquitt Street, in the months preceding Gill's appointment to be Headmaster of the LNC.[98]

Founded in 1814 by the reforming abolitionist movement headed by the Rathbone and Roscoe families, the 'Royal Society' of Liverpool was based at the Royal Institution building, purchased by public subscription in 1817.[99] Sited on the city's Colquitt Street, the building housed a museum, library, gallery and was the home of a boys' grammar school, the Royal Institution School, hosting 'many learned societies meeting on their premises'.[100] The Royal Institution School was closed in 1892, thereby presenting a central, accessible, rentable and almost purpose-built potential venue in which to locate the LNC. Furthermore, its distinct, established

[97] 'During these dark weeks and months, it was James Gill who took over as society President 'pro tem', and along with such others as Richard C. Johnson, and William Benjamin Hutchinson, Gill managed to drag the society from the brink of total collapse and to carry on with local Liverpool meetings, lectures, and events and the society carried on from the 19th century and into the 20th century, thanks partly to James Gill'. The Liverpool Nautical College and Liverpool Astronomical Society. The Story of James Gill (1840 – 1900), Headmaster & President. – By Gerard Gilligan. *Newsletter of the Liverpool Astronomical Society*, June 2020, accessed via https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TpTuBnAb0Cj7rzqZFKQOVl60o92le00l/view 8.

[98] 'The Liverpool Astronomical Society', *LM*, October 14, 1891, 5. 'The Liverpool Astronomical Society', *LM*, March 3, 1892, 6.

[99] The 'Royal Society of Liverpool' was commonly termed the 'Liverpool Royal Institution'.

[100] 'Liverpool Royal Institution', *LM*, March 10, 1894, 6.

presence within Liverpool's civic fabric offered the emerging LNC a well-respected location. The transition from the (old, private) grammar school to the (modern, public) nautical college demonstrated the reformist ambition of Councillor Willink and Headmaster Gill to make bold advances in promoting nautical education within Liverpool. Within a few months of Gill's appointment, the meeting of the Liverpool City Council in July 1892 received and recommended 'the Corporation take on a lease for three years the premises now occupied by the Royal Institution, on the east side of Colquitt Street, at a rent of £425 per annum, for the purposes of the School of Navigation'.[101] The new scheme was badged 'School of Navigation' throughout the first half of 1892 and Gill was appointed to the post of 'Headmaster of the Liverpool School of Navigation' in April 1892.[102] Yet by the end of July in 1892 the institution was titled 'The Liverpool Nautical College' in advertising material and it was to retain that name thereafter.[103] The Council appeared to recognise the value of the College's prestigious location, including prominently and proudly in an advertisement the statement that it would occupy 'premises lately occupied by the Royal Institution School'.[104]

Although the Royal Institution building had previously housed a school and was 'admirably adapted structurally for a college', the interior required work before students could be admitted to the LNC. Investment in the internal infrastructure was not lacking; it was noted in October 1892 that 'workmen have been engaged for some weeks in thoroughly overhauling and rearranging the spacious rooms in the building'.[105] Such investment was not funded from the whisky money (or by the rates) but by the proceeds of a recent Naval Exhibition, that were split between the refurbishment of the Royal Institution building and the purchase of an acclaimed 1806 painting by Benjamin West titled 'The Death of Nelson'.[106] Further investment

[101] 'Shipping notes', *Shields Daily Gazette,* July 7, 1892, 4.

[102] 'Local news', *LM*, April 29, 1892, 6. 'City Council meeting', *LM*, May 2, 1892, 4. 'City Council: The Navigation School', *LM*, May 5, 1892, 6.

[103] 'The Liverpool Nautical College', *South Wales Daily News*, July 18, 1892, 1.

[104] 'City of Liverpool: The Liverpool Nautical College', *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List*, November 24, 1892, 9.

[105] 'Nautical jottings', *LM*, October 22, 1892, 6.

[106] 'City Council: The Naval Exhibition', *LM*, October 27, 1892, 7. The Naval Exhibition opened in the Walker Art Gallery in February 1892. An idealised, iconic representation

in facilities and equipment promised to make the new venture 'one of, if not the best, nautical college in the kingdom'.[107] By Tuesday 1st November 1892, the LNC had assumed physical form within the buildings previously occupied by the Royal Institution school, although the ceremonial launch event on 1st December will be remembered for different reasons (as discussed in section 3.2).

The building of an observatory in the grounds of the Royal Institution building not only placed Gill's personal stamp upon the ethos and structure of the LNC, but also gave the institution an important advantage over its competitors. An enthusiastic astronomer, Gill was able to combine his recreational pursuits with his professional occupation, as navigation by celestial objects was a skill required of a ship's master. Manchester wire manufacturer and keen amateur astronomer Thomas Glazebrook Reynolds gifted a state-of-the-art telescope and accessories to the LAS in 1889 'on the condition that they should be properly housed and put to active use'.[108] The Society promptly entered into negotiations with Liverpool Council seeking a site for an observatory, but the 'original application to build an observatory at St. James Mount, now occupied by Liverpool Cathedral, was turned down'.[109] However, Gill now had within his remit both occupation of the site for an observatory and the necessary leverage with the NISC with which to pursue fulfilment of the conditions of Reynolds' donation.

Gill argued that 'the telescope is a very excellent one… Such an Instrument would be a most valuable acquisition to the Technical Educational appliances of the College and the City'.[110] Toward the close of 1892, a proposal to build 'an observatory in the grounds of the Nautical College, in Seel Street and Colquitt Street, beyond the front main walls of the buildings on either side thereof in Seel Street' was

---

(rather than a historically accurate depiction, symptomatic of the 'Cult of Nelson'), the painting remains to this day on display at the gallery.

[107] 'Nautical jottings', *LM*, October 22, 1892, 6.

[108] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, November 11, 1892, 2.

[109] Liverpool Astronomical Society, 'The History of Liverpool Astronomical Society', published at https://liverpoolas.org/the-history-of-liverpool-astronomical-society/ (accessed 10th January 2022)

[110] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, November 11, 1892, 3.

approved.[111] By the early weeks of 1893, LNC publicity material was circulated including the promise that 'an astronomical observatory and a lending library are also to be established'.[112] By 25th August 1893, Gill was able to report that 'the instrument has been tested in its present position by several experts and is pronounced to be of first rate excellence'.[113] Both LNC students and members of the LAS made use of the observatory and Gill negotiated admission of students of the Boys' School as junior members of the Society for a discounted sum of two shillings per year.[114] By February 1894 Gill had also acquired for the College a transit instrument for 'teaching the methods for the accurate determination of time'.[115]

Although prudent, the NISC did not solely rely upon donations for the provision of equipment of the students of the LNC. Materials such as a lantern (projector) with screen, maps, books, charts and even a rigged mast were purchased to underpin curricular delivery before students were admitted. Over time, 'school apparatus' would be renewed and supplies of textbooks replaced when stocks became 'dilapidated'.[116] Infrastructural investment in gas lighting ('seven dozen Governor Burners') and in 'the rental of a direct wire from the Nautical College to the Telephone Exchange at a cost of £8.10.0 per annum' provided the College with modern amenities.[117] Such investment in teaching facilities and equipment set the LNC apart from the *ad hoc* spaces in which tuition had been delivered at the Liverpool Sailors' Home and the domestic parlours from which some private tutors operated. Although the embodiment of public investment in technical education in the late-Victorian era, subsidy of the modern and well-equipped LNC was perceived as unfair by commercial competitors in the city (as will be discussed in section 3).

[111] 'The Council business', *LM*, December 28, 1892, 5.

[112] 'Day to day in Liverpool', *LM*, January 30, 1893, 5.

[113] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, August 25, 1893, 28.

[114] Liverpool Astronomical Society, *The History of Liverpool Astronomical Society.*

[115] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, February 9, 1894, 39.

[116] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, January 11, 1899, 159.

[117] NISC minute book, January 3, 1896, 164 and September 20, 1895, 142.

For all that the Royal Institution building in Colquitt Street provided a distinguished home for the LNC, its infrastructure was by the 1890s exhibiting signs of decay and disrepair and an ongoing programme of repair and refurbishment was required to maintain the fabric of the building. Within the first year of the College's existence, the Headmaster (successfully) requested that the lighting be improved, the drains be unblocked and the premises made secure 'to prevent the incursions of street boys… [who] easily get over the wall and unbolt the door, admitting members who swarm up the rigging'.[118] In the following months and years, the heating would repeatedly fail, the roof, water pipes and toilets would leak and even the fire grate in the Caretaker's house would fall to pieces. Gill was required to seek formal approval from the NISC to undertake all renovations or repairs, even when securing the transit instrument to the wall.[119] Gill's assiduous record keeping conjures the materiality of the LNC as each tiny, banal, bureaucratic record adds to the emerging picture of the Royal Institution building as a working environment and as the venue for a late-Victorian educational institution. What emerges from a study of the (candid) archival record is a very different picture than that painted in public, in the form of prospectuses or press articles.

By the summer of 1895 the LNC's lease was up for re-negotiation, at which time the Royal Institution was experiencing an existential crisis. A proposal to explore a 'scheme of fusion with the University College' in the Institution's future governance met with strong opposition amongst some of the Institution's shareholders.[120] In response, the dissenting shareholders criticised the Institution's proprietors for demonstrating 'apathy' and 'ignorance' in allowing its work to decline to the point that the Royal Institution building was merely a venue for tenants including the LNC, the School of Cookery and 'learned societies'.[121] An amendment

[118] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, June 16, 1893, 23.

[119] LNC Headmaster's Report Book. February 9, 1894, 39.

[120] 'Liverpool Royal Institution', *LM*, March 4, 1895, 6.

[121] 'Liverpool Royal Institution', *LM*, March 4, 1895, 6. 'Liverpool Royal Institution', *LM*, June 11, 1895, 5. The School of Cookery emerged from the Liverpool School of Domestic Science that held classes in St George's Hall. School of Cookery President Fanny Calder (1838-1923) would play a prominent role in the history of the LNC. The cookery school was distinct from the Liverpool Corporation's Seamen's Cookery Classes, although both (like the LSC) received funding from the TISC and Calder wrote the preface to a book 'Cookery for Seamen' (Alexander Quinlan and N. E. Mann, *Cookery for Seamen* (The Liverpool Training

moved at the 1895 Liverpool Royal Institution General Meeting that the Institution should utilise their building to 'organise [their own] lectures and other arrangements whereby scientific interests and instruction may be promoted to the utmost' was defeated.[122] Notwithstanding such debate and the fact that 'overtures had been received from the School of Science, Technology, and Art for the tenancy of part or the whole of the premises at present occupied by the Nautical College', a one-year extension was agreed to the LNC's lease 'on the same terms as heretofore'.[123]

Simultaneously, public interest was engaged in proposals to create a showpiece Pierhead building for Liverpool's waterfront and the LNC was considered amongst the public amenities fit to occupy such a 'stately civic building'.[124] This development was congruent with John Belchem's argument that '[I]n an effort to purge memories of the slave trade, Liverpool underwent a second stage of the "urban renaissance" which had earlier established the infrastructures and organisations of polite society throughout Georgian Britain'.[125] A correspondent of the *LM* proposed that in addition to housing the LNC at the Pierhead, advantage should be taken of the proximity of the docks in which 'a stationary training vessel more in keeping with the future calling of the students than that mast and rigging now erected in a yard surrounded by brick' could be situated.[126] In the previous year, Gill had authored a report for the NISC titled 'Training Afloat' in which the advantages of providing access to a training vessel for the LNC were discussed.[127] It therefore came as little surprise that (contrary to the advice of Hele-Shaw's LMAC sub-committee in 1891) the ambitious Gill responded enthusiastically to the idea of

School of Cookery, 1894)). The proliferation of such classes reflected an increase of emphasis placed upon the importance of hospitality aboard ship for both passengers and crew. 'The Seamen's Cookery Classes', *Liverpool Journal of Commerce*, February 4, 1896, 3.

[122] 'Liverpool Royal Institution', *LM*, June 11, 1895, 5.

[123] 'Liverpool Royal Institution', *LM*, February 15, 1896, 7.

[124] 'River frontage and the Corporation of Liverpool', *LM*, March 26, 1895, 6.

[125] John Belchem, *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* (Oxford University Press, 2006), xvii.

[126] 'Liverpool Nautical College: A new suggestion', *LM*, March 16, 1895, 5.

[127] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, February 23, 1894, 40.

relocating the College within a modern, customised building on the Mersey waterfront.[128]

In September 1895 NISC agreed: 'That the Headmaster report as to what accommodation would be required for the Nautical College in the event of the college being included in any scheme for new baths at the Pierhead'.[129] In a detailed report to the NISC meeting of 4th October 1895, Gill listed the potential advantages arising from the mooted relocation to the Pierhead site. Echoing the earlier advice of Professor Hele-Shaw, Gill argued that the 'central situation would make it easily accessible from all parts of the Dock Estate and to residents on both sides of the River whilst its prominent position would bring it under the notice of those connected with shipping'. Proximity to the overhead railway and 'other means of conveyance' were noted, as was the prospect of 'freedom from disturbance by street traffic'. Gill's vision was characteristically bold and ambitious, arguing that 'an Aquarium, a Nautical Museum and a Nautical Library would be suitable accompaniments' to the relocated LNC. Freed from the physical constraints imposed by the layout of the former Royal Institution School, Gill imagined a blueprint for the ideal physical environment for the LNC. It would have six classrooms, an observatory, a laboratory, a lecture hall, a gymnasium, two Masters' Rooms and 'rooms for a caretaker'; a combined dimension of over 7,500 square feet ('exclusive of the space which would be required for a Salt Water Aquarium, a Nautical Museum and a Sailors' Library').[130] However, despite Gill's grand ambition, the proposed (re)location of the LNC did not transpire as discussions between the Corporation and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company took many years to conclude and instead resulted in the construction of the Port of Liverpool building in 1907.

When the Corporation sought to renew its lease with the Royal Institution in 1896, it found its landlord keen to negotiate revised terms. Initial interest by the School of Science, Technology, and Art in occupying space within the Royal

[128] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, October 4, 1895, 83.

[129] Local news: The Nautical College, *LM*, October 1, 1895, 6.

[130] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, October 4, 1895, 84. Further information on sailors' libraries can be found in Ian Arthur, 'Libraries Afloat', *Library Review* 11, no. 6 (1948): 393-395.

Institution building had not abated and nor were these approaches discouraged. Rather than extending the lease for the same accommodation, the Royal Institution offered the LNC access to a reduced amount of space in exchange for a reduction in the rent (from £425 to £250, although this latter figure was a result of negotiation, the Institution initially seeking £360 *per annum*).[131] Without suitable alternative accommodation at hand, the NISC accepted the proposed terms leaving Gill with no choice but to cut his cloth to suit. Desks and models were relocated to the retained classrooms, but 'certain properties belonging to the College' including 'a large table with drawers', 'a quantity of chemicals' and 'apparatus in the laboratory' were offered for sale to the School of Science, Technology, and Art.[132] The receipts from this sale (£15) may have mitigated the cost of alterations to the gas supply incurred 'in order to avoid complications of gas accounts'.[133] The degree to which such disruption impacted upon teaching is moot, but the general sense of insecurity must have been destabilising to Gill and the staff of the LNC. Far from the idealised view of his Pierhead paradise, the reality of Gill's present circumstances and the immediate prospect of working in more confined conditions ('the school-house facing Seel Street, playground & gymnasium & keeper's cottage, the passage communicating between playground & gymnasium, with urinals to attached') was bleak.[134]

Furthermore, in 1898 the LNC ceased to be a tenant of the Liverpool Royal Institution and instead became a tenant of the Training School of Cookery when the buildings associated with the former Royal Institution School were sold (tenants in situ).[135] Within a short time of this transaction, the President of the School of

---

[131] Losing the 'chemical laboratory, former coat-room & former picture gallery with the vestibules and stairway to the north west of the same and pertaining thereto'. NISC minute book, January 17, 1896, 167 and April 10, 1896, 187.

[132] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, September 29, 1896, 114.

[133] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, November 20, 1896, 119.

[134] NISC minute book, January 17, 1896, 168. In the minutes of the meeting of the NISC of 26th March 1897 it is stated: 'Premises James Street: Resolved that the consideration of the Head Master's Report be further postponed'. This is unusual, as there is no prior reference to this item either in the Headmaster's Report Book or in the minutes of earlier meetings ('…be *further* postponed'). It is never mentioned again. NISC minute book, March 26, 1897, 246.

[135] Papers relating to the proposed transfer of the Liverpool Royal Institution to University College, Liverpool (1895) and the sale by the LRI of property to the Training School of

Cookery, Fanny Calder, made clear her intention to locate her School's activities within the (former) Royal Institution school site on Colquitt Street. The LNC was thereby given advanced notice that their tenancy would not be renewed following expiration of their lease in 1899, to allow for necessary structural renovations to be undertaken ahead of the opening of the Cookery School on Colquitt Street in 1900. This matter was discussed by the NISC in March 1898 at which point the Headmaster was 'instructed to confer with the Surveyor upon the subject [of]… new premises' for the Nautical College.[136] At that time, rumours were circulating that the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board was proposing to vacate rooms in the Custom House Building on Canning Place where their offices were situated. This was a location that Gill knew very well owing to the proximity of his former place of employment, the Liverpool Sailors' Home.

Facing eviction from Colquitt Street, James Gill saw an opportunity to secure better accommodation for the LNC at the Customs House, albeit on a temporary basis. The NISC meeting on 11th January 1899 appointed a (smaller) sub-committee to inspect the available premises in the Customs House 'with a view of judging of the suitability of the accomodation offered in that building for the purposes of the Nautical College'.[137] Accompanied by Gill, the sub-committee was given a guided tour of the available accomodation in the Customs House by 'the Postmaster'.[138] Reporting to a 'Special Meeting of the Nautical Instruction sub-committee' held on 20th January 1899, the sub-committee concluded that available space on the ground and first floors would be 'ample' and 'could be very well adapted for classrooms'.[139] It was also noted that the cost of rent for the space would be prohibitive, as it exceeded the sum currently committed to fund the College's rent (in Colquitt Street).

Cookery (1898), University of Liverpool Archives (D122: Liverpool Royal Institution Archive) Liverpool Royal Institution Archive - Archives Hub (jisc.ac.uk).

[136] NISC Minute Book, March 11, 1898, 305.

[137] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, December 20, 1898, 158 and January 20, 1899, 160. NISC's (accommodation) sub-committee comprised only three 'members': Maxwell, McNab and Parsell.

[138] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, January 20, 1899, 160.

[139] NISC Minute Book, January 20, 1899, 349.

There are very few records of exchanges between James Gill and the NISC in which his manner was anything other than deferential (for example, 'The Headmaster begs to request…') Gill's reports were deliberately presented in a tone that recognised and formally acknowledged the hierarchy of his relationship with the NISC, in which the latter party held both the purse strings and the power. However, the report that Gill presented to the NISC on 20th January 1899 alongside that of the designated (accommodation) sub-committee on the subject of their tour of the Custom House was uncharacteristically forthright and effervescing with righteous indignation:

> In the matter of rent, however, the HM [Headmaster] is of the opinion that the Committee is entitled to very generous treatment at the hands of the Government on the ground that the *work done at the College is of national importance*, first because many of the students are officers of the Royal Naval Reserve and secondly because the efficient educational training of navigating officers of the Mercantile Marine should be made a national concern, as it is in every other Maritime State [emphasis added].[140]

Gill's sense of frustration with the College's growing accommodation crisis was palpable, as was his indignation over the *laissez-faire* approach of central government to the funding and organisation of maritime education and training. A passionate advocate of nautical education, Gill was confident in asserting the LNC's national significance in relation both to concerns emerging as a consequence of Britain's fading maritime primacy and to the significant role played by the merchant service as a naval reserve.

The NISC instructed Gill to widen his search for temporary premises and report further on affordable options whilst committing to plan for a permanent solution in the longer-term. Accordingly, in the following week, a further meeting was held 'for the purposes of considering the questions of Nautical Instruction and the establishment of a Permanent Nautical College'. It was determined at that meeting that 'temporary premises be engaged in which to carry on the work of the College pending

[140] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, January 20, 1899, 161.

arrangements being made to provide accommodation in the new Technical Schools in course of erection in William Brown Street'.[141] Designs for a new Central Technical School building were approved in 1896 but completion of the build was not expected until 1901. However, the extension of the initial contract with the Royal Institution would only keep the (temporary) roof over the LNC until the summer (of 1899). An immediate-term solution was required to address the period between quitting Colquitt Street in 1899 and the intended launch of the Technical School in 1901.

Whether Gill found himself short of other available options, or whether he put little effort into his task, his eventual report on 'Temporary Premises' to the NISC meeting of 8th February 1899 was very brief. In total, of 'several suggested buildings' he investigated only two alternative sites and deemed neither the 'vacant premises in Chapel Street' nor the 'House in Duke Street' fit for purpose without investment in modifications. There is a discernible tone in Gill's report of resentment at the NISC's parsimony; if they were panicked at the prospect of the rent charged for suitable accommodation at the Customs House then they would surely demur from investing in infrastructural projects to render unsuitable premises fit for purpose. Instead, he directed the attention of the NISC to rooms in the Royal Institution building outwith the space formerly occupied by the Royal Institution school, which may be available for daily hire ('and probably one or two rooms in the evening') and which crucially 'could be used without alteration'. His report book reveals that Gill also offered the NISC some temporary breathing space, proposing that the LNC continue to operate in the months ahead from their current premises whilst renovations were being undertaken to the site by the School of Cookery 'as it is not proposed to pull down any part of the present building'. Notwithstanding the potential adverse impact upon the educational environment or indeed the health and safety of staff and students, Gill offered to work around the 'new building operations' in line with the schedule of the Cookery School's 'building plans'.[142] The success of Gill's stratagem was contingent upon remaining in situ (amidst a building site) for as long as possible and then exchanging the hammering and dust of Colquitt Street for the construction site

[141] NISC Minute Book, January 27, 1899, 353-354.

[142] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, February 8, 1899, 162-163.

from which the Technical School was emerging once they were left with no option but to quit the Royal Institution building. Provided Fanny Calder was willing to offer some leeway on the LNC's exit date (and therefore tolerance of their presence during structural alterations), the NISC may take the opportunity to encourage the TIC to facilitate the early relocation of the LNC to the unfinished Technical School.

It was with this scheme in mind that Gill wrote to Calder in February 1899, a last roll of the dice for a man mindful that his luck may have been about to run out. In the absence of a prompt reply, he wrote again plaintively asking for a response ahead of the meeting of the NISC on 8th March. On 6th March 1899, Calder threw Gill a lifeline. Having consulted with the Executive Committee of the Liverpool Training School of Cookery and the architect undertaking the renovations, Calder offered to 'accommodate you and enable you to retain the use of the School Rooms for the Nautical College up to June 1900'.[143] However, the offer came with conditions, all recorded in the NISC minute book along with the correspondence. The Cookery School had decided that in renovating the old Royal Institution school to suit their own purposes, neither the gymnasium nor the caretaker's house would be required. As such, they intended to offer these buildings for sale and were not prepared to guarantee the LNC access to these buildings beyond 30th September 1899. Furthermore, Calder was at pains to state that she would find it impossible to consider a longer-term tenancy (beyond June 1900) for the LNC at that stage (March 1899). Perhaps in recognition of these caveats, Calder offered a small reduction in the LNC's rent for the premises, from £250 to £225pa.

At the meeting of the NISC on 8th March 1899, Calder's proposed terms were discussed and accepted. Thus, a nine-month reprieve was secured to cover the period from the conclusion of the current lease (30th September 1899) to 30th June 1900. Gill then took immediate steps to seek to bring forward the relocation of the LNC to the new Central Technical School building. He opportunistically convened the Council of the LAS which discussed 'the proposed removal of the Nautical College to the New Central Technical Schools (sic) in William Brown Street' and approved a motion for 'transfer of the Observatory and Telescope to those

[143] NISC Minute Book, March 5, 1899, 362.

premises'.[144] Said motion created the impetus for the NISC to request in April 1899 that the architect of the Technical School should 'submit plans for the provision of an office… for the Headmaster and for the fixing of the dome and telescope' and to confirm space on the first floor of the School 'to enable satisfactory provision to be made for Nautical College classes'.[145]

Thus, the detail of the LNC's complicated, frustrating and (ultimately) doomed tenure of the Royal Institution building is captured in the LNC archive. Like a swan gliding serenely on a lake, but paddling furiously beneath, the public perception of these events was very different. Readers of the edition of the *LM* published on Tuesday 6th February 1900 would have learned:

> In view of the fact that the buildings have been purchased for the purposes of a school of cookery, the Nautical College, which has been carried on in Colquitt Street since its establishment in 1892, will shortly be removed elsewhere. It has, therefore, been decided to transfer the work of the college to the new Central Technical School, William Brown Street, certain rooms on the first floor having been allocated to those classes. An addition has accordingly been made to the original plans to provide an observatory to receive the equatorial telescope and transit instrument now in the possession of the college with the object of facilitating as far as possible the preparation of a portion of the new schools for use in September next, special arrangements are being made to temporarily roof over the three floors above which the walls have been carried, and so enable the work of furnishing to be proceeded with at once.[146]

James Gill led the LNC through the turbulence of months and years of uncertainty over its place within Liverpool's civic fabric. Whilst the Royal Institution building had provided a ready-made home for the fledgling College, it proved to be an insecure and inadequate location for its staff and students in the longer term. Although Gill had seen the promised land of embedding the College's operations within the

[144] NISC Minute Book, April 12, 1899, 373.

[145] NISC Minute Book, April 12, 1899, 374.

[146] 'Day to day in Liverpool', *LM*, February 6, 1900, 9.

flagship civic structure of the new Central Technical School building, he would not lead his people into that bright future. Gill died in the early days of 1900 and it was his successor as Headmaster, William Venner Merrifield, who completed that task. Calder held up her side of the bargain and even agreed to extend the LNC's lease by a further four months, but by the summer of 1900 it became very clear that the College had outstayed its welcome in Colquitt Street. The Cookery School's newly refurbished premises may have been of greater appeal to potential (female) students if the (male) students of the LNC were housed elsewhere. Merrifield found the College's mast and rigging lying in the yard on 7th June, with Calder's builders pointedly asking when it would be removed.[147]

The NISC minutes formally record that the transfer of the LNC from 'the old buildings in Colquitt Street to the new rooms in the Central Technical Schools, Byrom Street' was finally undertaken 'on Friday and Saturday, Nov 2nd and 3rd (1900)'. Classes were suspended for a day and resumed from their new location on Monday 5th November. Thus, the students and staff of the LNC and the College's assets ('furniture, models etc.') were provided with a stable location and a secure future. Merrifield noted that in quitting the Royal Institution building 'several useless articles were left behind e.g.: gas stove, broken chairs, damaged school-books…'[148] He failed to mention James Gill's ghost.

[147] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, June 25, 1900, 184.

[148] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, December 26, 1900, 190.

2.5 Summary comments

Analysis of the LNC documents held in the LJMU Special Collections archive, together with contemporary data sources such as local newspaper reports, underpins this articulation of a new institutional history of the early years of the LNC. Through the related lenses of governance, staffing and physical infrastructure, a comprehensive picture of the LNC's earliest years has been newly constructed. Significant aspects of the LNCs formative years have been highlighted, offering fresh perspectives and insights drawn from an examination of the details of everyday interactions. For example, the extent to which the NISC executed its remit 'to organise and manage the Nautical College … to secure the most perfect efficiency' can only be fully appreciated through detailed analysis of the NISC's own paperwork.[149] NISC's application of scrutiny to every item of business, especially to potential spending from the LNC budget, left little to chance. Yet scrutiny of the assembled evidence reveals that NISC's zealous approach was inspired by more than the Victorian predilection toward the public accountability of government. The commitment given by the Chair of the LMAC (Forwood) to the Council in 1891 that not a penny from the rates would be spent on the LNC set the tone for the diligence and prudence with which the NISC undertook its role. Yet, as the pages of the NISC's minute book reveal, not all the members of the NISC approached their responsibilities with the same degree of rigour.

Membership of NISC was carefully constructed to balance the competing interests in the city's maritime community, including representation from the insurance industry (via the Underwriters' Association) and the agencies responsible for the licensing of ship officers (via the Marine Board). The NISC minutes reveal that representatives of the Marine Board, the Underwriters' Association and (to a lesser degree) the Sailors' Home Committee neglected their duties toward the LNC in respect of their repeated absences from meetings of the NISC. Over time, NISC membership was adjusted to reflect these patterns of participation and therefore the NISC membership of 1899 differed from its initial constitution; the rationale for such

[149] 'Technical instruction in Liverpool', *LM*, January 30, 1893, 6.

changes can only be understood from careful analysis of patterns of participation of individual NISC members.

Furthermore, the NISC minutes (together with the complementary material in the Headmaster's Report Book) reveal the differences in character between the sub-committee's respective chairs and the impact of this upon the LNC's early development. The committed workaholic Willink set the tone for NISC's meticulous scrutiny of LNC business, offering constructively critical oversight of Gill's work and plans. Maxwell's subsequent tenure in the NISC Chair was no less critical but perhaps less constructive in facilitating Gill's objectives, as the LNC's early progress and momentum appeared to stall. Furthermore, close reading of the NISC minutes and associated correspondence suggests that whilst Forwood, Willink and Gill were broadly aligned in their overall approach to the leadership and management of the LNC, Maxwell appears to have been more sceptical and idiosyncratic in his approach. His decision to invite his father-in-law, a convicted Confederate traitor, to join the NISC is testimony to Maxwell's disregard for the forms and conventions that bound the approach and practices of other members of the NISC. Maxwell's overall approach appears to have antagonised the representative agencies seeking to represent Liverpool's various maritime interests (see also section 3) and may have retarded rather than advanced the LNC's progress in its fledgling years.

Another significant theme that features prominently in this new institutional history of the LNC is drawn from analysis of documentation relating to the college's staffing resource. A picture soon emerges of the precarious nature of their situation, owing to the LNC's particular funding arrangements and manifested in the contracts of employment that were offered to LNC staff. In each case it was specified that the LNC staff were considered temporary employees of the Liverpool Corporation, whose contracts could quickly be terminated if the Corporation chose to withdraw funding from the LNC. Together with the temporary nature of the accommodation provided for the LNC and the (frequently public) criticisms of their work, it is herein suggested that the LNC staff succeeded in educating their students despite their working conditions, rather than being supported or valued in their role.

Whereas traditional institutional histories of universities, colleges or schools list their celebrated faculty, this new institutional history offers balance in also exploring, articulating and evaluating the LNC's less successful staffing stories. Glimpses of the overall context in which LNC staff management was conducted emerge from the LNC archive, especially with reference to two figures otherwise forgotten to history; Robert Finlay and Alfred Larkman. Finlay's attempts to recover his lost employment with the Liverpool Corporation shone a critical light on the staffing of the LNC. Although highly selective and subjective in his arguments, Finlay's criticism of NISC's over-reliance upon the LNC's Headteacher for oversight of all academic and administrative affairs appears authentic and allows a different perspective on the early years of the LNC to emerge than would otherwise have been apparent. Although not specifically stated in the available documentation, it appears that issues in Larkman's conduct led to his removal from the staff of the LNC. Much (perhaps more) can be learned of an institution by its failures than by its successes; particularly in the way in which such shortcomings were addressed. This rare glimpse 'behind the curtain' in respect of LNC staffing, highlighting those who would be omitted from official institutional histories, is particularly revealing in that regard.

So far as anything about the nineteenth-century roots of the LNC is recalled within twenty first-century Liverpool, it may be its initial location in the Royal Institution building in Colquitt Street.[150] Yet the exact nature of the LNC's tenancy of the Royal Institution building has remained obscured until revealed by scrutiny of the material held in the LNC archive. Over an eventful decade, the LNC's tenuous grip on its first home gradually eroded and its occupancy of rooms diminished until its eventual eviction by a new landlord. James Gill's time was increasingly devoted to the problems of longer-term relocation of the LNC, encumbered by a strict limit in the costs of rent to which the Council would commit. As revealed in documents within the LNC archive, Gill was unable to find suitable premises in the commercial sector to which the LNC could relocate within these imposed financial restrictions. If the City's new Central Technical School building on William Brown Street had not been

[150] Webster and Wilkie, *The Making of a Modern University.* The buildings in which the various manifestations of the LNC were located (on Colquitt Street, William Brown Street and Byrom Street) are all still standing.

in a position to accommodate the LNC in 1900 it is unclear where, how or indeed whether the LNC could have continued to operate. Whyte notes in his volume on university history that '[T]he university as a built environment has very rarely been the subject of serious discussion' by historians.[151] This may in part be explained by perceptions of ivory towers looking inward, ignoring the settings in which they are situated. Yet the evidence assembled in this research illustrates the importance of the built environment in the history of the LNC and of its place within the civic and architectural fabric of the port city.

There can be few better insights into Gill's vision of the potential of the LNC than in his detailed proposals for the redevelopment of the Pierhead site in 1895.[152] Furthermore, Gill's various proposals for initiatives such as the development and delivery of 'higher education' classes (see section 3.3) can be better contextualised with reference to his ambitious vision of the LNC's potential, rather than to the reality of his (often straitened) circumstances. Chancellor of the Exchequer Goschen's whisky money funded technical education in Liverpool and thereby breathed life into the LNC. Yet in securing the Council's approval for the LNC, the LMAC committed to funding it entirely from these bespoke revenues and not (ever) from revenue accrued from rates levied upon Liverpool's citizens. This binding fiscal pact between (LMAC Chair) Sir William Forwood and the Council undermined any prospect of dedicated investment in LNC premises or facilities and made inevitable Gill's wearisome pursuit of inexpensive, temporary lodgings.

Despite these logistical shackles (and amidst other constraints) Gill succeeded in embedding the LNC within the city's fabric if not in bespoke structures of bricks and mortar. Thus, this analysis of materials in the LNC archive provides a counter-narrative to what history has thus far recalled of the location of the LNC in its early years. It also exposes the uneasy relationship between the LNC and the Liverpool City Council, under which authority the College was funded. The 1890s was a period of rare political change in Liverpool, as the Liberals secured a majority of councillors in 1892, thereby briefly interrupting almost a century of Tory dominance. This

[151] Whyte, '*Redbrick',* 12.

[152] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, October 4, 1895, 83.

turbulence appeared to carry little impact on the LNC, as 'the Conservatives kept their hands on key Committees, Sir William Bower Forwood… led the Library, Museum and Arts Committee'.[153] Nor was there any relief from the LNC's teething troubles when the Conservatives regained their majority in Liverpool in 1895. It can be concluded that, whilst often stimulating political debate, the LNC was not a party-political issue in Liverpool in the 1890s.

It should also be noted that the Liverpool Council's attitude and approach to the LNC was contextualised by (and viewed through) the wider perspective of Willink's educational ladder. In approving LMAC's motion in November 1891, the Council approved the annual award of predicated funding from the whisky money for a programme of technical education of which the LNC was an important component (the first of seven listed branches). Thus, the Council's parsimony toward the LNC was a reflection of their overall approach to technical education, rather than a policy specifically targeted upon the institution. Furthermore, many of the initiatives explored by Gill (widening access, higher education) were scaffolded by LMAC's intention to promote social mobility and 'enable the people to go right from the bottom to the top'.[154] Hence, political oversight of the LNC and the Council's wider promotion of technical education were indivisible. Although the material in the Special Collections archive pertains exclusively to the LNC, much of the discussions and decisions recorded therein were symptomatic of broader debates around public investment in the late-Victorian port city.[155]

Whether the LNC succeeded in delivering upon LMAC's ambitions for technical education in Liverpool is explored in the following sections, but were the governance, staffing and infrastructure of the LNC in its first decade managed 'properly' and 'efficiently' in the context of a late-Victorian port city? The NISC was convened to provide effective and representative governance for the LNC; evidence considered in section 2.2 suggests that it executed its role effectively by closely scrutinising the detail of the development and delivery of all aspects of the LNC's curriculum to

[153] Rees, *Local and Parliamentary Politics in Liverpool,* 85.

[154] 'Technical instruction in Liverpool', *LM*, November 28, 1891, 7.

[155] Hewitt, *The Technical Instruction Committee and Its Work*.

maximise financial efficiency, although subsequent procedural irregularities discussed in section 3.3 may challenge this confidence. Furthermore, many of the city's maritime agencies that were represented amongst the membership of the NISC failed to fully participate, thereby undermining the 'proper' governance of the LNC in its first decade.

The decisions of the NISC and of the Council (under the ever-present scrutiny of the town clerk and city auditor) in respect of LNC staffing and infrastructure further emphasised the drive toward and indeed the attainment of prudent stewardship of public funds. Yet there is more to efficiency than cost-effectiveness. Evidence from the LNC archive suggests that the ability of the LNC to function efficiently may have been undermined by the limitations of its physical environment. Whereas in 1892 the Royal Institution building appeared to be a suitable base from which to lay the LNC's foundations, by the end of that decade it represented a shrinking and increasingly unstable resource, putting at risk Gill's plans for expansion. If a proper means of efficient nautical education requires accommodation that facilitates delivery of said education, then the LNC in its first decade may be said to have been deficient in that regard.

Not only are the various documents in the LJMU archives rich in detail about specific events in the early years of the LNC, a vivid impression of the LNC's launch and early development can be constructed from the accumulated evidence of these multiple sources together with scrutiny of contemporary newspaper reports. It is possible to interpret the material to mitigate author bias, to account for gaps in the narrative or to detect subtle shifts in tone only appreciable from close textual scrutiny, allowing the researcher to read between the (often densely written) lines. Documents such as reports and committee minutes were functional tools, elements of the LNC's operational fabric in the nineteenth century. They have subsequently become testament to a forgotten episode in Liverpool's past, providing the raw materials from which a detailed and layered history of the early years of the LNC has been written.

This investigation has therefore revealed the kind of institutional history that may be constructed through multiple microanalyses of contemporary source materials. It is a hidden history, lurking in the minutiae of bureaucratic detail, obscured by the decades of dust accumulating upon neglected volumes. It is a candid history replete with errors and thwarted ambition, a lens that scrutinises what might have been as well as what befell. It shows how multiple strands of inquiry are tightly woven into a narrative account of events as they occurred and as they were experienced by their protagonists. It can therefore be concluded that multiple microanalyses of contemporary source materials can produce a verifiable, evidence-based account which may robustly counter negative perceptions of 'the suspect character of institutional histories'.[156]

[156] Hérubel, 'University, College Institutional Histories', 353.

3 Public impact and debates

3.1 Preliminary comments

Section 2 of this thesis crafted an evidence-based (and evidence-bound) approach to institutional history, based upon archival analysis. This section is focused on a critical appraisal of the institution's local impact, framed in the context of the approach developed by Matthews-Jones in her work on the University Settlement Movement and the contribution of institutions to the promotion of values such as 'moral training… character, public service and citizenship'.[1] This research is also cognisant of Henry Fielding's view that the causes of memorable historical events, although important, may be obscured and neglected in consequence of their apparent mundanity:

> [I]n reality, there are many little circumstances too often omitted by injudicious historians, from which events of the utmost importance arise. The world may indeed be considered a vast machine, in which the great wheels are originally set in motion by those which are very minute, and almost imperceptible to any but the strongest eyes.[2]

Indeed, history is so full of notable individuals, institutions and incidents that it becomes all too easy for specific events and occurrences, particularly where these appear to carry only local or temporary consequence, to become forgotten. To recover such lost forgotten historical fragments, there is value in seeking to ascertain the significance of (everyday) events at the point at which they occurred. In this way, the impact of the emergence of the Liverpool Nautical College (LNC) on the civic landscape of Liverpool's late-Victorian port city may be assessed. One of the most useful sources of such information, in an era of widely available news media, are the pages of the contemporary local press.

---

[1] Lucinda Matthews-Jones, '"I still remain one of the old Settlement boys": Cross-class Friendship in the First World War Letters of Cardiff University Settlement Lads' Club', *Cultural and Social History* 13, no. 2 (2016), 199.

[2] Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (Routledge & Co, 1857), 121.

Advances in digital humanities have opened new avenues in scholarly activity, facilitating collaborations between archivists, historians and programmers.[3] Researchers can utilise a range of online query interfaces to visit the discussions and debates of the 1890s through the pages of the late-Victorian press; Bob Nicholson notes that 'scholars of nineteenth-century Britain have much to gain from engaging with digital methodologies'.[4] Efficient and effective access to historical newspaper articles is facilitated by searchable digital databases, such as The British Newspaper Archive. Researchers must be aware of the limitations of such technologies: 'accuracy of optical character recognition (OCR) software is (quite literally) hit and miss; some articles are transcribed accurately into machine-readable text while others are converted into a garbled mess'.[5] However, by employing strategies such as reading editions of newspapers adjacent to those highlighted by database searches and/or diaries of key events, researchers can minimise risks of omission. Newspaper cuttings preserved within the LNC archive also provide valuable information, revealing the local topics that most interested the faculty of the LNC in the late-Victorian port city.

In the latter years of the Victorian era, the people of Liverpool were offered a diminishing choice of local newspapers. Whereas a dozen titles had been available in the 1840s-1860s, by the 1890s three dailies remained: the (working-class) *Liverpool Echo* (1879-date), the *Liverpool Daily Post* (1855-2013) and *Liverpool Mercury* (*LM*, 1811-1904) described by Hobbs as a high-status 'creation[s] of the post-Stamp Duty era, with a largely middle-class readership'.[6] Each newspaper had

[3] Tim Hitchcock, 'Confronting the Digital: or how Academic History Writing Lost the Plot', *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 1 (2013): 9-23. Patrick Leary, 'Googling the Victorians', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 10, no. 1 (2005): 72-86.

[4] Bob Nicholson, 'Counting Culture; or How to Read Victorian Newspapers from a Distance', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17, no. 2 (2012), 240.

[5] Nicholson, 'Counting Culture', 242.

[6] Andrew Hobbs, 'When the Provincial Press was the National Press (c. 1836-c. 1900)', *International Journal of Regional and Local Studies* 5, no. 1 (2009), 16. The *LM* was first published as a weekly newspaper in 1811, becoming a daily paper in 1858. The (liberal) *LM* merged with the (non-aligned but liberally minded) *Liverpool Daily Post* in 1904; the newspaper was temporarily renamed the *Liverpool Daily Post and the Liverpool Mercury*, before adopting the title *Liverpool Daily Post*.

a distinctive tone; for example, readers of the *LM* opted for a 'staunch campaigning newspaper'.[7] Indeed, as Nick Foggo suggests, '(t)he Mercury became one of the best-known Liberal newspapers in the country and, for most of its career, as outspoken as any. Of equal importance was its reputation for high quality journalism'.[8] Liverpool's equivalent of the *Manchester Guardian*, the reformist, Liberal *LM* was unafraid to challenge authority and to offer a platform to dissenting voices. Although contemporary coverage of the early years of the LNC was published in a range of newspapers and periodicals, the greatest concentration of LNC-related news and opinion could be found in the *LM*. Hobbs describes the extensive networks that were involved in submitting journalistic copy in the Victorian era, as 'each paper also had scores, sometimes hundreds, of part-time correspondents and contributors who sent in news items… or wrote expertly on particular topics such as agriculture or local history'.[9] It follows that the interests, aspirations or prejudices of a range of parties could be mediated through the medium of local newspapers.

Prominent LNC stories covered by the *LM* (and also in other newspapers) included the events surrounding the opening ceremony of the College in December 1892, the politicisation of the LNC during the 1895 Liverpool Council elections and the College's proposal to offer Higher Education programmes. On each of the above occasions, the volume and content of both articles and letters in the local press indicate hostility toward the LNC or to those responsible for its management. Yet closer reading suggests that such negative coverage was exacerbated by (and indeed instigated by) individuals and organisations whose interests and livelihoods were challenged by this new municipal institution. By triangulating sources including archival material such as the reports of the LNC's Headmaster or the minutes of the Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee (NISC) and wider documentary evidence with contemporary press reports, it becomes possible to read between the lines of the

[7] 'The Liverpool Mercury is born in 1811', *Liverpool Echo*, July 2, 2011 (accessed via the Liverpool Echo website on 2nd March 2023).

[8] Nick Foggo, 'The Rise and Fall of Diversity in the Liverpool Newspaper Press', *Media History* 27, no. 2 (2021), 135.

[9] Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855-1900* (Open Book Publishers, 2018), 62.

unfavourable media coverage (see also section 2). From such analysis, a picture emerges of how the LNC's role and reputation came under attack for what it represented more so than for anything that it did.

This section therefore reveals much about the political constraints within which the fledgling LNC operated in late-Victorian Liverpool. The existence and the role of organisations antagonistic to the LNC are identified and their methods in securing exposure for their views are explored. The role played by the media in offering a platform to purveyors of manufactured misinformation masquerading as public discourse is explored. Parallels with the twenty-first century plague of 'fake news' are evident as the readers of the *LM* were led into the murky waters of distortion, misinformation and newspeak. Hobbs suggests that local newspapers may have been complicit in generating provocative copy, '[T]he editor used the popularity of letters, especially controversial ones, to encourage further letters and to increase readership'.[10] Whether the outspoken outpourings of the vocal critics of the LNC who had the benefit of the *LM*'s editor's ear succeeded in truly misleading the public is moot. Either way, their purple prose makes for fascinating reading over a century later.

To evaluate the impact of the early years of the LNC upon the city of Liverpool it is necessary to understand both the emergent College and the environment in which it was founded. Although every city has its own history, culture and perspective, late-Victorian Liverpool appears idiosyncratic, perhaps exceptional, as argued most notably by John Belchem.[11] It was a city of extremes, which 'produced as many millionaires as Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, West Midlands, Tyneside and East Anglia combined', but where life for the majority was nasty, brutish and short.[12]

---

[10] Andrew Hobbs, 'Readers' Letters to Victorian Local Newspapers as Journalistic Genre', in Alison Cavanagh and John Steel (eds.) *Letters to the Editor: Comparative and Historical Perspectives* (2019), 131.

[11] Belchem, *Merseypride*. See also Colin G. Pooley, 'Living in Liverpool: The Modern City', in John Belchem (ed.), *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History* (Liverpool University Press, 2006): 171-255.

[12] Tony Lane, *Liverpool: City of the Sea* (Liverpool University Press, 1997), 30. Average life expectancy in Liverpool 1891-1900 was 30 years, compared with a mean life expectancy of 39 years across Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle &

Upon his arrival in the city in 1885, the Rev Acland Armstrong wrote that '[T]he contiguity of immense wealth and abysmal poverty forced itself upon my notice…I had seen wealth. I had seen poverty. But never before had I seen the two so jammed together'.[13] American readers of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1879 would have found the city depicted thus:

> The Exchange and Town-hall form a hollow square, with a fine monument to Nelson in the centre, and the open space is called, from the character of its pavement, the Flags, whereupon gather the spruce emissaries of the great mercantile houses to transact their business, with a quiet and earnest activity from which the stock-brokers of Wall Street might take a lesson… A prosperous multitude fills this neighbourhood. Castle Street, Lord Street, and Bold Street, in the vicinity, are bordered by tempting shops, and the sidewalks swarm with well-dressed pedestrians… The town has lovely suburbs…where the merchant princes live in houses set amid the umbrageous privacy of magnificent parks. But Liverpool is iniquitous, and in the phase of life revealed in Scotland Road is peculiarly revolting, not so much from its poverty and squalor, the sad attendants of all large cities, as from its utter and irredeemable brutality.[14]

Where proactive civic participation thrived in modern municipalities built upon industry, the transient, casualised nature of Liverpool's Victorian economy instead engendered a climate of unease and uncertainty.[15] Victorian Liverpool was open to the Atlantic, facilitating the sharing of people, goods and cultural influences. Graeme Milne argues that '[I]f nineteenth-century Liverpool seems odd compared with the

---

Sheffield. Ramola J. Davenport, 'Urbanization and Mortality in Britain, c. 1800–50', *The Economic History Review* 73, no. 2 (2020), 471.

[13] Margaret B. Simey, *Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool, 1951) quoted in Lane, *Liverpool: City of the Sea,* 52.

[14] William H. Rideing, 'England's Great Sea-Port', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 344, no. 58 (1879), quoted in *American Travellers in Liverpool* ed. David Seed (Liverpool University Press, Second Edition, 2020), 282-283.

[15] Valerie Burton, 'Boundaries and Identities in the Nineteenth-century English Port: Sailortown Narratives and Urban Space', in Simon Gunn and Robert J. Morris (eds.), *Identities in Space. Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850*. (Ashgate, 2001), 137. See also Zoë Alker, 'Street Violence in mid-Victorian Liverpool', unpublished PhD thesis, Liverpool John Moores University (2014).

average English provincial town, it fits well enough in the company of Hamburg or Marseilles'.[16] Isaac Land describes how maritime towns (indeed, emerging cities such as late-Victorian Liverpool) evade the historian: 'urban history – for all its sophisticated debates about the meaning of theatres, towers, and temples – has offered surprisingly few insights into the forest of masts in the harbour'.[17]

Sailortowns offered convenient comforts and attractions to visiting seafarers, notwithstanding the poverty and criminality of their settings.[18] Depictions of Liverpool's sailortown in the mid-Victorian period may be found in numerous fictional accounts, famously those of Charles Dickens and Herman Melville.[19] In seeking a depraved netherworld from which Mr Earnshaw could rescue the destitute, starving infant he named Heathcliff, Emily Brontë conjured the disturbing spectacle of Liverpool's sailortown.[20] Both Brad Beavan and Henk Driessen discuss the construction and mapping of 'moral geographies' within sailortowns.[21] Beavan argues that 'urban elites' within sailortowns 'juxtaposed the safe and loyal civic centre with the primitive and vice-laden port that was open to dangerous foreign influences'.[22] Such elites fit the mould of 'gentlemanly capitalists' who, as Cain and Hopkins argue, 'ruled Britain' in the nineteenth century.[23] Haggerty, Webster and White (quoting Belchem) reflect that '[T]his is especially true for Liverpool, where a network of nineteenth-century ship-owners, traders, commodity brokers, insurers, processors and financiers produced a 'northern outpost of "gentlemanly capitalism"'

[16] Milne, 'Maritime Liverpool', 257.

[17] Isaac Land, 'The Humours of Sailortown: Atlantic History meets Subculture Theory', in Glenn Clark, Judith Owens and Greg T. Smith (eds.), *City Limits: Perspectives on the Historical European City* (McGill, 2010), 325.

[18] Beaven, 'The Resilience of Sailortown Culture'.

[19] Charles Dickens, 'Poor Mercantile Jack', *All the Year Round* 46 (1860). Herman Melville, *Redburn: His First Voyage* (Richard Bentley, 1849).

[20] Ellis Bell, *Wuthering Heights, A Novel* (Thomas Cautley Newby, 1847).

[21] Beaven, 'The Resilience of Sailortown Culture', 80. Henk Driessen, 'Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered', *History and Anthropology* 16 (2005), 130–131.

[22] Beaven, 'The Resilience of Sailortown Culture', 80.

[23] Peter J. Cain and Anthony G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New Imperialism, 1850-1945', *Economic History Review* 40, no. 1 (1987): 1-26.

which was remarkably reminiscent of, and second only to, London'.[24] Milne agrees, noting that 'Liverpool business had a clear hierarchy. The larger shipowners were a class of their own in the late nineteenth century, when personal control of a steamship line remained possible'.[25] Tony Lane asserts that Victorian Liverpool's leading merchant families were expected to 'practise *noblesse oblige* in the city in the same way that landowning families were supposed to practise it in the countryside'.[26] This is key to understanding not only the social hierarchies within Victorian Liverpool, but also the dynamics at play in the governance of the port city as context for analysis of the public impact of the LNC.

Lane also argues that, notwithstanding their political and / or religious differences, Liverpool's patrician elite operated as a coherent network, convening 'at the Steamship Owners' and other trade organisations. Most, if not all, circles overlapped and the launching of one or another civic venture would quickly produce cross-sectional support'.[27] In contrast, Milne detects some divergence between the actions of 'a few individuals and families – the Rathbones famously – [who] clearly pursued wealth as a means to social, philanthropic and religious ends rather than for its own sake' and 'business as a whole [which] seemed reluctant to pay for the city's educational and cultural facilities'.[28] Milne cites the views of contemporary 'radical commentators [who] saw a direct line from the slave traders of a century before to the present generation of shipowners in their treatment of labour'.[29] Radical journalist Hugh Shimmin, editor of *The Porcupine*, was coruscating in his criticism of the city's failure to invest in educational institutions,

> Is there any community of civilised men and women in the world where all that pertains to culture of the mind is so little honoured, nay, is so openly scorned, as Liverpool? The pride of ignorance is rampant here. We say in all sincerity,

[24] Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas White, 'Introduction' in *The Empire in One City*, 7.

[25] Milne, 'Maritime Liverpool', 290.

[26] Lane, *Liverpool: City of the Sea,* 9.

[27] Lane, *Liverpool: City of the Sea,* 36.

[28] Milne, 'Maritime Liverpool', 287.

[29] Milne, 'Maritime Liverpool', 305.

> and without the slightest wish to exaggerate, that the general public feeling of Liverpool towards the thinker, the scholar, the man of letters, the poet, is one of genuine, honest, hearty contempt.[30]

It was within this challenging civic climate that the LNC was opened in 1892. Although this initiative represented targeted subsidised public investment in Liverpool's maritime economy, neither the city's (ship-owning) elite nor representatives of officers of the mercantile marine embraced the LNC whole-heartedly. Milne reflects that in the context of Victorian Liverpool 'Higher education in general was a difficult sell, though, and business looked for direct benefits'.[31] Yet Paul Robertson notes that 'many British ship-builders and engineers did not believe that the benefits to be gained from increased technical training would have justified the expenses they would have incurred in establishing a workable system of education'.[32] Critical of the 'stupidity' of critics of technical education throughout Victorian Britain, Roderick Floud considers how 'by contrast, in the German case the state was in almost complete control of training, in pursuit of its aim of rapid economic growth'.[33] David Landes depicts Victorian industrialists as 'convinced the whole thing was a fraud, that effective technical education was impossible, scientific instruction unnecessary.... Moreover, even when employers did come to recognise the need for trained technical personnel, they yielded grudgingly'.[34]

Whereas from the 1880s 'the movement for technical education was increasingly regarded as one of national importance', it was viewed with 'considerable anxiety' by the Liverpool Trades Council.[35] As the LNC's Headmaster and NISC would soon discover, the protectionist tendencies of certified ship's officers

---

[30] Hugh Shimmin quoted in Simey*, Charitable Effort in Liverpool,* 48.

[31] Milne, 'Maritime Liverpool', 287.

[32] Robertson, 'Technical Education', 233.

[33] Roderick Floud, 'Technical Education and Economic Performance: Britain, 1850-1914', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 14, no. 2 (1982), 162 & 164.

[34] David Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 345-346.

[35] Fidler*,* 'The Liverpool Trades Council', 209-210.

would mirror the opposition of qualified tradesmen to the opening-up of their professions. David Rees notes that in Victorian Liverpool 'the old trade unions especially the craft unions were conservative in their approach, extremely opposed to change, defending always their privileges, and very anxious to restrict entry into the labour market'.[36] Echoing this view, Geoffrey Fidler places hostility toward technical education in late-Victorian Liverpool within a broader context:

> The concentration into larger, more efficient, business units, and the interest in effecting improvements in vessels, crews, docking facilities etc. that this entailed (which, to some degree, underlined the need for superior technical expertise) also in part explained the great discontent and militancy which characterised the water-front in the late 1880s and early 1890s.[37]

The definition of technical instruction enshrined in the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 was both broad and flexible. It permitted discretion to designate (even on a local basis) funding to support instruction in a range of disciplines, crafts and skills:

> 'Technical Instruction' means instruction in:-
>
> a) Any of the branches of science and art with respect to which grants are for the time being made by the Department of Science and Art;
> b) The working of wood, clay, metal or other material for purposes of art or handicraft;
> c) Commercial arithmetic, commercial geography, book-keeping, modern languages, and shorthand; and
> d) Any other subject applicable to the purposes of agriculture or trade, or to commercial life and practice, which may be sanctioned by a minute of the Department of Science and Art on the representation of a local authority that such instruction is required by the circumstances of its district.[38]

[36] Rees, *Local and Parliamentary Politics,* 72.

[37] Fidler, 'The Liverpool Trades Council', 217.

[38] The Technical Instruction Act (1889), Vol VIII, 220.

Floud notes that the Department of Science and Art in 1859 issued regulations which specified that technical instruction should be available to 'artisans or operatives in receipt of weekly wage' or 'persons in receipt of salaries not large enough to render them liable to income tax' (in other words workers or, as Fidler puts it, 'the artisan class').[39] Thus tensions around technical instruction inevitably arose with the trades unions and guilds, for whom such vocational instruction was viewed solely as their preserve as guardians of 'the traditional system of apprenticeship'.[40] However, as Valerie Burton illustrates, '[U]nlike other professional associations, shipmasters did not have the power to regulate their profession by qualification, and they were particularly sensitive to this weakness'.[41] Shipmasters' associations could (and did) protest about the extension of technical instruction to candidates for Board of Trade (BoT) shipmaster certification, but were powerless to prevent public revenue being deployed for that purpose. Whereas an able seaman learned their craft through experience, the acquisition of skills and competencies for ship masters and mates involved the study of theoretical principles:

> At the more advanced end of the knowledge spectrum, those destined to rise to the command of ships needed much more than just a passing acquaintance with a lengthy set of subjects often treated ashore as separate fields of study. At the core, in historical terms, was the study of navigation and nautical astronomy. This was the leading topic of mathematical, astronomical and scientific study and research from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, with emphasis placed on the "space age" problem of the day - the practice of oceanic navigation.[42]

As described by Roderick and Stephens, 'The [Liverpool Nautical] College was in reality an amalgam of four distinct schools catering for boys preparing to go to sea, apprentices and seamen, candidates for the Board of Trade certificate, and a higher

---

[39] Floud, 'Technical Education and Economic Performance', 159. Fidler, 'The Liverpool Trades Council', 210.

[40] Fidler, 'The Liverpool Trades Council', 210.

[41] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 116.

[42] Kennerley, 'Nationally-Recognised Qualifications', 116.

school for officers and masters'.[43] Kennerley summarises the differences in curricular content between these four 'schools' or 'divisions'. In relation to the curriculum of the (Division 1) Boys' School 'Gill was following an idea emphasised by the Science and Art Department, that educational standards of seafarers were best raised in the long term through attention to new entrants to the occupation'.[44] The Boys' School comprised two distinct 'departments': the Navigation Department provided 'youths intending to go sea [with]...a thorough Nautical Education to fit them for the position of Deck Officers in the Mercantile Marine' whilst in the Marine Engineering Department '[T]he Curriculum is designed to give to Youths intended for Marine Engineers the necessary Scientific and Technical Education before entering the workshop'.[45]

Also innovative, the (Division 2) Apprentices' School represented 'Gill's attempt to overcome the loss of contact with study during the three or four years that had to be spent at sea before the second mate's examination could be attempted' with 'distance learning' punctuated by attendance during shore leave.[46] Preparation for BoT ship officer competency exams was supported in 'Division 3' (as it was in numerous other Navigation Schools and by private tutors). Yet in his Annual Report for 1896 James Gill argued '[T]he old idea that the Board of Trade certificate was the end and aim of study or 'cram' [sic] is being discredited in the growing desire for a more liberal nautical education'. Gill had in the previous year made a bold declaration about the 'Division 4' higher school: 'The main object of the college is to promote higher nautical education and enable students to gain the College Diploma, the passing of the Board of Trade examinations being merely incidental'.[47] Yet despite these protestations, Division 3 accommodated over three-quarters of the College's students and Kennerley's argument that '[I]t is possible that the [Liverpool

[43] Roderick & Stephens, 'Approaches to Technical Education', 156.

[44] Alston Kennerley, 'The Education of the Merchant Seaman in the Nineteenth Century', unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Exeter (1978), 122.

[45] 'City of Liverpool: The Nautical College, Colquitt Street', *Liverpool Echo*, August 17, 1893, 1.

[46] Kennerley, 'The Education of the Merchant Seaman', 123.

[47] Annual Report of the Headmaster of the Liverpool Nautical College 1895, quoted in Kennerley, 'The Education of the Merchant Seaman', 127.

Nautical] College was the most successful college nationally' was based upon a quantification of the number and success rates of candidates for BoT exams.[48]

In this section, contemporary reports and records are interrogated to determine the significance and implications of the launch of the LNC on technical instruction and the professionalisation of maritime training in the late-Victorian port city. Close analysis of contemporary newspaper resources reveals much about the impact and perception of the LNC 1892-1900. It also reveals a great deal about the dynamics of the relationship between the LNC and the political agencies operating within Liverpool's seafaring community.

[48] Kennerley, 'The Education of the Merchant Seaman', 126.

3.2 The opening ceremony of the LNC and its aftermath (1892-1893)

By November 1892 all the elements required to provide a broad programme of nautical instruction in Liverpool were in place (including premises, equipment, staff and the first 21 enrolled students). Admission to the LNC was initially advertised in July 1892, with notices posted in the newspapers of Liverpool and other port cities.[49] The doors were first opened on 1st November with little fuss, so the decision to schedule the formal opening ceremony on Thursday 1st December 1892 is therefore likely to have owed more to the availability of the guest speaker and civic dignitaries than to the requirements of the College or its students. As befitted a municipal showpiece of public investment, the LNC was formally launched amidst much fanfare with promotional national press coverage: 'the opening of the LNC may be said to mark a distinct epoch in the history of the British mercantile marine'.[50]

The opening ceremony was held with ceremonial flourish in the gallery of the Royal Institution building, which had been 'tastefully decorated' for the occasion with a selection of shrubbery 'by Mr Powell, of the Botanic Gardens'.[51] Many of the most prominent members of Liverpool's nautical and political communities were assembled for the event, including the Mayor of Liverpool, ten councillors, a Member of Parliament and representatives from various nautical concerns (including the Shipowners' Association and the Liverpool Sailors' Home). Mayor Robert Durning Holt emerged from a prominent shipowning family, which supported educational initiatives in Liverpool. He was also the brother-in-law of Beatrice Webb, whose commitment to social reform and the promotion of workers' education would have found expression in the ethos underpinning the bold LNC initiative. Deemed worthy of note in the national press (albeit a specialist trade paper), the edition of the

[49] 'Advertisements and notices. City of Liverpool: The Liverpool Nautical College', *LM*, July 19, 1892, 1. 'Advertisements and notices. City of Liverpool: The Liverpool Nautical College', *Belfast News Letter*, July 25, 1892, 4. 'Advertisements and notices. City of Liverpool: The Liverpool Nautical College', *Glasgow Herald*, August 15, 1892, 1.

[50] 'The Gazette', *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List*, December 9, 1892, 7-8. Indeed, the *Liverpool Echo* published a feature *Annals of our Time: a record for future reference* in which the entry for 1st December 1892 read 'The Liverpool Nautical College opened…' 'Annals of our time', *Liverpool Echo*, January 2, 1893, 3.

[51] 'The Nautical College: Opening ceremony', *LM*, December 2, 1892, 5.

Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List published on Monday 28th November 1892 included the following notice: 'The nautical instruction sub-committee of the library, museum, and arts committee of the Liverpool Corporation have issued invitations for the opening of the Nautical College, in Colquitt-Street, on Thursday next, December 1. The Right Hon. Lord Brassey, K.C.B., will declare the building open'.[52]

Thomas Brassey was a revered Victorian celebrity, having completed the first global circumnavigation by private yacht (1876-77). Ennobled, he served as Lord of the Admiralty 1880-1884, after which time he founded and initially edited the publication 'Naval Annual'. A respected authority of all matters nautical, Brassey was considered the perfect choice as guest of honour at the opening ceremony of the LNC, 'his experience of matters relating to the sea renders his appreciation of the scheme of the Library Committee of the Corporation particularly acceptable'. Brassey's appearance in Liverpool lent the opening ceremony and the fledgling LNC both publicity and gravitas, as indicated in the local press coverage of the event:

> Although there is a Plymouth Nautical College somewhat akin to that which was opened yesterday in Liverpool, practically this port has led the way, as it should, in the establishment of an institution the curriculum of which will enable aspirants to the seafaring profession to equip themselves with that scientific knowledge through which alone they can hope to maintain that hereditary supremacy in maritime affairs which his nation has all long enjoyed.[53]

Brassey was introduced to the assembled civic dignitaries by Sir William Bower Forwood, whose introductory comments focused upon deficiencies in 'the technical education of officers of the mercantile marine, who carried significant responsibility for safeguarding lives and property', an education 'inferior to that given to any class in this country'.[54] During his opening address, Forwood claimed that fewer than one British ship's officer in fifty had 'any scientific or theoretical knowledge of his

---

[52] 'The Liverpool Nautical College', *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List*, November 28, 1892, 9-10.

[53] 'The Nautical College: Opening ceremony', *LM*, December 2, 1892, 5.

[54] 'The Nautical College: Opening ceremony', *LM*, December 2, 1892, 5.

profession', for which he blamed the BoT in their adoption of and adherence to the threshold standard against which to establish certification of competency of ships' officers (masters and mates).[55] He also criticised 'crammers and coaches whose duty and object it was to impart the largest amount of information within the shortest possible time, and with the least possible mental exertion on the part of the students'. Having maligned the educational attainments of an entire profession (many of whom formed his audience), Forwood concluded 'nothing could be more despicable than this means of educating the officers of our mercantile marine, and as a matter of fact it was no education whatever'.[56]

Guest speaker Brassey invoked international comparisons by stating that whilst England was pre-eminent in shipping tonnage, 'In facilities for acquiring a good nautical education we are behind rather than ahead of other nations…' The consequence of such shortcomings was financial as 'we pay heavily for the neglect… [as] we have a large percentage of avoidable loss through carelessness or incapacity'.[57] Brassey cited evidence that had been submitted to the Royal Commission on the Loss of Life at Sea in 1885 by nautical assessor Captain Robert Methven:

> Viewing the whole of the merchant service as one profession, both masters and mates, I, as being one of them myself, have, since I have been brought in contact with them as an assessor, been most thoroughly ashamed. I have felt that the mode in which navigation was conducted in a portion of our merchant service has been discreditable to the country.[58]

---

[55] Even before the introduction of the 1850 Act there had been criticism of the educational standards of British seafarers, see David M. Williams, 'The Rise of United States Merchant Shipping on the North Atlantic, 1800-1850: The British Perception and Response' in Clark G. Reynolds (ed.), *Global Crossroads and The American Seas* (Pictorial Histories, 1988), 74.

[56] 'The Nautical College: Opening ceremony', LM, December 2, 1892, 5.

[57] 'The Nautical College: Opening ceremony', *LM*, December 2, 1892, 5.

[58] Great Britain. Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea. *Final report of the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea: with minutes of evidence, appendix, and digest of the evidence* (printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1887).

In Brassey's view, the insurance premiums paid by shipowners were inflated due to the 'recklessness and carelessness' of sailors. The required solution would be provided by the LNC in 'sending forth gallant, skilful, instructed, and high minded officers to command our ships' where these were presently lacking. Put simply (and bluntly) 'With the extension of professional education, losses should be fewer and premiums lower'.[59] As a former Lord of the Admiralty, Brassey's focus was not solely upon the mercantile marine, but also upon wider naval matters. Peacetime naval capacity could be increased during periods of conflict by calling-up a dormant naval reserve made up of merchant seafarers, as 'to maintain in peace the personnel required in war would cast an intolerable burden upon the taxpayers'.[60] Brassey saw the LNC not only as an educational establishment but also as a means of recruiting naval reservists.[61]

In compliance with ceremonial tradition, the guest of honour was entitled to receive a vote of thanks; the responsibility for proposing the vote of thanks was given to William Graves, managing director of Ismay, Imrie & Co, representing the interests of the Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association (LSSOA). Graves did not engage with or indeed refer to Brassey's comments about shameful, discreditable, reckless and careless seafarers. Instead he focused solely on the issue of international state-funded competition: 'up to the present time the English shipowner had prospered entirely by his own enterprise and boldness and unaided by any Government' whilst in nations including as Germany, France and the USA government 'by subsidy and fostering care no efforts were spared to wrest from us the coveted position we held'. The duty of seconding the vote of thanks to the guest speaker fell to (former Mayor and MP) Thomas Royden who acknowledged that for ships' officers 'difficulties and responsibilities were much greater and heavier than they used to be… (noting that) He felt proud that Liverpool, which was sometimes called the first seaport in the kingdom, should be the first in recognising its duties to these officers'. However, in an astonishing breach of protocol at such a showpiece event, Royden challenged

[59] 'The Nautical College: Opening ceremony', *LM*, December 2, 1892, 5.

[60] 'Lord Brassey on Nautical Education', *Northern Whig*, December 3, 1892, 7.

[61] For further elaboration of this point, see Sarah Palmer, *Politics, Shipping and the Repeal of the Navigation Laws* (St Martin's Press, 1990).

Brassey's unflattering depiction of professional seafarers, 'It was quite true that the schools of the past had not been such as could be desired, but might he say that in spite of their shortcomings we are proud of the officers of the mercantile marine who had distinguished themselves?' Brassey promptly recanted and in the account of the ceremony published in the *LM* on 2nd December 1892 his awkward yet apologetic tone is discernible:

> in endeavouring to establish the necessity and desirability for the institution of this college he might, perhaps, have somewhat laboured the point of necessity by showing that there were deficiencies in the training of our merchant officers. He desired, however, to pay the highest compliment to the conduct, skill and efficiency of the present commanders of our large merchant ships.[62]

In national press coverage of the LNC opening ceremony, Forwood was admonished although Lord Brassey's address was deferentially welcomed, 'Lord Brassey says with truth that we still have a large percentage of losses due to carelessness or incapacity'.[63] Yet the immediate reaction to the event, as recorded in the local Liverpool press, was far from positive. An unidentified shipmaster who attended the opening ceremony was quoted as exclaiming: 'I have now been at sea 40 years, and came here to be told I know nothing'. It was, as one local journalist observed, 'a novel way of wooing their sympathies for the new college'.[64]

A letter written under the pseudonym of 'Shellback' was published in the *LM* on 3rd December 1892.[65] Having attended the ceremony, Shellback accused Brassey and Forwood of 'glorifying the shipowner at the expense of the shipmaster', asking 'Why was it necessary to hold up for the delectation of the listening audience the

---

[62] 'The Nautical College: Opening ceremony', *LM*, December 2, 1892, 5.

[63] 'We have no hesitation in saying that he [Forwood] has overstated the matter…' 'The Gazette', *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List*, December 9, 1892, 7-8.

[64] 'Nautical jottings', *LM,* December 3, 1892, 6.

[65] The term 'Shellback' is nautical slang for an experienced sailor. 'Most pseudonyms were related to the topic of the letter, influencing trends in choice of pseudonym, and differences between papers. They were carefully chosen as a rhetorical device, enabling writers to continue their argument into the signature, and end on a pithy high note'. Hobbs, 'Readers' Letters', 142.

especial ignorance of the British shipmaster?' Shellback criticised Forwood's comments which 'traduce(d) a body of men who have done as much, to say the least, to increase the wealth and importance of the very class of which Sir William is so conspicuous a member as that class themselves' and those of Brassey whose perspective 'has its root in prejudice and ignorance'. Shellback's critique reflected emerging political currents about class and the exploitation of workers by a wealthy, privileged elite that had found tentative expression in the election of Keir Hardie to Parliament two years earlier. It was also indicative of a sense of unease amongst the agencies operating within the seafaring community in Liverpool that the LNC was neither of their making nor entirely in their interests. As noted in the *LM*, 'I am only sorry that such a departure had not been made for seamen by seamen themselves. The history of the past has not shown us that the shipowner is so entirely the disinterested and philanthropic person he wished us to believe he is'.[66]

Although the identity of Shellback was not known, it is possible that they were a member of the Mercantile Marine Services Association (MMSA), founded in 1857 to advocate on behalf of shipmasters and deck officers. Something of a broad church, the MMSA simultaneously secured a seat on the NISC whilst offering episodic public and private criticism of the sub-committee's work. The frequency of critical interventions by the MMSA reduced after 1893 when some of their members splintered to form the Merchant Service Guild (MSG), emerging from this research as an antagonistic militant group whose demands for a separate seat on the NISC were rejected (and latterly ignored). Whereas the MSG became the College's chief antagonist in the mid-1890s, dissent from the MMSA was first publicly manifested in the fallout over the comments of speakers at the College's opening ceremony. On 4th January 1893, the *LM* published correspondence that had been exchanged between the MMSA and Forwood and by the MMSA and Brassey. Dated 20th December 1892, a letter signed 'JJ Grylls' of the MMSA was sent to Brassey expressing the 'pain and regret' of the MMSA's Council following Brassey's comments about the 'large percentage of avoidable loss through carelessness or incapacity'.[67] Dated two days later, a brief and conciliatory reply was sent to JJ

[66] 'Shipowners and shipmasters', *LM*, December 3, 1892, 6.

[67] 'Nautical Education in Liverpool', *LM*, January 4, 1893, 5.

Grylls in which Brassey expressed confidence in the great majority of the merchant service. The MMSA had thereby secured a victory in obtaining Brassey's written retraction and in publishing the correspondence they may have been keen to articulate such vindication of the reputation of their members. Quite what they sought to gain from publishing their correspondence with Sir William Bower Forwood is moot, for that proved to be a very different exchange.

Also dated 20th December 1892, a letter signed 'JJ Grylls' of the MMSA was sent to Forwood, stating that the MMSA Council 'deeply regret the unkind and uncalled for tone of your reflections upon the masters and officers of the merchant service'. With specific reference to Forwood's claim made at the opening ceremony that fewer than one in fifty ship's officers had 'any scientific or theoretical knowledge of his profession', the MMSA described the statement as being 'as incorrect as it is unjust'. The date of Forwood's reply indicates that he spent part of Christmas Day in 1892 replying to Grylls's earlier missive. If Grylls had hoped for a little in the way of festive spirit in this Yuletide *communiqué*, he would have been disappointed, as Forwood informed him 'I regret I do not see my way to modify anything I said on the occasion to which you refer'. In words guaranteed to enrage his correspondent, Forwood wrote, 'I am sure I have rather overstated the proportion of those having a thorough scientific knowledge of navigation'. He cast the MMSA in the role of partisan apologists attempting to cover up evident failings by the profession that they sought to represent, 'I think he is their best friend who recognises defects and shortcomings, and tries to find and supply a remedy'. [68] Thus, with the flourish of a pen the battle lines were drawn between the governing body of the LNC and those who considered themselves representatives of the commercial maritime interest in Liverpool.

On 10th December 1892 an article was published within the regular 'Nautical Jottings' section of the *LM*, offering critical commentary on the events at the opening ceremony of the LNC that had been held over a week before.[69] The author of the

[68] 'Nautical Education in Liverpool', *LM*, January 4, 1893, 5.

[69] 'Nautical Jottings' was a regular column in the *LM* in which local shipping news and commentary on issues pertinent to a port city were published.

article was not identified, nor was the source from which much of the material cited in the article was drawn. Despite the furore surrounding the controversial comments of the speakers at the event, the need for such an institution was recognised, '[W]ith the advance of education generally, the enormous development of marine architecture and the increased size and speed of our steamers, there must be a corresponding step forward in the knowledge of the men who command these vessels'. However, the author of the article was sceptical about the likely benefit of the tuition offered by the LNC, 'whilst not disparaging scientific training, there is no doubt that, at least in navigation, ship-owners will prefer the practical man before the merely theoretical'.[70] This fissure between theory and practice would continue to widen with the progress of the LNC (as considered in section 3.3). However, the article on 10th December 1892 was not just prescient but also tacitly insightful as to the origins of the dispute that was about to be publicly displayed between the MMSA and the LNC.

The author of the 10th December 1892 'jotting' had noted 'Apropos of this Nautical College, it is curious to notice how the principal instigators of the scheme have been forced into the background', going on to describe how '[A] gentleman… associated with Liverpool shipping went in vain from one influential personage to another, all of whom discounted the idea, until at last he met with Alderman Fred Smith, who alone appeared to appreciate the utility of such a scheme'. At no point in the article is the identity of the anonymous 'gentleman' to whom the idea of the LNC is credited revealed, but the (anonymous) author leaves some useful clues. For example, reference is made to the formation of the Library, Museum and Arts Committee (LMAC) sub-committee of 1891 'in which several gentlemen connected with the shipping interests of Liverpool, including the gentleman to whom is solely due the real credit of having suggested the scheme… consider[ed] the matter'. Furthermore, it was stated that,

> the very gentlemen who in the earlier stages had done so much practical good in the way of advice and assistance as to the necessary equipment of the college, were gradually thrust out and received no notice of the committee

[70] 'Nautical Jottings', *LM*, December 10, 1892, 4.

meetings. They did not even have an invitation to the formal opening ceremony by Lord Brassey, nor were they invited to the lunch at the Adelphi Hotel.[71]

There is a pervasive sense of personal grievance in this article, which may have been based upon the testimony of the 'anonymous gentleman' who had been in the author's view unfairly excluded from the picture. The LMAC in 1891 consulted 'several gentlemen': Captain McNab (chief examiner and secretary of the Local Marine Board), Mr Grylls (secretary of the MMSA), Mr Duckworth (chairman of the Liverpool School of Science and Technology), Mr Tate (honorary principal of the Liverpool Science and Art Classes) and Messrs Hanmer & Gill (Sailors' Home). Neither Duckworth nor Tate were particularly 'associated with Liverpool Shipping' and both Gill and Hanmer attended the Opening Ceremony of the LNC. The account of the opening ceremony of the LNC published in the *LM* on 2nd December 1892 mentioned neither Grylls nor McNab. Captain John McNab was a respected, multi-lingual and knowledgeable figure who was appointed to be a member of the NISC, representing the Local Marine Board, in November 1898. He was very much an 'establishment insider', with numerous links to those at the heart of the governance of the LNC and no evident interest in undermining the College's reputation. The same cannot however be said for Joseph John Grylls, secretary to the MMSA.

Grylls was fired with a missionary zeal, befitting a presbyterian pastor, as his letters to Brassey and Forwood imply.[72] A dogged, energetic campaigner for pastoral and professional causes, he was reputed to have become exhausted by the latter part of the 1890s after 'his arduous labours… for over 20 years finally undermined his health' and would die in 1899.[73] Grylls's formal involvement with the

[71] 'Nautical Jottings', *LM*, December 10, 1892, 4.

[72] 'The Navvy Mission Society was a national society formed by a group of Church of England members to cater for the spiritual, physical and social needs of navvies and their families. When the Wirral railway system was being built a large number of the navvies engaged in its construction lived in Neston. The Neston Navvy Mission organised events in the Navvy Mission Hall during the Christmas period. The *Cheshire Observer* (31st December, 1881) records an evening attended by upwards of 150 people which was organised by Mr Grylls, the mission pastor'. https://www.nestonpast.com/christmas-past/ (accessed 13th January 2022).

[73] 'District intelligence: Neston', *The Chester Courant and Advertiser for North Wales*, October 12, 1898, 3.

establishment of the LNC was restricted to a single meeting during the initial exploratory phase of the Council's work on their nautical education scheme, yet his shadow looms large over subsequent events. Having had its initial 'pitch' to be regarded as the city's recognised nautical education institution declined, the MMSA sprang into action in both overtly and covertly lobbying councillors in an attempt to block the LMAC's proposal for a 'composite committee' to 'draw up a scheme' for a nautical education in the summer of 1891. The involvement of JJ Grylls in this activity was evident in a letter that he wrote to the *LM*, published 6th August 1891, and the correspondence submitted in his name (but on the MMSA Council's behalf) sent to the full meeting of the Liverpool Council in the same month.

Such conduct may have rendered Grylls *persona non grata* in the eyes of the organisers of the opening ceremony of the LNC in December 1892, thus explaining his exclusion from the showpiece public launch event. Furthermore, in the published correspondence of August 1891, Grylls complained that the MMSA had been unfairly excluded from decision-making processes, which is an allegation repeated by the author of the 10th December 1892 article in the *LM* in respect of the ostracism of 'the anonymous gentleman'. Grylls of the MMSA emerges from this research as the maleficent godparent who whispered curses over the infant LNC.[74] As discussed in section 2.4, Grylls appeared to harbour animosity toward the LNC until his retirement due to exhaustion and subsequently his death at 54 years of age. He was not, however, the LNC's only anonymous antagonist whose objections would be played out in the local press.

[74] His centrality to this story is best illustrated by the MMSA's 'Telegraphic Address' in the 1890s, which simply read 'GRYLLS, Liverpool'. 'Mercantile Marine Service Association', *Lloyd's List and Shipping Gazette*, November 24, 1892, 9.

3.3 Higher Education (1894-1897)

At the core of the Liverpool Corporation's strategy for publicly funded nautical education was the aim of raising the educational standard of ship masters and mates. In his introduction to a public lecture at the LNC in 1893 on the topic of Naval Architecture, Headmaster James Gill argued that:

> he did not know any profession which involved a knowledge of so many matters as that of a shipmaster. He must be a seaman, a navigator, an astronomer, a doctor, a sanitarian – for he must know something of food and the best way to treat it. He must also be a good business man; and, lastly, he must know how a ship was put together.[75]

Yet the standard of competency required for professional certification in the mercantile marine was not set by individual educational institutions, but by the BoT. Openly voiced condemnation of the standard of ship officer attainment by city dignitaries (see section 3.2) was framed in a wider national discourse over the international competitiveness of British trade toward the close of the nineteenth century. This in turn must be contextualised in relation to perceived challenges to British global supremacy in the latter days of the nineteenth century from international competitors such as Germany and the USA, owing to 'the erosion of Britain's industrial and commercial pre-eminence, upon which, in the last resort, its naval, military and imperial strength rested'.[76]

An article published in the *LM* in 1894 appeared to endorse the Liverpool Corporation's position fully. The unidentified author of the article argued, 'It is quite time that something more was done in the matter, otherwise how can England hope to maintain a mercantile marine to compete with those of other Powers'. The article concluded 'A radical revolution is necessary in these examinations, or else the

[75] 'Naval Architecture and Shipbuilding', *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List*, October 28, 1893, 12.

[76] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (Random House, 1988), 293. See also Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (Penguin, 2017).

sterling Scandinavian or the stolid German will find his way still more rapidly under the red ensign'.[77] Yet this was not an uncontested view; a correspondent of the *Shipping Gazette* in 1894 argued that it was 'monstrous to propose to subject an unfortunate class of men to the ordeal of a highly scientific examination who have no greater reward to look forward to than a life of hardship and the wage of a mechanic'.[78]

Such debates were not played out against a static backdrop, but within a rapidly changing environment. Between the introduction of the BoT Certificates of Competency for officers of the mercantile marine in the 1850s and the last decade of the Victorian era, the nature of shipping and the necessary skills required by ship officers had been transformed. Whereas the Board of Trade had sought to ensure that their assessments of competency for shipmates and masters was sufficiently generic to cover all styles of maritime vessel, their approach was considered increasingly outdated by the 1890s. As Burton describes,

> Ship navigation… became progressively more technical and scientific as cartography and navigation by instrument were perfected and knowledge of wind systems and ocean currents was systematised. The application of scientific theory to navigation increased the theoretical content of the skill, removing it from the practical plane and from the grasp of the seaman. Attendance at navigation schools on shore was to become indispensable for aspiring shipmasters.[79]

Kennerley offers context on the wider debates about education and training in the latter part of the nineteenth century, noting the 'cyclical pattern in the relative weight given training and education'.[80] An early prominence given to education of ship officers was replaced after the MMA by a focus on training, although concern for education prompted scrutiny of the officer licensing system in the 1890s by the BoT,

---

[77] 'Nautical Jottings, *LM*, May 5, 1894, 5.

[78] 'Higher Education of Mercantile Marine Officers', *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List,* February 3, 1894, 4.

[79] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 105.

[80] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 134.

which announced a review of the ship officer competency examinations in an 1894 a circular that was issued for consultation to a range of experts, including the Headmaster of the LNC.[81] Gill welcomed the proposed changes, 'to secure a more intelligent and efficient class of officers. The best men welcome the prospect of increased stringency and will work up to the higher standard without feeling any hardship, when they know it is compulsory'. Furthermore, Gill emphasised that a 'competent knowledge of principles is required in addition to the working of the problems'.[82] This proposed modernisation, extension and strengthening of the BoT competency assessment aligned with the objectives of the NISC in seeking to shift the emphasis from (a more traditional view of) technical instruction toward the provision of nautical education that would equip and prepare a new generation of officers for the mercantile marine service.

Gill was alert to the opportunity that the proposed changes presented; if the threshold standards were to be raised and the academic content of the curriculum extended, the LNC would be the perfect vehicle for the more scholarly delivery required to underpin the revised qualifications. Furthermore, the 'cramshops' that rote-coached potential masters and mates ahead of their exams would struggle to compete with the College in a 'higher education' environment once the baseline standard had been raised.[83] Keen to capitalise on the abandonment of 'Mid-Victorian simplicity [sic]', Gill devised a radically new curriculum to position the LNC at the forefront of the new age of certification of seafarer competency.[84] The extent and depth of Gill's knowledge of his subject was exemplary and his proposal was rich in detail and brimming with a confidence reminiscent of his ambition for a purpose-built LNC at the Pierhead, or his belief that the Treasury should subsidise the LNC's rent owing to its national importance (see section 2.4). Gill envisaged a scheme for

---

[81] NISC minute book, May 26, 1894, 43.

[82] LNC Headmaster's report book, LJMU Special Collections & Archives (LJMU history: Byrom Street archive), Liverpool John Moores University, June 8, 1894, 49.

[83] The Marine Department of the BoT applied a baseline standard to the shipmaster and -mates 'competency assessment' (based on a written paper and oral exam, for which the only qualification for entry was 'time-served'), stating that '[t]he qualifications have been kept as low as possible'. Guide Book to the Local Marine Board Examination, 1851.

[84] Dixon, Seamen and the Law, 108.

Certificates of Merit comprising two distinct classes each with a discrete curriculum. For aspiring 'apprentices & junior officers' he advocated an academic programme comprising mathematical principles, geography, meteorology and correspondence. For aspiring shipmasters and –mates Gill developed an extensive curriculum covering maritime business & law, mechanics, naval architecture, electro-technics, meteorology and steam & marine engineering. This wide-ranging proposal, if implemented, would necessitate a substantial increase in the time taken to deliver and to learn the revised curriculum, requiring additional teaching beyond the existing scheme, supported by a programme of evening classes. Recognising that professional seafarers seeking advancement in their careers would suffer interruption to their studies whenever they set out to sea, Gill proposed an innovative solution in which 'work done at the College in this connection will therefore be chiefly the teaching of principles and methods, whilst the working out of the problems will, in most cases, have to be practised at sea'.[85] In Gill's proposed model, the cost of tuition and assessment for a student seeking to attain a Certificate of Merit would be 2 guineas, provided that the delivery of higher education classes could be scaffolded by public subsidy.

The Certificate of Merit proposal was thoroughly comprehensive in all aspects but one; there was, from the outset, a lack of evidence to substantiate Gill's belief in the likely demand for such a scheme. Furthermore, concern over recruitment to existing courses at the LNC gave the new proposal a precarious veneer, fuelling scepticism amongst the members of the NISC (particularly the Chair, Councillor Maxwell) toward the proposed scheme. It was therefore necessary for Gill to create demand for the new scheme, by securing external professional endorsement:

> There is good reason to believe that the Board of Trade would give the desired sanction, and if Shipowners could be convinced that by employing men with the higher qualifications, their risks would be very much diminished, no doubt they would be willing to give a preference to Officers holding Certificates of Merit.[86]

[85] Nautical College Report re: Boys' School, 6.

[86] Nautical College Report re: Boys' School, 7.

In accordance with the Headmaster's report and their subsequent deliberations, the NISC resolved to recommend that the LMAC 'sanction a scheme for granting Special Certificates of Merit to Officers of the Mercantile Marine, on the general lines laid down in the Report'. Yet their endorsement of Gill's paper was not unqualified; NISC was well aware of the plan's Achilles Heel and sought to pre-empt any opposition to the proposal before it emerged in wider discussions. Duly, NISC recommended to the LMAC that a deputation be convened and despatched to confer with the BoT 'with the view of obtaining their approval, or recognition in some form, of the proposed Certificates'.[87]

For the sake of completeness, the minute book of the NISC not only recorded the minutes of each meeting of the sub-committee but also an extract from the minutes of each meeting of the parent committee (LMAC) at which the minutes of the sub-committee were formally received. On every occasion but one in the period 1893-1899, the minutes of the NISC, inclusive of any and all recommendations, were duly approved by the LMAC. The sole exception to this established pattern arose at the meeting of the LMAC on 27th September 1894, where the formal record simply states that approval for the proposed Certificate of Merit was withheld. Theoretically, there should have been no difficulty in progressing the recommendations of the NISC through their parent committee. Three of the eight members attending the meeting of the LMAC on 27th September 1894 (Councillors Jones, Maxwell and Picton) had also been present as members of the NISC six days earlier. Furthermore, the Chair of the LMAC (Alderman Forwood) and committee member Councillor Willink were two of the LNC's biggest champions. Approval of the recommendation was withheld following a change of heart by Maxwell, who concluded that, as the success of the Certificates of Merit would entirely rest on securing external professional accreditation or recognition, securing BoT acknowledgement should therefore be a necessary precursor to implementing the scheme. This view departed from James Gill's proposal to seek independent accreditation whilst rolling-out the scheme, although this approach carried the inherent risk that such accreditation might not be secured. Maxwell was supported by Principal Rendall who dismissed the value of any certification from 'a comparatively small institution', arguing that the entire validity

[87] NISC minute book, September 21, 1894, 72.

of the Certificate of Merit scheme would be reliant upon endorsement from ‘a great university or from some large body such as the Board of Trade’.[88]

LMAC Chair Forwood ‘wanted the college to be recognised as the great centre for teaching navigation in Liverpool’, notwithstanding competition from ‘what were called coaches, and of so called schools of navigation’ in the city and ‘hostility from the Mercantile Marine Association’. He conceded to being ‘persuaded that they would not be doing their duty unless they asked the Board of Trade to join with them in instituting such an examination as would enable the students to obtain a higher certificate’. As such, LMAC agreed to withhold approval for the proposed Certificates of Merit scheme, pending an outcome from discussions with the BoT. An article in the *LM* on 28th September 1894 recorded ‘It was resolved that a deputation consisting of the chairman and deputy chairman of the Nautical Instruction Committee [Councillor Maxwell and Mr Graves, respectively], Sir W.B. Forwood, and Captain Miller, be authorised to see the Board of Trade on the subject’.[89]

Representatives of political agencies within the city’s seafaring community that were antagonistic to the LNC (see sections 3.2 and 3.4) promptly and predictably expressed their hostility toward the Certificates of Merit scheme. Readers of the *LM* on 1st October 1894 would have learned the MSG’s opinion on the Certificates of Merit scheme and the intention of the NISC to send a delegation to the BoT. Correspondent John G Moore hoped that ‘the auditor will not pass any expenditure of money on such a wild-goose chase’ as the deputation to the BoT. He also attacked the governance of the LNC, demanding that membership of the NISC should include representation from navigation teachers working independently and also from the MSG. Moore echoed a previously voiced criticism that ‘there should be more of the nautical element on the committee and staff’. His summation was delivered in the manner of a parting-shot in an argument, ‘A school so managed and conducted as a cheap cramming school cannot succeed. It can only be regarded as inimical to the

[88] ‘Liverpool Library Committee’, *LM*, September 28, 1894, 6.

[89] ‘Liverpool Library Committee’, *LM*, September 28, 1894, 6.

best interests of the officers of the mercantile marine, and at the same time a grievous waste of public money'.[90]

Minutes of meetings of the NISC in the early months of 1894 describe the attempt of Captain Moore to secure a seat at their table on behalf of the MSG. On 14th February 1894 Moore wrote to the NISC 'requesting to be allowed to nominate a representative of the 'Guild' [sic] on the Sub-Committee'.[91] At first the request was ignored ('resolved that consideration of the same be postponed') then rejected ('resolved that the Town Clerk reply that the Committee are unable to comply with the request').[92] Unwilling to accept the rejection when it was finally despatched, Captain Moore made an appeal against the outcome on 4th April. The NISC meeting of 6th April remained unmoved by this repeated request. However, if the NISC had hoped that the awkward elements of the MMSA had jumped ship to the MSG leaving the MMSA a more amenable ally, they were soon to be disabused of this notion.

In what appears to have been an effort to build bridges in the fractious relationship between the LNC and the MMSA, Maxwell consulted Captain James Price (Chair of the Liverpool MMSA) and Mr Grylls (MMSA Secretary, taking a rare step out of the shadows) about the proposed Certificate of Merit scheme. The meeting, which took place on the afternoon of 8th October 1894, did not however result in any thawing of relations between the parties. That evening, Maxwell wrote to Captain Price, reflecting on the outcome of their earlier meeting, in which an incredulous Maxwell stated,

> I understood you to express the view that the average shipowner is opposed to the higher education of the officers of the mercantile marine; in fact, that instead of preferring such a one he prefers the reverse, and on this ground you seemed to think that certificates issued not only by the Nautical College but by any other institution would be valueless.[93]

---

[90] 'Nautical Examinations', *LM*, October 1, 1894, 6.

[91] NISC minute book, March 9, 1894, 31.

[92] NISC minute book, March 9, 1894, 32.

[93] 'Higher Education of Officers of the Mercantile Marine', *LM*, October 19, 1894, 6.

To secure written confirmation of the MMSA's position on Certificates of Merit, Maxwell stated with antagonistic faux passivity, 'the more I think it over the more inclined I am to think that I must have misunderstood you; and in order to set my mind at rest I have determined to write and ask you if I am correct in my impressions'. Captain Price confirmed that Maxwell 'received a fairly accurate impression of the substance of our conversation', arguing that merchant service officers would only value Certificates of Merit once their employers valued their higher-level attainments with higher wages, yet 'I cannot see any prospect at present for an improvement in the status or emoluments of the officers of the mercantile marine'. Responding, Maxwell expressed his 'regret, that the impression I had gained from our conversation was the correct one' and questioned the validity of the MMSA's argument: '[I]f shipowners generally hold the views you attribute to them I can hardly see how our Nautical College is likely to progress; but for my part I cannot for one moment think that they do hold such views'. To secure an 'authoritative expression of opinion' Maxwell resolved to 'send this correspondence to the public press, with a view of ventilating the subject, and in the hope of drawing the special attention of shipowners to a subject which affects their interests in a very important degree'.[94]

On 19th October 1894 Maxwell duly published his correspondence with Captain James Price in the pages of the *LM*. This was possibly a riposte for the publication by the MMSA of their correspondence with Brassey and Forwood in the previous year (see section 3.2). Yet Maxwell's call to arms to the shipowners to express their support for the Certificates of Merit scheme did not elicit the intended reaction. Indeed, the sole published response was from 'Atlantic Liner' who described themselves as a seaman and shared their experience that 'the average shipowner does not desire highly educated men' as officers with higher level qualifications would expect higher levels of remuneration and therefore the issue is 'simply a matter of money'.[95] Yet whilst correspondence (and correspondence about

[94] 'Higher Education of Officers of the Mercantile Marine', *LM*, October 19, 1894, 6.

[95] 'The Nautical College', *LM*, October 20, 1894, 6.

correspondence) was being exchanged with the MMSA, the more militant fringe of the MSG was about to intervene further in the debate.

On 16th October 1894, a General Meeting of the MSG was held at which the following resolution was unanimously carried:

> That, in view of the intention of the Liverpool Nautical Instruction Committee to apply to the Board of Trade for official recognition, in connection with the examinations of masters and mates, of certificates to be issued from the Nautical College, and, further, to ask shipowners to give preference to those holding such certificates, we, the Merchant Service Guild, being certificated captains and officers in active service, desire to enter our protest against such a measure as being a grave injustice to those holding Board of Trade certificates, and as being subversive of our independence and liberty. We deplore the fact that the committee should propose taking a step which could only be regarded as an act of intolerable coercion, and which would alienate from the Nautical College those whom it was created to benefit and whose desire is to see it become a prosperous and useful institution. We further resolve that we will memorialise the Board of Trade that they will not entertain the proposal or grant privileges of any kind in connection with their examinations.[96]

At the heart of the MSG's opposition to Certificates of Merit was the perceived risk to the livelihoods of masters and mates who had already secured certification and whose qualifications may have subsequently been judged as inferior to the proposed award. In such a scenario, experienced officers already qualified as competent may be deemed to be less employable than new officers with a higher certificate, hence the suggestion of a 'grave injustice to those holding Board of Trade certificates'. An editorial piece in the *LM* on 26th October 1894 suggested that despite the initial 'Great expectations' of the LNC, it had become an 'apparent failure'. The editorial appeared sympathetic to the MMSA/MSG, noting that serving maritime officers 'are unable from constant employment or sailing on long voyages to take up the curriculum of the college' and that the 'nerve and discretion to steam at high speeds'

[96] 'Shipping News: Merchant Service Guild', *LM*, October 22, 1894, 5.

are learned through experience alone. The editorial postulated that shipowners were unlikely to favour inexperienced officers with Certificates of Merit 'simply because they might be able to determine a ship's position by other planets than the sun, or in whatever other respects their higher education consists'. In the view of the article's anonymous author, 'it would appear more prudent on the part of the authorities of the Nautical College to pursue their work of higher education for its inherent benefits, and not attempt too early to put a commercial value upon them by desiring to issue certificates of merit'.[97]

Such sentiment was echoed in a letter dated 25th October 1894 (therefore written before the critical editorial) but published on 27th October (the day after the editorial appeared). Correspondent Captain Corcoran posed the rhetorical question 'Is the time really come when our ships are to be officered by professors and not sailors?' His letter continued much in that vein 'If our forefathers were not sufficiently educated for their profession, how is it that they navigated their ships all over the wide world…?'[98] Insofar as there was a wider public debate about Certificates of Merit, it did not go in the NISC's favour. Furthermore, the deputation to the BoT comprising representatives from the LMAC and the NISC that was agreed in the September of 1894 had not been despatched by the time that the NISC met in the following November. Indeed, on 16th November 1894 Maxwell informed the NISC about 'correspondence with the officials of the Board of Trade' to arrange the proposed meeting, the disappointing substance of which led him to conclude that 'the visit of the Deputation appointed to confer with the Board should be postponed for the present'.[99] Having made third party verification a precondition of approval for Certificates of Merit, Maxwell found himself on the horns of a dilemma; if the BoT would not provide professional endorsement of the award, then who could?

Maxwell wrote to 'the respective Secretaries of the Liverpool Steamship Owners Association (LSSOA) and the Liverpool Ship Owners Association' (LSOA)

---

[97] 'Nautical Jottings', *LM*, October 26, 1894, 5.

[98] 'Liverpool Nautical College', *LM*, October 27, 1894, 6.

[99] NISC minute book, November 16, 1894, 81. Insofar as the records indicate, the meeting never took place.

indicating in his letter(s) that 'the time has arrived to push the College with a view to its taking a higher place as a Nautical Education establishment' with the Certificates of Merit scheme.[100] He returned to his dispute with the MMSA in stating 'I have been astounded to hear it said that the average Shipowner is averse to employing well-educated men' arguing such a view would be disproved by 'approval of the scheme by your Association'.[101] Maxwell asked both Associations of Liverpool shipowners to commit to the principle that 'candidates for Officers' positions who hold satisfactory Certificates from the College' will be given 'preference'.[102] In reply, the Secretary of the LSSOA declined the offer to bind 'members as to the method of selection of Ships Officers', but limply waved an olive branch in stating that 'certificates of merit as proposed by the Liverpool Nautical College will prove an advantage generally'.[103] No reply is recorded from the LSOA in respect of Councillor Maxwell's request, whose silence suggests that their enthusiasm for well-educated masters and mates was waning.[104]

Scrutiny of the minute book reveals that almost six months had passed since the proposed LNC Certificate of Merit had first been outlined, yet the frustrated Maxwell had nothing to show for his efforts in securing an endorsement for the scheme except unsavoury public exchanges and disappointing correspondence. Perhaps reluctantly, NISC requested that Gill produce a further report including the detail of the scheme, the 'probable estimate of cost' and a commentary on 'the future working of the College'.[105] The dynamic, restive Headmaster wasted no time in drafting a revised report, which was circulated ahead of the subsequent scheduled meeting of the NISC (7th December), although consideration of that report was postponed to a special meeting convened for the purpose in the following week. Finally, at that meeting, the amended report was endorsed and the sub-committee

[100] NISC minute book, November 16, 1894, 82.

[101] NISC minute book, November 16, 1894, 83.

[102] NISC minute book, November 16, 1894, 82.

[103] NISC minute book, November 16, 1894, 84.

[104] 'In 1865 the Liverpool Shipowners Association suggested university degrees for navigating officers', Dixon, Seamen and the Law, 145.

[105] NISC minute book, November 16, 1894, 84.

resolved to request £2,500 in funding from the Council 'in order to cover the cost of the proposed Certificates of Merit'.[106]

In presenting NISC's proposal to LMAC, Maxwell stressed that whilst an increase in the grant was sought it was no greater a sum (£2500) than the start-up grant allocated by the Council in 1892. Furthermore, he was keen to make any future funding contingent upon the outcomes of a formal review of the Certificates of Merit once implemented, 'A year's working under the new conditions would, he thought, show whether the scheme was worth going on with'. Willink noted that the original grant had been 'made in anticipation of a very much larger use being made of the school' and warned that an increase in funding such as that sought by NISC would render 'the instruction given very expensive'. The cautionary tone was further adopted by Rendall who argued that not only the Certificates of Merit scheme but the performance of the LNC overall should be subject to a 'trial' and that 'unless it thrived better than at present' the terms of the College's entire public grant should be reviewed. Without proposing any formal review process or schedule, the Committee Chair 'hoped the College would be given a fair trial' despite 'considerable opposition from one of the representative institutions of master mariners in the city'. Securing LMAC's support, Forwood commented that the introduction of Certificates of Merit would 'lift up the general character of the teaching of the school and increase its utility'.[107]

Readers of the edition of the *LM* published on Christmas Day 1894 may have noted that 'The Library Committee have approved the report, and will recommend the Council that the amount to be voted for the expenditure of the college for the year 1895 be increased to £2500, in order to cover the cost of the proposed certificates of merit'.[108] Two days later the *LM* reader may have encountered a further letter by erstwhile correspondent John G Moore (identified as Secretary of the MSG). Moore took the opportunity to disparage the MMSA from which the MSG had recently split, commenting that Sir William Bower Forwood had,

---

[106] NISC minute book, December 14, 1894, 90.

[107] 'Library Committee', *LM*, December 21, 1894, 7.

[108] 'Local News', *LM*, December 25, 1894, 6.

> stated that the Nautical College had met with the hostility of a very representative body of master mariners, and, as this guild is the only representative body of that kind in Liverpool, and possibly in the kingdom, it may be thought that it was to us to whom the chairman alluded.

Mixing contempt with sarcasm, Moore claimed to be 'grateful to the Council for their bountiful grant of money on our behalf' before poking at the scar tissue of a recent wound, 'we asked for direct representation on the committee, and were refused because we were representative – a curious reason truly – the result being that the college is a failure, and quite out of touch with the nautical community at large'. In full dyspeptic flow he targeted his vitriol upon the LNC: 'The fact of the matter is it is worked on altogether wrong lines, and as being a subsidised "cramming" establishment, can now only meet with the hostility of all right-thinking men'.[109]

Despite this critical commentary, the Council approved the scheme and also the full amount of the requested additional funding. On 15th February 1895 it was agreed by the NISC that 'Sir W.B. Forwood, Captain Miller, W.J. Graves & The Chairman be appointed a Special Sub-Committee to settle the Syllabuses etc in connection with the scheme for awarding Certificates of Merit'.[110] The syllabi having been confirmed, James Gill subsequently submitted an estimate of £184 for 'apparatus in connection with the new syllabus for Certificates of Merit'.[111] Thus, the LNC's Certificate of Merit scheme was born, with grudging approval and lacking the external verification that had earlier been considered essential to its success. Yet the *impression* of BoT endorsement for the Certificates of Merit was conveyed in the subsequently circulated LNC syllabus, by the inclusion of a statement to the effect that a BoT assessor would be a member of the Examining Board. This statement, which gave expression to Gill's intent, rather than to the reality of the situation, was duly brought to the BoT's attention. The Board wasted little time in demanding an explanation (June 1895), demanding its removal (July 1895) and refusing to back down on this

[109] 'Nautical Education', *LM*, December 27, 1894, 6.

[110] NISC minute book, February 15, 1895, 99.

[111] NISC minute book, May 17, 1895, 118.

demand, despite the pitiable entreaties of Councillor Maxwell and the town clerk (August 1895).[112]

In an early example of re-branding, the controversial Certificate of Merit scheme was eventually launched as the College Diploma of Merit in May 1895. Under this scheme, ten subjects were delivered over 26 weeks, four of which were delivered by contracted specialists (naval architecture was delivered by Mr Dales, electro-technics by Mr Hunter, steam by Mr Marsden and hygiene by Mr Narramore). The remaining six subjects were delivered by the staff of the LNC (mathematical principles and nautical surveying by Mathematical Assistant Mr Merrifield, mechanics and magnetism & compass deviation by Senior Technical Assistant Captain Owens and meteorology and maritime law by Headmaster Gill).[113] The NISC passed 'a resolution recommending the payment to members of staff of the Nautical College at the rate of 10/ per lecture for special evening lectures delivered to students working for the College Diplomas as per timetable' on 6th December 1895, although the minute book reveals that reference to payments of money owed to Gill was subsequently deleted.[114]

The explanation for this adjustment can be found in the pages of the Headmaster's report book. In settling the staff bill for the delivery of the College Diploma of Merit, it came to light that the city auditor and controller would not sanction payment of Merrifield, Owens or Gill as 'servants of the Corporation are not permitted to receive payment for extra services without a suspension of the standing order'.[115] In short, the payment of LNC staff for the provision of extra tuition, although agreed by the NISC, was not in the gift of the NISC. This important detail of municipal bureaucray was missed by everyone involved in the governance of the LNC (including experienced Councillors), suggesting that the NISC's scrutiny was not watertight.

---

[112] NISC minute book, July 12, 1895, 130-131 and August 23, 1895 136-137.

[113] LNC Headmaster's report book, December 6, 1895, 89. The only member of the College's staff that did not deliver evening classes was Mr Larkman.

[114] NISC minute book, December 6, 1895, 159.

[115] LNC Headmaster's report book, January 3, 1896, 93.

By way of a resolution of the payment issue, Gill proposed 'a small increase in salary' for the affected staff as 'it does not appear reasonable to impose on the staff extra work involving a large amount of preparation and extended time in attendance – not implied in the original terms of their engagement – without some additional remuneration'.[116] With an impactful flourish, Gill cloncluded his report thus: 'The Headmaster has withdrawn all claim to extra remuneration but loyalty to his colleagues prompts him to advance a plea on their behalf'.[117] Yet beyond annotating the minutes of their 6th December meeting by crossing-out James Gill's name, the NISC proved reluctant to engage in any immediate discussion of the matter. The minutes of the meeting of the NISC on 3rd January 1896 merely record that the 'report of the Head Master with reference to the question of the future payment of the College Staff for Evening Lectures' was 'read'.[118] Ahead of the next scheduled meeting of the NISC on 17th January 1896, Gill requested 'definite instruction as to the payments for extra evening lectures to members of the Staff', especially as delivery of the evening lectures had resumed.[119] In response, the NISC resolved that 'consideration of the [report] be postponed and that in the meantime no extra fees be paid to the College staff for Evening Lectures'.[120] Not only did the NISC fail to discuss the matter at their next meeting, by the time the matter was addressed (14th February 1896) it was only the retrospective payments of Owens and Merrifield that were agreed.[121] At both the first and second meetings of the NISC in March of 1896 it was resolved 'that the consideration of this subject be further postponed'.[122]

It took the NISC over three months to respond to Gill's request for confirmation of funding for College Diploma of Merit lectures, finally agreeing on 10th April 1896 that 'a sum of 10/ be paid to each of the members of the Nautical College staff when

[116] LNC Headmaster's report book, January 3, 1896, 93.

[117] LNC Headmaster's report book, January 3, 1896, 94.

[118] NISC minute book, January 3, 1896, 165.

[119] LNC Headmaster's report book, January 17, 1896, 95.

[120] NISC minute book, January 17, 1896, 169.

[121] NISC minute book, February 14, 1896, 173.

[122] NISC minute book, March 6, 1896, 177 and March 20, 1896, 179.

engaged upon Evening Lecture work and that this arrangement date from 1st January 1896'.[123] It appears that some degree of accomodation was reached with the city auditor in the application of the standing order that prohibited payment for extra services to the staff of the College. In what may have been a related development, the NISC agreed to alter their oversight of the LNC by appointing 'two members of the Committee to be appointed monthly to act as Visitors and to meet the Chairman at the College at least once during the month', in lieu of a second meeting each month.[124] The Headmaster was also required to provide a 'statement of particulars' (listing the number of College Diploma lectures, their date ranges and associated staff) for the city auditor as a condition of payments to LNC staff for delivery of the evening classes, which he first issued on June 5th 1896.[125]

Notwithstanding such accommodation, the NISC maintained close scrutiny of the College Diploma, seeking regular reports from the Headmaster of numbers of enrolled students.[126] Keen to demonstrate the rigour of their governance, on 23rd April 1897 the NISC took the view that the Diploma classes were no longer financially viable and resolved '[T]hat the Evening Lectures at the Nautical College be discontinued from the month of May to the end of September and that the Head Master be instructed to prepare a report as to their continunace through the winter'.[127] However, it later transpired that the instructions of the NISC were not fully enacted and whilst six of the seven classes were suspended, the Magnetism and Compass Deviation class was 'carried on voluntarily' by Captain Owens (see section 2.3) 'in order to complete the course entered upon, with a view to an examination on

[123] NISC minute book, April 10, 1896, 188.

[124] NISC minute book, March 6, 1896, 176-177.

[125] LNC Headmaster's report book, June 5, 1896, 107.

[126] It could not have helped Gill to read in the pages of the *LM*, 1st June 1897 the report of the Annual General Meeting of the MMSA. Lord Mayor Alderman Thomas Hughes gave an address, from which the following passage was quoted: 'the civic authorities of this city had done all they could to afford by their Nautical College the same facilities for every one who chose to avail himself of them. (Hear, hear.) At the same time, he could not help feeling with regret that, after all the great expenditure which had been incurred by the Nautical College, it had not borne that amount of fruit which they might have expected from it. (Hear, hear.)' 'Mercantile Marine Service Association', *LM*, June 1, 1897, 7.

[127] NISC minute book, April 23, 1897, 251.

these subjects'.[128] Yet the Diploma's darkest hour proved to be just before the dawn. In July 1897 the LNC received an unexpected boost when the long-awaited endorsement of the Diploma of Merit was received from the LSSOA, 'the association recommend its members if possible to give a preference to those officers who in addition to the usual Board of Trade certificate possess also the diploma of the Nautical College'. [129] In comparison, the LSOA's response was lukewarm and failed to offer an endorsement for the Diploma of Merit ('recommends all boys desirous of going to sea to first pass through a course of instruction at the Nautical College or other similar Institution').[130] Yet Gill succesfully lobbied the NISC to overturn their resolution of 23rd April and to approve 'the resumption of the classes at the end of September'.[131]

From September 1897 to December 1899, Gill laboured to ensure the continuation of the College Diploma of Merit. He was repeatedly required to present evidence of numbers of students attending the evening classes through which the curriculum was delivered. In line with the requirements of the city auditor, Gill routinely published the 'particulars' of payment for each of the lecturers. It is both pitiable and poignant that the final entry that James Gill made in the Headmaster's report book was in relation to this tedious bureaucratic minuet: 'The Headmaster requests an order for the payment of account (presented herewith) for special evening lectures in accordance with Resolutions of Committee dated 6th December '95, 7th October '98 and 15th September '99'.[132] Amongst the listed accounts is a payment to Gill for the sum of six pounds and ten shillings in respect of thirteen lectures on Navigation and Compass Deviation that ran on Wednesday evenings between 20th September and 20th December 1899. Whether Gill ever received this money is moot, as he died within a fortnight of completion of delivery of the course of lectures. As his successor only once brought forward 'statements of particulars' for the payment of lecturers delivering evening classes (April 1900), it appears that

[128] LNC Headmaster's report book, August 20, 1897, 132.

[129] NISC minute book, August 20, 1897, 265.

[130] NISC minute book, July 21, 1897, 262.

[131] NISC minute book, August 20, 1897, 269.

[132] LNC Headmaster's report book, December 21, 1899, 177.

these convoluted funding arrangements for the College Diploma of Merit barely outlived James Gill.[133]

[133] LNC Headmaster's report book, April, 1900 (Merrifield consistently recorded the month, not the day), 182.

3.4 'Nautical taxpayer' (1895-1896)

Over a six month period (September 1895 – February 1896, during which the 1895 municipal elections were held) the *LM* printed six letters from a correspondent writing under the *nom de plume* of the 'Nautical Taxpayer'. The correspondence of Nautical Taxpayer presented a sustained and vitriolic attack on the LNC which succeeded in eliciting some noteworthy responses, including those of the College's students and Headmaster. Whilst Nautical Taxpayer's motives may have been biased and politically motivated (as a subsequent discussion concerning the identity of the correspondent suggests) their critique serves as a counterbalance to the positive gloss that may have been painted by James Gill and the governing body of the LNC about its popularity and prospects. The story of Nautical Taxpayer reveals complex, fractious relationships between representatives of agencies active within the local maritime sector and the LNC in late-Victorian Liverpool. It is also an inherently political tale, illustrating how a vocal minority with a (perhaps partially hidden) agenda could exploit local media in seeking to influence public opinion in the late nineteenth century.

Nautical Taxpayer's first letter (published 16th September) was written in response to a meeting of the Liverpool Council held on 11th September 1895 at which *inter alia* the extension of the Museum to provide accommodation for technical instruction classes was discussed. It had been suggested during a heated exchange at the Council meeting that the LMAC had covertly prepared plans to levy a halfpenny rate to cover the cost of the works, although this allegation was denied by Councillor Willink. Nautical Taxpayer claimed 'it is quite evident that the addition of this burden upon us unfortunate ratepayers for the purpose as stated is nothing but a dodge to supplement the funds which are used, or rather wasted, upon so-called technical education'. Although no evidence to substantiate this assertion was offered, Nautical Taxpayer claimed that two-thirds of attendees of publicly subsidised technical classes in Liverpool had enrolled for pastime or amusement rather than to develop their professional skill, stating that technical classes should be closed to all except those 'in the trade or business taught'.[134]

[134] 'City Council', *LM*, September 12, 1895, 7.

Having pontificated about the wastefulness of public investment in technical education *per se*, Nautical Taxpayer then turned their focus upon the LNC, arguing that the College's annual grant was 'not only wasted but actually used to the detriment of the class it was intended to benefit'. To Nautical Taxpayer, the LNC was

> a cheap cramming establishment for the Board of Trade examinations – the very evil it was intended to counteract. Here are created officers for the merchant service from persons who are quite unfitted and unsuitable to undertake the enormous responsibilities which may be placed upon them in regard to care of life and property. These persons only attempt to get certificates because they are tempted by the facilities for cheap cramming, which are afforded at the cost of the over-burdened taxpayer, and our profession is thus flooded with incompetent persons, who bring disrepute upon us to our lasting injury.

Nautical Taxpayer's criticism of the LNC was not simply that it acted as a cramming establishment, but as a *cheap* cramming establishment, giving the impression that more expensive (unsubsidised) cramming establishments were the real injured parties. Nautical Taxpayer's use of the term 'class' may be read as referring to the professional seafarers of Liverpool and the deference afforded to masters aboard ship. To Nautical Taxpayer, the efforts taken by the LNC to widen access to educational and professional opportunities were anathema, in light of the impact of an influx of newly qualified ships' officers upon the professional standing (and thus the income) of established mates and masters whose technical education was not state supported. Yet to adopt a public position upon such a biased and partial perspective would have been barely defensible, hence the correspondent's adoption of the identity of maritime everyman 'Nautical Taxpayer'.

Nautical Taxpayer sought to make the LNC, funded by annual grant that could have instead been utilised in the subsidy of local rates or in supporting different nautical education initiatives, an election issue: '[T]he coming elections will be a good opportunity to bring to book these gentlemen, who, for their own glorification, try to make out that this technical education business is a splendid thing, whilst they know

perfectly well that the bulk of it is only humbug or worse'.[135] Responses to these criticisms, published in the *LM* on 16th September 1895, were indicative of a plurality of views on the topic including those of rival anonymous correspondents 'Shipowner' and 'Technology'. 'Shipowner' celebrated the achievements of the LNC in 'raising the tone of our officers', stating that 'if education can be made cheaper and better for our seamen, and for our artisans, no right-minded citizen will allow the outcry of parties interested in retarding those blessings to interfere with their due advancement'. Shipowner further reflected that '[T]hose responsible for the college' should 'refute the absurd allegations', but only if they 'think the misstatements worth powder and shot'. However, in a tone more sympathetic to Nautical Taxpayer, 'Technology' described their experience of attending technical classes, 'it was quite evident to me that the teacher had not the slightest technical knowledge, beyond what he had learned from some text book on the subject'. Voicing a criticism that was to haunt the LNC, Technology suggested that technical education in Liverpool was sub-standard because 'the only qualifications that the teachers have is a university degree' rather than 'actual technical experience'.[136]

The edition of the *LM* of 17th September had barely rolled off the presses before Nautical Taxpayer issued a response to both Shipowner and Technology, despite having a different audience (and target) in mind. Dismissing Shipowner's criticism, Nautical Taxpayer attacked the LNC as lacking in any value or

> a leg to stand on. There is no doubt but that cheap cramming and easy examinations in past days have contributed mostly to the miserable position our profession, generally, holds to-day, and it has remained with the City Council of Liverpool to inflict upon us the crowning act of degradation by the establishment of a charity cramming institution.

Yet Nautical Taxpayer claimed not to blame the Council, as 'they have been misled by persons who are much more interested in cramming than I am'. Nautical Taxpayer could not resist suggesting that Shipowner may have had a vested interest

[135] 'Abuse of Technical Education', *LM*, September 16, 1895, 6.

[136] 'Technical Education', *LM*, September 17, 1895, 6.

in the oversupply of certified ships' officers and asks, '[H]as the better tone he speaks of anything to do with the tone of officers' voices when they meekly accept starvation wages?' Nautical Taxpayer repeated Technology's argument that academically qualified teachers were unable to deliver technical instruction and that, in the LNC, 'the whole staff, with one solitary exception, are landsmen, and I would like to know how they can teach us nautical technology'.[137] If Nautical Taxpayer was attempting to goad the Headmaster of the LNC into making a public response, he was not to be disappointed.

In a rare public statement, James Gill wrote to the *LM* on 18th September 1895 and his letter was printed in the newspaper on the following day. Gill attacked Nautical Taxpayer's intentions as 'calculated to mislead the public with regard to an important public institution… "Nautical Taxpayer" thinks it brave to shoot from behind a hedge. Let him come out in the open, and it will be at once seen what are the motives which prompt his attacks'. Furthermore, Gill claimed to know the identity of the anonymous correspondent, '[H]e assumes to represent the "nautical profession", but the publication of his name would show that he represents only himself and his menaced interests… He is not in active service, nor has he been for very many years, and may therefore be relegated to the "old fogies"'. Gill challenged the perception that Nautical Taxpayer's representative position amongst the seafaring community gave validity to their criticism of the curriculum and the teaching staff of the LNC, dismissing the veracity of the assertion that:

> the college staff of teachers should consist of practical sailors only. Surely he must know that it would be impossible to constitute a staff of merely nautical men who would be capable of teaching the mathematics of navigation and the other sciences which make for the higher education of the modern officer.[138]

Having been enticed into a public exchange of letters by Nautical Taxpayer's persistent vilification of his College, his staff and his ability, Gill was not about to miss the opportunity to promote the LNC in the pages of the local press. In order that

[137] 'Abuse of Technical Education', *LM*, September 18, 1895, 6.

[138] 'The Nautical College', *LM*, September 19, 1895, 6.

‘your correspondent ought not to be allowed to mislead your readers’, Gill described the breadth of the College’s curriculum (‘a wide range of subjects necessary to the full qualifications of commanding officers of modern ships’) and mapped the allocation of teaching responsibility between theoretical and technical subjects:

> Where the subjects are purely technical they are taught by qualified practical men – thus, engineering and steam by a high-class practical engineer; electrical lighting and power by an electrical engineer; naval architecture by a naval architect, &c. Mathematics, the ground-work of most modern sciences and especially of navigation, must be taught by a mathematician and not by a “practical sailor”.

This was the very model of a modern-day curriculum, where practical and technical topics were accorded the same educational standing as theoretical subjects. Gill sought to downplay the significance that Nautical Taxpayer had drawn to the ‘Division 3’ school: ‘The work which happens to be directed to the Board of Trade examinations is only a small part of the general work…’[139] Here Gill’s argument appears less credible; whilst the curriculum of the LNC was much broader than just tuition for the BoT exam, the number of enrolled students in ‘Division 3’ greatly outnumbered all others.

The editors of the *LM* appeared to encourage this exchange of correspondence in the pages of their newspaper. As a newspaper sympathetic to criticism of the city’s civic elite, the *LM*’s readership may have been receptive to correspondence critical of municipal projects such as the LNC. Such was the rapidity of the submission of letters and the immediacy of their publication that the reader could experience a day-to-day dialogue between antagonistic correspondents over this issue. On the day after Gill’s letter was published an immediate response from Nautical Taxpayer could be found in the *LM*. Unlike the carefully crafted compositions of earlier correspondence, Nautical Taxpayer’s letter dated 19th September and published 20th September 1895 appeared to have been hastily

[139] ‘The Nautical College’, *LM*, September 19, 1895, 6.

drafted and despatched, offering a clear example of the ratchet effect of winding-up tension to a point where arguments are set aside in favour of displays of derogatory scorn. A sneering, dismissive tone is evident throughout the letter, 'herein lies the gist of the thing, and it is quite clear that notwithstanding high-falutin' circulars, which anyone can draw up, and which prove nothing, cramming is practically the only work done there'. With reference to Gill's criticism of their 'personal interest' however, Nautical Taxpayer lashed out in dramatic fashion:

> if he could hear my remarks when I get my rate and tax bills, and think how the money is being squandered, he would be still further satisfied on that point. I am also interested because of my love for my profession, and I don't want to see my brethren of the cloth sink any deeper into the slough of degradation in which they are now wallowing, and into which they have got, as I have said before, chiefly through cheap cramming and easy examinations.

Such hyperbole was eclipsed by Nautical Taxpayer's description of the LNC as 'the Augean stable in Colquitt Street' and his instruction to Gill to cleanse it.[140]

Although dated 19th September 1895 a letter from 'Jack Tar' published in the *LM* on the following day does not appear to relate to Gill's letter, but to the earlier correspondence of 16th-18th September (between Nautical Taxpayer, Shipowner and Technology). Jack Tar was scathing of the 'Nautical College, which, having started amidst the sounding of trumpets and clashing of cymbals, has unfortunately exhausted its energy, and is now fairly bidding for collapse'. Jack Tar appeared to call into question the *masculinity* of the LNC's curriculum, 'the lectures were, as a matter of fact, attended very properly by members of the gentle sex, who enjoyed the lessons immensely'. What initially appeared to be a positive statement ('With regard to the teaching staff attached to our Nautical College, I may assert that a more excellent selection could not have been made') subsequently appears to have been delivered with sarcasm: 'Surely no person, I am sure, would intentionally insult us by any gratuitous appeal to landsmen on our behalf, that we may be permitted to go up

[140] 'Abuse of Technical Education' (letter from Nautical Taxpayer), *LM*, September 20, 1895, 6.

to the back of Bold-street and learn our seamanship'. At the heart of Jack Tar's letter, buried beneath layers of over-played simile ('The doctor does not attend college to learn surgery; he attends the hospital, and the engineer attends the engineering works') is the argument that 'a seaman does not come on shore to be taught seamanship'.[141] The criticism evident in Jack Tar's letter is not targeted at the LNC *per se*, but at the principle of delivering technical instruction within an educational setting, under the authority of schoolmasters rather than shipmasters.

Indeed, this tension had been aired within the NISC on numerous occasions. In February 1894 the Headmaster circulated a 'private and confidential' report titled 'Training Afloat' in which Gill made the case for investment in a training vessel to complement the (land-based) tuition for students of the LNC.[142] Gill offered a rationale as to why this would be of 'great advantage', based around the principle that '[T]o secure efficient instruction, theory and practice should go together. The principle is fully recognised in preparing cadets for the Royal Navy, and preliminary training is no less necessary for the Mercantile Marine'.[143] Indeed, Gill went further in declaring that '[N]o educational establishment for sailors can be complete without a sailing vessel', listing existing provision of such in London, the Isle of Wight, Dublin and America.[144] The detail of Gill's proposal was laid out as follows:

> Supposing a sound and well-found vessel of about 300 tons were provided, it would be necessary to fit up berths or hammocks in the hold or 'tweendecks for about 40 boys. The cabin would give accommodation for the Captain and working staff. At sea the vessel would be under the command of the Head Technical Master of the Nautical College. A Sailing Master would then act as Mate, and at other times as Master and Caretaker. He should be assisted by an experienced boatswain, who would also act as Seaman Instructor, the boys

[141] 'Abuse of Technical Education' (letter from Jack Tar), *LM*, September 20, 1895, 6.

[142] Training Afloat, Report of the Headmaster (Nautical College), LJMU Special Collections & Archives (LJMU history: Byrom Street archive), Liverpool John Moores University.

[143] Training Afloat, Report of the Headmaster (Nautical College), 3.

[144] Training Afloat, Report of the Headmaster (Nautical College), 4.

themselves forming the working crew. A cook could be hired when a cruise extended to several days.

The 'first cost' of the proposal was estimated to be £450 (to purchase a suitable vessel) and 'in the event of the Dock Board being willing to forego Dock Dues, it is not probable that the cost of maintenance would exceed £500 a year'.[145] By way of meeting this additional financial commitment, Gill declared that 'the attraction of a training vessel would in all probability soon fill the Boys' School, and thus the increased cost would be counterbalanced by increased revenue'. Gill left the NISC in no doubt of the significance that he attached to his proposal: '[T]he addition of a training vessel to the educational means already provided by the Corporation for sailors would constitute a complete Marine School, which would in a short time leave no cause of complaint as to the inefficiency of young Deck Officers'.[146]

Gill's subtext in 'Training Afloat', that land-based delivery of nautical instruction is fundamentally deficient, aligns with the views publicly articulated by Nautical Taxpayer in the following year and it is therefore unsurprising that the report was marked 'private and confidential'. The NISC asked Gill to identify a suitable vessel for the cost outlined in his proposal. He was unable to do so and the NISC meeting in April 1894 agreed 'that the question of training afloat should be left in abeyance until it can be brought forward in a form which the Committee may approve'.[147] In the following month, the Chair of the NISC was passed from Willink to Maxwell, which may be characterised as signifying the end of Gill's honeymoon period of sympathetic governance; it would be almost three years before the NISC returned to the question of training afloat.

As a proxy for a training vessel, some seafaring operations were simulated on-site at the LNC. A mast and rigging were erected in the school yard, as would be found on a sailing ship, allowing the boys to practise skills with ropes and sails.

[145] Training Afloat, Report of the Headmaster (Nautical College), 5.

[146] Training Afloat, Report of the Headmaster (Nautical College), 6.

[147] NISC minute book, LJMU Special Collections & Archives (LJMU history: Byrom Street archive), Liverpool John Moores University, April 6, 1894, 36.

Ahead of the meeting of the NISC of 26th March 1897, the Headmaster produced a letter that had been written on 25th March 1897 by the Technical Instructor of the LNC about required repairs to the rigging in the schoolyard. On reflection it appears unusual that a colleague of Gill with whom he worked closely every day would take the trouble to write a formal letter about a matter that must have been part of their ongoing professional dialogue. Yet the final paragraph of the letter reveals the real reason why it was written in such a formal way, because Gill was not the intended audience. Captain Owens dispensed with the business of mast and rigging repairs before voicing a more fundamental concern: 'I also feel very strongly the necessity of our boys being taught rowing and the management of a boat… Boys are taught [such skills] in all the training ships. Our boys should be taught also'.[148]

Having failed to implement his earlier scheme for training afloat in 1894, Gill appeared to be seeking to re-open the discussion (albeit more subtly) with reference to the letter from Captain Owens. But the NISC meeting in March 1897 was in no mood to take the bait and merely noted that 'the consideration of the question of providing a boat be deferred'.[149] This debate was still very much alive in the May of 1897 as is evident with reference to the proceedings of the annual meeting of the MMSA. The Lord Mayor, presiding over the meeting, noted his 'regret that the Nautical College had, perhaps, not borne that amount of fruit which they might have expected considering the large expenditure upon it'.[150] During the ensuing debate, owner of the *Liverpool Courier* and Everton MP John Archibald Willox was received warmly as he argued 'that seamanship was not altogether a matter of book learning, but largely one of experience and courage'. To a chorus of applause, Willox stated 'that while they estimated most highly the educational work carried on by the Nautical College and other technical schools in the community, they must recognise as of no less importance the practical work done by the shipowners and shipmasters in training young men to be bold, courageous and efficient sailors'.[151]

[148] NISC minute book, March 26, 1897, 246.

[149] NISC minute book, March 26, 1897, 246.

[150] 'Mercantile Marine Service Association', *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 1, 1897, 3.

[151] 'Mercantile Marine Service Association', *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 1, 1897, 3.

On 21st September 1895, the day after publication of their previous epistle, Nautical Taxpayer wrote to the *LM* again, claiming that expenditure on technical education was an investment in nothing other than partly or poorly qualified idlers, who flit from one trade to another ending up as 'corner men and loafers', concluding that 'the result of our system can only be meretricious, and is productive of much empty show and twaddle'.[152] On 1st October, Nautical taxpayer once again felt compelled to write to the *LM* ostensibly to discuss the proposed relocation of the LNC from temporary lodgings in Colquitt Street to a purpose-built site at the Liverpool Pierhead, although the underlying reason for their correspondence is likely to have been to sustain their campaign against the LNC into the local election period culminating on 1st November 1895.

Whereas Nautical Taxpayer had previously mixed argument with disparagement, the 1st October letter merely contained allegation and abuse. Their usual themes were explored, 'it is to be hoped that this is the beginning of the end of subsidised cramming… I hope that we taxpayers in general, and nautical men in particular, will have your powerful support in resisting further waste of money on this thing'. However, the tone of this letter was even more bitter than usual and Nautical Taxpayer appeared to allege wrongdoing or at least misuse of public funds on the part of the LNC. Reflecting upon the College's proposed riverside relocation, Nautical Taxpayer wrote 'the Headmaster will be able to keep his eye on that 3-ton yacht in which some of his establishment disport themselves occasionally, and get over their sea sickness at the public cost'.[153] Toward the end of the letter Nautical Taxpayer shifted from employing the singular to the plural form of the first person, 'What we want, and what we have asked for, is a place to which we can all resort without shame… We have asked for bread, and we have been given a stone in the shape of a cheap cramming shop, than which nothing could be more detrimental to our interests'.[154]

---

[152] 'Abuse of Technical Education', *LM*, September 24, 1895, 6.

[153] 'The Nautical College', *LM*, October 2, 1895, 6. This may refer to the sailing yacht owned by Mr Lamb, a neighbour of Gill from Great Crosby, who offered to take 'the boys in attendance at the College… for short cruises', NISC minute book, May 31, 1895, 120.

[154] 'The Nautical College', *LM*, October 2, 1895, 6.

Had there been any doubt as to the identity of Nautical Taxpayer, this letter amounts to a tacit disclosure. There are many clues to the identity of Nautical Taxpayer embedded in their correspondence and James Gill was in no doubt of the identity of his epistolary assailant. The statement in their letter of 16th September 1895, in which the LNC was first described as a cramming establishment, used the phrase 'the very evil it was intended to counteract'. In a letter dated 29th September 1894 and published in the *LM* 1st October 1895 John G Moore (Secretary of the MSG, misquoting Councillor Maxwell) asked 'Why should the other schools have been compelled to compete with what Mr Maxwell calls a cramming school, which is subsidised by the Corporation, and which is simply perpetuating the evil which it was created to abolish?'[155]

In Gill's contribution to their public correspondence, he stressed that Nautical Taxpayer was 'selfish' and has 'menaced interests', which can be referenced against the claims of John Grant Moore in his letter of 1st October 1895 that 'other schools have been compelled to compete' with the publicly-funded LNC. As a Principal of a Navigation School (according to the 1891 census) Moore's business was likely to have felt 'menaced' by competition from the LNC. Gill also points out in his letter of 18th September that Nautical Taxpayer was 'not in active service, nor has he been for many years' which was true of Captain Moore in 1895.[156] Furthermore, in responding to Gill's criticism that they were an 'old fogie' in their letter of 19th September 1895 Nautical Taxpayer responded, 'I don't know when that interesting period of life begins; but I believe I am just one year younger than Mr Gill himself'.[157] On 19th September 1895 Gill and Moore were in fact the same age (59 years old).

On the day after Nautical Taxpayer's letter to the *LM* was published on 2nd October, the Conservative Party in Liverpool's Abercromby Ward met to select their candidates for the forthcoming municipal elections. Each Ward returned representatives to three seats; as this was an 'all up' election, the order of the returned candidates (by number of votes) determined their tenure as councillor (the

[155] 'Nautical Examinations', *LM*, October 1, 1894, 6.

[156] 'The Nautical College', *LM*, September 19, 1895, 6.

[157] 'Abuse of Technical Education', *LM*, September 20, 1895, 6.

candidate with the most votes was returned for three years, the second for two and the third for one, thereby returning to the 'third per year' schedule). Therefore, a campaigning organisation such as the MSG could seek to influence the outcome of an election either in campaigning to prevent the return of a candidate or by impacting the duration of a successful candidate's tenure. On 3rd October 1895, the Abercromby Tories selected an experienced slate of Councillors: Menlove (a tradesman with nine years of experience as a councillor), Jones (a lawyer who sat on the LMAC and the TIC) and Maxwell (Chair of the NISC). In their hustings, both Jones and Maxwell referenced the LNC (which carried 'the utmost importance to such a seaport as Liverpool').[158] Hence, the LNC was recognised as an election issue, but it was about to gain much wider exposure. Readers of the *LM* on 24th October 1895 would have read the following notice:

> *C*andidates in all the wards will shortly receive a communication from the Merchant Service Guild, which is composed of marine captains and officers, asking them to declare themselves in favour of causing the curriculum of the Nautical College, which enjoys a grant from the Technical Instruction Fund, to be rearranged, "to the extent of making it a place for education only". The members of the guild complain that now practically the whole of the work of the institution consists of cramming for the Board of Trade examinations.[159]

On the following day, the newspaper's readers were shown the full resolution:

> Whilst we, being merchant captains and officers, fully appreciate, and are grateful to the City Council for their munificent grant from the Technical Instruction Fund, and the establishment of the Nautical College for our benefit, we at the same time cannot but view with alarm the fact that practically the whole of the work done at the college is that of cramming for the Board of Trade examinations – which is degrading to us as a class, and inimical to our best interests: therefore we resolve that we will memorialise, and pray the City Council that they will cause the curriculum of the college to be amended and

[158] 'Municipal Elections: Abercromby Ward', *LM*, October 3, 1895, 6.

[159] 'The Municipal Elections: Notes and Incidents', *LM*, October 24, 1895, 6.

> rearranged to the extent of making it a place for education only, and thus enable us to give it our fullest support.[160]

Perhaps the wording of this resolution was already drafted before Nautical Taxpayer began their correspondence with the *LM* on 13th September 1895. If so, that may explain the similarities (indeed parallels) between the wording of the MSG's resolution and the content of Nautical Taxpayer's sustained campaign of correspondence. The reference to 'cramming for the Board of Trade examinations' in the MSG's resolution was foreshadowed within eleven separate references to 'cramming' in Nautical Taxpayer's letters of 13th, 17th and 19th September. Furthermore, the suggestions of the MSG that the LNC brought 'degradation' to the nautical profession and that the College's curriculum should be revised were also presaged by Nautical Taxpayer. Put simply, Nautical Taxpayer spent weeks preparing the ground for the MSG's resolution to be considered as a legitimate election issue. Yet if the result of the 1895 Liverpool City Council election in the Abercromby Ward is anything to go by, it does not appear that association with the LNC was electorally damaging to those closest to its management. From a field of six candidates (three Tory, two Liberal, one Independent) the Conservative Party's candidates swept the Board with Councillor Maxwell topping the poll. The Abercromby Ward results were replicated across the city as 59 of the 84 Councillors were successful candidates of the Conservative Party, bringing to an abrupt end the 'Liberal/Nationalist' interregnum in over a century of Tory rule in Liverpool's local governance.

Avoiding providing the MSG the oxygen of publicity during the election campaign, a response to the MSG's resolution was written by 'Students of the Nautical College' on 1st November and published in the *LM* on 2nd November 1895. Their tone reflected the combative style of Nautical Taxpayer, 'Does the secretary of the Merchant Service Guild criticise the Nautical College in his secretarial capacity, or as a Board of Trade crammer?' The students then challenged the validity of the MSG's resolution, 'Whose resolution? Do a dozen men picked up haphazard represent anybody or anything except themselves?' They address the suggestion

[160] 'Nautical jottings', *LM*, October 25, 1895, 6.

that the LNC is a cramming institution directly, '…we have all been at other schools, and are therefore best able to distinguish as to what is cramming and what is teaching; we emphatically deny the cramming; it is the British public that is being crammed by specious resolutions, not we students'. Offering, unlike Nautical Taxpayer before them, evidence to substantiate their claims, the students state: 'Anyone doubting our statement should obtain a syllabus and a list of the teachers, and have a look at our apparatus; or, better still, interview the day or evening students, when they will find an honest appreciation of the Corporation efforts towards our welfare'. With commendable brevity, the students conclude:

> It would be a crying shame, therefore, if private interests are allowed to interfere with public good. We indignantly protest against this resolution of the Merchant Service Guild, and as we are numerically stronger than those who passed it, our condemnation ought to carry more weight.[161]

Whilst the statement from the students, written on the day of the 1895 election toward which Captain Moore AKA Nautical Taxpayer had been working, should have been the final word on the matter, there was in fact one further, brief cameo from Nautical Taxpayer. Months later, apropos of nothing, on 18th February 1896 Nautical Taxpayer wrote to the *LM*, which published their letter on 22nd February. In comparison with the vicious, vitriolic venom of their previous compositions, this final flourish of Nautical Taxpayer's pen was lacklustre and pitiful. Nautical Taxpayer described seeing an advert for a lecture at the LNC on the subject of wind and weather, to be delivered by 'Captain Gill, principal of the Nautical College'.[162] The use of the title 'Captain' appeared to amuse Nautical Taxpayer somewhat, as they archly asked, 'I shall be much obliged if you will kindly inform me as to how many nautical men there are on the teaching staff of the college'. It is unclear whether anyone shared the joke.

It appears beyond doubt that Captain John Grant Moore was Nautical Taxpayer and that his motivation for writing these letters was to promote the objectives of the

[161] 'Liverpool Nautical College', *LM*, November 2, 1895, 6.

[162] 'The Nautical College', *LM*, February 22, 1896, 6.

MSG during the 1895 Liverpool City Council election. Yet there is a pervasive offensive tone in Nautical Taxpayer's correspondence which transcends political discourse. The tenor of Nautical Taxpayer's criticism of the LNC is personal and pointed, even alleging wrongdoing and incompetence on the part of the Headmaster. The frequency and nature of Nautical Taxpayer's correspondence suggests that Captain Moore was motivated by something other than the MSG's resolution. The final piece of the jigsaw, which completes and solves the puzzle, can be found in the pages of the *LM* on 29th April 1892.[163] In March and April of 1892 the NISC recruited a Headmaster to the new LNC. The successful candidate was James Gill, selected from a pool of 43 applicants of which eight were shortlisted for interview. Also interviewed for the post, but unsuccessfully, was Captain John Grant Moore. Hell hath no fury like a Nautical Taxpayer scorned.

[163] 'Local news', *LM*, April 29, 1892, 6.

3.5 Summary comments

As levels of literacy increased throughout the Victorian era, mass consumption of affordable printed materials became commonplace.[164] Even those unable to afford newspapers or periodicals may have found editions carefully placed in library reading rooms, or carelessly discarded in public spaces. Furthermore, people with limited reading abilities may have heard the news read aloud whether at work or in their leisure time ('One Liverpool pub landlord, John McArdle, performed the paper himself').[165] As a means of articulating ideas and influencing behaviour, newspapers held unrivalled influence in the late-Victorian era. It therefore comes as little surprise to discover that both the advocates and the detractors of the LNC sought to exploit the potential of locally printed media in furthering their respective causes. The tone and the content of the press articles and published correspondence about the LNC that have been discovered within this research project were, however, quite unexpected.

Viewed through the contemporary media lens, the LNC emerges as a divisive issue in late-Victorian Liverpool. Yet in seeking to establish the LNC's impact on the port city, it is necessary to determine the extent to which these articles and letters reflect or indeed represent public opinion. Hobbs places the nature of such material in a context that appears to correlate with these findings, '[M]ost letters in Victorian local newspapers were complaints [and]… part of a dialogue, either with other correspondents or with newspaper content'.[166] It is therefore unsurprising that such material presents a critical perspective of the early years of the LNC. Yet evidence gathered from analysis of documents within the LNC archive allowed me to read between the lines of the published newspaper text, to attempt as far as possible to decouple fact from fiction and to unmask secretive antagonists. With such insight, the articles and letters about the LNC published in the *LM* and other media outlets

[164] David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). Richard D Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago University Press, 1998).

[165] Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town,* 76. Hobbs further notes that 'Even in middle-class mercantile rooms like the Liverpool Lyceum, regional and local newspapers were more popular than London papers for most of the last three decades of the century', 222.

[166] Hobbs, 'Readers' Letters', 137.

appear less representative of public opinion than of sectional interest. Yet Nicholson cautions against being too dismissive,

> While it would be misleading to argue that the press simply reflected the opinions and practices of its readers, the commercial pressures of the nineteenth-century newspaper market compelled editors to be sensitive to shifting tastes… No other form of Victorian print culture allows us to explore the period with such precision.[167]

Although the events (and aftermath) of the LNC's opening ceremony highlighted distinctions between Liverpool's shipowning interest and the city's wider seafaring community, research into the events of the previous year (see section 1) demonstrates that such divisions were already established by December 1892. The subsequent actions of the MMSA in pursuing apologies and publishing Brassey's retraction publicly exposed the expanding fissure in the local nautical community between representatives of seafarers and the municipal government, over which shipowners carried a disproportionate influence. This evidence and subsequent conclusions run counter to Burton's argument that Victorian shipmasters' interests were aligned with those of shipowners and instead reflects the more complex 'paradoxes' arising from the 'ambiguous position between capital and labour' occupied by Victorian supervisory workers.[168] Nor were such tensions restricted to the events of December 1892; subsequent press coverage episodically attests to the activities and schemes of organisations resentful of the challenge that the LNC presented to their own interests.

There can be no better illustration of this point than the example of the Secretary of the MSG masquerading as a worried taxpayer in the pages of the *LM*, in order to foreground the MSG's intervention in the Liverpool City Council election of 1895. Whereas the MMSA was frequently critical of the management of the College,

---

[167] Nicholson, 'Counting Culture', 242.

[168] Joseph Melling, 'Non-Commissioned Officers': British Employers and their Supervisory Workers, 1880-1920', *Social History* 5, no.2 (1980), 192. See also Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession'.

the militant faction of the MSG sought its immediate cessation. Had the MSG's resolution been introduced into the election without any prior discussion, their concerns would have been easier to dismiss. Had Captain Moore put his own name to the letters that appeared in the *LM* between 16th September and 2nd October, he could not have claimed the legitimacy of writing in the guise of a disinterested (and widely representative) everyman. We can conclude that Captain Moore wore the mask of Nautical Taxpayer to disguise his true motives and intentions from the city's electorate. Although Gill was not fooled by this charade, it is possible that the wider readership of the *LM* may have been more susceptible to this trickery. Indeed, an unsuspecting historian reading the letters of Nautical Taxpayer for the first time may take these at face value and arrive at some erroneous initial conclusions about public perceptions of the LNC in 1895. The case of Nautical Taxpayer clearly illustrates the importance of Hobbs' maxim '[W]e cannot trust any one letter as evidence, unless we know its provenance from other sources'.[169]

Contemporary newspaper articles and material from the LNC archive depict an environment in which the LNC's early progress was keenly monitored to ensure that it delivered the benefits that were promised when it was launched. The Headmaster made regular (fortnightly or sometimes monthly) reports to the NISC regarding student enrolments, with annual reports summarising these and other data published for wider circulation. A picture soon emerged of consistently strong student recruitment to the (Division 3) school for aspirant ships' officers, balanced by disappointing recruitment of students across Divisions 1, 2 and 4: '…the earlier hopes for higher nautical education were not fulfilled; work for the masters and mates examinations continued to dominate nautical education'.[170]

At the April meeting of the (full) Liverpool City Council in 1897, (by now Alderman) Fred Smith was bitterly critical of the progress of the institution that he was first amongst elected members to champion:

[169] Hobbs, 'Readers' Letters', 143.

[170] Kennerley, 'The Education of Merchant Seaman', 128.

> Alderman F. Smith remarked that it appeared to him that the Nautical College was practically a failure. The number of students who were present at the beginning of 1896 and the number of candidates who presented themselves at the examinations indicated a lamentable state of things, and especially bearing in mind the large amounts of money that they were expending upon the college. – It appeared to him, therefore, that some little revision was required, for everything should be done to make the institution as useful as possible.

Smith's criticism was especially damning, as he had been the LNC's first supporter. Responding to Smith, on behalf of the LMAC to which the NISC reported, Forwood outlined his view of the LNC's progress five years after opening. Forwood argued that the LNC was still to be a considered 'an experiment', particularly the Boys' School which had demonstrated positive outcomes ('they were doing some good in taking boys at a tender age and preparing them for an apprenticeship at sea'). Acknowledging Smith's criticism, Forwood pointed the finger of blame at Liverpool's shipowners for their failure to prioritise College boys for employment in their vessels, '[T]he real difficulty, however, had been that when the boys left the school they could not get shipowners to take them into their ships. As a matter of fact, they had dealt with 24 boys at the college, and they had a large number of boys that they could not get places for'.[171] Therefore, in a late-Victorian port city whose maritime community was divided between the interests of shipowners and of seafarers, Liverpool's flagship nautical education institution somehow managed to antagonise both (opposing) sides simultaneously.

The research in this section has demonstrated how the interventions of organisations (MMSA, MSG) and individuals (Captain Moore, see also Robert Finlay in section 2.3) through targeted media campaigns against the LNC carried disproportionate impact upon the fledgling college. In working with newspaper records, it is necessary to remain aware of and indeed compensate for the inherent unreliability and impartiality of the journalistic fragments from which accounts of the past can be constructed. For example, the MMSA conspired through overt and covert means to turn the opening ceremony of the LNC into a public relations

[171] 'City Council: The Nautical College', *LM*, April 8, 1897, 7.

disaster. Their subsequent 'briefing' of a journalist (10th December 1892) and publication of correspondence between the MMSA and the speakers at the event in the *LM* (4th January 1893) illustrated that the newspaper was complicit in providing a platform from which the LNC could be attacked. In comparison, the 'Nautical Taxpayer' furore of 1895 was wholly lacking in substance; if it is the responsibility of the fourth estate to speak truth to power then the *LM* appears to have been deficient in that regard. Separately and cumulatively, the three episodes discussed in sections 3.2-3.4 neatly illustrate the problem of unreliable narration in Liverpool's local press in the late-Victorian era.

Criticism (implied or otherwise) of existing mercantile marine officers inevitably arose from investment in the improvement of the standard of future officers. The rationale (indeed justification) of the civic elite for the LNC was rooted in the belief that existing mercantile marine officers were deficient and that, to remain globally competitive, the standard of their education and training should be improved. In the view of the MMSA, the wealthy, connected patrician shipowners of Liverpool had secured the levers of municipal power in the city and were promoting their own interests at the expense of beleaguered shipmasters through the LNC. Whether such conspiracy was real or imagined, the perception of unfairness and abuse of power against the nautical workforce was keenly felt by the MMSA (and subsequently by the MSG).

These studies of contemporary reports and records have revealed the city's late-Victorian maritime community to be an intricate network of varying and competing interests. These interests were frequently represented by unofficial networks or indeed by organisations visibly seeking to advocate for their members' interests. Shipping companies may have operated in competition with one another, but they shared a common interest in maximising profits from their trade whilst reducing their costly insurance overheads; perhaps a further manifestation of the Conference system of shipping line cartels.[172] Such cartels provided 'a sound way of allowing companies to maintain and build upon their comparative advantages in a

[172] Stanley George Sturmey, *British Shipping and World Competition* (Liverpool University Press, 2010).

certain trade, while itself constituting an adaptive mechanism to deal with changing conditions'.[173] From their perspective investment in technical instruction, including the higher education and professionalisation of master mariners facilitated by the LNC, represented sound business practice. Conversely organisations representing ships' officers demonstrated opposition (and antagonism) to the LNC, concerned for the jobs and wages of existing licensed mariners. It would be expected in a maritime city that there would be few people without a view, or an interest, in this matter.

It can therefore be concluded that the LNC did not emerge from (or belong to) the city's professional seafaring community but was instead imposed upon that community. This speaks to (and reflects tensions in) the 'propriety' of the LNC as a vehicle for providing the proper means of efficient nautical education in Liverpool's late-Victorian port city. Findings from this research activity therefore adds to the scholarship detailing Liverpool's rich port and maritime history, specifically by highlighting the context and contested circumstances of the LNC's launch in 1892. Change is rarely benign and never neutral, so the LNC was perceived as a threat or as an opportunity, depending upon each party's particular perspective. The lens of the investigation into the impact of the launch of the LNC has laid bare these divisions, revealing the exasperation of the civic leaders who sought to secure efficient nautical education within the city, whilst the fractured, fractious Mersey maritime community hung out its dirty linen in the local broadsheets.

In analysing the public response to the launch of the LNC and its early years, the relevant press articles and published correspondence emerge as unexpectedly detailed and extensive. This is not only beneficial in the plentiful array of available evidence, but also in seeking to determine the local impact or significance of the launch of the LNC. Whilst papers like the *LM* were of general interest to a general readership, much of their reporting about the LNC comprised detail that may have appeared more suited to specialist publications such as *Lloyd's List and Shipping Gazette.* This suggests that the local media was so interested in the early years of the LNC (1892-1900) because it offered an inherently news-worthy saga in which the local populous was invested. Thus, both the quality and the quantity of local press

[173] Clarke, 'Liverpool Shipowners', 459.

coverage demonstrate, via the contents of their printed pages, the significant impact of the fledgling LNC in the late-Victorian port city.

4: Legacy

4.1 Preliminary comments

The datasets in this section explore parental occupation in comparative terms as a means of evaluating the impact upon future career progression of study at the LNC Boys' School. This 'sequential generations' analysis of occupational change as a measure of social mobility reflects the methods established by Jason Long, Andrew Miles and David Mitch.[1] It also draws upon the work of Stephan Thenstrom in recognising that '[O]ccupation may be only one variable in a comprehensive theory of class, but it is the variable which includes more, which sets more limits on the other variables, than any other criterion of status'.[2] Yet conclusions drawn from comparisons of occupational data snapshots are necessarily constrained by the limitations of the dataset. The detailed ancestral investigation undertaken into the six parental pairs who opted to send more than one of their children to the Boys' School of the LNC in section 4.4 remedy this deficit. Such longitudinal analysis has the benefit of offering a wider lens through which to better understand and contextualise the occupational intentions and trajectories of these students and their (grand)parents. This research documents the places, occupations and events that featured in the ancestral histories of the siblings, presenting a longitudinal overview of the circumstances that brought them to enrol in the Boys' School of the LNC. As Mander notes, '[W]hile statistical manipulation may control for a wide variety of confounding factors, isolating what appear to be the crucial characteristics of the socially mobile, it cannot on its own say much about how or why those characteristics

---

[1] Jason Long, 'The Surprising Social Mobility of Victorian Britain', *European Review of Economic History* 17, no. 1 (2013): 1-23. Andrew Miles, 'How Open was Nineteenth-century British Society? Social Mobility and Equality of Opportunity, 1839–1914', in Andrew Miles and David Vincent (eds.), *Building European Society: Occupational Change and Social Mobility in Europe, 1840–1940* (Manchester University Press, 1993): 18-39. David Mitch, '"Inequalities which every one may remove": Occupational Recruitment, Endogamy, and the Homogeneity of Social Origins in Victorian England', in Miles and Vincent, *Building European Society*: 140-164.

[2] Stephan A. Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress; Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Harvard University Press, 1964), 8.

are activated'.[3] Thus, these constructed narratives provide the missing information regarding the context and circumstances through which the dataset can be interpreted and understood.

As discussed in section 3, early critics of the Liverpool Nautical College (LNC) expressed their indignation about the public subsidy provided to an institution whose primary function appeared to be tuition of aspirant ships' officers seeking Board of Trade (BoT) certification. Whilst the majority of its students were enrolled for this purpose (in Division 3), the LNC project launched in 1892 was not intended to be confined to (or defined by) this activity. The LNC was distinguished from commercial providers and other navigation schools through pioneering distance courses (Division 2), a higher school (Division 4), a programme of public lectures on subjects of nautical relevance and the Boys' School (Division 1). The Boys' School fused the concepts of nautical education and technical instruction (the latter of which had traditionally been the preserve of occupational learners) within the embryonic civic educational ladder. Of the four divisions comprising the College's initial structure, aspects of divisions 2-4 have all endured in various forms into the twenty-first century. However, as these divisions catered for maritime workers already engaged in various stages of their careers it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which any individual seafarer's life course was influenced by their studies at Divisions 2-4 of the LNC. In comparison, the Boys' School was created to provide 'a thorough nautical education…for Boys *intending* to go to sea' (emphasis added).[4] As such, establishing whether these boys progressed to a nautical career offers verifiable data through which to measure the impact of the LNC.

The LNC had an international outlook and students from overseas availed themselves of the College's services, especially those experienced seafarers seeking advancement through the hierarchy of a ship's chain of command. Whilst it was necessary to hold a BoT shipmaster's certificate to be in command of a foreign-going British-registered merchant-ship after 1850, it was not necessary to be a British

[3] Peter Mandler, 'Comment: Social Mobility and the Historians', *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 1 (2019), 104.

[4] 'The Liverpool Nautical College', *Liverpool Journal of Commerce*, August 11, 1892, 4.

subject.[5] Joseph Conrad's grotesque Captain Gustav was German by birth but certified as a Master of British-registered vessels, at least until such time as he abandoned the ill-fated *Patna*:

> That's what you English always make—make a tam' fuss—for any little thing, because I was not born in your tam' country. Take away my certificate. Take it. I don't want the certificate. A man like me don't want your verfluchte certificate. I shpit on it.[6]

Records within the LNC Admissions Register highlight the enrolment of aspirant officers seeking command of British registered ships from mainland Europe, the USA and (even as far afield as) New Zealand. However, the vast majority of the College's students were UK-domiciled, a predominance most evident in the composition of the student body comprising the ('Division 1') Boys' School.

The student admissions registers held within the LNC archive detail the records of college students. Information recorded about LMC students include name, address, age on date of entry (also date of entry), previous / current ship (or education), employer and a record of the student's attainment. In addition to such formal biographical information, the 1892-1906 register includes Headmaster Merrifield's illuminating annotations (and some press cuttings) that offer insights into the lives (also, sometimes deaths) of LNC alumni. In addition to the LNC data, a wider range of sources has also been interrogated, including reports in contemporary newspapers, BoT ship officer registrations, military records, civil registrations, church records and census returns. This research has facilitated the creation of microbiographies of each of the (104) students of the Boys' School (maintained within an Access database). This enhanced dataset includes (as a minimum) student place of birth, student future career, identity of parents, parent birthplace and parent (mostly father's) occupation. These data underpin the analyses undertaken in

[5] Janet Taylor, *Hand-book to the Local Marine Board Examination, for Officers of the British Mercantile Marine* (published by Mrs Janet Taylor, 1853).

[6] Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim: A Romance* (McClure, Phillips & Co, 1903), 33. Conrad served in the British merchant marine 1878-1893, where he reached the rank of (certificated) first mate.

section 4.2. A data subset has been maintained comprising information about each of the (seventeen) LNC scholarship boys which is used for the purposes of comparison with the global LNC Boys' School student dataset, underpinning section 4.3. A much more detailed data subset has been created in respect of the (six) families who sent multiple sons to the LNC Boys' School, narrating detailed histories in the form of ancestral profiles for these boys, extending through many generations of great grandparents (section 4.4).

Like microhistory, microbiography is a flexible approach which is employed in this instance to distinguish between discrete, episodic investigations and the articulation of a condensed life course narrative. Both adhere to principles of the microhistorical method, specifically in examining and accumulating (often fragmentary) evidence to assemble datasets from which to draw broader conclusions that could not have been reached by other methods. Such conclusions inform both the narration of a history of the LNC and an analysis of the nature of the port city in which it was launched. In similar vein, Maurice Harteveld has explored the port city of Rotterdam through the lens of microbiography.[7] Harteveld's approach uses diverse 'micro-narratives' informed by disciplinary perspectives including 'history, literature [and] cartography' from which 'specific place-based port-city meanings' are conveyed 'against the background of past events'.[8] Harteveld rejects the confines of specific disciplinary strictures, congruent with the microhistorical principle that the nature of the data dictates the analytical method, 'there is not one narrative...[t]here is not one monistic model nor one biography, instead rather pluralistic models and endless biographies, thus situated approaches. Each giving an account of specificities in the undivided port-city'.[9] Data derived from sources including civil registrations, church records and census returns offer detailed and illuminating context through which skeletal records can be transformed into microbiographies, linking distinct microhistories within a coherent narrative. In doing so, I am obliged to exercise my judgement in interpreting and evaluating the rich seam of information

[7] Maurice Harteveld, 'The Port-City Portrayed in its Public Spaces: Introducing Micro Biographies of Places', *PORTUSplus Journal of RETE* 11, no. 11 (2021): 1-17.

[8] Harteveld, 'Port-City', 2, 4 & 6.

[9] Harteveld, 'Port-City', 15.

when mining these datasets. Places of birth, notwithstanding degrees of specificity, are fixed data points and (if consistently recorded) may provide reliable and robust information.[10] There is, however, greater potential for variation in determining a person's occupation in that whilst individuals can only have one place of birth, they can have many jobs over their lifetime. Furthermore, records of employment captured in the Victorian (and later) census returns may lack clarity owing to ambiguities in recording information (for example, use of generic descriptions including 'servant', 'labourer', or 'agent') or to legibility / transcription errors in the capture of information.

Census data offer an unrivalled source of demographic information within which to contextualise the findings of microhistorical investigation. Yet census returns offer skeletal static snapshots rather than the detail of lived experiences of individuals and their families. Furthermore, census data may be replete with omissions and inaccuracies. If the 'head of household' charged with completing the census form was insufficiently literate to undertake the task then (literate) third parties would have transcribed information imparted to them, which inevitably creates capacity for error. Even where householders were sufficiently literate to complete the census paperwork themselves, their submissions may have been vague, incomplete or inaccurate. Enumerators then collected the household schedules and collated (transcribed) these data within enumeration books and summary tables which (for 1841-1911 in England and Wales) form the basis of the census information that we access today. Compounding transcription / interpretation errors, episodic data capture carries risks of error based upon assumption (for example, someone employed as a bricklayer in both 1841 and in 1851 may not have worked in that capacity in the intervening years). Triangulation of multiple data sources is therefore essential in supporting longitudinal analysis, filling in gaps between census snapshots of often complex and unpredictable lives. Throughout section 4 reference is made to events in the lives of LNC alumni and their families. These events are all underpinned by a dataset comprising records from the primary sources listed in the bibliography (please see section 6).

[10] For example, 'Wales' > 'Anglesey' > 'Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch'.

The dataset underpinning section 4.4 provides ancestral detail of LNC boys from both maternal and paternal lines. However, concerns over the validity of information about the employment of women as represented in Victorian census returns are highlighted, among others, by Edward Higgs who argues that 'the process of accumulating, arranging and analysing census data was not a value-free exercise, especially with regard to the work of women' and that census data were 'constructed by men… who had certain assumptions about the position of women in society'.[11] A number of scholars (including Joanna Bourke, Joyce Burnette, Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, and Sara Horrell & Jane Humphries) endorse this view, developing what Michael Anderson called an 'orthodoxy' united around the assertion of Horrell and Humphries that 'the [nineteenth-century] census enumeration of women's employment is demonstrably inaccurate'.[12] Sophie McGeevor notes that:

> Implicit in some of the criticism of the nineteenth century censuses is the suggestion that male householders and census administrators deliberately concealed the work of women from the official record. Prejudiced, it has been suggested, by an all-pervasive domestic ideology, the motive for such malevolent administration was their own distaste when faced with the reality of working women and, particularly, married working women.[13]

Yet this 'orthodoxy' has not gone unchallenged. John McKay explores the notion of 'extraneous occupations' such as innkeeper's wife, a role that may contribute to the running of a family business but which was not delineated as employment within

---

[11] Edward Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal* 23, no. 1 (Oxford University Press, 1987), 60.

[12] Joanna Bourke, 'Housewifery in Working-class England 1860-1914', *Past & Present* 143 (1994): 167-197. Joyce Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (Routledge, 2018). Sara Horrell and Jane Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-breadwinner Family, 1790-1865', *Economic History Review* 48, no. 1 (1995): 89-117. Michael Anderson, 'What can the Mid-Victorian Censuses tell us about Variations in Married Women's Employment?' *Local Population Studies* 62 (1999): 9-30.

[13] Sophie McGeevor, 'How well did the Nineteenth Century Census record Women's 'Regular' Employment in England and Wales? A case study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19, no. 4 (2014), 492.

early census returns.[14] The scale of such spousal service was addressed by Xuesheng You, who notes that 'women recorded as "occupation's wife" constitute the largest group of married women with any occupational titles in the census'.[15] This aligns with Higgs' assertion that in interpreting census data it is 'necessary to define accurately what is meant by an 'occupation' [sic] and economic activity, and what constitutes the boundary between the family and market economies'.[16] Accordingly, whilst McGeevor recognises that 'women's part-time, seasonal and casual work was not always recorded in the nineteenth century censuses', she accepted that '[r]ather than being seen as evidence of inaccuracy… these omissions indicate that householders were following the census instructions [which] requested that only the occupations of women who were "regularly employed" be recorded'.[17]

You approaches the issue by analysis of multiple complete datasets, building on the work of Schürer *et al* whose data set is 'not a sample, but rather a transcription of the complete census records that survive for the period 1851–1911'.[18] You concludes, '[A]t least in areas where there was high demand for female labour and married women's employment was consequently more likely to be regular, census recording seems to have been reasonably faithful'. This indicates that the concerns raised by Higgs may be explained by 'the disparity between what historians would ideally want to know about women's work and what the census tried to capture', rather than any deliberate distortion or deletion of census data by the enumerators.[19] As the dataset in section 4.4 gives equal weight to the occupations and life courses of maternal and paternal lines of LNC boys, it is necessary to

[14] John McKay, 'Married Women and Work in Nineteenth-century Lancashire: the Evidence of the 1851 and 1861 Census Reports', *Local Population Studies* 61 (1998): 25-37.

[15] Xuesheng You, 'Working with Husband? "Occupation's Wife" and Married Women's Employment in the Censuses in England and Wales between 1851 and 1911', *Social Science History* 44 no. 4 (2020), 587.

[16] Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work', 76.

[17] McGeevor, 'Nineteenth Century Census', 489.

[18] Kevin Schürer, Eilidh M. Garrett, Hannaliis Jaadla and Alice Reid, 'Household and Family Structure in England and Wales (1851–1911): Continuities and Change', *Continuity and Change* 33, no. 3 (2018), 366.

[19] Xuesheng You, 'Women's Labour Force Participation in Nineteenth-century England and Wales: Evidence from the 1881 Census Enumerators' Books', *The Economic History Review* 73, no. 1 (2020), 116-7.

establish confidence in the datasets (including data drawn from census returns) pertaining to both of the parents.

Founding LNC Headmaster James Gill was instrumental in securing and maintaining a scholarship programme through which academically able children from families with limited means could enrol at the College. A narrative overview of the process of agreeing and operating the scholarship programme is told for the first time in section 4.3, drawing upon primary data from the LNC archive. Detailed consideration is applied to the specific demographic characteristics of the scholarship boys and their families relative to those of the global Boys' School data set. Furthermore, the performance of scholarship boys, in comparison with their fee-paying peers, is analysed to determine whether the extension of scholarship opportunities facilitated a broader base of recruitment to the Boys' School of the LNC, evaluating the relative social and economic advancement of the successful candidates. This is especially important in determining whether the LNC delivered upon the egalitarian ambitions of Willink's educational ladder in Liverpool. Within itself my scholarship data analysis provides evidence that is essential in evaluating the impact of the ambitions inherent in the launch of the LNC. Yet this only provides part of the picture. If the scholarship boys represent the less advantaged families, then those families who were able to pay multiple fees for multiple children to attend the Boys' School may be considered as a contrasting group with which further comparisons may be drawn.

Six families (Grant, King, Rae, Ridyard, Scott and Short) sent more than one of their boys to the LNC, for whom detailed narrative accounts of ancestral histories have been complied within an enhanced sibling data subset. Notwithstanding one omission, all the grandparents of the sibling students are represented in this dataset (and numerous great grandparents); grandparental ancestries are summarised in figures 11 and 12. This research explores the frameworks of interconnected people, places and events that shaped the life-course trajectory of siblings attending the LNC Boys' School. This sibling data subset comprises richer detail than the overall student dataset, in that it offers a more comprehensive longitudinal overview than the 'partial snapshots' that feature in the main dataset and in that it recognises and gives equal prominence to the lives and legacies of the boys' mothers. As many of the

boys were raised in homes with absent fathers who worked away at sea, the influence of their mother and of their wider kinship networks played a significant role in their development and may have shaped their worldview.

Emma Griffin notes that despite 'the progressive raising of the legal age for starting work' in the aftermath of the 1878 Factory Act, 'the poorest families removed their boys from school as soon as the law permitted' especially where 'fathers were low earners, or were ill, absent or failing in some way to provide for their families'.[20] Reformers and activists who celebrated the introduction of the Elementary Education Act in 1870 regarded childhood participation in education as an inherently good thing, yet it may not have appeared that way to members of deprived and disadvantaged communities in which employed children may have formed an important part of the family economic unit. Analysis of the ancestral datasets for the siblings who attended the Boys' School facilitates discussion of the kinship models and domestic environments in which they were raised. Emily Cuming notes '[S]ailors occupy a peculiar relationship to the idea of home as a group whose lived experience has often been seen to emblematize the roaming life away from terrestrial and national boundaries'.[21] Scholars such as Davidoff focus on the difficulties inherent in the discussion of families in their domestic settings,

> The concepts of kinship and family are themselves products of Western cultural thought, culled from ideas about religion, nationality, ethnicity, social class, welfare and health provisions, division of property, notions of social honour, of 'the person' and all of these framed by perceptions of gender.[22]

Family units can comprise complex structures, especially where multiple generations cohabit, where separate (step-) family units are merged or where family members are 'adopted'. 'Fictive kinships', in which close family friends acquire the status of a

[20] Griffin, *Bread Winner,* 65-66.

[21] Emily M. Cuming, 'At Home in the World?: The Ornamental Life of Sailors in Victorian Sailortown', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 47, no. 3 (2019), 463. See also Kennerley, 'British Merchant Seafarers'.

[22] Leonore Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (Polity Press, 1995), 206.

family member, may not be apparent from 'official records' but may have played a significant role in everyday life. Holly Furneaux posits a model in which 'families bonded neither by blood nor marriage' can be wholly constructed.[23] Such is the degree of variety inherent in the definitions and analyses of kinships that Steven King argues 'more recent writing has done much to complicate our understanding of the meaning, form, fluidity and function of families and their associated households for the post-1750 period'.[24]

Over the period January 1893 to September 1902 (117 months) 104 boys were enrolled in the LNC 'Division 1' Boys' School. On two of the 117 months in the reporting period (January 1898 and January 1899), seven students were enrolled on each occasion and in September 1895 five students were enrolled in that month. Four student enrolments within a given month were recorded on three occasions, three student enrolments within a given month were recorded on seven occasions and two student enrolments within a given month were recorded on twelve occasions. In each of 28 of the 117 months in the reporting period a single student was enrolled, but in over half of these months (64) no student enrolments were recorded.[25]

Offering non-residential education only, the boys attending the LNC were by necessity predominantly drawn from the local community. Addresses in Liverpool (or in places easily commutable by train or ferry) were recorded for 98 of the 104 boys in the College's admission register. It appears that the LNC maintained information under the heading 'address' in the admissions register for the purposes of official correspondence (such as invoicing) rather than as a means of logging the domestic residential details of their students. For example, Thomas Henry Rothwell would not have been living in Anglesey nor Thomas Wilfred Millar in Dublin whilst studying at

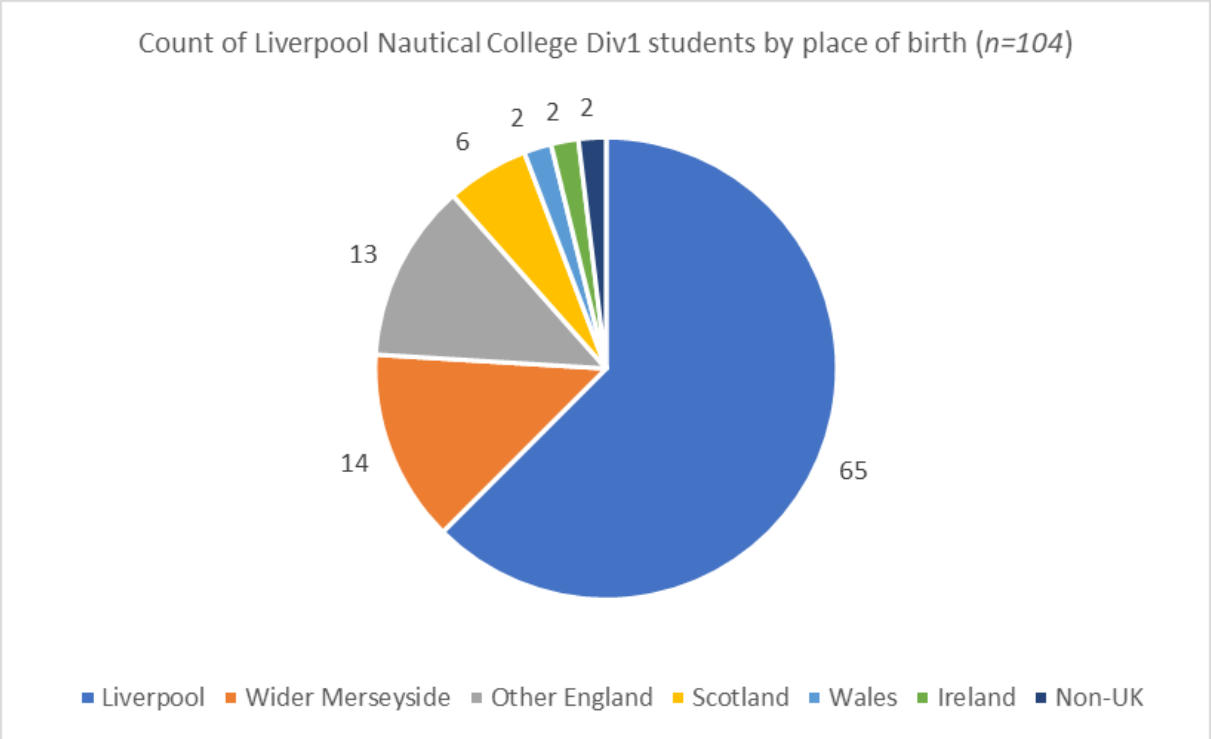
[23] Holly Furneaux, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 14.

[24] Steven King, 'Configuring and Re-configuring Families in Nineteenth-Century England', in Carol Beardmore, Cara Dobbing and Stephen King (eds.), *Family Life in Britain, 1650–1910* (Springer, 2019), 229.

[25] This illustrates the overall flexibility of enrolment dates, but closer analysis reveals patterns in the distribution of these events; the most common months for student enrolments were January, April and September.

the Boys' School. Students without a recorded Liverpool (area) address may have been lodging with extended family, or in rented accommodation in the city for the duration of their studies.

Figure 3: Count of Div1 students by place of birth



Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns and the Civil Registration index of births, marriages and deaths for England and Wales.

Other than in a few (seemingly random) cases, information about the birthdates or -places of the students at the Boys' School are not recorded in the LNC admission register. Yet following investigation into census, civil registration and other records, I have been able to identify the locations in which all of these boys were born. Over three-quarters of the boys enrolled in the LNC were born in locations within reasonable distance of the College. The definition of 'Liverpool' in this analysis is the area presently covered by an L-prefixed postcode, from Speke in the south to Ormskirk in the north. A little licence has been taken with the parameters of 'Wider Merseyside', as this includes both the Wirral peninsula (where eleven LNC boys were born) and a handful of disparate adjacent North-West locations (St Helens, Southport and Wigan). As figure 3 illustrates, 25 of the boys enrolling in the LNC

between 1893 and 1902 were not born locally. Just over half of this group were born in England: two in Cornwall, Devon, Durham and Norfolk respectively, others from Bristol, London, Nottinghamshire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire. Ten boys were born in other nations within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, namely Scotland (six), Wales (two) and Ireland (two). Of the two remaining boys, one was born in India and the other 'at sea'. There may have been a rich mixture of accents echoing down the halls of the Nautical College, ingredients in the making of Scouse.

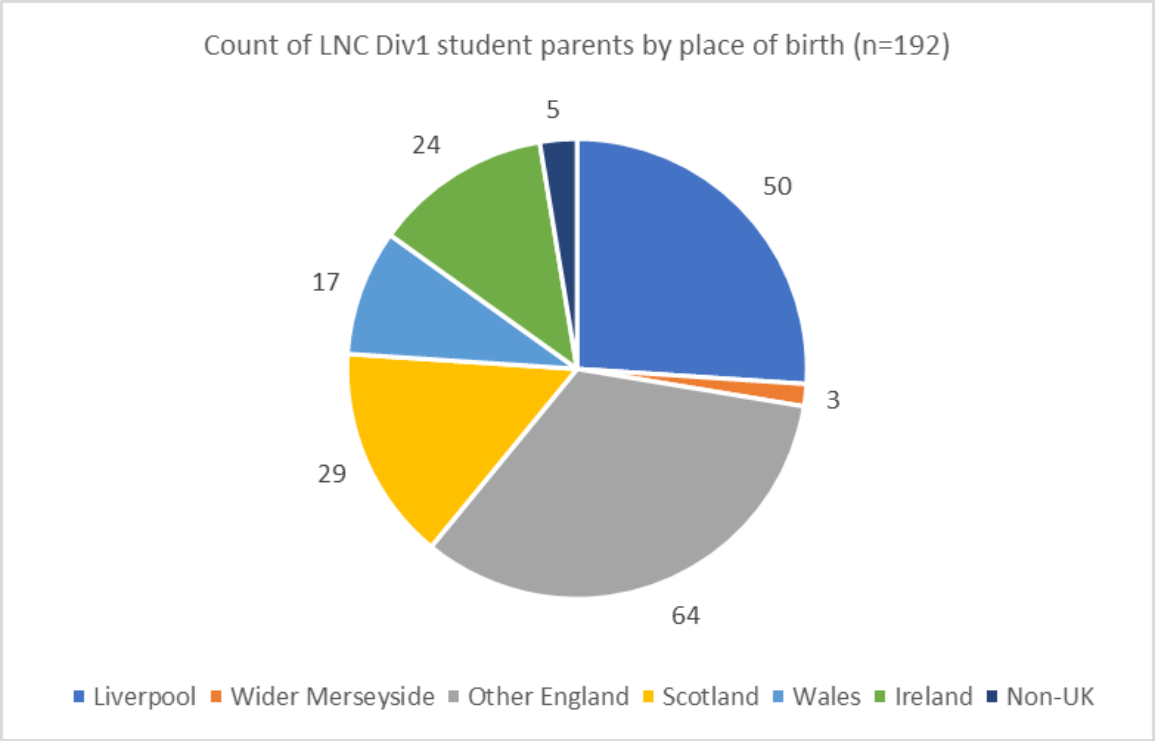
All of the boys were born between the years of 1876 and 1888, the closing quarter of the century in which the City of Liverpool emerged. However, the details of the births of the parents of the students at the Boys' School illustrate in microcosm the pattern of migration that led to the growth of Liverpool's population.[26] In comparison with the birthplace of their sons, many fewer parents were born in Liverpool / in sight of the Mersey, with almost three-quarters of the parents drawing their first breath in a different part of the country, or indeed the world.[27] These data align with the demographic mobility findings of Schürer *et al* that '[I]n 1851 some 63 per cent of females and 66 per cent of males aged 45 and over (and both within England and Wales) lived within ten miles of their place of birth, yet by 1891 these figures had fallen to some 55 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively'. [28]

[26] Amongst the one hundred and four boys enrolled at the LNC, there were five sets of two brothers and one set of four brothers (which will be explored further in section 4.4). This means that, to avoid double-counting, the analysis of the place of birth of the parents of LNC boys is based on one hundred and ninety-two separate individuals (ninety-six parental pairs).

[27] John Belchem, 'Hub and Diaspora: Liverpool and Transnational Labour', *Labour History Review* 75, no. 1 (2010): 20-29.

[28] Schürer et al, 'Household and Family Structure', 383.

Figure 4: Count of Div1 student parents by place of birth



Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns and the Civil Registration index of births, marriages and deaths for England and Wales.

Natives of all of the regions of England sent their children to study at the College, including those from the North-West (21), South-East (14), Midlands (ten), South-West (ten) and North-East (nine). International migration was also evident, with parents born in Canada, France and in Scandinavia. Such data (figure 4 refers) reveals the demographic composition of the Boys' School and illustrates the evolution of the city in which the boys studied. Over the course of the Nineteenth-Century, the population of the Liverpool district increased a hundred-fold, from approximately 7,000 to approx. 700,000, fuelled by an explosion in trade and migration.[29] Such migration is evident in the data relating to the birthplaces of the parents of LNC boys. Indeed, a number of the 'local boys' had been born in Liverpool in the immediate aftermath of their parents' arrival in the city (take for example John Limrick Keene whose elder siblings were all born in Ireland or John

[29] Census of population, Office of National Statistics (data published at https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10105821/cube/TOT_POP) accessed 12th December 2022.

Stewart whose elder siblings were born in Scotland). Although writing about a different Northern port and surveying a longer period of time, Laura Tabili highlights the inter-relationship of the local and the global within 'provincial' English cities in arguing that factors such as 'nation building in Britain and elsewhere, imperial competition and decline, world war and global depression' all 'impinged on and transformed local cultures'.[30]

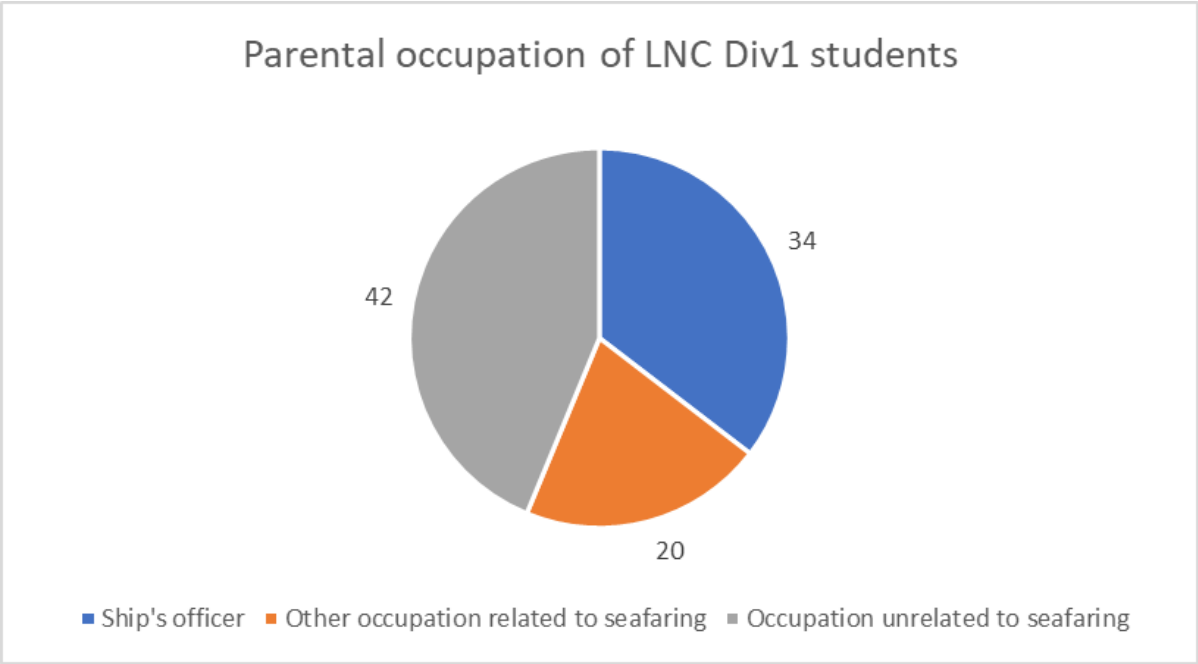
For the purposes of this analysis (comparison of the occupations of the students at the Boys' School of the LNC with those of their parents) parental occupations are divided into two broad categories; occupations allied to seafaring and occupations not allied to seafaring. Where evidence is found to demonstrate that a student's parent worked in an occupation allied to seafaring then they are deemed to be of this type. The dataset comprises the occupations of ninety-five fathers and one mother of the boys who studied at the LNC. There is rarely any evidence of recorded occupations of the students' mothers within census returns or in trade directories, which appears to correlate with the low frequency of married women in Liverpool in regular employment.

The exception to this prevailing pattern is George Leslie Batt, whose atypical upbringing has led to the inclusion of his mother's occupation within the dataset, rather than that of his absent father. Yet it is not through disapproval of Henry Batt's actions that he is excluded from this dataset, but from recognition of the occupational activities of Alice Batt. Not only did Alice raise their son in Henry's absence, but she did so whilst running a school in Birkenhead's Hamilton Square. In short, Alice's 'parental occupation' is much more valid than that of Henry Batt in the context of young George's upbringing and therefore more relevant to this dataset. The daughter of a music master, Alice taught gym, dance and callisthenics at this school either consistently or at intervals over almost half a century. In terms of influence alone, Alice's data are included over that of Henry (it is unlikely that her errant, bigamous husband paid her son's school fees). Alice Batt is unique in the dataset as a woman with paid employment, the family's 'breadwinner'. Henry Batt is not unique

[30] Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939* (Springer, 2011), 237.

within the dataset in absconding from the family home (Genest Hatton's father also deserted his family whilst his son was young) or in engaging in illegal activities (William Warrington Dakin served time in prison). Indeed, Griffin offers wider context in noting that '[A]lthough fathers were supposed to be breadwinners, not all undertook this role with much relish'.[31]

Figure 5: Parental occupation of LNC Division 1 students



Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns and the LNC Admissions Register.

Of the 96 parental occupations included in the dataset (figure 5 refers), over half (54) are allied to seafaring. Of particular significance is the subset (34) of qualified (certified) shipmates and –masters, representing the mercantile 'officer class'. All of the parents who sent multiple children to study at the LNC worked in occupations allied to seafaring. In total sixty-one of the boys had fathers (currently or

[31] Griffin, *Bread Winner,* 114. Please note that the data from which these (and all subsequent) biographical sketches are drawn are, unless separately stated, sourced via the online repository Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 16th April 2023. All further footnotes specifying biographical sources shall be referenced against this statement. [1861 Castle Rushden prison records, William Dakin : 1865 marriage record, George Batt and Alice Taylor : 1871 census return Alice Batt (Taylor) and George Batt : 1881 census return Alice Batt (Taylor) and George Batt : 1891 census return Alice Batt (Taylor), George Batt and Benjamin Hatton : 1901 census return Alice Batt (Taylor) and George Batt : 1902 marriage record George Batt.]

previously) working in occupations allied to seafaring and over one-third (39) of all enrolled boys were the sons of ship captains or officers. It is possible that a number of these (34) qualified ship officers studied with James Gill at the Navigation School run within the Liverpool Sailors' Home, prior to the foundation of the LNC. One of the parents, Robert Conby's father Henry, was himself a student of the LNC, enrolling in 1894 (at the age of 46) in the 'Division 3' school for candidates preparing for BoT exams (Robert enrolled in Division 1 at the age of 13 in 1899). Henry's experience of the LNC was clearly positive as not only did he send his son to study at the College, but he also passed his 'Extra Master' BoT exam in October 1894.

The remaining (20) parents whose occupations were allied to seafaring worked in a range of different jobs. In addition to the seafarer William Dakin, John Hall's father (also John) was a steward on Cunard ships travelling from Liverpool to Boston, an occupation and a route also followed by Sydney Grant's father Henry. Advances in marine technology drove the development of larger and faster ships, increasingly reliant upon the specialist skills of engineers to power and maintain these vessels as they traversed the oceans in ever-faster journeys. Boys enrolling at the LNC would choose to specialise in either navigation or engineering. Fathers of five of the boys worked as marine engineers, including Arnold Ridyard (see section 4.5) and George Backhouse's father William, a Mersey-based pilot assisting huge cargo ships and passenger liners to make careful landings at the Liverpool docks where the harbour master, William Crafter's father Richard, may have greeted them. Occupations allied to seafaring do not always involve working at sea. Four fathers of LNC boys were clerks working for shipping companies, such business routinely conducted on dry land in premises overlooking the docks from which their fleet sailed. In similar (white collar) vein, a customs officer, a purser and a shipping manager appear amongst the parental occupations, whilst a shipwright and a stevedore got their hands dirty. It appears likely that the father whose seafaring-related occupation was located furthest from the sea was James Herbert Wainwright Gill's father James, whose place of work (the LNC, where he was the founding Headmaster) was half a mile away from the nearest body of water.[32]

[32] [1866 shipping record John Hall : 1871 census return John Hall and Arnold Ridyard : 1872 shipping record Henry Grant : 1874 shipping record Henry Grant : 1877 shipping record William Backhouse : 1881 census return William Backhouse : 1882 shipping record John

In order to make some sense of the forty-two occupations unrelated to seafaring in which the parents of LNC boys worked, these have been aggregated into four 'like types': 'financial sector', 'skilled crafts', 'retail' and (the loosely connected remnants) 'positions of responsibility'. These are capricious categorisations employed simply to facilitate discussion; they are all 'broad churches' in which various different job roles and functions are performed. Once again, the issue of terminological inexactitude arises, with 'health-warnings' firmly in place. Labels can be ambiguous. Take, for example, the case of Albert Morton's father George, who gives his occupation in the 1891 census as 'builder'. This may conjure images of bricks and mortar, of George Morton suffering days of hard labour with mud and shovels. In fact, George Morton owned a Liverpool building firm at one time employing seven men and three boys and his probate record refers to him posthumously as a 'gentleman'. Thirteen of the parents worked in the financial sector, in one capacity or another. At the wealthier end of the spectrum, seven of the parents sought their fortunes from trade (although such trade may have relied upon commercial exports it would have been too much of a stretch to consider their occupations as 'related to seafaring', as with the shipping clerks discussed above). Two were described as 'merchants', two as 'brokers' and two as 'commercial agents'. The most detailed description of a role in this category is 'coal agent', the occupation of William Waterbury's father Frank whose work took him to Ghana where he died in 1896. Not all of the occupations grouped under the 'financial' heading were wealthy; even weekly wage-earners (our four bookkeepers / cashiers) may in some weeks have taken home more pay than estate agents or insurance agents, whose income may have relied upon commission.[33]

Within the category of 'skilled craftsmen' (they were all men) in the data population, three performed different wood-working roles: a joiner, a coachbuilder and a cabinet maker. Two were millers at very different ends of the financial spectrum. William Lunt's father George was a miller who at one stage employed 70

Hall : 1883 shipping record John Hall : 1886 shipping record John Hall : 1891 census return Henry Grant : 1891 census return Richard Crafter : 1901 census return Richard Crafter.]

[33] [1871 census return George Morton : 1881 census return George Morton : 1891 census return George Morton : 1895 probate record George Morton : 1896 death record Frank Waterbury.]

men, 38 boys and 12 women (listed in that very order in the census return of 1881). In comparison, Robert Domony's father (Robert senior) was a miller whose income was limited to the extent that that his son qualified for a student scholarship at the LNC. It is tempting to speculate whether Domony was amongst Lunt's employees. The sons of a builder (Morton), an engineer (non-marine) and two surveyors also studied at the LNC, as did the son of 'lard refiner' William Ainsworth. Thirteen of the parents of the boys studying at the Nautical College worked in the retail sector. It appears that this category represents in scope the small business owners upon whose efforts a 'nation of shopkeepers' was founded. Four drapers sent their sons to study at the LNC, as did two grocers and two jewellers. In a *who's who* of the Victorian high street, a butcher, a bookseller, a furniture dealer, a shoe retailer and a hairdresser all selected a technical, nautical themed education for their sons. The final category is the least coherent, yet it features job roles that carry an element of authority or responsibility. There are two teachers (including Alice Batt), a police officer, a railway signalman and a career soldier Major Arthur William McKinstry, whose family owned land in County Sligo. An honourable mention is extended to the barely categorisable polymath and reformer Bernard Augustine Dromgoole, an Irish Catholic campaigner for social causes in the north of England. For a period he edited and published a radical newspaper (initially titled the *St Helens Weekly News*, latterly *Dromgoole's St Helens Newspaper and Advertiser*) whilst running businesses as diverse as drapery / clothing, stationery and a pawnbrokers shop. His son Victor was the only one of his twenty-one offspring to study at the LNC.[34]

Within the admissions register of the LNC, the previous educational institutions of all but one of the boys enrolling in the Boys' school are recorded (figure 6 refers).[35]

[34] [1853 birth record Arthur McKinstry : 1871 census return George Lunt : 1881 census return George Lunt : 1891 census return William Ainsworth, Robert Domony, Bernard Dromgoole, George Lunt and Arthur McKinstry : 1901 census return Robert Domony and Bernard Dromgoole : 1911 census Robert Domony.]

[35] The exception is John Scott; although his brother (Ernest) joined the LNC from the Liverpool Institute it cannot be assumed that John also attended the same elementary school as his brother. Consider brothers Edwin and John Short who both enrolled in the Boys' School, the former from the (selective) Liverpool Institute and the latter from St Margaret's (Church of England) School in Princes Park. A further example is provided by brothers William and Arnold Ridyard, the former of whom studied at the Liverpool Institute before enrolling at the LNC whilst the latter progressed through secondary education via the Wirral-based Birkenhead Institute. Did John Scott, like his brother, pass the Liverpool Institute's

The ‘Liverpool Institute High School for Boys’ emerged from the Liverpool Mechanics Institute founded in 1825. Situated in Mount Street in an impressive building fronted by four iconic Ionic stone columns, the infrastructure of the Liverpool Institute hints at the standing of the school within Liverpool’s emergent Victorian cultural and civic tableaux. Twenty-nine of the one hundred and three boys whose prior educational institution is listed in the LNC admissions register came from the Liverpool Institute, an independent grammar school with competition for places based upon selection at the age of eleven. The Liverpool Institute was significant in the story of the LNC as no other school provided more than half a dozen students for the Boys’ School.

Figure 6: Schools from which 3 or more LNC Div1 students enrolled

Schools from which 3+ Div1 students enrolled	No.
Liverpool Institute	29
Arnot Street Board School	6
Liverpool College, Mossley Hill	6
Granby Street Board School	5
Hope Street, Upper Hope Place	5
St Margaret’s, Princes Road	4
St Mary's, Edge Hill	4
St Francis Xavier, Everton	3
Waterloo College, Crosby Road	3

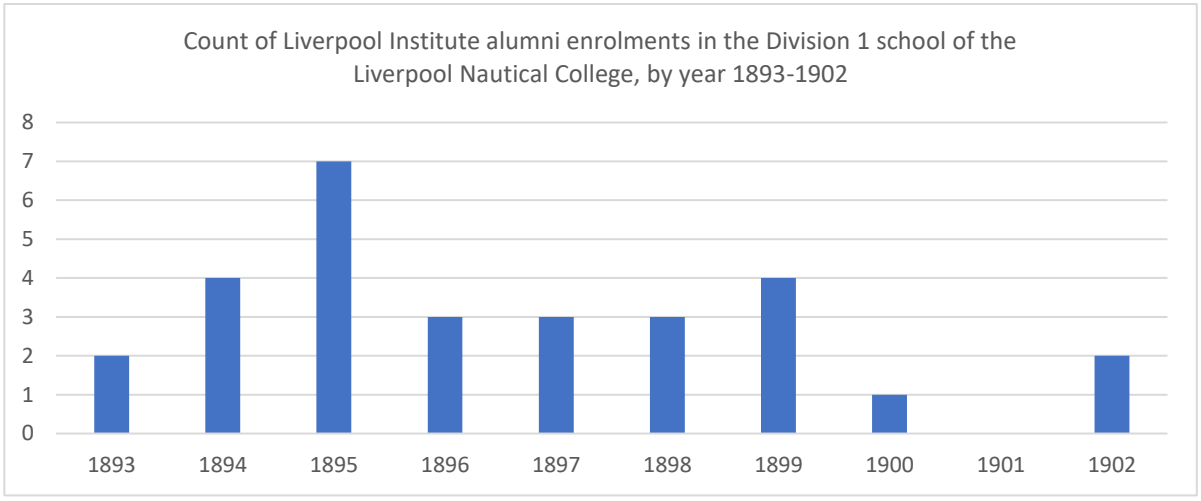
Source: LNC Admissions Register.

The Liverpool Institute boasts an impressive roster of alumni, with a number of boys completing their time there with the award of an Oxbridge scholarship. Thus, the Liverpool Institute students had followed a curriculum somewhat at variance from the vocational, technical focus of the LNC. Widely perceived as an exemplar of educational excellence, the Institute offered an archetype to be emulated by the newly created Boys’ School, whose first students were admitted in 1893. Moreover, the influence of the Institute was manifested in the LNC’s governance structures.

competitive entrance exam? In the absence of any concrete information about John Scott’s academic history, he is omitted from the sample and therefore the dataset underpinning this analysis comprises 103 items.

The Reverend John Sephton, described in his obituary as 'one of the greatest Headmasters of his generation', served in that capacity at the Institute between the years of 1866 and 1889.[36] In April 1898 he was co-opted as an ex-officio member of the Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee (NISC), which oversaw the running of the LNC, perhaps offering a re-assuring public statement about the academic standard of the LNC's curriculum.

Figure 7: Count of Liverpool Institute alumni enrolments in the Division 1 school of the LNC, by year 1893-1902



Source: LNC Admissions Register.

Hundreds of boys enrolled to study at the Liverpool Institute each year, but the line of students vacating Mount Street for Colquitt Street (where the LNC was situated 1892-1900) was very short, as displayed in figure 7. Institute boys enrolled at the LNC in all but one of the (calendar) years in which boys were admitted, but in only one of those years did the number of students transferring from the Institute to the LNC exceed four. It appears, based on both the age profile and parental occupation, that the twenty-nine Liverpool Institute students offer a broadly representative sample of the total Boys' School student body. The ages for all but one of the LNC boys were recorded in the admission register and the remaining boy's (H.E. Morrow) date of birth at the point of enrolment has been subsequently

[36] Obituaries of graduates of St John's College, Cambridge accessed via: https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Eagle/Eagle%20Chapters/Obituaries/Obituaries_1910s.pdf accessed 10th October 2022.

calculated by comparing his date of birth with his date of enrolment. It is also worth noting that although Ernest Rimmer gave his date of birth upon enrolment as fourteen, he was at that point no more than twelve years and one month old.[37] Other than a greater degree of clustering around admission at the ages of fourteen and fifteen (90% of the Institute 'cohort' compared to 71% of the overall cohort), the age profile of Institute students does not differ greatly from the global profile. One student was admitted from the Institute aged 13, nine aged 14, 17 aged 15 and two aged 16. The overall spread of age at admission in the Boys' School is slightly wider (twelve to sixteen) and nineteen of the twenty students admitted at the ages of twelve or thirteen did not arrive from the Liverpool Institute. The average age of boys on entry is 14 years and 4 months; this same profile applies to both the sons of parents not employed in seafaring and also those employed in an occupation allied to seafaring. The average age of the sons of ships' officers entering the Boys' School of the LNC is 14 years and 3 months, but this is not a statistically significant difference.

The youngest Liverpool Institute boy who progressed to study at the LNC was John Allen Robertson, admitted in March 1897 at the age of thirteen. John's father (also called John) was a Master Mariner who died at some point between the 1891 and 1901 census dates. The same fate was to befall John junior, who studied for fourteen months at the LNC, securing an apprenticeship in May 1898. He went to sea but the vessel upon which he was sailing was lost 'with all hands' in the waters off Gibraltar in 1900, including the teenaged John Robertson.[38] Eight of the boys from the Liverpool Institute progressed to the LNC with their brothers (two Grants, two Kings and four Raes) and are discussed further in section 4.4. As such, the dataset of parental occupations associated with the Liverpool Institute boys comprises twenty-four items. The profile of parental occupations of the Liverpool Institute student dataset is very similar to that of the global dataset, with 63% (as opposed to 56%) of occupations being allied to seafaring, of which 42% (compared

[37] This is likely to be due to the eligibility criteria for Nautical College scholarships, in which candidates must be over 13 but not over 15 years of age. Whether Rimmer's family or indeed the staff of the LNC were complicit in this deception is a moot point.

[38] As recorded in the margins of the LNC Admissions Register.

with 35%) of fathers were certified shipmasters and mates, with all of the sub-categories of 'occupations not allied to seafaring' being represented.

Academic requirements for entry to the Boys' School of the LNC were outlined in the explanatory 'Liverpool Nautical College scheme of organisation', in which it was argued that 'boys should not be admitted to the college until they have attained a certain standard of proficiency in elementary subjects (say the 6th standard in elementary schools and the 5th form in such public schools as the Liverpool College and the Liverpool Institute)'.[39] In 1894 the fees for the Boys' School were reduced to £3 3s (or three guineas), equivalent to the lowest fee band at the Liverpool Institute in 1895 when '[T]he fees were then three guineas, four guineas, or five guineas according to age'.[40] This may have offered a financial incentive (and certainly no financial deterrent) to a boy transferring from the Liverpool Institute to complete a more specialist secondary education at the Boys' School of the LNC. Yet evidence from the LNC dataset suggests that the early increase in boys moving from the Liverpool Institute to the LNC (two in 1893, four in 1894, seven in 1895) was not sustained and averaged two per year between 1896-1902.

[39] 'The Liverpool Nautical College', *LM*, August 31, 1892, 5.

[40] Herbert J. Tiffen, *A History of the Liverpool Institute Schools* (Old Boys' Association, Liverpool, 1935), 69.

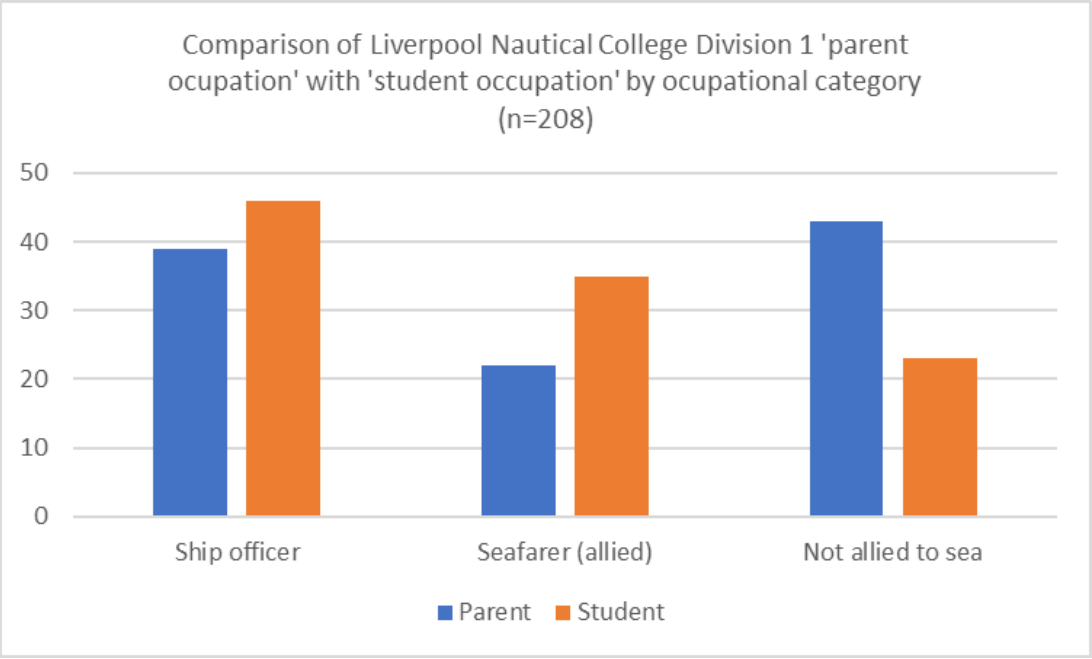
4.2 Boys' School student destinations

As a source of information from which the occupations of LNC boys and their parents can be captured, available evidence accrued from UK census returns proves barely adequate. Notwithstanding that some of the older LNC boys who have a recorded occupation in the 1901 census, the 1911 census is the only common widely available data source from which their occupational information may be gathered, although some of the boys sadly did not live to see 1911. Similarly, many of the students (also their parents) followed a seafaring career and were consequently absent from the 1911 census (which recorded everyone in the country in accordance with where they slept on the evening of Sunday 2nd April). Further information has therefore been sought in order to establish their occupations (including civil registration records, military records, church records, the 1939 census, newspapers, maritime records, registers of professional bodies and marginalia in the LNC admissions register). It has been possible to establish an evidenced outcome for each of the one hundred and four Boys' School students and to map this to a rudimentary method of classification (please see Appendix 1). Irrespective of any other recorded occupational activity, if one of the boys achieved certification as a ship's officer then they are recorded as having attained the profession of a ship's officer. In the absence of any other recorded occupational activity, if evidence exists placing any boy not classified as a ships' officer aboard ship in an occupational capacity then they are recorded as a seafarer (a deliberately broad and inclusive term). Otherwise, a boy's occupation is based on accumulated evidence and in the few cases where multiple different occupations are recorded a judgement is made based upon their latest evidenced occupational activity. This is an imprecise and necessarily imperfect analysis, but it does provide a complete and categorised overview of the occupations/future careers of the entire LNC Boys' School student population.

A further difference between the parental occupation dataset and the student occupation dataset is that all the parents reached adulthood and spent some of their adult lives in the UK. In contrast, a number of the LNC boys died at a young age (some as casualties of military conflict, such as William Milestone whose ship was torpedoed in 1918) and a number emigrated overseas soon after leaving the LNC (Victor Dromgoole served two years of his five-year naval apprenticeship before

jumping ship in Australia and spending the next six decades in New Zealand, where he wed in 1908 and died in 1957). This analysis therefore offers only a glimpse of the richness and complexity of the lives lived by the LNC students when they had outgrown the Boys' School. Figure 8 summarises the occupations of the former Boys' School students compared with those of their fathers (and in the case of George Batt, his mother), revealing that most are related to seafaring (by approx. 3:1).[41] Whilst around a quarter of the LNC boys engaged in occupations not associated with seafaring, the technical and mathematical disciplines within the curriculum of the Boys' School may have had a wider application than the nautical context in which they were delivered.

Figure 8: Comparison of LNC Division 1 parent occupation with student occupation, by occupational category



Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns

Of the eighty-one boys who earned their living through seafaring, forty-six became qualified ships' officers. Four of these qualified to the level of Second Mate, a further four were qualified to serve in the capacity of First Mate, whilst thirty-eight

[41] As the count is by student, parents Henry Robert Grant, John Wesley King, Arnold Ridyard, Joseph Scott and Edwin Grant Short are each included twice and James Rae is included four times; the dataset therefore comprises 208 items.

carried the certification required to captain a ship in the mercantile marine (of these thirty-eight, eight were certified as 'Extra Master').[42] Thirty-five of the boys who earned their living through seafaring were not certified by the BoT as being eligible to serve as a ship's officer. These students can be considered in three (sub)categories: 'apprentice / able seaman', 'marine engineers' and 'others'. Sixteen of the LNC boys initially went to sea as apprentices or general crew but did not qualify to be officers. Some of the boys were indentured to serve as marine apprentices upon leaving the LNC, although some undertook but did not complete an apprenticeship (Hugh Pike served all but three months of his four year apprenticeship) yet this did not necessarily halt their subsequent seafaring career (which for Hugh ended in his death in 1910). Thirteen of the LNC boys became marine engineers, a modern and rapidly evolving role aboard modern steamships. Unlike the masters of sailing ships, steamship captains were wholly reliant upon their engineers to ensure that the ship's engine and boilers were operating effectively, to ensure the safety of those on board and to carry the ship's passengers and/or freight to their destination.

Four of the remaining students in this category spent only a short period of time at the LNC, including Edward Shortell who left after four months. His father James was as an Irish, Roman Catholic stevedore employed at the docks. Perhaps the family's economic circumstances and Edward's truncated period of study are related, especially if the Shortell family struggled to support Edward's continuing education.[43] Similarly, Genest Hatton only spent one term at the LNC where he was described at

[42] These qualifications were designed to be attempted sequentially, facilitating progression through the hierarchy of a ship's command structure. The qualifications were all linked to navigational skills, with increasing sophistication of methods. A second mate could navigate by a compass and solar observation (to determine longitude and latitude), whilst a first mate could also navigate at night, using a sextant and the position of the stars. Qualification as Master required knowledge of navigation via logarithms and the shifting positions of 'celestial objects', whilst an Extra Master was also proficient in spherical trigonometry and the plotting of charts. Whilst Mates and Master certificate skills could be 'learned by rote', the Extra Master was a much more academic qualification and required candidates to produce essays and to engage in both written and oral exams.

[43] It does not appear that Edward Shortell became a reliable source of household income for his family as upon leaving the LNC he took up an apprenticeship in Dundee before going to sea and then joining the armed forces, from which he deserted in 1899. His apparent absence from the 1901 and 1911 census returns suggests time at sea (possibly on the run from the authorities) and the 1939 national register records that Edward is employed at sea, as a rigger.

the age of thirteen as 'very irregular and unsatisfactory'.[44] Hatton went to sea and served as a boatswain in 1911, in which capacity he may have supervised the work of riggers like Edward Shortell. Unlike Shortell, Hatton's military service was distinguished and upon retiring from the sea, Hatton worked as nightwatchman for the Leyland Shipping Company until the age of eighty-three. William Pyecraft pursued a number of occupations prior to his untimely death in his fortieth year. He enrolled at the age of fourteen to study at the Boys' School but left after only three months having secured a marine apprenticeship which he does not appear to have completed. By 1901 he took up a post in the Pilot Service, but a note in the LNC admissions register indicates that William was unsuccessful in pursuing that career due to problems with his eyesight. He went back to sea and attempted his BoT 'Second Mate' exam without success (which may also have been attributed to his deficient eyesight). William's father Charles Pyecraft was a purser, in charge of the money kept aboard a ship and it was to this career that William turned in 1904, initially aboard ships of the Elder Dempster line. William Bennett's occupational journey took him to the Post Office and then to the Cunard line where he served as a telegraphist; he died in action in France in 1917.[45]

Two other LNC boys were employed in specific occupations that were related to seafaring, but only one was afloat. There are fewer more straightforward and linear occupational pathways in our dataset than that of George Backhouse, who followed precisely in his father's footsteps. George Backhouse was the son of Liverpool Pilot William Backhouse. Upon completing his studies at the LNC, George Backhouse was apprenticed into the Liverpool Pilot Service in which he served for at least ten years and possibly many more. The 1911 census (and George's marriage certificate in 1913) show Backhouses senior and junior at the same address and in the same occupation, with the same employer. In contrast, the footsteps left by Martin Palmer Kerridge's father Martin Edmonds Kerridge strayed far and wide. Martin junior was born in the popular Victorian holiday destination of Great Yarmouth, into a family with

[44] As recorded in the LNC Admissions Register.

[45] [1881 census return James Shortell : 1891 census return Charles Pyecraft and James Shortell : 1901 census Charles Pyecraft, William Pyecraft and James Shortell : 1902 military record William Bennett : 1911 census William Bennett, Genest Hatton and William Pyecraft : 1917 death record William Bennett : 1923 death record William Pyecraft.]

local roots (both of his parents were born in Great Yarmouth). His earliest years appear to have been spent in relative affluence, with his father Martin senior running a drapery business employing at least two people and a household comprising two servants. At some point between 1891 and 1897 the Kerridge family relocated to Liverpool where Martin senior took-up employment as a 'salesman' in a drapery shop, perhaps on Liverpool's commercial artery of Smithdown Road (as they lived toward the junction of Smithdown Road and Egerton Road in 1901). Their domestic circumstances were more modest and their financial situation had deteriorated to such an extent that Martin junior qualified for a LNC scholarship in 1898. Martin senior was to die in 1917 at the Lancaster County Lunatic Asylum. The location of Martin Edmonds Kerridge's death serves as a poignant and necessary reminder that the human condition is more messy and complicated than evident in the snapshots of daily life provided by census returns. Mental health and wellbeing issues were stigmatised and poorly understood in the Victorian era and Martin Kerridge senior may have struggled with mental illness for years. He was not alone amongst the parents of LNC boys in experiencing episodes of mental instability. Richard Pierce's father Owen died in the North Wales Counties Mental Hospital in 1936 whilst Higginson Robinson (father of Charles) spent time in the Tuebrook Asylum in the 1870s and 1890s and at the age of seventy was taken into the St Pancras workhouse where his recorded personal information simply read 'traveller'. Upon leaving the LNC, Martin Palmer Kerridge became a shipping clerk.[46]

Despite enrolling upon a nautical education designed to prepare boys for a life at sea, twenty-three of the LNC boys pursued careers unrelated to seafaring. However, it is possible to map connections between the technical education provided by the LNC and the occupations of ten of these boys who engaged in jobs related to numerous aspects of engineering (civil, electrical, mechanical, nautical). In terms of technical competency there may be little to separate a mechanical engineer from a

[46] [1870 Tuebrook Asylum records Higginson Robinson : 1877 marriage record William Backhouse : 1881 census return William Backhouse : 1884 birth record Martin P Kerridge : 1891 census William Backhouse, Mary Kerridge (Palmer) and Martin E Kerridge : 1896 Tuebrook Asylum records Higginson Robinson : 1901 census return William Backhouse and Martin E Kerridge : 1911 census return George Backhouse and William Backhouse : 1913 marriage record George Backhouse : 1917 death record Martin E Kerridge : 1920 St Pancras Workhouse records Higginson Robinson : 1936 death record Owen Pierce.]

marine engineer, yet context becomes very significant when dealing with a combustion engine that is floating in a vast ocean. The technical education that provided the basis for the future careers of thirteen marine engineers also underpinned the future careers of ten non-marine engineers. Taken together, engineering (of various hues) accounts for almost a quarter of the future careers of LNC boys.

In a similar 'overlap' to the engineers, three of the LNC boys became clerks but not in a shipping company (as did Kerridge). It would certainly have been an advantage to these boys to be educated beyond the elementary level and to therefore develop transferable skills associated with 'tertiary-level' learning, but it is difficult to imagine how much value they may have drawn from the maritime curriculum delivered by the LNC in their workplaces. One of these boys, William Robertson Tyerman, did not intend to work in an administrative capacity but initially attempted an engineering apprenticeship. It was only after that proved unsuccessful that William followed his father (also William) in working as a clerk. Herbert Wall was the son of a ship's captain, but he worked as a clerk for a timber merchant and appears only to have approached a ship when he emigrated to Canada at some point before the outbreak of war in 1914. Also emigrating to Canada, David Adamson worked as a clerk after completing his studies at the LNC. He left behind an affluent homelife; in 1911 his father, a former cabinet maker and merchant, employed amongst his servants someone to wait at table in his comfortable Wirral retirement property. We do not know the extent to which boys attending the LNC were actively committed (at the age of thirteen or fourteen) to pursue a nautical career, yet it is unlikely that they had sufficient independent agency (or the financial means) to pursue a course of study that varied from the wishes of their parents.[47]

Three of the LNC boys pursued careers in the retail sector, two of whom followed faithfully their father's commercial footsteps (bookseller Cecil Thomson and draper James Hughes). It is unclear whether Hughes ever sought any other

[47] [1876 marriage record David Adamson : 1877 shipping record Joseph Wall : 1891 census return David Adamson and Joseph Wall : 1901 census return William Tyerman, Herbert Wall and Joseph Wall : 1911 census David Adamson and William R Tyerman : 1916 marriage record Herbert Wall.]

occupation, but the LNC admissions register records that upon completion of his two-year scholarship, Cecil Thomson immediately left to work in a bookshop in Castle Street in Liverpool. 'Philip and Sons' do appear to have developed a specialist line in maps, so Cecil's navigational training may have been put to some use. The occupations of the final 'cluster' of seven boys defy simplistic categorisation. Two of these boys (James Dysart Peterkin and Frederick William Thornton Viner) pursued a career in teaching. James Dysart Peterkin of Wigan and his Scots-born father shared the same name, the elder Peterkin moving through various retail jobs as a grocer, commercial traveller and dairy produce agent. Peterkin junior was a bright student, initially apprenticed to Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast, although a combination of problems with his eyesight and the death of his mother brought him back to the North-West of England. He enrolled at Owens College (forerunner of the University of Manchester) where he studied under Professor Dixon, Director of the Chemical Laboratory. With Dixon, Peterkin published a paper on nitric oxide in 1899 and he later became a schoolmaster in Wigan. Fred Viner came to teaching later in life, having previously worked as a shipping clerk and a storekeeper.[48]

Two of the remaining boys, Robert Aston and Charles Haycocks, led remarkably similar lives. Aston and Haycocks were both recipients of LNC scholarships (Aston in 1899 and Haycocks in 1900). From the LNC Aston immediately secured a position with the civil service in the General Post Office, which Haycocks also achieved in 1903. Both living in Liverpool in 1911, they recorded the same job title in their census return: GPO Sorting Clerk and Telegraphist. They both served in the First World War in the Royal Engineers (where Haycocks was appointed to the rank of Corporal). It is likely that both Aston and Haycocks worked for the GPO in Liverpool throughout their careers. The 1939 census finds Aston a Post Office Supervisor whilst Haycocks is a 'Clerical officer, Treasury class' in the

[48] [1871 census return James Peterkin (Snr) : 1881 census return James Hughes (Snr), James Peterkin (Snr) and Alexander Thomson : 1891 census return James Hughes (Snr) and James Peterkin (Snr) : 1901 census return James Hughes (Snr), James Peterkin (Jnr), James Peterkin (Snr), Alexander Thomson and Cecil Thomson : 1911 census James Hughes (Jnr), James Hughes (Snr), Alexander Thomson, Cecil Thomson and Fred Viner : 1914 marriage record James Peterkin (Jnr) : 1915 military record Fred Viner : 1925 death record Fred Viner.]

post office telegraphy department. Aston died in 1946, ten years before Haycocks, but in all other respects their stories appear to have run along parallel lines.[49]

However, the lives of the final three boys could barely have been more different. Henry Freeman was born in Wiltshire in 1884, within five months of the marriage of his parents. By 1891 the Freeman family had relocated to the Wirral peninsula, initially living in Seacombe and sending Thomas to school in nearby Wallasey. Henry's father (also Henry) enjoyed a varied career and was working as a factory foreman before the move from Wiltshire. On Merseyside Henry (Snr) was employed as a collector for an estate agent, an auctioneer (also for an estate agent) and then a grocery-shop owner. Upon leaving the LNC, Henry (Jnr) worked in the family's shop and saw military service in the First World War in the Royal Army Service Corps, from which he was discharged 'with a disability' in 1919. In later years Henry Freeman worked as a driver, still living on the Wirral in 1939. In contrast, William Dakin could barely wait to escape to the other side of the world where he struggled in Adelaide as an itinerant housepainter before his shocking, public death by his own hand.[50]

With reference to the career path followed by William Lincoln Waterbury, it is unclear whether he ever made any use of the formal curriculum delivered at the Boys' School of the LNC. Waterbury's father Frank was a coal trader, a job which took him overseas to Africa where he died on the 'Gold Coast' in Accra, Ghana in 1896 when William was just seven years old. Soon after, William's widowed mother married another Liverpool-based coal trader and the family continued to live in the city in comfortable circumstances. Young William neither followed his father (or step-

---

[49] [1901 civil service records Robert Aston : 1903 civil service records Charles Haycocks : 1911 census return Robert Aston and Charles Haycocks : 1914 military records Robert Aston and Charles Haycocks : 1939 census Robert Aston and Charles Haycocks : 1946 death record Robert Aston : 1956 death record Charles Haycocks.]

[50] [1884 marriage record Henry F Freeman and Catherine King : 1884 birth record Henry E Freeman : 1891 census return Henry F Freeman : 1901 census return Henry F Freeman : 1911 census return Henry E Freeman and Henry F Freeman : 1919 military record Henry E Freeman : 1939 census Henry E Freeman]. Details of the death of William Dakin having 'leapt from the Adelaide Post-Office balcony' on 27th November 1927 are published in articles 'Fall from Adelaide P.O.', *Broken Hill Barrier Miner*, October 31, 1927, 4 and 'Post-Office Fatality', *The Adelaide Advertiser*, November 1, 1927, 15.

father) into the coal (or any other) trade, nor did he navigate the ‘seven seas’. Instead, he spent a period of time in the civil service (at the BoT) before taking holy orders. Waterbury was ordained as a deacon and then as a priest in 1916 and 1917, securing the living of parishes of the Venerable Bede in Gateshead (1923) and St Marks in Heaton, Newcastle (1930). It is perhaps salient to conclude with and reflect upon the case of Rev. Waterbury who died at the age of 43. Although the LNC was an unlikely seminary, Waterbury’s maritime schooling appears to have left an enduring impression; he was a keen amateur painter whose works featured coastal themes and sea-vessels. Waterbury illustrates by example that the overall impact of the LNC Boys’ School on its alumni cannot be fully measured by one metric alone.[51]

[51] [1891 census return Frank Waterbury : 1896 death record Frank Waterbury : 1901 census return Alice Waterbury (Heapy) : 1911 census return William Waterbury : 1923 ecclesiastical records William Waterbury : 1932 death record William Waterbury.]

4.3 Scholarship

An illuminating insight into the approach taken to widening access to nautical education in late-Victorian Liverpool is afforded by analysis of the terms of the LNC scholarship scheme. In common with the city's University College studentships, the Boys' School scholarships were open to 'candidates resident within the city, whose parents have an income of not more than £250'.[52] Yet there were differences; the studentships were 'tenable for two or three years' and the annual maintenance grant stood at '£30 per annum', while the nautical scholarships were limited to two years with a maintenance grant of £12pa.[53] This may indicate the different values placed upon higher education and technical instruction, wherein the latter lacked parity of esteem with the former (although the disparity in funding may also reflect the ages and likely earning potential of the recipients). The prevailing lack of parity of esteem between higher education and technical instruction offers useful context for understanding why, despite his best efforts to blur this distinction, James Gill faced such an uphill struggle (as discussed in section 3.3).

Although publicly subsidised, access to the Boys' School remained beyond the means of all but financially secure families; average earnings in the UK were below £70 in 1900 and the cost of Boys' School fees for two years would exceed a tenth of that amount.[54] Approximately five times higher than the average income (and broadly equivalent to £29,000 in 2022 terms), the eligibility threshold for LNC scholarships may not have excluded too many potential applicants.[55] These were not therefore scholarships targeted at the poorest families, but applicable to a broader cross-section of social groups, reflecting the variations in middle class family

---

[52] 'The Liverpool Nautical College: New Educational Schemes', *Liverpool Echo*, January 16, 1894, 4.

[53] 'Liverpool Notes', *John O'Groat Journal*, February 2, 1894, 2.

[54] For detailed elaboration of this point, please refer to the Annual RPI and Average Earnings for Britain dataset published at https://www.measuringworth.com/datasets/ukearncpi/earnstudyx.pdf.

[55] According to the real wage calculator at 'MeasuringWorth.com' (utilising the Retail Prices Index).

income.[56] However, the payment of a monthly (£1) maintenance grant to the successful applicants would have had the biggest impact on the poorest households, perhaps allowing boys whose wages would otherwise be required to subsidise domestic budgets the freedom to focus on their studies in anticipation of their future maritime career.

Evidence from the LNC archive suggests that, in practice, the income threshold criterion for scholarship eligibility was not strictly enforced. The minutes of the NISC record that (in January 1895) three applications for nautical scholarships that 'had not stated the income of their parents' were reviewed by the sub-committee; all three candidates were given the benefit of the doubt and were allowed to take the entrance exam.[57] Furthermore, Director of Technical Instruction William Hewitt noted that 'after two or three years' experience, it was found that the operation of this apparently simple condition was very unequal in its incidence, and that there were considerable difficulties in its practical application; it was, therefore, discontinued'. In line with Hewitt's assertion that 'scholarships were, however, always confined to persons resident in the city, or the children of ratepayers', analysis of the LNC records shows that the nautical scholarship application age limit and the residency rules were stringently imposed, as were deadlines.[58] In 1896 a scholarship application was deemed 'ineligible as being outside the boundary of Liverpool' and 'three were received too late' to be entered.[59] The eligible age range for applicants was set at between 13 and 16 years of age at the point of enrolment and applicants were excluded from the selection process if they did not meet the age criterion, such as Master Menzies aged 12 years and 5 months and Master Brown at 12 years and 3 months in March 1897.[60] In the following year, the NISC discussed further

[56] 'Middle-class family income…was often between £100 and £300 per annum' (in 1871), Susie L Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in nineteenth-century Britain* (Routledge, 2016), 118.

[57] NISC Minute Book, January 18, 1895, 94. The original forms in which parental income was stated are not included in the LNC archive.

[58] Hewitt, *The Technical Instruction Committee,* 38.

[59] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, April 10, 1896, 102 and April 24, 1896, 103.

[60] NISC Minute Book, March 26, 1897, 247. Although the case of Ernest Rimmer (as discussed in section 4.1) demonstrates how easy it was to falsify information to appear to meet NISC's qualifying criteria.

applicants whose ages fell below the 13-year-old minimum threshold, relaxing this criterion to the extent that those 'who are not less than 12 years and 9 months old' should be entered for the exam.[61]

When he initially articulated his ideas for nautical scholarships for the Boys' School of the LNC, Gill noted that attainment of a certain standard of proficiency in 'preliminary mathematics' would be required.[62] Furthermore, in agreeing to offer scholarships to the LNC, the NISC determined that the entrance exam would be 'competitive'.[63] To ensure the probity of proceedings, the Rev R Wilson Jones MA was appointed as Examiner to set and mark the entrance papers for the initial exam.[64] By 1896 the candidates at the entrance exam answered questions covering six subject areas: Arithmetic (100 marks), Algebra (100 marks), Euclid (100 marks), Geography (100 marks), Geometry (70 marks) and Dictation (30 marks).[65] In the following year, the standard of the entrance exam was raised (if measured by the total number of possible marks, which increased to 700).[66] It appears that such increased stringency sought to limit the award of nautical scholarships to the more gifted students, thereby increasing the chances of their success at the LNC once *in situ*.

Successful candidates for nautical scholarships may have outperformed their peers, but evidence suggests that the overall standard of performance by applicants varied from year to year. Some strong performances were noted; the top marks attained by scholarship candidates in 1896 were 81% and 76% and in 1897 the top marks were 73% and 66%.[67] However, a subsequently redacted jotting in the margin

[61] NISC Minute Book, May 6, 1898, 313.

[62] LNC Headmaster's report book, June 28, 1893, 25. Initially, Willink and Hewitt sought to extend the nautical scholarship programme to include the Mersey-based training ships *Conway* and *Indefatigable*. Preferring their independence from municipal oversight, the training ships declined to participate in the scheme, leaving the entirety of the nautical scholarships in the gift of the NISC to deploy to students of the Boys' School of the LNC.

[63] NISC Minute Book, December 29, 1892, 15.

[64] NISC Minute Book, March 28, 1894, 33.

[65] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, April 24, 1896, 103.

[66] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, April 23, 1897, 126.

[67] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, June 19, 1896, 104 and April 23, 1897, 126.

of the Headmaster's report book is revealing. On 16th February 1895, the NISC discussed the scholarship entrance exam that had taken place on 22nd January. The sub-committee was provided with a commentary about the process via the Headmaster's formal report and a separate report from the examiner listing candidate performance. The Chair of the NISC confirmed the award of scholarships by writing the names of those students to whom scholarships were conferred into the margin of the Headmaster's report book, followed by the statement 'in future no award unless candidate gets over 50% of marks'.[68] This provides an insight into the deliberations of the NISC that were not captured in the official record (minutes) of that meeting, which instead simply recorded the names of the successful candidates. These words were subsequently struck-through, implying that whilst that statement may have reflected a despondent or reluctant decision of the meeting (jotted whilst the discussion was underway) it did not subsequently result in any agreed change to policy or process. The redacted statement 'in future no award' implies that at least one of the successful nautical scholarship candidates in 1895 failed to attain 50% of the available marks, although the original reports are not included in the LNC archive.

Notwithstanding the broad (and inconsistently enforced) eligibility criteria, the available evidence suggests that the LNC was not exactly inundated with applications for scholarships to the Boys' School. Such data are recorded in the NISC's paperwork for some but not all of the years in which the scholarships were offered (1894-1901). It appears that over this period the number of eligible applications only exceeded 10 in one year and the number of candidates attempting the competitive entrance exam ranged from 10 (1897) to four (1895). With such a small pool of candidates from which to draw in 1895, it is perhaps unsurprising that the successful candidate(s) need not have demonstrated a particularly high overall standard of performance. Perhaps more surprising were the successful candidates who promptly resigned their scholarships; William James Bennett (who took up a job in the post office after four months at the College in 1897) and E. Fitzgerald, who 'changed his mind about going to sea' and failed even to enrol after performing well

[68] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, February 15, 1895, 64.

in the 1896 competitive scholarship exam.[69] In both cases, the scholarship was awarded to the boy placed next in the order of results (Robert Henry Ainsworth in 1896 and John Hall in 1897).

Available records indicate that at least eight of the 17 Nautical College scholarship boys (1893-1902) completed their two years of scheduled study, whilst four did not (the remaining five may well have completed their studies but this is not recorded in the LNC archive; three of these five received positive evaluations at the end of their first year of study). James Gill was keen to champion not only the scholarship programme but also the selected scholars themselves. In March 1895, Gill persuaded the NISC to issue 'vellum certificates' to boys obtaining nautical scholarships and the success of at least one of the boys in winning a scholarship was celebrated in an article published in the local press.[70] The archived LNC records appear to suggest that after Gill's death the NISC lost enthusiasm for the scholarships, initially opting to 'postpone the question of scholarships' when the matter was raised by Headmaster Venner in 1901, the last year in which nautical scholarships would be offered.[71]

Data relating to the 17 scholarship students have been compared with the overall Boys' School student dataset. With regard to student place of birth, fifteen of the scholarship students were born in Liverpool, which reflects the predominance of Liverpool-based births in the wider student body. The two remaining scholarship students were born elsewhere in England (Norfolk and Worcestershire, in 1884 and 1886 respectively) but by 1901 both were resident with their families in Liverpool, thereby meeting one of the scholarship eligibility criteria. Similarly, the scholarship parent birthplace data subset (thirty-four of one hundred and ninety-two) are comparable to the data covering the whole 'parent population'. Just under a third (ten) were Liverpool natives, a similar number from the Celtic nations (seven from Scotland, four from Wales) and thirteen were born elsewhere in England (all regions

[69] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, May 22, 1896, 105.

[70] NISC Minute Book, March 1, 1895, 103. 'Local News', *LM*, February 25, 1895, 6.

[71] LNC Headmaster's Report Book, April 22, 1901, 195.

represented: four from the North-East, three from each of the South-East and South-West, two from the Midlands and one from the wider North-West region).

However, the profile of parental occupation data for the subset of boys awarded scholarships is at variance from the global profile. Only six of the seventeen scholarship boys had parents with occupations related to seafaring, of which only three were certified ship officers, including Francis Fraser's father Captain John Fraser. It may be relevant that John Fraser was relatively old when he qualified to be a ship's mate (at thirty-five years old) and master (at forty years old). Fraser initially served an apprenticeship and worked as a sailmaker, which may have appeared to be a career with a bright future in the 1860s (less so in the 1890s). Captain Fraser appears not to have reaped significant financial reward from his seafaring exploits, as the Fraser family income fell within the parameters of qualification for the award of an LNC scholarship at the point at which the application was made. Griffin also recounts the tale of a seafarer whose contribution to the family's finances declined over time: 'At some point during twenty-five years of marriage, Matthew Cowper slipped from being a provider to being a burden'.[72] Francis Fraser claimed to have sailed twice round the world with his father before reaching ten years of age, so it was not through lack of early employment that his family's financial circumstances were straitened.[73]

An example of the distorting impact of multiple careers on this categorisation may be illustrated by John Williamson's father Andrew, who passed his 'second mate' qualification in 1874 and was gainfully employed at sea three years later. However, he underwent a significant career change and took up employment in the Liverpool police force in 1878. Throughout his childhood, John Williamson knew his father as a domestically-grounded policeman (latterly also a fireman) rather than as a (remote) seafarer, yet the tales of his father's youthful exploits may have provided the inspiration for his nautical education. Of the three remaining scholarship boys

[72] Griffin, *Bread Winner,* 109.

[73] [1871 census return John Fraser : 1878 marriage record John Fraser: 1880 shipping records John Fraser : 1884 shipping records John Fraser : 1891 census return John Fraser. Information about Francis Fraser's youthful seafaring experience extracted from Francis Fraser's obituary, published via the Ancestry website, accessed 18th July 2022.]

whose fathers worked in occupations allied to seafaring, one was a ship steward, and the others were shipping clerks.[74]

Although there may have been little difference in role (or income) between (non-seafaring) bookkeepers and (seafaring related) clerks in shipping offices, none of the scholarship boys, therefore those likely to be from less affluent backgrounds, had fathers who worked in the 'financial sector' of occupations beyond seafaring. Five scholarship boys had parents who worked in the retail sector: a bookseller, draper, furniture salesman, hairdresser, and a 'shopkeeper' (selling boots). This may indicate that for these parents a technical education at the LNC offered their sons prospects and opportunities that were not available to them in their youth. It may also indicate that such an education was intended to prepare their sons for careers that were more financially rewarding than careers in retail, or that a career as a ship's officer would offer their sons the chance to attain a higher social standing than they were themselves able to enjoy. If so, this demographic characteristic may offer evidence in support of the argument that the LNC succeeded in extending opportunities for educational and social advancement to deserving children and further support for the idea that such social aspiration toward bourgeois respectability was the preserve of more affluent working families.[75]

Four of the sons of parents whose occupations were not aligned with seafaring, but were aligned with skilled trades and crafts, secured scholarships at the LNC. A joiner, coachbuilder and engineer would all understand and value the benefits afforded by a technical education as a pathway toward an apprenticeship. Whether Mr William Ainsworth had served his time as a 'lard refiner' is a moot point, but his son Robert was more of an adventurer. An illuminating annotation in the LNC Admissions Register suggests that having completed his two years at the LNC,

[74] [1874 shipping records Andrew Williamson : 1881 census return Andrew Williamson : 1901 census return Andrew Williamson.]

[75] Indeed, De Bellaigue argues that the middle classes embodied 'the new fluidity of nineteenth-century society': Christina De Bellaigue, 'Great Expectations? Childhood, Family, and Middle-Class Social Mobility in Nineteenth-Century England', *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 1 (2019), 30.

Robert boarded a ship named *Shakespeare* and at the age of fifteen sailed for South Africa. As far as the available records suggest, he was never to return.

The highest ratio of scholarship places to LNC boys by employment type emerges in respect of the (vaguely catch-all) authority roles category, including two very different examples of occupational continuity and fluidity. William Bennett's father Frederick worked for 42 years as a signalman at Edge Hill railway station. Rather than a job for life on the railways, the opportunity afforded by the LNC scholarship may have offered young William hope of a more financially rewarding future as an officer in the merchant marine. Indeed, after his time at the LNC William took up an offer of employment with the Marconi company, working aboard ocean-going liners as a telegraphist. He enlisted in the telegraph battalion of the Royal Engineers in March 1900, serving two years in South Africa at the time of the Boer War. Bennett died in action in a French field in the November of 1917, serving as a sergeant with the Royal Engineers.[76]

Information has been collected in respect of paternal occupation for all the Nautical College boys, thereby facilitating comparison of the scholarship data subset with the wider dataset.[77] Analyses of these datasets show that the scholarship data subset is very similar to the global dataset in all but one respect. From the twenty-nine boys who progressed to the LNC following a period of study at the Liverpool Institute, only one boy (William James Bennett) did so on the basis of a scholarship. Around 16% of the students enrolled in the Division 1 (Boys') School at the LNC were awarded scholarships. If this 'global scholarships to students' ratio was applied to the Liverpool Institute dataset we would expect to find five times the number of

[76] [1869 marriage record Frederick Bennett and Mary Williams : 1871 census return Frederick Bennett : 1881 census return Frederick Bennett : 1891 census return Frederick Bennett: 1901 census return Frederick Bennett : 1902 military records William Bennett : 1904 military record William Bennett : 1911 census return William Bennett : 1917 military record William Bennett.]

[77] It is recognised that this approach to data collation based upon paternal occupation imposes limitations on an understanding of family dynamics and restricts the degree to which it is possible to measure the influence of the wider family upon the decision to enrol boys into such specialist technical education. A more nuanced and comprehensive appraisal of kinship networks is provided in respect of the 'siblings dataset' (see section 4.5), in which the influence of the wider family network and, crucially, the role of the mother is explored.

scholarship boys from that secondary school alone. It is perhaps ironic that Bennett (whose father was a railway signalman) was the only one of the boys offered a LNC scholarship that we know to have embarked upon but subsequently resigned that scholarship. William Bennett and Robert Biggs Domony, from the (non-denominational) Arnot Street Board School achieved the highest scores in the LNC Boys' School 1897 scholarship exam. They both enrolled on 3rd May 1897 but Bennett served only five months of his two-year scholarship, taking up employment with the General Post Office. If the definition of scholarship boys is restricted to those boys who not only won a scholarship but who completed that scholarship, then it can also be concluded that the Liverpool Institute as the largest (by far) source of 'Division 1' students would have provided none of the LNC's scholarship boys.

The elementary schools from which the LNC scholarship boys emerged were numerous and diverse, reflecting the proliferation of such schools toward the end of the nineteenth century, especially in locations with a rapidly growing population such as Liverpool. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 laid the foundations for state-funded compulsory education for children aged five to thirteen in the UK and the 1891 Elementary Education Act established the principle of education as a right and not as a privilege (or perhaps a lottery, with reference to the continued operation of charitable or 'ragged' schools). Because of these totemic legislative advances, thousands of children were afforded academic opportunities that their forebears had previously been denied. Independent schools and church schools continued to enrol students (into the twentieth century and beyond) but public investment in, and governance of, 'Board Schools' became a central function of municipal authorities in the late-Victorian period.[78] The seventeen Nautical College scholarship students were drawn from eight schools in (and around) the heart of Liverpool. Four of these schools, providing nine scholarship-winning students, were local authority-run, elementary, non-denominational Board Schools. A further four scholarship-winning students emerged from a single Church of England school in Liverpool and the same number from three independently run schools (including Bennett from the Liverpool Institute).

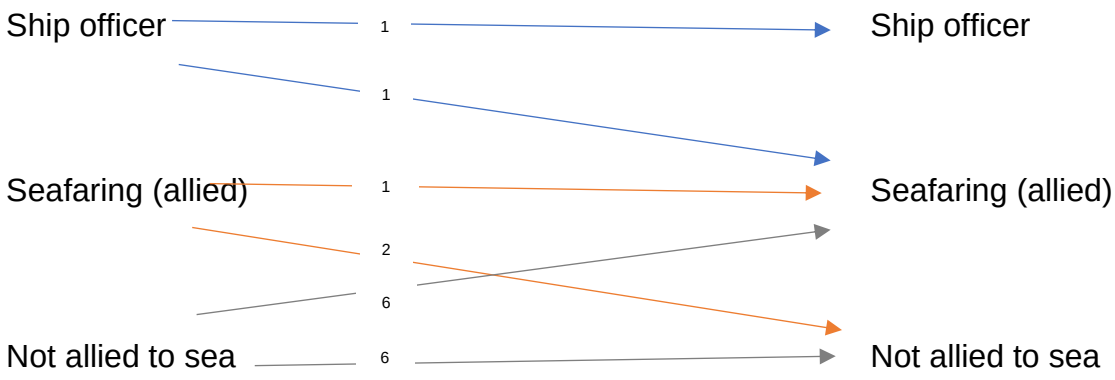
[78] Walter H.G. Armytage, 'The 1870 Education Act', *British Journal of Education Studies* 18, no. 2 (1970): 121-133.

Admission to the Boys' School of the LNC was contingent upon attainment of standards of proficiency in elementary education that were less likely to have been reached by children of the poorest families, especially as their full participation in elementary education may have been (financially) restricted. This in turn suggests that the success of the scholarship programme in widening access to nautical education was stymied by the College's own requirements of prior educational attainment; the poorest families were effectively excluded. Consideration of LNC student parental occupation data by student prior education institution for the scholarship boys reveals that the full range of occupations may be found across the contributing schools. The spread of occupations of parents of scholarship boys from the church school (clerk, hairdresser, furniture salesman and joiner) are not discernibly different from the occupations of parents of scholarship boys from Board schools (including *inter alia* a teacher, an engineer and a lard refiner). However, the similarity between the range of parental occupations for scholarship students from (publicly funded) elementary schools and the range of parental occupations of students from the (fee-paying) Liverpool Institute is more telling. Occupations at the lower end of the social order are absent from the data pertaining to the parents of the scholarship boys and (other than Edward Shortell whose father James shovelled coal at the Liverpool Docks) from all the parents of the LNC boys.

There is a curious coda to this debate hidden within an obscure document (or rather, missing from the document), which suggests how 'technical instruction' may have been regarded by aspirant professionals and their families in the late-Victorian era. LNC graduate Richard Davies was employed in 1915 as an 'Engineering Assistant to the Wallasey Corporation' at which point he applied to join the Institute of Civil Engineers. When asked to list the particulars of his prior education, he falsely claimed that he had studied at Wallasey Grammar School until 1903 and made no reference to his enrolment at the LNC in 1901. It is not plausible that this was an oversight on the part of Richard Davies, so we are left to conclude that he deliberately sought to conceal his technical instruction at a nautical college from his prospective professional peers. If such a stigma existed in relation to participation in technical education, what kind of ignominy may have been attached to the pursuit of a Nautical College scholarship?

Further corroboration for the argument that the inclusive 'educational ladder' of publicly funded technical education reaped only limited benefits can be found in consideration of the occupational destinations of the LNC scholarship boys. Whereas more than half of the LNC boys that were not awarded scholarships progressed occupationally to be ships' officers, only one of the scholarship boys became a certified ships' officer; James Dysart Peterkin, whose father was a certified ships' officer. Closer analysis of the scholarship boys' destinations dataset reveals some movement between the employment categories of parents and the occupational destinations of their sons (as demonstrated in figure 9). Overall, the 'scholarship parents' are split 2:3:12 by occupation category (ships' officer / occupation allied to seafaring / occupation not allied to seafaring), whereas their sons are split 1:8:8. This shows some movement from 'occupations not allied to seafaring' toward 'occupations allied to seafaring' for the scholarship boys, which may not appear to be particularly surprising given the curricular focus of their education at the LNC.

Figure 9 LNC scholarship boys movement between parent and student employment categories (n=17)



Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns.

Three of the scholarship students following occupations allied to seafaring whose parents worked in areas not allied to seafaring (Morgan, Brebner & Williams, sons of a coachbuilder, shopkeeper and schoolteacher respectively) became marine engineers, an occupation very closely related to their tuition at the LNC. The

technical aspect of the boys' education may have advanced the occupation of William Bennett (telegraphist), the academic aspect may have advanced the occupation of Martin Kerridge (shipping clerk) and the nautical aspect may have advanced the occupation of Robert Ainsworth (sailor). It is therefore possible to demonstrate a relationship between students winning scholarships at the LNC and their subsequent pursuit of seafaring-related careers that differed from those of their parents. However, the lack of scholarship boys attaining the rank of officer (let alone master) in the mercantile marine suggests that access to such professions was not transformed by the LNC scholarship initiative.

4.4 Kinship

Prior to the industrial revolution, multi-generational occupations were not uncommon (for example, a farmer inheriting land, or a master craftsman apprenticing his son in his trade). However, in the nineteenth century, ascendant industry (be that in the form of factory, mill or mine) dominated and determined occupational outcomes. In this context, it is interesting to observe that the outcomes of this research suggest that occupational inheritance remained prevalent amongst the sons of Liverpool's seafarers in the late-Victorian port city. In each of the six sibling groups investigated within this section, the occupation of the boys' father was linked to seafaring. Such occupations include master mariner (King, Rae, Scott & Short), marine engineer (Ridyard), chief steward (Grant), harbour supervisor (King) and shipowner (Rae). Furthermore, in all but the case of Ridyard, seafaring occupations were also undertaken by the grandparents of the sibling boys, including master mariner (Rae, Scott, Short), ship owner (Rae), ship agent (King), customs officer (Grant), coastguard (Short) and naval rating (Grant). Not only were the sibling boys exposed to seafaring occupations within their family, they were also resident in a port city where other seafaring occupations were manifest. Furthermore, their enrolment in the Boys' School had been undertaken by parents intent on preparing their sons for seafaring careers. In such circumstances, it is unsurprising that all the sibling boys pursued successful careers at sea (two of whom were marine engineers, all the others qualified and served as deck officers).[79]

In considering the ancestral profiles of the sibling boys, it emerges that their fathers all held positions of responsibility or authority in their occupational spheres. Four of the siblings' fathers were master mariners commanding sailing vessels (King, Rae, Scott and Short), of whom James Rae appeared to have the most lucrative career and Edwin Short the least. Furthermore, Henry Grant was a Chief Steward

[79] [1834 marriage record John Short and Jane Wiblin : 1841 census return James Grant and John Short : 1851 shipping record Alexander Rae : 1856 marriage record James King and Emma Wilson : 1870 shipping record James Rae : 1873 shipping record Edwin G Short : 1874 marriage record Henry Grant and Mary Smerdon : 1875 shipping record John King : 1877 marriage record Emily Draper and Joseph Scott : 1879 shipping record Joseph Scott : 1891 census return Henry Grant, Alexander Rae and Arnold Ridyard (Snr) :1901 census return John King : 1906 death record John Rae.]

and Arnold Ridyard was Chief Engineer (for Elder Dempster), both occupying senior maritime roles that carried both respectability and responsibility. Once Ralph and Norman King's father John had retired from a life at sea, he was appointed harbour supervisor in which authoritative capacity their grandfather (William Corfield) had also served. Also, Edwin and John Short's grandfather (John Short) had been the officer in charge of a coastguard station, a well-regarded and well remunerated position reflecting the significant responsibilities of the role. Therefore, in addition to their paternal influence, these (grand)fathers also appeared as role models for their sons (and others in the wider family) to emulate. This evidence leads me to suggest that such positive vocational family role-models challenge Humphries' depictions of children resentful, indifferent or fearful toward fathers who had been away at sea.[80]

At variance from the wider distribution of parental birthplaces in the full Boys' School scholar dataset, the subset of sibling ancestral locations is unusually geographically concentrated (please see Appendix 2). Half of the parents in the sibling subset hail from ancestral bases in the South-west of England, between Portsmouth and Penryn. Unsurprisingly, most of these bases are found in coastal locations thereby reflecting the particular predominance of seafaring as an ancestral occupation within the sibling subset. Yet, in considering the ancestral profiles the sibling boys, the occupational attainments of the majority of their fathers do not appear to have been pre-determined. Other than James Rae, who was employed by the 'family firm', all the other fathers in the sibling data subset achieved roles of authority or status independent of the advantage or support afforded by kinship networks. They were 'self-made' professionals, acquiring their economic and social status through their endeavour alone. With the possible exception of Ralph and Norman King's maternal line, featuring a well-educated and well-travelled milieu of characters (and the occasional cameo by family friend Charles Darwin), ancestral roots of the sibling boys can be traced back to those working the land, in factories or in military occupations. Their comparative lack of social or financial advantage did

[80] Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 130-131. See also Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

not however impede their eventual progress toward positions of authority within Liverpool's maritime community.

There are, within the families of the sibling students, a number of interesting examples of sibling interaction that illustrate idiosyncrasies in patterns of kinship. Valerie Sanders utilises contemporary literary sources to reflect on the significance of '[t]his unavoidable, lifelong sibling tie, which persists through estrangement, death or disguised identity' in blurring the boundaries of the traditional view of the Victorian nuclear family.[81] Davidoff argues that '[B]oth in youth and as adults, siblings have been key links in patterns of migration, for gaining access to housing, waged work and support of all kinds'.[82] One example from the sibling dataset that would appear to substantiate this argument can be found in the case of Sydney and Stanley Grant's father Henry and their uncle George. George David Crossland was over twelve years older than Henry Robert Grant and left the family home when his half-brother was a small child. Yet despite their variations in age (eldest and youngest child surviving to adulthood, respectively) and parentage (different fathers), Henry appeared to carry greater significance for, and influence upon, George than the 'full siblings' who were closer to his own age. Unlike his brother James who followed their father into the navy, Henry Grant followed George Crossland into the merchant service and into a career as a steward. He also named his son Sydney Crossland Grant, perhaps in affectionate tribute to this most influential (half)sibling.[83]

Indeed, in later work, Davidoff notes that '[D]ependence on a wider kin network is also illustrated in naming patterns'.[84] This phenomenon is evident throughout the sibling dataset, but particularly pronounced in relation to the Rae siblings, in light of the names of their father and uncles. Grandfather Alexander Rae named his sons Samuel, John, Henry and James. His son James sent four children to the Boys'

---

[81] Valerie Sanders, '"Lifelong Soulmates?": The Sibling Bond in Nineteenth-Century Fiction', *Victorian Review* 39, no. 2 (2013), 55.

[82] Davidoff, *Worlds Between,* 206.

[83] [1840 birth record George Crossland : 1852 birth record Henry Grant : 1857 shipping record George Crossland : 1864 shipping record George Crossland : 1872 shipping record Henry Grant.]

[84] Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780-1920* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 58.

School of the LNC, three of whom were named James Henry (referencing both father and uncle, who were twins), Samuel (uncle) and John (also uncle). This naming pattern suggested a close family connection that can be substantiated by evidence drawn from contemporary records. Not only did these Raes all go to sea, but their careers were closely entwined with the family's ship-owning business. The elder Rae brothers crossed paths at various points and in various locations (be that in their ancestral base of Dumfriesshire, family homes in Liverpool or when at sea), sharing close personal and professional interests. Thus, beyond the locations in which they were born and raised, the Raes illustrate how geographically-separated and highly mobile seafarers established wider land-based networks and communities in Victorian Britain. Indeed, Henry Rae married Elizabeth Wilson, the cousin of Mary Wilson who was his sister-in-law (wife of brother John).[85]

Davidoff asserts that '[S]uch 'close marriages' [sic] doubled or trebled the kinship ties between their respective families'.[86] Yet there is an example of even closer family ties within the sibling dataset. LNC sibling Edwin Short's mother Mary (née Cullen) may have been separated from her seven siblings by the Irish Sea, but from her Liverpool home she evidently remained in contact with her sister Frances in Wexford. Frances' daughter, Frances Alice, married Edwin Short, her cousin. The *Book of Common Prayer* includes a 'Table of Kindred and Affinity' that lists marriages forbidden by the Anglican Church. In the Victorian era this included such prohibited spouses as wife's sister / husband's brother and even brother's daughter's husband. Yet marriage to a cousin was not prohibited, despite the closer genetic affiliation of such spouses. It may perhaps have appeared hypocritical if not treasonous to condemn endogamy in the Victorian era, especially as the reigning monarch had engaged in that very practice. Indeed, Adam Kuper estimates that in 'the great bourgeois clans of nineteenth-century England… more than one marriage in ten was with a first or second cousin'.[87] However, Mary Corbett reflects that in more recent

[85] [1851 census return Alexander Rae, Henry Rae, James Rae, John Rae and Samuel Rae : 1869 marriage record John Rae and Mary Wilson.]

[86] Davidoff, *Thicker than Water,* 60.

[87] Adam Kuper, *Incest and influence. The Private Life of Bourgeois England* (Harvard University Press, 2009), 18.

times ‘Like the old boys’ network itself, cousin marriage has come to appear archaic and regressive’.[88]

Examples of the changing nature of sibling relationships can also be found in the sibling dataset, for example in relation to Ernest and John Scott’s mother Emily (née Draper). Despite being close in age (within two years) to her brother Alfred, he adopted the role of her legal guardian upon the death of their father. It was only with the consent of Alfred that Emily was permitted to marry Joseph Scott at the age of twenty, a ceremony witnessed by Mary’s brother/guardian. Yet sibling relationships may not all have been so supportive or harmonious, as suggested by the case of Edwin and John Short. A decade before he married his cousin, Edwin Short signed onto the vessel *Itata, en route* to Australia. Not yet qualified as a ship’s officer but with two years of seafaring experience, Edwin was an Able Seaman aboard *Itata* whilst his younger brother John also joined the crew (as an Ordinary Seaman). It is unclear what (or whether anything) passed between the brothers on the long voyage to New South Wales but on arrival in the port of Newcastle John promptly deserted the ship (and his brother).[89] Perhaps the most intriguing manifestation of sibling affiliation from the data subset emerges in relation to Norman and Ralph King’s father John, who offers an example of what Claudia Nelson called the ‘phenomenon of the constructed family’.[90] Having escaped the turbulence of his childhood (dead mother, alcoholic father, sporadic relocations) by going to sea, John King developed a deep, fraternal relationship with follow apprentice Norman Corfield. Their bond was so strong that John became a regular visitor to the Corfield family home when ashore and he formally joined that family by marrying Norman’s sister Eliza.[91]

The extensive and detailed sibling ancestry dataset comprises interesting information about kinship models in Victorian Britain. Lawrence Stone has published

---

[88] Mary Jean Corbett, ‘Cousin Marriage, Then and Now’, *Victorian Review* 39, no. 2 (2013), 77.

[89] General Register and Record, Office of Shipping & Seamen, Verification sheet 14712/02.

[90] Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007). [1911 marriage record Frances Coursey and Edwin Short].

[91] [1876 marriage record Eliza Corfield and John King : 1877 marriage record Emily Draper and Joseph Scott : 1900 shipping records Edwin Short and John Short].

the findings of a study of family structures over three hundred years, depicting transition between predominantly rural 'extended families' in the seventeenth century to predominantly urban 'nuclear families' at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[92] However, there is some considerable debate between historians over the predominant nature of the Victorian family. George Behlmer offers criticism of this view, having investigated Victorian family units using data from the 1851 census returns and concluding that only 35% of households could be defined as nuclear.[93] In contrast Schürer *et al* using a different (substantially bigger) data sample conclude:

> [T]hroughout the period 1851–1911 the nuclear family – consisting of just a single CFU [conjugal family unit] with no additional family members … was by far the most dominant household type, and increasingly so, accounting for some 70–3 per cent of all households in the period, which in turn accommodated between 63 and 69 per cent of the population.[94]

More recently, Beardmore *et al* consider it 'undeniable' that 'census documents reveal most co-residential family units to be broadly nuclear both at any point in time and over time'.[95]

This debate will not be resolved here (nor anywhere unless such analyses are undertaken within consistent reporting parameters). Yet Hager and Schaffer offer a carefully worded commentary on the debate: 'To understand how the Victorians experienced family, we have to relinquish our assumption that the small nuclear family was normative'.[96] Hager and Schaffer are careful to avoid making any comment on the 'typicality' of the Victorian nuclear family, instead emphasising that

---

[92] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (Penguin, 1979).

[93] George K. Behlmer, *Friends of the Family: The English Home and its Guardians, 1850-1940* (Stanford University Press, 1999).

[94] Schürer *et al*, 'Household and family structure', 383.

[95] Carol Beardmore, Cara Dobbing and Stephen King, 'Introduction' in Beardmore *et al* (eds.), *Family Life in Britain, 1650–1910* (Springer, 2019), 4.

[96] Kelly Hager and Talia Schaffer, 'Introduction: Extending Families', *Victorian Review* 39, no. 2 (2013), 7.

contemporary understanding of Victorian families should not be constrained by predetermined expectations, especially where findings are derived from data that was gathered for a different purpose. Whilst census records provide a useful dataset, the information therein was captured by household in relation to people present in that property at a given date rather than who lived at a particular property or who may have been considered as an integral part of an identified family unit. In comparison, the information comprising the sibling dataset is drawn from a range of sources that add layers of texture and detail to the episodic nature of data sources from UK census returns. It is therefore possible to consider how closely, if at all, the experiences of the Nautical College siblings and their families compare with the model of 'nuclear Victorian families'.

At the point of their enrolment at the Boys' School, all the siblings were domiciled in 'nuclear families' within a single conjugal family unit (CFU) household. Yet this is a snapshot in time which masks a wide variety of previous domestic arrangements and more varied kinship models. In some cases, the 'attainment' of such stable and structured home lives followed years of more flexible and temporary domestic arrangements. The Rae siblings who attended the Boys' School all recorded their address as 49 Fern Grove, Sefton Park, which would be their family home for over twenty years (notwithstanding the property that they also owned in Scotland). Yet prior to their arrival in Liverpool, the Rae children were raised either aboard ship when accompanying their parents to sea or with relatives in Scotland in their parents' absence. The childhood family experience of the Rae siblings therefore appears to have been initially flexible but subsequently conformed to the nuclear model once their parents invested in their smart double-fronted property by Sefton Park. Beverley Skeggs equates the Victorian notion of 'respectability' with a publicly acknowledged 'embodied form of moral authority'.[97] For the Raes, if not for all the siblings' families, the establishment of a respectable nuclear household offered a public demonstration of their economic and social (indeed moral) status and social standing within Victorian Liverpool.[98]

[97] Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (Sage, 1997), 3.

[98] [1869 shipping record Henry Rae : 1911 census return Jane Rae (Thomson).]

It may be argued that the Raes offer atypical examples from the data subset of the families of the sibling boys, owing to their relative wealth and status as Liverpool shipowners and that these specific circumstances may have influenced their domestic arrangements in ways that are not more generally replicable within the wider dataset. Yet, notwithstanding such atypicality, the experiences of the families of the other two ocean-going master mariners (John King and Joseph Scott) appear to follow a distinctly similar pattern to that of the Raes. Whereas the Rae children spent time at sea with their parents punctuated by periods under the care of their relatives (in Scotland), Norman and Ralph King also experienced a childhood split between travelling the world and residing with their mother's relatives (in Cornwall) and the same applied to Ernest and John Scott (in Liverpool). It appears that the family experience of the King, Rae and Scott sibling boys was defined by the determining factor of their mothers travelling on ships captained by their husbands. It was only when Jane Rae, Eliza King and Emily Scott decided to stop travelling the world that the family put down definite domestic roots in which their children were housed. In this way, the actions of their parents collectively (and their mother specifically) transformed the children's familial experience from a flexible kinship model to that of a domestic nuclear family.

Only in the case of the Kings did both parents of children in the sibling data subset remain at home, as John Wesley King was employed from the 1890s by Fernie and Sons in the role of Liverpool harbour supervisor. In every other case the fathers within the sibling data subset were largely absent from the domestic setting as a consequence of overseas travel, or death at sea (Joseph Scott 1900, Edwin Grant 1902) thereby challenging the supposed centrality of the 'male breadwinner'.[99] Neither James Grant nor William Ridyard were master mariners, and the family experiences of their children were distinctly different from that of the Rae, King and Scott brothers. In both cases, Henry and Mary Grant and Arnold and Mary Ridyard

[99] 'Though there is neither a normative man nor a set of behavioural values labelled "masculine" that consistently expresses how men act and portray themselves, most westernized nations have traditionally subscribed to the authority of patriarchy and the ethic of the male breadwinner'. Margaret Walsh, 'Gender in the History of Transportation Services: A Historiographical Perspective', *Business History Review* 81, no. 3 (2007), 555.

appeared to acquire a settled home environment once married, prior to the birth of their children and therefore the settled domestic setting into which their children would be born. It is reasonable to expect that Mary Grant's mother was brought into the family home in her latter years, as she died under her daughter's roof. Yet, latterly resident Grandmother Smerdon aside, Sydney and Stan Grant appeared to experience a nuclear family upbringing. William and Arnold (Jnr) were geographically separated from the wider Ridyard / Thornley clans, save for one paternal uncle. Yet whilst Arnold (Snr) and his elder brother Samuel Ridyard were both resident on the Wirral peninsula, their families lived some miles apart. The domestic environment from which William and Arnold Ridyard emerged may conform to the nuclear family model but the presence of their father's fascinating guests, associated with his activities in Western Africa, would have provided a unique homelife.[100]

Of all the sibling family configurations, the Shorts appear the most 'singular'. Although Edwin Short was a master mariner his trade was coastal coal transportation rather than oceanic travel, so his wife Mary did not accompany him to sea. Yet the Shorts did not 'settle down' into a fixed domestic pattern before the birth of their children. Edwin Short and Mary Cullen married in Bristol in 1873 and their first child was also born in Bristol in 1875. Between 1876 and 1879 they appeared to be living in Plymouth (Edwin short's ancestral base) where their next two children (including Edwin) were born, whereas between 1881 and 1884 they were once again in Bristol, where their next two children (including John) were born. From 1888 they were based in Liverpool, taking up residence in a modest terraced house that would become the Short family home for around thirty years.[101]

The familial experience of Edwin, John and the other Short children was broadly comparable to the Raes, Kings and Scotts (in that it comprised initial

[100] For a discussion of Arnold Ridyard's legacy through contributions to the West African Collection of the World Museum in Liverpool, see Zachary Kingdon and Dmitri van den Bersselaar, 'Collecting Empire?: African Objects, West African Trade and a Liverpool Museum' in Heggarty et al, *The Empire in One City?*: 100-122.

[101] [1873 marriage record Mary Cullen and Edward Short : 1875 birth record Marian Short : 1879 birth record Edwin Short : 1884 birth record Herbert Short : 1888 birth record Ernest Short].

geographical flux and flexibility followed by a deferred and settled 'nuclear family' configuration), but for different reasons. Edwin and Mary's relocation from Bristol to Plymouth in 1876 occurred in the same year as Edwin's father's death in Plymouth. Might the newly widowed Jane Short have reached out to her youngest son and his emerging family with an offer of accommodation in exchange for their companionship? But if so, why did Edwin and his family subsequently return to Bristol where they were resident for at least three years before his mother's death (in the home of her daughter in Wells)? Their domestic location does not appear to be determined by Edwin's employment; in 1881 the Shorts were living in Bristol whilst the ship *Seine* of which Edwin was master operated out of Plymouth. Most intriguing was their relocation to Liverpool, a city that appeared to hold neither connection nor affiliation for Edwin nor Mary. The ship *Eglington* of which Edwin was master in 1901 and 1902 was registered in Liverpool, but it does not appear that his occupation was enhanced by his relocation, as he continued working in the same coastal coal trade over a quarter of a century.[102]

In comparison with the other families in the siblings dataset the financial means of the Shorts appeared somewhat limited. Although a master mariner, Edwin did not work the more lucrative ocean-going routes and the 1901 census captures him between periods of seafaring employment, when engaged as a salesman of paint. Within nine months of the 1901 census date Edwin was lost at sea, his remains never recovered. Yet despite all of these distinct and disadvantageous features of the Short family experience, both Edwin Short and Mary Cullen emerged from nuclear families and they provided such an environment in which to raise their own children. Albeit via a circuitous route, the Shorts join all the other sibling families in establishing late-Victorian households based around a single 'conjugal family unit'. This overall pattern aligns with Schürer *et al'*s argument that 'extended household arrangements and co-residence were largely the result of conditions of extremis – usually of a short- to medium-term nature during which the household in question was experiencing a situation that required or could offer support'.[103]

[102] [1881 shipping records Edwin Short : 1902 shipping records Edwin Short.]

[103] Schürer *et al*, 'Household and Family Structure', 396.

My research into the lives of the LNC sibling families and analysis of the resulting dataset reveals that the mothers of half of the sibling groups (King, Rae and Scott) travelled overseas with their husbands. Although none of the boys in the data subset were born at sea, some of their siblings were. Furthermore, such phenomena appears to have been an exhibition of repeated behaviour in the case of Emily Scott (nee Draper) whose mother Ellen had sailed with her father as a newlywed bride. The only mother in the sibling data subset who did not travel with her master mariner husband was Edwin Short's wife Mary, an option that may have been precluded by Edwin's trade in coastal coal transportation. Indeed, the data subset reveals that in every case of a master mariner undertaking extensive oceanic travel, they were initially accompanied on their voyages by their wives.[104]

Events committed to her diary by Eliza King reveal a curious mixture of the extremities and banality of life at sea when aboard her husband's ship. Her accounts of perilous weather conditions also described the resulting dangers to those aboard ship, 'Norman and I were falling about so that while I had him in my arms we both fell down over John's chair and I hurt my arm and side very much indeed'.[105] She revealed cases of sickness and death amongst the crew, even a near-mutiny, 'The crew hoisted the anchor in the morning but after breakfast they all refused to go to sea again in the ship… John had to go ashore [and] set a boat off for 3 of our crew to come on shore where they were put in jail for 3 months with hard labour'.[106] Such dramatic events were however balanced by extensive periods of uneventful inactivity where Eliza and her child(ren) were either confined to their cabin or permitted on deck where the weather allowed it, 'Just such another day as yesterday. Not quite so much wind'.[107] However, when in port the part of the captain's wife was transformed into a social role, receiving guests or accepting invitations to expatriate colonial entertainments. In this latter regard, Eliza King's role aboard ship was akin to her role at home, as the wife of a prosperous and well-connected shipmaster.

---

[104] [1844 shipping records Ellen Draper (Greenhalgh) : 1875 birth record Alexander Rae : 1890 shipping record Emily Scott (Draper).] The Diary of Eliza King, Merseyside Maritime Museum, SAS 35C/1/6.

[105] The Diary of Eliza King, 6.

[106] The Diary of Eliza King, 29.

[107] The Diary of Eliza King, 10.

Eliza's numerous references to her children and extended kinship networks within her diaries present an unfailingly positive impression of seafaring motherhood, echoing Humphries' observations on representations of family within personal memoir: 'The sources that historians have tended to use to document family life, court records for example, have perhaps erred on the dark side. In contrast the overall picture from the autobiographies is relatively benign'.[108]

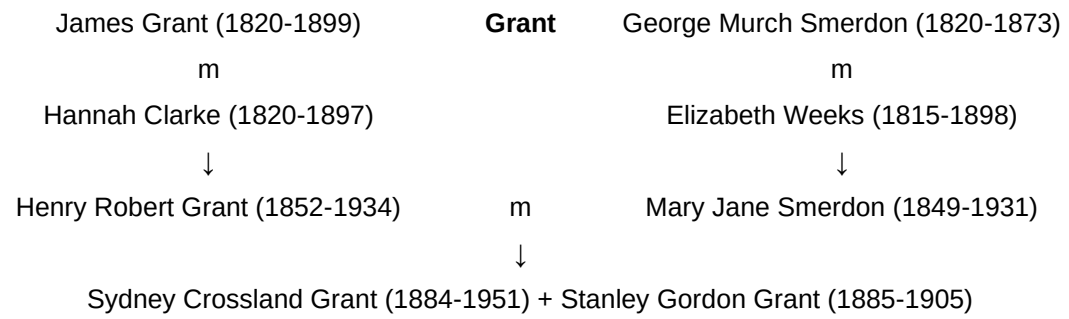
Yet Humphries' argument that '[A]n unintended consequence of the nascent division of labour between husbands and wives was that children were not only estranged from their fathers, they were thrown together with their mothers' is challenged by the data comprising the siblings subset.[109] By exercising their opportunities to accompany their husbands on long voyages, the wives of master mariners of ocean-going vessels became temporarily estranged from their children over lengthy periods. As discussed above, sibling families Rae, King and Scott all approached this situation differently, leaving (variously) all, some or none of their children in the care of relatives in their absence. For example, both Ralph and Norman King as infants (separately and together) accompanied their parents on long-haul voyages although as older children they remained in lodgings near their mother's family in Penryn whilst their parents were away from home. Whilst the Scott brood appeared to travel *en famille* until the mid '90s, the Rae children remained ensconced in the family home under the care of relatives during the absence of their parents.

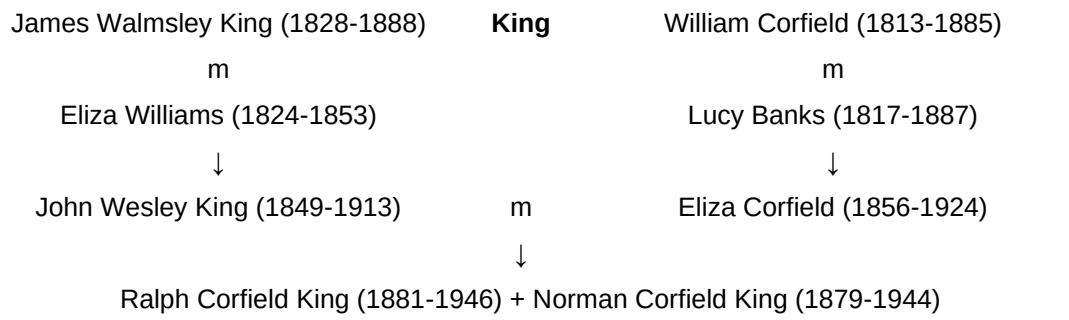
The process of researching and compiling ancestral profiles of the 'kindred dataset' has revealed some unexpected and fascinating outcomes in the form of the stories of the LNC boys and their colourful ancestors. A selection of biographical sketches in Appendix 3 illustrate some of the more compelling cases.

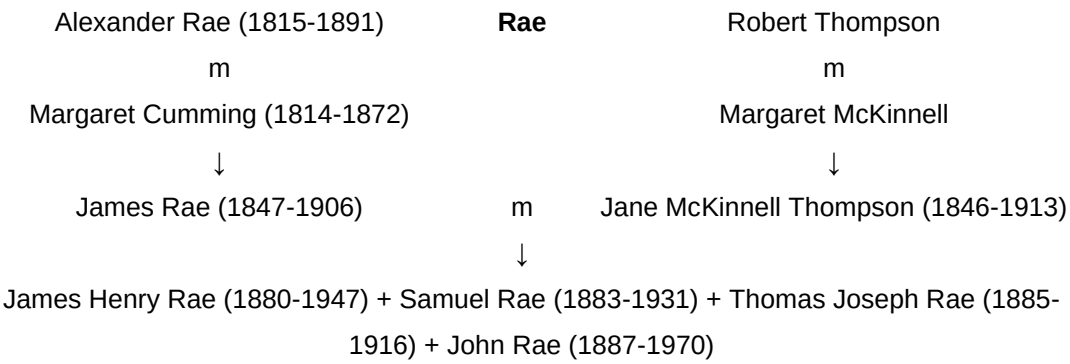
[108] Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour,* 128.

[109] Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour,* 142.

Figure 10: Kinship sibling subset, grandparent ancestry







William Ridyard (1810-1887)	**Ridyard**	Thomas Thornley (1827-1892)
m		M
Amelia Hayes (1817-1871)		Ann Lythgoe (1830-1874)
↓		↓
Arnold Ridyard (1851-1924)	m	Mary Thornley (1852-1931)

↓

William Ridyard (1879-1918) + Arnold Ridyard (1883-1954)

Robert Scott	**Scott**	Thomas Draper (1809-1873)
m		m
?		Ellen Greenhalgh (1819-1895)
↓		↓
Joseph Scott (1844-1900)	m	Emily Draper (1856-?)

↓

Ernest Bartlett Scott (1881 – 1902) + John Ralph Scott (1883-?)

John Grant Short (1813-1876)	**Short**	Lindsay Cullen (1820-1904)
m		m
Jane Gregory Wiblin (1811-1884)		Maria Seale (1826-1890)
↓		↓
Edwin Grant Short (1849-1902)	m	Mary Cullen (1849-1918)

↓

Edwin Short (1878-1949) + John William Short (1881-1910)

Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns.

4.5 Summary comments

My research shows that there is value in constructing and analysing the stories of the alumni of the Boys' School of the LNC, as a vehicle for documenting events that 'connect the phases of life'.[110] Hughes *et al* take a broad view of the concept of career, which transcended employment '(s]uch joining of a man's life with events, large and small, are his unique career…') in mapping a life's course.[111] Advocates of the 'life course approach' undertake research that is 'diffused across disciplinary boundaries' and longitudinal, exploring 'the notion of interdependent lives [which]… are typically embedded in social relationships with kin and friends across the life span'.[112] Glen Elder, at the interface between sociology and history, notes 'Historical forces shape the social trajectories of family, education, and work, and they in turn influence behaviour and particular lines of development'.[113]

More recently, Karl Ulrich Mayer neatly summarises the value of life course research: 'There are two kinds of questions that one would hope to answer by such studies: First, how stable are certain socioeconomic characteristics and behaviour across the larger life span? And second, how can we best understand the dynamics of life trajectories?'[114] Mapping the destinations of the alumni of the Boys' School facilitates an evaluation of the (quantitative and qualitative) impact of the LNC. It also addresses Mayer's final, but unasked, question: 'we know next to nothing about how the internal dynamics of life courses and the interaction of developmental and

[110] Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan, eds. *Handbook of the life course* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2007), xi.

[111] Everett C. Hughes, David Riesman and Howard S. Becker. *The Sociological Eye: Selected papers* (Routledge, 2017). See also Pamela Cox, Heather Shore, Zoe Alker and Barry Godfrey, 'Tracking the Gendered Life Courses of Care Leavers in 19th Century Britain', *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies: International Journal* 9, no. 1 (2018): 115-128.

[112] Glen H. Elder Jr. 'Time, Human Agency, and Social Change: Perspectives on the Life Course', *Social Psychology Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (1994), 4 & 6.

[113] Glen H. Elder Jr. The Life Course as Developmental Theory', *Child Development* 69, no. 1 (1998), 2.

[114] Karl Ulrich Mayer, 'New Directions in Life Course Research', *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009), 417.

social components of the life course vary and how they are shaped by the macro contexts of institutions and social polices'.[115]

Vibrant tales of the far-flung adventures of notable LNC graduates (such as the Captain of the *Carpathia* rescuing the Second Officer from the wreckage of the *Titanic*) add colourful detail to the LNC's story, although they cannot be presented as more widely representative.[116] However, it would be remiss to ignore activities outwith the mundane which offer a flavour of the dramas, zeniths and nadirs experienced by some of the LNC boys in the course of their lives. For example, a number (at least five) of the (one hundred and four) LNC boys were appointed to 'orders of chivalry' in recognition of their commercial or military achievements. William McLure Lunt was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for his services to Kenya (in 1944).[117] In 1919 James Herbert Wainwright Gill was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1919 in recognition of services in connection with the War.[118] Gill returned to the UK in the 1920s and established a business, the 'Gill Propellor Company', designing and manufacturing a 'shrouded propeller' to improve the speed of water flow.[119] The Gill Propellor Company was eventually wound up in 1962.

George Lyle English was appointed to the Order of the British Empire in 1942 in recognition of his wartime service as Captain of the (five hundred and seven bed) hospital ship *Somersetshire*.[120] Sydney Grant also received an OBE for his service during the Second World War, surviving (with all hands) a torpedo attack on 17th August 1942 off Haiti on the ship *Laguna* of which he was Captain.[121] In addition,

---

[115] Mayer, 'New Directions in Life Course Research', 426.

[116] Walter Lord, *A Night to Remember* (R&W Holt, 1955).

[117] Supplement to the London Gazette, 8 June, 1944, 2591.

[118] Supplement to the Edinburgh Gazette, 5 June, 1919, 2003.

[119] United States Patent Office, serial number 1,454,967, patented May 15, 1923.

[120] Supplement to the London Gazette, 1 January, 1842, 16. English's service was completed shortly before the ship was damaged in a U-boat attack, with the loss of seven lives.

[121] Merchant Navy Awards, London Gazette, 13 April, 1943, National Archive reference T 335/61.

Genest Hatton was awarded the British Empire Medal for his role in the rescue of the stricken vessel *Anna* when he was serving as quartermaster in SS *Tactician*.[122] However, not all of the LNC boys who narrowly cheated death at sea were celebrated in the aftermath of those traumatic events. George Randolph McOnie was appointed Third Engineer on the *Empress of Ireland* as the passenger liner traversed the Atlantic from Liverpool on 15th May 1914, setting out to return from Quebec on 28th May 1914. On the following day (night) the ship was rammed in heavy fog by a Norwegian coal ship, leading to the loss of over 1,000 lives. George McOnie survived, only to face critical cross-examination during the subsequent Wreck Commissioner's Enquiry.[123] McOnie's treatment was not dissimilar from that given to Charles Herbert Lightoller, the most senior surviving officer of the *Titanic* (who had enrolled in Division 3 of the LNC in June 1901 ahead of passing his Extra Masters Certificate in 1902). Both McOnie and Lightoller were regarded as victims, yet they were also perceived as potentially culpable in the loss of their vessel when subject to a process of enquiry seeking to attribute blame.

In contrast, seafarers rescuing stricken sailors were (rightly) celebrated. On 26th November 1872, the *New York Times* received a special despatch from roving correspondent Samuel L Clemens, writing under his nautical *nom de plume* of Mark Twain. Twain was crossing the Atlantic on the steamship *Batavia* when, amidst a 'furious squall' a 'dismasted vessel was sighted' in which nine sailors were 'clinging to the main rigging'.[124] A volunteer team of crew from the *Batavia* set out in a rescue mission 'although it seemed like deliberate suicide to go out in such a storm', from which they returned having saved the lives of all aboard the stricken *Charles Ward*.[125] Mark Twain listed the volunteers in recognition of their bravery, including fourth officer 'H. Kyle'. Haslett Kyle, father of LNC boy Haslett Thomas Kyle, was awarded a medal for his role in this rescue by the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society. In a similar vein, Richard Robert Williamson, father of LNC boy James Allen

[122] Supplement to the London Gazette, 9 January, 1946, 326.

[123] Wreck Commissioner's Inquiry, Empress of Ireland, ninth day. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Casualty to the British Steamship "Empress of Ireland", 1914.

[124] Samuel Clemens, quoted in Willard E. Martin, Jr., 'Letters and Remarks by Mark Twain from the *Boston Daily Journal'*, *Mark Twain Journal* 18, no. 1 (1975), 1.

[125] Martin, 'Letters and Remarks', 1.

Williamson, was presented with a telescope by the French government for his role in rescuing the crew of French vessel *Doisma* in 1867 when Captain of the *Fire Queen*.[126] Sons of fathers whose nautical endeavours have been celebrated as heroic would have strong role models to encourage and shape their own career choices. It is therefore unsurprising that Haslett Thomas Kyle and James Allen Williamson both enrolled at the LNC and pursued a future career in professions allied to seafaring; both became maritime engineers.

For all the adventure, the tales of exploration and the celebrated acts of selfless bravery there were also tales of injury, sickness and death, in which LNC boys experienced traumatic events at an early age. Mary Black had succumbed to bronchitis aboard the *Antiope*, of which her husband was master, on 20th January 1886; at the age of six, John Francis Black saw his mother interred in a watery grave, yet that experience did not deter him from enrolling at the Boys School of the LNC at the age of 15 or from qualifying to serve as a ship's captain. Indeed, irrespective of such impactful experiences of their own including periods aboard ship in their infancy, all the boys in the sibling data subsample opted for an occupation at sea. The threat of injury or death at sea were accepted risks by the nautical community, although this does raise queries over the judgements of parents who took their children to sea in the face of such evident peril.[127]

An emerging body of research into Victorian family structures highlights a fluidity and flexibility that may be obscured by perceptions created within (and obscured by) official records. Davidoff and Hall, although researching families from an earlier period, comment that 'the orthodoxy of the primary nuclear unit, while still influential, has been chipped away'.[128] Hager and Schaffer seek a broader (re)-definition, claiming that 'the Victorian construction of family occurred in the wake of a long history of networks of affiliation'.[129] Yet examples of such fluid and flexible

[126] 'Rewards for Gallantry in Saving Lives at Sea', Lloyd's List, December 13, 1867, 1.

[127] [1886 shipping records Mary Black (Molloy) : 1875 shipping records John Black.]

[128] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes,* xxxviii.

[129] Hager and Schaffer, 'Extending Families'. It is also argued that the traditional securities associated with marriage may have lost some resonance for Victorian women, especially amongst those struggling with the grim economic realities of industrialised settings: 'Pairing

family structures rarely emerge from the LNC dataset or from the outcomes of the research undertaken into the lives of the students at the Boys' School. Indeed, it appears that the families of the majority of these boys eventually embodied the model of the 'primary nuclear unit' when established within a domestic setting. Whether this data subset is representative of the wider population is moot, but the hint of conventional Victorian domestic respectability, of aspidistras and antimacassars, cannot be avoided. The findings of this research appear to align with Schürer *et al*'s view of non-traditional family structures being the atypical model.[130]

On 1st September 1892 a meeting of the Library, Museum and Arts Committee the Liverpool Council was convened. Noting that the LNC 'would be opened in about three weeks time', the Committee received a progress report titled 'The Liverpool Nautical College Scheme of Organisation'.[131] Within this report, drafted by James Gill and approved by the NISC, expectations regarding recruitment to the Boys' School were outlined: 'It is anticipated that many applications will be received on behalf of the sons of sea captains and others, whose means will not permit them to take advantage of training school ships, such as the Conway and Worcester'.[132] In 1890 the annual cost of enrolling a boy on the HMS *Conway* was £52 10s.[133] In comparison, the fee to admit a boy to the LNC in 1893 stood at £7 *per annum*, with fees also payable each term (£2 10s) or half-term (£1 5s).[134] With tuition fees subsequently reduced to £3 3s *per annum* in the following year (a fraction of the cost of the tuition offered by the *Conway)*, the Boys' School of the LNC presented opportunities for the sons of 'sea captains and others' who were unable to afford a berth on the school ship. Furthermore, the expectation that 'sons of sea captains'

---

up with a male partner was also an essential part of defraying costs. Often these relationships were short-lived and formed out of necessity, though others endured for months or years without ever being sanctified in a church. Middle-class observers were regularly horrified by how easily and quickly poor men and women could embark upon and dissolve these partnerships'. Hallie Rubenhold, *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women killed by Jack the Ripper* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019), 11.

[130] Schürer et al, 'Household and Family Structure', 396.

[131] 'Technical Education and the Nautical College', *Liverpool Echo*, September 1, 1892, 4.

[132] 'The Liverpool Nautical College', *LM*, August 31, 1892, 5.

[133] Data published at http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/TSConway/

[134] 'City of Liverpool: Nautical College, Colquitt Street', *Liverpool Weekly Courier*, March 4, 1893, 8.

would enter the Boys' School was also met, with around a third of the parents of students at the Boys' School engaged as ship officers, the largest single occupational group within the dataset. However, if the phrase 'sea captains and others' assumed that the majority of entrants to the Boys' School of the LNC would be the sons of serving sea captains, then the NISC may have made a misjudgement. A wide variety of occupational groups is represented in the dataset; more 'others' than 'sea captains'.

Yet enrolment numbers suggest that, rather than an integral component of Liverpool's civic educational ladder, the Boys' School of the LNC appears to have been regarded by the wider Liverpool population as something of a niche institution. This research has revealed how the LNC Boys' School appealed to a specific strata of society, comprising both the petit-bourgeoisie and those workers with middle-class ambitions for their children. Yet these notions of class offer only limited support to understanding the nuances of the social hierarchies of Victorian Liverpool. As David Cannadine notes in relation to Victorian social hierarchies, 'class was too crude a concept: it did not do justice to the refractory complexity of historical processes, and it never captured more than a part of the way in which ordinary men (to say nothing of ordinary women) lived their lives'.[135] Furthermore, when the Boys' School of the LNC was opened in 1892 'it was reckoned that 40% of Liverpudlians were below the poverty line…37,000 Liverpudlians became paupers annually and almost one third of the manual labour class died in the workhouse…the biggest in the world'.[136] Opportunities for social mobility were stifled (even prohibited) for those caught in a poverty trap and Victorian social hierarchies were restrictive, 'fluid only in the sense that economic change was affecting the distribution of occupations which facilitated some limited mobility between the upper working class and the lower middle class'.[137]

[135] David Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (Penguin, 2000), 15.

[136] Rees, *Local and Parliamentary Politics,* 89.

[137] Christina De Bellaigue, Helena Mills & Eve Worth, ''Rags to Riches?' New Histories of Social Mobility in Modern Britain – Introduction', *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 1 (2019), 2.

Burton identifies the role of the Victorian shipmaster as the preserve of the 'professional middle classes', an argument made on both economic ('shipmasters occupied a key position between capital and waged labour') and social grounds ('the formation of an officer elite was…locked into the process of stratification in Victorian society).[138] She also highlights how an 'elite of labour, imbued with a sense of its position in the hierarchy' sought 'advancement … in a professional capacity in the mould of the non-entrepreneurial middle classes' to serve as masters in the mercantile marine.[139] Such a perspective provides an interesting lens through which to consider whether the LNC was the proper means of efficient nautical education for the late-Victorian port city; did it threaten or sustain the status quo?

Information accrued within this research appears to substantiate the theory that Victorian social mobility was restricted to the interface between wealthier workers and the lower middle-classes and that attainment of positions of command in the late-Victorian mercantile marine were out of the reach of the majority.[140] However, it is acknowledged that the relative social statuses of LNC scholars and their families may not be based solely upon recorded parental occupation. Working-class jobs attracting weekly wages may have paid less than many salaried white-collar occupations, but not necessarily so. Northumbrian coalminer Joseph Skipsey, whose poetry was celebrated amongst literary circles in the 1860s, was 'elevated' from his subterranean existence by being appointed to the post of assistant librarian at the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne. After a short while he returned to the coalface because 'the pay was better'.[141] Furthermore, common occupational labels can mask a range of different working experiences and conditions; indeed Burton acknowledges such variations in the status of Victorian shipmasters, highlighting 'the comparatively small number of master's berths in the

[138] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 99 & 101.

[139] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 117.

[140] De Bellaigue *et al*, 'Rags to Riches'. Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession'.

[141] Dan Jackson, *The Northumbrians: North-East England and its People, a new history* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 92.

premier liner establishments which, in respect of wages, security of employment, and retirement benefits, were worlds apart from the tramp sector'.[142]

Owing to the pyramidic structure of Victorian society, many of the jobs with which the workforce engaged were of the unskilled variety and it therefore follows that this pattern of parental occupation would be reflected in the inclusive elementary school system introduced in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The absence of any example of unskilled labour from the parental occupations of LNC scholarship boys suggests that either the sons of unskilled labourers were unsuccessful in the competitive scholarship exam, or that they did not attempt the exam. If Burton is correct in arguing that '[T]he task of the elementary schools was to educate the lower classes to their station, not above it', then opportunities for social (indeed academic) advancement emerge from this research as being less meritocratic and more reliant upon (supportive) socio-economic networks.[143] The social hierarchies, manners and subliminal protocols of the late-Victorian era may have restricted access to LNC scholarships for both the (Board School) children of academically disenfranchised unskilled labourers and the (Liverpool Institute) children of parents who appeared unwilling to seek financial support.

Middle-class parents seeking a financially rewarding career for their sons may have been attracted by the prospect of wages of up to £16 per month for ships' masters in 1892 (although not all ship's masters earned such wages).[144] Shipping company Devitt and Moore promoted apprenticeships as 'professional education for the sons of gentlemen'.[145] In an article published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, maritime expert Thomas Brassey wrote in 1890 (two years before the events discussed in

[142] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 114.

[143] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 101. Renwick agrees with Burton that Victorian children would 'receive an education which enables them to enter the same grade of occupation as their parents'. Chris Renwick, 'Movement, Space and Social Mobility in early and mid-Twentieth-Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 1 (2019), 19.

[144] Royal Commission on Labour: British Parliamentary Papers (1892), quoted in Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 114.

[145] Charles F. Walker, *Young Gentlemen: The Story of Midshipmen from the XVIIth Century to the Present Day* (Longmans, Green and Company, 1938).

section 3.2) that shipmasters were the peers of bank managers, 'in both income and status'[146]. Burton cautions that the increasing stratification of Victorian society infected the professionalisation of maritime trade to the extent that 'discrimination against the lower class was overt in the recruitment of Masters'.[147] She cites a contemporary source who argued that the examination of masters and mates 'only allows a certain class of men to work their way up'.[148] Rather than an inadvertent process, Burton argues that the bourgeois stratification of the shipmaster's career was a deliberate contrivance on the part of the shipowning interest and that the 'gentrification' of the shipmaster's role became a celebrated tactic of recruitment into the mercantile marine.[149]

A comparison of the 'inputs and outputs' of the sibling dataset with that of the 'scholarship boys' reveals some interesting contrasts. At least eight of the 17 scholarship boys completed two years of study at the LNC (four did not, the remaining five may have done). In comparison, the duration of study of the sibling boys was persistently shorter and occasionally limited to a single term (for example, Stan Grant three months, Norman King and Ernest Scott four months). The scholarships provided financial support (free fees and a monthly bursary) over two years. As the full value of the scholarship was only realised at the completion of the study period, this may have incentivised the attendance of the scholarship boys over the longer term. In comparison, fee paying students at the Boys' school represented a cumulative cost to parents who may have been disinclined to extend their sons' studies over two full years. It may therefore be argued that the nautical scholarships were of indirect benefit to the LNC in boosting their student numbers (upon which James Gill was obliged to regularly report) by incentivising attendance over the longer term.

---

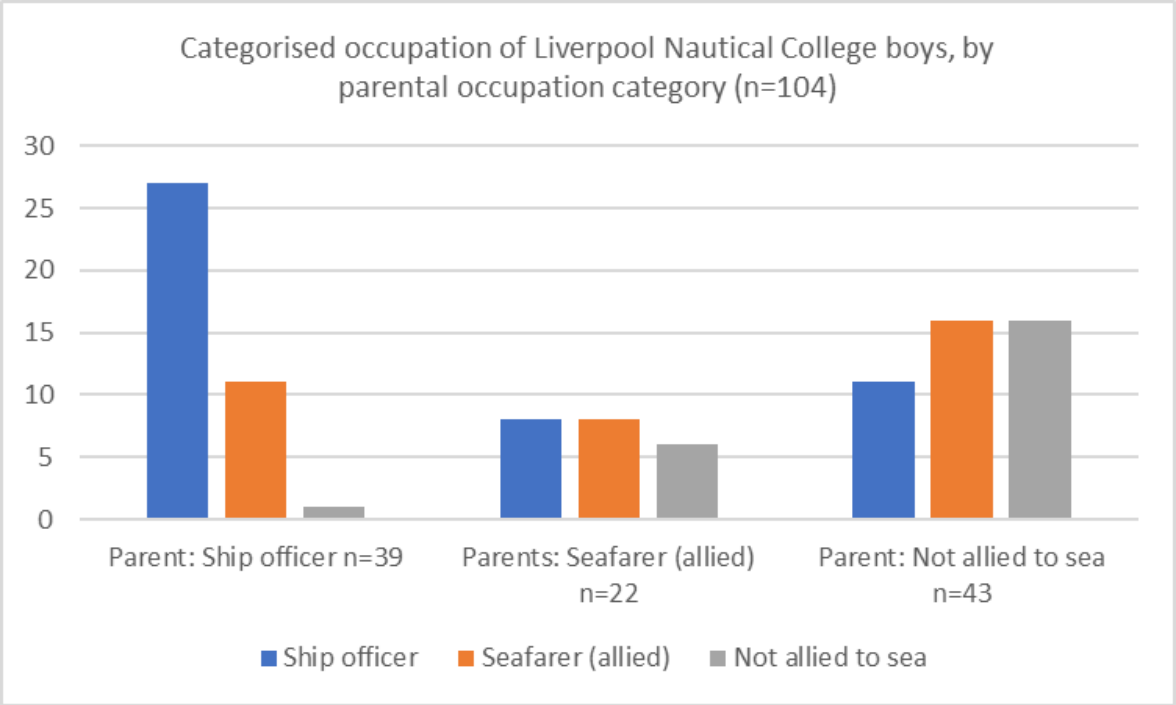
[146] Brassey, T., 1890, 'Choice of a Profession – The Sea', Pall Mall Gazette 25th July 1890, quoted in Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 114.

[147] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 101.

[148] William Allingham, 'Mercantile Marine Education': *London Shipmasters' Society Course of Papers* 28 (1893), 39, quoted in Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession', 101.

[149] Burton, 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession'.

Figure 11: Categorised occupation of LNC boys, by parental occupation category



Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns.

Taking a broader view, it may be possible to explain the differences in attendance in terms of student (and indeed parental) expectations. Whereas only six of the seventeen scholarship boys had parents with occupations related to seafaring (of which only three were certified ship officers), all the siblings came from families in which their father worked at sea (two-thirds of whom were certified ship officers). Furthermore, whilst all the siblings progressed to careers at sea (mostly as deck officers, following a marine apprenticeship) around half of the scholarship boys (8/17) did not go to sea and only one became a deck officer. This suggests that the enrolment of the siblings in the Boys' School LNC was a temporary stepping-stone toward a pre-determined (and well-trodden) career path, whereas for the scholarship boys it represented an opportunity for social advancement in new horizons (although potentially unrealised). Griffin notes 'It is inevitably the case that those sons from more prosperous families enjoyed several advantages when they entered the workplace, enjoying better access to apprenticeships, to well-paid work and to jobs

with training opportunities'.[150] Thus, the experience of the sibling students would have been different from that of the scholarship students at the LNC, the former benefitting from the cultural capital and confidence drawn from their family's seafaring experience and from their privileged economic and social status.

Together with the information about parental occupation, the aggregated (categorised) destinations data for the LNC boys offers interesting reading. As displayed in figure 11, the destinations of LNC boys differ based upon the occupation of their parents. This is particularly clear in relation to those thirty-nine boys whose fathers were certified ships' officers, as all but one subsequently pursued a career in an occupation allied to seafaring. Furthermore, over half (twenty-seven) of the (forty-six) boys who became certified ships' officers were the sons of certified ships' officers, despite just over a third of all parents holding such certification. It follows that parental occupation was a dominant factor in determining student destination and therefore that whilst the LNC extended opportunities in making officer careers in the mercantile marine accessible to students from a range of backgrounds, it also served the interests of the maritime officer elite who sought to keep such opportunities *en famille*.

Whilst the LNC offered education to all in theory, in practice those fathers who worked in occupations allied to seafaring (and especially those qualified to be ships' officers) were more likely to enrol their children in the Boys' School than parents without any occupational links to the sea. From this small yet complete data sample, I conclude that whilst opportunities for widening access to technical, nautical education were provided by the LNC, parental occupation (therefore 'accident' of birth) and a desire to 'keep it in the family' was a greater determinant of participation than efforts to secure wider social inclusion.

This investigation has revealed how an institution's legacy can be effectively appraised through detailed analysis of the lives of a section of its alumni. Through analyses of their future careers (in comparison with those of their fathers), the outcomes for scholarship students and the kindred students, a colourful tapestry of

[150] Griffin, *Bread Winner,* 78.

multiple microbiography has been woven. Furthermore, working outward (and backward) from the enrolment of the boys at the LNC, I have constructed a broader picture of their domestic settings and considered the pivotal role of mothers and sailors' wives in the late-Victorian port city. This investigation has therefore illustrated how the character, complexity and consequence of an institution like the LNC can be depicted in detail by documenting both the lives and achievements of its students and the influences that shaped those lives.

5 Conclusion

Was the Liverpool Nautical College (LNC) the 'proper means of efficient nautical education' for the late-Victorian port city? It is possible to interpret the findings of this research to make a case both for and against this claim. An argument may be made that the LNC was not the proper means of nautical education for the late-Victorian port city as it struggled throughout the period 1892-1900 to meet the expectations placed upon it, particularly when measured by student participation in divisions 1, 2 & 4 of the College. A general lack of enthusiasm for the LNC may be extrapolated from its disputed political and financial status, interspersed with episodes of outright hostility (from representatives of political agencies operating within the seafaring community, encouraged by local media). Within this period the failure of the Council to directly fund the LNC left its faculty in a precarious position and rendered its facilities sub-standard. It also failed to lift the poorest folk of Liverpool up an educational ladder to academic, financial or social improvement. Were it not for the persistent support of vocal, belligerent and well-placed champions, the LNC may not have survived its turbulent infancy.

Alternatively, a counter argument could be made. Not only did the LNC offer a much needed centre of maritime learning to the second city of Empire, but it did so with a unique ambition. The LNC's application of radical innovations such as distance learning and higher education to maritime learning was visionary in the Victorian era and its staff delivered an extensively diverse output across all divisions. Although Gill may have sought to play down the importance of Division 3, the number (measuring quantity) of aspirant ship officers enrolling at the LNC and their subsequent success rates in seeking Board of Trade certification (measuring quality) were significant. Notwithstanding the undercurrent of civic reluctance (running from indifference to hostility) from which the LNC emerged, it succeeded in delivering exceptional nautical education within an exceptional city.

The LNC was designed to disrupt the *status quo* not only by offering late-Victorian Liverpudlians a publicly-funded centre for nautical education but also by modernising the very notion of nautical education; within James Gill's lifetime it achieved the former, although not the latter. Although Gill may have regretted the

limited impact of his distance learning initiative, higher education courses or the LNC scholarship programme, such shortcomings must be viewed in context. Indeed, Councillor Willink's overall educational ladder programme was undermined and ultimately rendered ineffective by endemic social and economic inequities way beyond his or the Council's control.[1] As discussed in the Introduction, Willink initially omitted nautical education from the technical instruction programme in 1891 and was only persuaded to advocate for (and ultimately champion) the LNC when it was locked into his vision for an educational ladder to widen access to further and higher education by under-represented groups in the city. This was congruent with national discourse that sought to transform previously elitist establishments into accessible institutions, including the establishment of new local universities designed to 'provide a very different sort of education, to a very different type of student, in a very different kind of environment'.[2] Failure to realise that ambition at the LNC during the first decade of its existence should not diminish Willink or the Council's intentions in that regard.

Furthermore, evidence of the effort that Gill devoted to the LNC Boys' School scholarship programme is indicative of his commitment to widening access and upward mobility through maritime education and professional training. Much can also be learned about Gill's priorities through analysis of the material in the LNC archive that he thought too important to throw away, in which his efforts to secure and sustain scholarships are manifest. As Whyte implies, such progress is best measured in yards not in miles, 'Of course, it was still hard for the very poor to get in, but it was no longer completely impossible for the lower-middle and working classes to obtain a university education'.[3] It was unfortunate for Gill that he pre-deceased necessary legislative intervention as, 'In 1902 the government turned its attention to the development of a compulsory state system of secondary education, the lack of

[1] As Long suggests, 'The development of mass public education in England after 1870 thus had surprisingly modest effects over the long run. Earnings mobility increased moderately for the first generation under public education (1881-1901) but did not increase over the course of the twentieth century'. Long, 'Surprising Social Mobility', 1.

[2] Whyte, 'Redbrick', 12.

[3] Whyte, 'Redbrick', 144-145.

which seriously inhibited improvement of the tertiary level'.[4] Yet Kennerley recognises the latent potential in James Gill's vision for education that facilitated social mobility:

> Gill's scheme is interesting because it was a clear attempt to rectify the weakness in existing schemes by providing a coordinated programme embracing pre- and post-experience study, leading those who chose to advanced levels of study.[5]

In retrospect, the failure of the LNC to achieve all its goals in the first decade of its existence appears to be symptomatic of the over-ambitious political posturing in which the scheme was conceived and initially promoted, rather than the efforts of its staff and supporters. Measured against such high expectations, together with the restrictive financial investment that followed, the project may appear to have been doomed from the outset. Yet the LNC not only survived into the twentieth century but thrives today, as a constituent element of Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). Its success was merely deferred until such time as the LNC was secured within the city's municipal infrastructure, provided with long-term investment and the rest of the world caught up with Gill's prophetic vision.[6]

Through this research I have investigated, reconstructed and analysed the history of the LNC in the context of the late-Victorian port city in which it was launched. This thesis reveals and narrates just how close the municipal government of the city came to rejecting the scheme for the LNC (in 1891). It also evidences how rapidly the vision of a Nautical College for Liverpool was then realised in bricks and mortar, in teaching and learning, in staff and students (from 1892). From a close

---

[4] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 123.

[5] Kennerley, 'Merchant Marine Education', 116.

[6] It should not go unnoticed that Gill's idiosyncratic Nineteenth-century ambitions in the promotion of vocationally oriented learning, widening access to higher education and innovative methods of delivery are all mainstays of the ethos of Liverpool John Moores University in the Twenty-first Century. Yet barriers to participation in higher education and unjust attainment gaps remain prevalent today, requiring new solutions (see Wayne Turnbull and Harvey Woolf (eds). *Widening Access to Higher Education in the UK: Developments and Approaches Using Credit Accumulation and Transfer* (McGraw-Hill Education, 2022).

study of the events of this period (1892-1900) the source of many of the tensions that ran through the early history of the College has been revealed. This research has also discovered that the LNC was based upon surprisingly shallow (and therefore hazardous) foundations and placed under a scrutiny so heavy that even the most trivial financial undertakings (including unblocking the drains or replacing careworn books) required the formal approval of a municipal governing committee.

Notwithstanding hostility to the project and despite operating within both an administrative straitjacket and a precarious employment contract, founding Headmaster James Gill wrote into existence multiple curricula and academic structures for the various schools within the LNC with notable speed and ambition. Gill's work at the LNC carried global significance through his training of many hundreds of officers of the maritime marine and impacted favourably upon the many thousands whose safe passage between ports around the world was assured by the professional competence of LNC alumni. The LNC was also of local significance to the port city in which it emerged, offering a modern and educationally credible challenge to the predominance of *cramshops* that had previously characterised nautical instruction.

Findings relating to the LNCs organisational structure, curriculum, faculty and governance are reported in section 2. In addition to the formal institutional history of the LNC (1892-1900), this thesis has provided a detailed account of its organisational culture, working practices and atmosphere within this period and of its development. The LNC emerged into the twentieth century as a busy and successful provider of training for aspirant ship officers and as a centre of maritime education for all ages. It was well-equipped for its purpose, save for Gill's unrealised ambition to support training afloat. Classes were provided during the day and in the evenings, thereby ensuring that the (diminishing number of) rooms occupied by the LNC within the Royal Institution building would be constantly busy. Although 'Division 1' students were relatively few in number, tuition at the Boys' School required support full-time, five days a week whilst tuition for aspirant officers could be delivered to meet demand. The number of boys returning to the LNC in later life to advance their careers is testament to the quality of their educational experience and to the dedicated attention and support of faculty, evident in the frequent Admissions

Register annotations concerning alumni achievements. We are left with the impression that Gill, Merrifield, Captain Owens *et al* actually cared about their students. If Bovill is correct in stating 'for most of the nineteenth century, Nautical schools were organised by proprietors for their own financial reward and not for any higher motive', then the LNC appears to be the exception to that rule.[7]

Situated at the junction between maritime history, the history of education, institutional history and Liverpool history, this study of the early years of the LNC contributes new intellectual inquiry into each of these various fields. Such a multi-layered, mixed-method approach facilitates consideration of the LNC from a range of perspectives (including archival research, analysis of newspaper records and the construction of microbiography from a variety of data sources), each adding a differently nuanced view and producing a multi-dimensional and rounded study. This thesis therefore represents a useful test of the innovative approach upon which it is based, presenting an insight into an overlooked aspect of the development of a local community which has long been characterised by its relationship to the port and maritime trade.

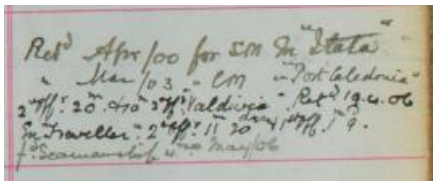
The critical questions explored in this thesis have revealed the kind of institutional history that can be constructed from multiple analyses of contemporary source materials and considered the extent to which an institution's legacy can be narrated through biographical study of its alumni. This affirms the centrality of the importance of individual stories in the form of microbiography in the Victorian maritime sphere as described by Cothran and Shubert.[8] Such institutional history is not just evidence-based but evidence-bound, rooted in the archival data and supporting contemporary material from which it has been drawn. Such institutional legacy is similarly narrated, through a study of life courses that converged upon then widely deviated from the LNC. Just as James Gill contemplated the heavens through

[7] Bovill, 'Education of Mercantile Mariners', 181.
[8] 'But above all, a microhistorical approach to the global nineteenth century has allowed us to emphasise the myriad ways in which globalization involved people, from wealthy shipowners like Duncan Dunbar and Cuban planters like Julián de Zulueta to settlers like thirty-two-year-old tailoress Elizabeth Broadhurst and Dr Frederick Everard Hunt; from indentured labourers like Angtau Mauricio and lascars like Mosio Ali to convicts like William Messenger and William Graham'. Cothran and Shubert, 'Maritime History, Microhistory', 78.

the LNC's state-of-the-art telescope, thousands of (primarily digital) data sources illustrate and reveal a constellation of biographies through which the LNC's legacy can be articulated and appreciated in more than just quantitative terms.

In addition to an investigation into the impact of the LNC on late-Victorian Liverpool, this research has provided a unique and challenging perspective on the city's late-Victorian maritime community. Rather than a co-ordinated, co-operative or coherent 'maritime interest', each of the city's seafaring stakeholders emerge from this research as wedded to their sectional concerns and appear openly hostile in their opposition to rival interests from within their community. Perhaps unexpectedly, this research has therefore revealed how Liverpool's maritime hegemony was achieved in spite of its fractured and fractious seafaring society. Records in the LJMU archive and contemporary press reports all attest to the LNC's tentative emergence into a divided city, a maritime community ill at ease with itself and (therefore) a very uncertain future. Viewed in that context, the LNC appears more of a success than a failure, having metaphorically navigated and survived the 'sulphurous roaring [of] the most mighty Neptune'.[9]

Figure 12: Extract from the LNC Admissions Register (Edwin Short)



Source: LNC Admissions Register

Archives can be cryptic places, their treasures hidden beneath layers of dust and obscurity. At first sight a source may appear incomprehensible, especially where data have been recorded by someone using a unique shorthand method (figure 12 refers). Yet once the code is unlocked, such dense graffiti may yield a wealth of extensive and useful information. The format and patterns of notation and

[9] Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act I, Scene II.

use of symbols in sequences offer clues, whilst even the most challenging handwriting becomes familiar over time. I was able to learn the language in which the records in the LNC archive were composed and I was able to translate that language into meaningful information. For example, the record in figure 12 (shown in actual size) reveals that after Edwin Short (Jnr) left the Boys School he subsequently:

> Returned to the LNC in April 1900 to prepare for the Board of Trade (BoT) second mate exam, having served on the vessel *Itata*. He then returned to the LNC in March 1903 to prepare for the BoT first mate exam at which point he had demonstrated sufficient 'sea time' having previously served on the vessel *Post Caledonia* in the capacity of second officer for a period of 20 months and on the vessel *Valdivia* in the capacity of second officer for a period of 10 months. He then returned to the LNC on 19th April 1906 to prepare for the BoT shipmaster exam, having previously served on the vessel *Traveller* in the capacity of second officer for a period of 11 months and 20 days and as first officer for a period of 1 month and 9 days. He failed the shipmaster exam on 4th May 1906 (being deficient in 'seamanship').

My awareness of the serendipitous survival of the LNC archive materials from the late-Victorian era enhances the powerful connection that arises from handling material that was once touched, even produced, by my research subjects. Originally published in 1989, *Le Goût de l'archive* by Arlette Farge is a *billet-doux* to historical archives. Farge explores the seductive quality of intimate records, in which archival research is conducted through emotion as a 'tool with which to split the rock of the past, of silence'.[10] In a similar vein, Lepore discusses the intimacy of archives and the emotional responses experienced by researchers to their data subjects.[11] Discussing archives, Laite advises that historians should be aware of the relationship between data and the sources of that data in the 'way we use evidence to tell the

[10] Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives,* translated by Thomas Scott-Railton (Yale University Press, 2013), 31-32.

[11] Lepore, 'Historians Who Love Too Much'.

stories of individuals and groups in the past'.[12] Having constructed this overall narrative from discrete micronarratives, it is fitting that the stories of individuals whose lives were enriched by the fledgling LNC have duly been granted appropriate recognition herein. Whether the LNC provided the proper means of nautical education for the late-Victorian port city therefore rather depends upon the perspective of the subject to whom the question is put. Hence, the inherent complexities of microhistory both illuminate and obfuscate, articulating an overall narrative with a thousand different viewpoints.

Laite discloses her motivation to pursue historical research, 'I have always wanted the stories'.[13] In this appraisal of the impact and legacy of the LNC on the late-Victorian port city, one further story remains to be told; that of James Gill. Gill's voice has been heard in this narration of the LNC's history through the words he carefully recorded (and occasionally redacted) in the Headmaster's report book, via the local press and from the pages of his *Text-book on Navigation and Nautical Astronomy*. Whilst his work (and words) in the last decade of the nineteenth century are clearly discernible, less is known of his background and early life. Yet it has been possible to construct a biographical sketch of Gill's formative years and progress toward the 1890s from which the gifted, ambitious yet frequently frustrated founding father of the LNC emerged.

Although both an article in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society and his gravestone (in Woolton Parish Church) state that he was born in May 1840, my research suggests that Gill had 'mislaid' 4 years from his age by the time of his death.[14] Records from the parish of St Patrick on the Isle of Man indicate that Gill was born on 15th May 1836 and baptised eight days later (as James Gell). James was the son of William Gill (or Gell, records differ) and Jayne Sayle who wed in that same parish in 1821. According to the 1841 census, *pater familias* William Gell/Gill was a fisherman; both his use of an X rather than a signature on his marriage

[12] Laite, 'The Emmet's Inch' (unpaginated).

[13] Julia Laite, 'Schooners and Schoonermen, My Grandfather and Me', *History Workshop Journal* 87 (2019), 259.

[14] Anonymous author, 'List of Fellows and Associates deceased during the past year', *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* 61, no. 4 (1901), 185.

certificate and the variations evident in the spelling of his surname (and those of his offspring) suggest that he may have been illiterate. William and Jayne had at least twelve children between 1822 and 1842, of whom their son James was the ninth. William Gill died at the age of 49 in 1842; he was buried just five months after the baptism of his youngest child. Jayne outlived her husband by over twenty years, dying aged 63 in 1864.[15]

My research has therefore revealed that James Gill was raised in difficult circumstances, within a large family soon deprived of their breadwinner's income. Concurrent census records show that other Gills (including a weaver and a shoemaker) and Sayles lived nearby and it is therefore possible that Jayne relied on a wider family network through which to support her children and to evade poverty. It is difficult to escape the inference that Gill's own impoverished beginnings may have influenced his later concern for social mobility. At least three of James' brothers took up trades that were related to seafaring; William became a (certified) shipmaster, John a shipwright (latterly living in Birkenhead) and Edward a naval architect (with a practice in Liverpool). Young James clearly impressed academically, at the age of 15 he was a 'pupil teacher' (or apprentice teacher) on the Isle of Man and eight years later he was appointed Assistant Master at the Liverpool School of Navigation. His movements in the intervening years are unknown; alongside Dr Alston Kennerley I have devoted many an hour in seeking to prove Kennerley's theory that Gill was trained by Edward or John Riddle, respectively Masters of the Nautical School at Greenwich Hospital 1841-1862. Such evidence remains elusive, although the principals of contemporaneous nautical schools in Belfast, Dublin, Glasgow, Hull and Leith were all graduates of the Greenwich School.[16]

[15] [1821 marriage record William Gell/Gill and Jayne Sayle : 1822 birth record Margaret Gill : 1824 birth record Elinor Gill : 1826 birth record Charlotte Gill : 1827 birth record Ann Gill : 1829 birth record Thomas Gill : 1830 birth record William Gill : 1832 birth record John Gill : 1834 birth record Henry Gill : 1836 birth record James gill : 1838 birth record Edward Gill : 1839 birth record Catherine Gill : 1841 census William Gell/Gill : 1842 birth record Evan Gill : 1842 death record William Gell/Gill : 1842 burial record William Gell/Gill : 1851 census return Jayne Gill (Sayle) : 1864 death record Jayne Gill (Sayle).]

[16] [1841 census returns John Gill and Patrick Gill : 1851 census return James Gill : 1851 shipping records William Gill : 1871 census John Gill : 1911 census Edward Gill.]

Gill was employed by the Liverpool Sailors' Home in their School of Navigation for thirty-three years, rising through the ranks as Assistant Master, First Assistant Master, Master, then Principal. Throughout this period, he cited his profession variously on his marriage record, children's baptism records and census returns as teacher, science teacher, teacher of navigation and nautical teacher. In 1872 he wed Mary Ann Wainwright, daughter of a prosperous Woolton tradesman (their nuptials were witnessed by Gill's brother Edward and Mary's sister Jane). The newlyweds initially set up home in Onslow Place in Liverpool's Fairfield community before moving to Beech Mount in the neighbouring parish of West Derby a few years later (where, in 1881, they employed residential staff, both a nurse and a general servant). By the 1890s they relocated to Agnes Road in Blundellsands near to commutable Formby and then took possession of 41 Rosset Road in Great Crosby.[17]

James and Mary raised a family comprising three children: James Herbert Wainwright (born 1876), Edith Marian (born 1878) and Oscar Sayle (born 1880). Whilst Edith remained close to her home and family, eventually marrying the Vicar of Woolton, her brothers led more adventurous lives that took them further afield. James HW Gill was enrolled in the Division 1 Boy's School of the LNC before taking up a post as a surveyor (subsequently mine manager and chief engineer) in Colombo (Sri Lanka). Elected to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (1914) and Institute of Civil Engineers (1916) he served as a Captain in the Royal Engineers in the first world war and was awarded a CBE in 1919. After the war he ran the Gill propellor company in the UK and worked as a consulting hydraulic engineer until his death in 1951. Oscar followed his elder brother's footsteps and worked as an engineer in Colombo and then in Rangoon (Myanmar). In 1933 Oscar retired to London, married a woman almost twenty years his junior and expired six years later in the fashionable Mayfair home that he and his wife shared with two (female) dancers.[18]

[17] [1861 census return James Gill : 1872 marriage record James Gill and Mary Wainwright : 1876 birth record James HW Gill : 1878 birth record Edith Gill : 1880 birth record Oscar Gill : 1881 census return James Gill : 1891 census return James Gill.]

[18] [1911 marriage record Edith Gill and Bertram Taylor : 1914 Institute of Mechanical Engineers records James HW Gill : 1916 Institute of Civil Engineers records James HW Gill : 1922 military records James HW Gill : 1939 census returns James HW Gill and Oscar Gill : 1943 death record Oscar Gill : 1951 death record James HW Gill.]

As previously noted, prior to his appointment as Headmaster of the LNC, Gill had attained a public profile in Liverpool through his role at the Liverpool School of Navigation and through the Liverpool Astronomical Society (and Royal Astronomical Society, of which he was elected a Fellow in 1888). Various newspaper records attest to popular interest in public lectures such as that delivered at the Liverpool Sailors' Home on Arctic Scenes and Scenery on 8th December 1882 at which Gill presided and in classes for the study of elementary astronomy such as that delivered by Gill on 21st April 1886 titled Spectrum Analysis.[19] It is possible that Gill was enough of a supporter of the Conservative Party to be the same James Gill that nominated Blundellsands-based architect Alfred Burroughs to contest the Knowsley Ward for the Tories in 1890.[20] It is also possible that Gill was active in the Liverpool Manx Society (as a James Gill was elected as a trustee of that organisation in 1899, although Gill is not an uncommon Manx name).[21] Gill gained national recognition in 1898 through the publication of his *Text-book on Navigation and Nautical Astronomy*. One contemporary review commended its 'useful' and 'thoroughly practical character', its 'conciseness and lucidity'. It concluded that the volume 'will be of great service to all candidates for masters' certificates'.[22]

Readers of the *LM* on 10th January 1900 would have learned that Gill 'caught a chill a week ago and pneumonia supervened' and that he 'expired yesterday morning'.[23] A few weeks later his household furniture was put up for sale at auction, comprising:

> (a) superior treadle turning lathe, Coalbrookdale iron garden vases, garden hose, genuine old Chippendale double chest of drawers, costly bronze and brass gasaliers, walnutwood and mahogany dining and drawing room suites in

[19] 'Local News: Lecture at the South Sailors' Home', *LM*, December 11, 1882, 6. 'Local News: Liverpool Astronomical Society', *LM*, April 23, 1886, 6.

[20] 'The Municipal Elections: Nomination Day', *LM*, October 25, 1890, 6.

[21] 'Liverpool Manx Society: Fourth Annual Meeting', *LM*, September 26, 1899, 7.

[22] V.B. 'New Books and Memoirs', *Journal of the British Astronomical Association* 9, no.5 (1899), 213.

[23] 'Births, Marriages and Deaths', *LM*, January 10, 1900, 8.

tapestry and hair cloth, mahogany dining table, mahogany bookcase and small library of books, pictures, glass, china, noble mantle mirrors and other effects.[24]

Such a list is impossible for a microhistorian to resist, facilitating a privileged glimpse into Gill's domestic world. From this cornucopia of possessions we learn that he was a gardener, tending a spacious plot requiring irrigation by hose, as well as cultivating decorative floral displays mounted in large ornamental vases forged in the Coalbrookdale foundry in Telford. Today the front garden of the property has been replaced by a tarmac driveway and a section of the rear lawn has been replaced by a patio, although the garden may have required more upkeep in 1899; is this where Gill caught the winter chill that was to prove fatal? Indoors, the detached, double-fronted property at 41 Rossett Road was illuminated not just by gas lamps but by an innovative, decorative and expensive gas-powered chandelier. Large mirrors placed over the mantlepieces would have reflected the daylight and, in the evening, the sparkling gasaliers. This brightness would have offset the heavy dark wood of the mahogany bookcase, mahogany dining table and walnut and mahogany dining room suites. Fashionable furnishings covered in weighty tapestry and heavy fringing were surrounded by china ornaments, books, pictures and further decorative sundries. Gill may have spent many an evening raging at the local press amidst the oppressive décor of his archetypal Victorian parlour, burning issues of the day on the open coal fire. Yet there is one, somewhat incongruous, item in the auction itinerary which suggests that Gill may have given more time to recreation than to rest. It should not be overlooked that Gill had amongst his household possessions a pedal operated lathe, but to what purpose was this put? Was he a recreational woodturner, a decorative carver or a jobbing joiner? It would come as little surprise if Gill's restless mind and hard-working hands were put to good use in the cause of home improvement in the long winter evenings. Such a self-made, pro-active 'DIY' aesthetic appears apposite in both his domestic and professional settings.

Friday January 11th 1900, Woolton Parish Church; mourners assembled as the remains of James Gill were interred. The doors of the LNC were closed, with surviving faculty Bate, Clements and Merrifield all paying their respects at the

[24] 'Sales by Auction', *LM*, January 26, 1900, 6.

graveside. Captain Parsell and Mr Hewitt were also present, representing the Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee and Liverpool Corporation respectively, whilst LNC alumni and parents (including James Raes senior and junior) joined Gill's friends and family in mourning their loss.[25] As an eventful chapter in the history of Liverpool's civic development came to a close, did any of those assembled in grief give any thought to the ways in which Gill and his efforts to provide a proper means of nautical education to the late-Victorian port city would be perceived by future generations? If so, they may have been reassured to know that, through this research, James Gill's memory has been preserved and the story of the LNC's earliest days has finally been told.

[25] 'Local News: Funeral of Mr. J. Gill', *LM*, January 13, 1900, 8.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Rudimentary summary of the occupations of the former LNC students, compared with those of their parents (n=208)

Ref	Student	Parent occupation	Student occupation
58	Keene, JL	3	3
59	Gill, JHW	Teacher of navigation	Engineer
60	Stewart, J	3	4
64	Adamson, DW	Cabinet maker	Clerk
78	Shortell, EA	Stevodore	Seaman rigger
79	Hatfield, J	3	3
84	Crosthwaite, S	Sharebroker	3
168	Williamson, JA	3	Marine engineer
213	Lunt, WM	Miller	4
228	Batt, GL	Dance teacher	Marine engineer
317	Peterkin, JD	Commercial agent	Schoolmaster
337	Morrow, HE	Commercial agent	Electrical engineer
404	Gore, GE	Bookkeeper	Mechanical engineer
482	*Williamson, JG*	*Police officer*	*Corporation engineer*
488	*Morgan, TA*	*Coachbuilder*	*Marine engineer*
500	Sewell, HM	Marine engineer	2
572	Wall, H	3	Clerk
595	Short, E	3	3
625	Elliott, WG	3	Sailor
627	Liddell, JS	Drapery salesman	1
628	English, GL	3	3
633	French, LJ	3	3
634	Dakin, WJS	Able Seaman	House painter
694	Short, JW	3	3
698	Ridyard, WV	Marine engineer	Marine engineer
715	Dixon, AO	Surveyor	4
717	Black, JF	3	3
718	*Peterkin, AG*	*3*	*4*

719	*Brebner, S*	*Shopkeeper*	*Marine engineer*
730	Robinson, CH	Jeweller	Locomotive foreman
756	Davey, G	Commercial agent	3
835	Rae, JH	3	4
842	Jones, CB	Bookkeeper	Sailor
843	Hatton, GN	Jeweller	Boatswain
844	King, RC	3	3
845	Crafter, WA	Harbour master	3
866	King, NC	3	3
906	Richmond, W	Butcher	1
907	Morton, AJ	Builder	3
914	Sowden, GH	3	3
917	Forrester, WT	3	3
949	Nash, H	Insurance agent	Sailor
950	Ison, DH	Grocer	3
951	Scott, EB	3	2
955	Pike, HE	Draper	Sailor
965	*Ainsworth, RH*	*Lard refiner*	*Sailor*
966	*Thomson, C*	*Bookseller*	*Bookseller*
1005	Lovold, KA	3	1
1016	Dromgoole, VP	Radical polymath	Sailor
1026	McGhie, W	Shipwright	3
1044	Syme, F	Marine Engineer	Railway engineer
1071	Hall, GS	3	3
1096	Robertson, JA	3	Sailor
1118	Aitken, J	Customs officer	Sailor
1122	*Bennett, WJ*	*Rail signalman*	*Cunard telegraphist*
1123	*Domony, RB*	*Engineer*	*Mechanical draughtsman*
1184	*Hall, J*	*Ship steward*	*Marine engineer*
1189	Pierce, R	3	Sailor
1243	Ridyard, A	Marine engineer	4

1245	Cartwright, WN	Shipping clerk	Sailor
1246	Richards, JH	3	3
1247	Rimington, FJ	3	2
1248	Logan, W	Police inspector	Sailor
1249	Pyecraft, WJ	Superintendent purser	Purser
1263	Tyerman, WR	Shipping clerk	Clerk
1317	Scott, JR	3	3
1319	Freeman, HE	Estate agent	Driver
1337	*Kerridge, MP*	*Draper*	*Shipping clerk*
1338	*Rimmer, EA*	*Joiner*	*Fitter*
1376	Mehegan, J	3	Marine engineer
1377	Rae, S	3	3
1390	McOnie, GR	Marine engineer	Marine engineer
1418	Brown, GR	Marine engineer	3
1420	Spencer, JG	3	4
1424	Grant, SC	Ship steward	4
1425	Millar, TW	Carpet merchant	Commercial traveller
1429	Owens, EWR	Cashier	Sailor
1430	Conby, RB	3	Sailor
1435	Rae, TJ	3	3
1469	Tiffin, JC	Surveyor	Sailor
1483	Kyle, HT	3	Marine engineer
1491	*Viner, FWT*	*Shipping clerk*	*Teacher*
1492	*Aston, RJ*	*Hairdresser*	*Civil servant (GPO)*
1548	Grant, SG	Ship steward	1
1559	Green, J	3	3
1588	Harrington, GB	Engineer	3
1589	Haywood, FM	Cashier	Sailor
1623	Gulland, JR	Merchant	3
1675	*Haycocks, CH*	*Furnishing salesman*	*GPO telegraphist*
1676	*Dovaston, HA*	*Shipping clerk*	*Fitter*

1679	Romney, DAT	Ship manager	2
1713	Hughes, JR	Draper	Draper
1716	Backhouse, GJ	Pilot	Pilot
1721	Davies, RH	Grocer	Civil engineer
1732	Milestone, WH	3	3
1751	McKinstry, AG	Military	3
1782	Waterbury, WL	Coal agent	Priest
1814	*Williams, CG*	*Schoolteacher*	*Marine engineer*
1815	*Fraser, FL*	*3*	*Marine engineer*
1851	Davey, OV	3	Sailor
1889	Forbes, S	3	3
1893	Rae, J	3	Marine engineer
1943	Rothwell, TH	3	3
1944	Bagnal, CG	3	Marine engineer

Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns

Key to table:

- Ref = (sequential) entry number for each student in the LNC admission register
- Blue text = certified ships' officer (1= second mate, 2= first mate, 3=master, 4=extra master)
- Green text = occupations allied to seafaring
- Black text = occupations not allied to seafaring
- Italic text = scholarship boys

Appendix 2: LNC Boys' School siblings: Location map of parental ancestry

key

1A: Grant (father), Portsmouth 1B: Grant (mother), Newton Abbot

2A: King (father), Tiverton 2B: King (mother), Penryn

3 Rae (both parents), Kirkcudbrightshire

4 Ridyard (both parents), Bedford nr Manchester

5A: Scott (father), Downpatrick 5B: Scott (mother), Combe Martin

6A: Short (father), Plymouth 6B: Short (mother), Co Laois

This list mostly, but not entirely, maps to the birthplaces of parents of the LNC siblings. The exceptions are 1A where Henry Grant was born in Jersey but his family were from Portsmouth and 6A where Edwin Short was born in Waterford but his

family were from Plymouth. In both cases (Jersey and Waterford) these birth locations were linked to their father's (temporary) employment location at the time of their birth, rather than to their ancestral bases.

Source: Various sources, primarily the General Register Office UK census returns.

Appendix 3: Biographical Sketches

The process of researching and compiling ancestral profiles of the 'kindred dataset' has revealed some unexpected and fascinating outcomes in the form of the stories of the LNC boys and their colourful ancestors. Take, for example, Ralph and Norman King's paternal grandfather James Walmsley King, who appears to have stepped out of the pages of a Victorian melodrama. James was, at the age of 23, a widowed lace worker in a Tiverton factory, raising two infant children. Yet from this miserable existence he somehow emerged five years later as a shipping agent in Liverpool, claiming the rank of 'gentleman' as he married spinster Emma Elizabeth Wilson in her family's parish church in Northumberland. This was not just the church that her family attended but the church that her family had built, as the Wilsons were the ancestral lords of the manor of Longbenton and resident at the Forest Hall estate. The upwardly mobile James and his aristocratic bride returned to Liverpool where they raised five more children and where James' rollercoaster career underwent a further transformation as he returned to the rag trade and became a tailor (and where his blue-blooded wife was compelled to take up employment, as a music teacher).[1]

According to testimony presented to the inquest into James Walmsley King's death in 1888, a doctor named Owen found the tailor to be 'very wild and in drink. He was suffering from delirium tremens and an acute attack of alcoholism'. On the evening of Wednesday 28th August, James 'became very wild in his manner' and even 'turned his wife out of doors'. Abandoned on a Liverpool street in the middle of the night, Emma Elizabeth called for Dr Owen's help. At 11pm Owen managed to gain access to 165 West Derby Road (perhaps assisted by those departing the public house next door) where he subdued the raving James Walmsley King with a shot of morphine. King fell into an unconscious state from which he never woke. Despite Dr Owen's judgement that James' death had been 'due to alcoholism', the subsequent inquest into these events ordered a post-mortem from which it was concluded on 4th September 1888 that James Walmsley King had died due to 'Death

[1] [1851 census return James King : 1853 death record Eliza King : 1856 marriage record James King and Emma Wilson : 1859 death record Emma King : 1860 death record Laura King : 1871 census return James King :1881 census return James King.]

by misadventure resulting from a dose of morphia'.[2] In the final act of her rags to riches existence, the widowed Emma Elizabeth, born into privilege, ended up letting out rooms in her Liverpool home to make ends meet.[3]

Also tragic is the tale of Ernest and John Scott's father Joseph, who as an infant fled famine resulting from the failure of the Irish potato crop and whose demise five decades later would prove equally dramatic. Having worked his way through the officer ranks in the mercantile marine, Scott took command of vessels including the *Vernon* and *Sierra Nevada* in which he made regular, long-haul trips to India and Australia. On 16th January 1900 *Sierra Nevada* sailed out of Liverpool with a varied cargo including machinery, brandy, cotton, earthenware and iron and by 8th May reached her destination port of Melbourne. As the ship approached the headland of Port Phillip Bay it signalled for the pilot vessel. The weather was 'very rough' and night was falling, deteriorating conditions that left *Sierra Nevada* in peril, adjacent to the rocky shoreline. The pilot vessel did not reach *Sierra Nevada* until 2.30 on the following morning at which point her anchors were let go but they failed to hold the ship, which drifted onto what have subsequently been named the Sierra Nevada rocks. By 3am the vessel was a wreck and the crew swam for their lives; five made it to the shore, but the other sailors and their captain, Joseph Scott, were drowned: 'About 9 o'clock next morning a body was seen tossing about in the surf, from whence it was dragged, and this was afterwards identified as the body of the captain by means of a ring on his finger. The head had been battered beyond recognition'.[4]

Yet perhaps most intriguing of these biographical vignettes is the case of the Rae siblings' paternal uncle John, who in 1901 was resident with his family at 123 Ullett Road in Liverpool, close to Sefton Park. As was the expectation of well-to-do late-Victorian families, the Raes employed a servant. In 1901 their 'general domestic servant' was Jane Sayle, a thirty-year old spinster born in Peel on the Isle of Man to mariner Thomas Sayle and his wife Jane who worked as a flax weaver and who

---

[2] 'The Strange Death of a Man at West Derby', *LM*, September 5, 1888, 8.

[3] [1891 census return Emma King (Wilson).]

[4] 'Wrecks on the Coast', *Melbourne Argus*, May 10, 1900, 5. [1879 shipping records Joseph Scott.]

occupied a single room dwelling. Investigation into her (and his) ancestry reveals that Jayne Sayle was the second cousin once removed of founding LNC Headmaster James Gill.[5] It is unclear whether Gill, through Manx family contacts, was familiar with and sensitive to the straitened circumstances in which his (second) cousin and her family were living, or whether Thomas and Jane reached out to James to seek his assistance in finding a place for their daughter in a 'respectable' home. However the situation came about, James Gill appears to have brokered the arrangement to secure Jane Sayle a position at Ullett Road in the employment of the Raes, in whose social circles he was likely to have mixed. Thus, these ancestral profiles of the LNC siblings reveal the depth and complexity of the lost histories of the students and staff of the LNC and provide a window through which their informal interactions may be observed.[6]

[5] James Gill named his younger son Oscar Sayle Gill, thereby referencing his mother's maiden name. The appearance of a Manx-born Sayle in Gill's wider orbit proved impossible to ignore.

[6] [1901 census returns John Rae, Jayne Sayle and Tomas Sayle.]

Bibliography

Primary sources

Archives

LJMU Special Collections & Archives (LJMU history: Byrom Street archive), Liverpool John Moores University:

Ad hoc LNC reports including:

Annual Report of the Headmaster of the Liverpool Nautical College 1895

Training Afloat, Report of the Headmaster, Nautical College Report re: Boys' School

Liverpool Nautical College (LNC) Admissions Register

LNC Headmaster's reportboook

LNC masters' timebook

Miscellaneous items including letters, annotated drafts and newspaper cuttings

Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee minute book

Merseyside Maritime Museum: 'The Diary of Eliza King' (SAS 35C/1/6)

University of Liverpool Archives: 'Liverpool Royal Institution Archive' (D122)

Newspapers

Newspaper records primarily accessed via the British Newspaper Archive service www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Adelaide Advertiser

'Post-Office Fatality', 1st November 1927

Belfast News Letter

‘Advertisements and notices. City of Liverpool: The Liverpool Nautical College’, 25th July 1892

Broken Hill Barrier Miner,

‘Fall from Adelaide P.O.’, 31st October 1927

Chester Courant and Advertiser for North Wales

‘District intelligence: Neston’, 12th October 1898

Glasgow Herald

‘Advertisements and notices. City of Liverpool: The Liverpool Nautical College’, 15th August 1892

Gore’s Liverpool General Advertiser

‘Serious Charge of Smuggling’, 16th January 1851

John O’Groat Journal

‘Liverpool Notes’, 2nd February 1894

Lancaster Gazette

‘The Liverpool School of Science and Technology: arrest of the Secretary’, 7th May 1892

Leicester Chronicle

‘Local Notes’, 28th March 1891

Liverpool Daily Post

‘The case of Mr R. F. Finlay’, 6th June 1894

‘Local intelligence’, 10th July 1894

‘Mercantile Marine Service Association’, 1st June 1897

Liverpool Echo

‘The Morning’s News’, 21st October 1891

‘The Liverpool School of Science’, 11th August 1892

‘Technical Education and the Nautical College’, 1st September 1892

‘Annals of our Time’, 2nd January 1893

‘City of Liverpool: The Nautical College, Colquitt Street’, 17th August 1893

‘The Liverpool Nautical College: New Educational Schemes’, 16th January 1894

‘The Liverpool Mercury is born in 1811’, 2nd July 2011

Liverpool Journal of Commerce

‘The Liverpool Nautical College’, 11th August 1892

‘The Seamen’s Cookery Classes’, 4th February 1896

Liverpool Mercury

‘Local News: Lecture at the South Sailors’ Home’, 11th December 1882

‘Local News: Liverpool Astronomical Society’, 23rd April 1886

‘The Strange Death of a Man at West Derby’, 5th September 1888

‘The Municipal Elections: Nomination Day’, 25th October 1890

‘City Council’, 2nd July 1891

‘Nautical Instruction in Liverpool, letter from A. Norman Tate’, 6th July 1891

‘Technical Education for Sea Officers, letter from Adelante’, 9th July 1891

‘Liverpool City Council’, 6th August 1891

‘The Marine Service Association & Nautical Training’, 6th August 1891

‘The promotion of technical education in Liverpool’, 9th October 1891

‘The Liverpool Astronomical Society’, 14th October 1891

‘Nautical education in Liverpool’, 21st October 1891

‘Technical instruction in Liverpool’, 28th November 1891

‘City Council’, 3rd December 1891

‘The Liverpool Underwriters’ Association’, 16th January 1892

‘Liverpool Corporation committees’, 27th January 1892

‘The Liverpool Astronomical Society’, 3rd March 1892

‘Local news’, 29th April 1892

‘City Council meeting’, 2nd May 1892

‘City Council: The Navigation School’, 5th May 1892

‘Liverpool police court’, 18th May 1892

‘Advertisements and notices. City of Liverpool: The Liverpool Nautical College’, 19th July 1892

‘Liverpool City Council: technical instruction’, 4th August 1892

‘Nautical jottings’, 13th August 1892

‘The Liverpool Nautical College’, 31st August 1892

‘Nautical jottings’, 22nd October 1892

‘City Council: The Naval Exhibition’, 27th October 1892

‘The Nautical College: Opening ceremony’, 2nd December 1892

‘Nautical jottings’, 3rd December 1892

‘Shipowners and shipmasters’, 3rd December 1892

‘Nautical jottings’, 10th December 1892

‘The Council business’, 28th December 1892

‘Nautical education in Liverpool’, 4th January 1893

‘Day to day in Liverpool’, 30th January 1893

‘Technical instruction in Liverpool’, 30th January 1893

‘Liverpool Nautical College’, 12th October 1893

‘City Council’, 14th December 1893

‘Liverpool Royal Institution’, 10th March 1894

‘Local news: Liverpool Library Committee’, 28th April 1894

‘Nautical jottings’, 5th May 1894

‘Liverpool Library Committee’, 28th September 1894

‘Nautical examinations’, 1st October 1894

‘Higher education of officers of the mercantile marine’, 19th October 1894

‘The Nautical College’, 20th October 1894

‘Shipping news: Merchant Service Guild’, 22nd October 1894

‘Nautical jottings’, 26th October 1894

‘Liverpool Nautical College’, 27th October 1894

‘Library Committee’, 21st December 1894

‘Local news’, 25th December 1894

‘Nautical education’, 27th December 1894

‘Local News’, 25th February 1895

‘Liverpool Royal Institution’, 4th March 1895

‘Liverpool Nautical College: A new suggestion’, 16th March 1895

‘River frontage and the Corporation of Liverpool’, 26th March 1895

‘Liverpool Royal Institution’, 11th June 1895

‘City Council’, 12th September 1895

‘Abuse of technical education’, 16th September 1895

‘Technical education’, 17th September 1895

‘Abuse of technical education’, 18th September 1895

‘The Nautical College’, 19th September 1895

‘Abuse of technical education’ (letter from Jack Tar), 20th September 1895

‘Abuse of technical education’ (letter from Nautical Taxpayer), 20th September 1895

‘Abuse of technical education’, 24th September 1895

‘Local news: The Nautical College’, 1st October 1895

‘The Nautical College’, 2nd October 1895

‘Municipal elections: Abercromby ward’, 3rd October 1895

‘The municipal elections: Notes and incidents’, 24th October 1895

‘Nautical jottings’, 25th October 1895

‘Liverpool Nautical College’, 2nd November 1895

‘Liverpool Royal Institution’, 15th February 1896

‘The Nautical College’, 22nd February 1896

‘Library extension in Liverpool’, 13th November 1896

‘City Council: The Nautical College’, 8th April 1897

‘Mercantile Marine Service Association’, 1st June 1897

‘Mercantile Marine Association’, 26th May 1899

‘Liverpool Manx Society: Fourth Annual Meeting’, 26th September 1899

‘Births, Marriages and Deaths’, 10th January 1900

‘Local News: Funeral of Mr. J. Gill’, 13th January 1900

‘Sales by Auction’, 26th January 1900

‘Day to day in Liverpool’, 6th February 1900

Liverpool Weekly Courier

‘Arrest of a Liverpool Official’, 7th May 1892

‘City of Liverpool: Nautical College, Colquitt Street’, 4th March 1893

Lloyd’s List

‘Rewards for Gallantry in Saving Lives at Sea’, 13th December 1867

London Evening Standard

‘Reward for Saving Life’, 1st January 1877

Melbourne Argus

‘Wrecks on the Coast’, 10th May 1900

Northern Whig

‘Lord Brassey on nautical education’, 3rd December 1892

Shields Daily Gazette

‘Shipping notes’, 7th July 1892

Shipping Gazette and Lloyds List

‘Mercantile Marine Service Association’, 24th November 1892

‘City of Liverpool: The Liverpool Nautical College’, 24th November 1892

‘The Liverpool Nautical College’, 28th November 1892

‘The Gazette’, 9th December 1892

‘Naval architecture and shipbuilding’, 28th October 1893

‘Liverpool Nautical College’, 12th December 1893

‘Higher education of mercantile marine officers’, 3rd February 1894

South Wales Daily News

‘The Liverpool Nautical College’, 18th July 1892

Online data sources referenced in this research

Annual RPI / average earnings dataset and ‘real wage calculator’:
https://www.measuringworth.com/datasets/ukearncpi/earnstudyx.pdf.

Census of population, Office of National Statistics:
https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10105821/cube/TOT_POP)

Final shooting script of the (1939) film version of *Gone With The Wind*:
Gone_With_the_Wind.pdf (dailyscript.com)

Final shooting script of the (2006) film version of The History Boys (by Alan Bennett): The History Boys Movie Script (scripts.com)

Historical records primarily accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk

HMS Conway: http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/TSConway/.

Liverpool Astronomical Society, 'The History of Liverpool Astronomical Society': https://liverpoolas.org/the-history-of-liverpool-astronomical-society/.

Mercantile Marine Service Association, 1866 – 1996, National Museums Liverpool website: (https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/artifact/mercantile-marine-service-association)

Newsletter of the Liverpool Astronomical Society, June 2020: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TpTuBnAb0Cj7rzqZFKQOVl60o92le00l/view.

Newspaper records primarily accessed via the British Newspaper Archive service www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Obituaries of graduates of St John's College, Cambridge: https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Eagle/Eagle%20Chapters/Obituaries/Obituaries_1910s.pdf

'The Comprehensive Guide to the Victoria & George Cross': http://www.vconline.org.uk/ernest-w-owens-am/4594868288.

Transcript of BBC Radio 3 series *Free Thinking* broadcast 22nd October 2014: http://historyworks.tv/projects/2014/10/22/the-history-manifesto/#bbc-debates-the-history-manifesto

Parliamentary papers and associated documents

Board of Trade, Notice of examinations of Masters and Mates, 19 December 1850

Fifth and Final Royal Commission on Labour: British Parliamentary Papers (HMSO, 1892)

Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, Parliamentary Paper, Annual statement of navigation and shipping 1895: Net tonnage entering and clearing England & Wales

Guide Book to the Local Marine Board Examination, 1851

'Improving the Condition of Masters, Mates, and Seamen, and maintaining Discipline in the Merchant Service' cited as 'The Mercantile Marine Act 1850'

'Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act', cited as 'Local taxation Act 1890'

'Merchant Shipping Repeal Act', cited as 'The Merchant Shipping Act 1854'

Tenth Report of the Science and Art Department (HMSO, 1863)

'The Elementary Education Act', cited as 'The Education Act 1870'

Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea. *Final report of the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea: with minutes of evidence, appendix, and digest of the evidence* (HMSO, 1887)

'Technical Instruction Act 1889'

Historical records

1939 Register (Series RG101), The National Archives, Kew, London, England.

Biographical annotations found in the marginalia of the LNC admissions register.

Civil registration records:

England & Wales, Civil Registration of Births, 1837-2007

England & Wales, Civil Registration of Marriages, 1837-2005

England & Wales, Civil Registration of Deaths, 1837-2007

Genealogies, images and obituaries, published via the ancestry.co.uk webpages.

Marine certification records from the General Register and Record, Office of Shipping & Seamen (National Archives of the UK).

Military draft, enlistment and service records.

National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1841-1911.*

Parish records of births, deaths and marriages.

Principal Probate Registry, *Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of the High Court of Justice in England*, London, England.

Professional membership information, including *Civil Engineer Membership Forms, 1818–1930*. London, UK: Institution of Civil Engineers.

Secondary sources

Adamson, John. ‘English Education: 1789-1902’, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 14, no. 2 (1966): 223-233.

Alexanderson, Kris. *Subversive Seas: Anticolonial Networks Across the Twentieth-century Dutch Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Alker, Zoe. ‘Street Violence in Mid-Victorian Liverpool’, unpublished PhD thesis, Liverpool John Moores University (2014).

Allingham, William. ‘Mercantile Marine Education’, *London Shipmasters’ Society Course of Papers* 28 (1893).

Altick, Richard. *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago University Press, 1998).

Anderson, Michael. ‘What can the Mid-Victorian Censuses tell us about Variations in Married Women's Employment?’, *Local Population Studies* (1999): 9-30.

Appuhn, Karl. ‘Microhistory’, in Paul Stearns (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of European Social History, vol. 1.* (Scribner’s, 2001): 105–112.

Appuhn, Karl. ‘Politics, Perception, and the Meaning of Landscape in Late Medieval Venice: Marco Cornaro’s 1442 Inspection of Firewood Supplies’, in John Howe and Michael Wolfe (eds.), *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe* (University Press of Florida, 2002): 70-88.

Armytage, Walter. ‘The 1870 Education Act’, *British Journal of Education Studies* 18, no. 2 (1970): 121-133.

Arnold, John. ‘The Historian as Inquisitor: The Ethics of Interrogating Subaltern Voices’, *Rethinking History* 2, no. 3 (1998): 379-386.

Arthur, Ian. ‘Libraries Afloat’, *Library Review* 11, no. 6 (1948): 393-395.

Ashwin, Paul. ‘The educational purposes of higher education: changing discussions of the societal outcomes of educating students’ in *Higher Education* 84, no. 6 (2022): 1227-1244.

Beardmore, Carol, Cara Dobbing, and Stephen King, ‘Introduction’ in Beardmore *et al* (eds.), *Family Life in Britain, 1650–1910* (Springer, 2019): 1-19.

Beaven, Brad. ‘The Resilience of Sailortown Culture in English Naval Ports, c. 1820–1900’, *Urban History* 43, no. 1 (2016): 72-95.

Behlmer, George. *Friends of the Family: The English Home and its Guardians, 1850-1940* (Stanford University Press, 1999).

Belchem, John. *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

Belchem, John. 'Hub and Diaspora: Liverpool and Transnational Labour', *Labour History Review* 75, no. 1 (2010): 20-29.

Bell, Ellis. *Wuthering Heights, A Novel* (Thomas Cautley Newby, 1847).

Berrill, Kenneth. 'International Trade and the Rate of Economic Growth', *Economic History Review* 12, no. 3 (1960): 351-359.

Bossenga, Gail. 'Institutions as a Mode of Historical Analysis', *Journal of the Western Society for French History* 44 (2016): 9-19.

Bourke, Joanna. 'Housewifery in Working-class England 1860-1914', *Past & Present* 143 (1994): 167-197.

Bovill, Donald. 'Education of Mercantile Mariners in the North East Ports (1840–1902)', unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University (1987).

Bovill, Donald. 'The Proprietary Schools of Navigation and Marine Engineering in the Ports of the North East of England, 1822-1914', *History of Education Society Bulletin* 44 (1989): 10-25.

Bovill, Donald. 'The Education of Boys for the Mercantile Marine: A Study of Three Nautical Schools', *History of Education Society Bulletin* 47 (1991): 11-22.

Brewer, John. 'Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life', *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 1 (2010): 87-109.

Broeze, Frank. 'Introduction', in Frank Broeze (ed.), *Maritime History at the Crossroads: A Critical Review of Recent Historiography* (Liverpool University Press, 1995).

Burnette, Joyce. *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Burton, Valerie. 'The Making of a Nineteenth-Century Profession: Shipmasters and the British Shipping Industry', *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada* 1, no. 1 (1990): 97-118.

Burton, Valerie. 'Boundaries and Identities in the Nineteenth-century English Port: Sailortown Narratives and Urban Space', in Simon Gunn and Robert J. Morris (eds.), *Identities in Space. Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (Ashgate, 2001): 137-151.

Cain, Peter and Anthony Hopkins. 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New imperialism, 1850-1945', *Economic History Review* 40, no. 1 (1987): 1-26.

Cannadine, David. *Class in Britain* (Penguin, 2000).

Carr, Edward, H. *What is History?* (Penguin Books, 1961).

Carradice, Phil. *Nautical Training Ships: An Illustrated History* (Amberley Publishing, 2009).

Carr-Saunders, Alexander and Paul Wilson. *The Professions* (Clarenden Press, 1933).

Clarke, David. 'Liverpool Shipowners: 1820-1914', unpublished PhD thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland (2005).

Coburn, Jon. 'Defending the Digital: Awareness of Digital Selectivity in Historical Research Practice', *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 53, no. 3 (2021): 398-410.

Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale University Press, 2005).

Collini, S. *What are Universities for?* (Penguin UK, 2012).

Collins, Neil. *Politics and Elections in Nineteenth-Century Liverpool* (Scholar Press, 1994).

Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim: A Romance* (McClure, Phillips & Company, 1903).

Cook, Hartley. *In the Watch Below: The Books and Hobbies of Seamen* (J. M. Dent & Sons, 1937).

Corbett, Mary. 'Cousin Marriage, Then and Now', *Victorian Review* 39, no. 2 (2013): 74-78.

Cornwell, John. *Newman's Unquiet Grave: The Reluctant Saint* (Continuum, 2010).

Cothran, Boyd and Adrian Shubert, 'Maritime History, Microhistory, and the Global Nineteenth Century: The Edwin Fox', *Global Nineteenth-Century Studies* 1, no. 1 (2022): 73-80.

Cowan, Ian. 'The Technical Instruction Committee in Salford from 1889 to 1903', *The Vocational Aspect of Education* 18, no. 40 (1966): 121-132.

Cox, Pamela, Heather Shore, Zoe Alker and Barry Godfrey. 'Tracking the Gendered Life Courses of Care Leavers in 19th century Britain', *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies: International Journal* 9, no. 1 (2018): 115-128.

Crafts, Nicholas. 'Forging Ahead and Falling Behind: The Rise and Relative Decline of the First Industrial Nation', *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 12, no. 2 (1998): 193-210.

Creighton, Margaret and Lisa Norling (eds). *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (JHU Press, 1996).

Cuming, Emily. 'At Home in the World?: The Ornamental Life of Sailors in Victorian Sailortown', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 47, no. 3 (2019): 463-485.

Davenport, Ramola. 'Urbanization and Mortality in Britain, c. 1800–50', *Economic History Review* 7, no. 2 (2020): 455-485.

Davidoff, Leonore. *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (Polity Press, 1995).

Davidoff, Leonore. *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780-1920* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Davidoff, Leonore and Catherine Hall. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (Routledge, 2018).

Davies, John. 'Political Satire: Nineteenth-century Comic Histories of Liverpool', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 157 (2008): 93-112.

De Bellaigue, Christina. 'Great Expectations? Childhood, Family, and Middle-Class Social Mobility in Nineteenth-Century England', *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 1 (2019): 29-46.

De Bellaigue, Christina, Helena Mills & Eve Worth. ''Rags to Riches?' New Histories of Social Mobility in Modern Britain', *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 1 (2019): 1-11.

De Figueiredo, Peter. 'Symbols of Empire: The Buildings of the Liverpool Waterfront', *Architectural History* 46 (2003): 229-254.

De Vivo, Filippo. 'Prospect or Refuge? Microhistory, History on the Large Scale: A Response', *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 3 (2010): 387-397.

Dickens, Charles. 'Poor Mercantile Jack', *All the Year Round* 46 (1860).

Ditchfield, Grayson. 'The Early History of Manchester College', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 23 (1971): 81-104.

Dixon, Conrad. 'Legislation and the Sailor's Lot, 1660-1914', in Paul Adam (ed.), *Seamen in Society* (proceedings of the Conference of the International Commission on Maritime History, Bucharest, 1980): 96-106.

Dixon, Conrad. 'Seamen and the Law: an Examination of the Impact of Legislation on the British Merchant Seaman's Lot, 1588-1918', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London (1981).

Douglas, Mary. *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse University Press, 1986).

Driessen, Henk. ‘Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered’, *History and Anthropology* 16 (2005): 129-141.

Duff, Wendy M. and Catherine A. Johnson, ‘Accidentally Found on Purpose: Information-seeking Behaviour of Historians in Archives’, *The Library Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (2002): 472-496.

Dyer, Thomas. ‘Institutional Research and Institutional History’, *Research in Higher Education* 8, no. 3 (1978): 283-286.

Dyer, Thomas. ‘On the Writing of College and University History’, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 113, no. 3 (1989): 439-446.

Elder, Glen. ‘Time, Human Agency, and Social Change: Perspectives on the Life Course’, *Social Psychology Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (1994): 4-15.

Elder, Glen. ‘The Life Course as Developmental Theory’, *Child Development* 69, no. 1 (1998): 1-12.

Ellis, Thomas and Ellis Ellis-Griffith. *Intermediate and Technical Education (Wales): A Manual to the Intermediate Education (Wales) Act, 1889, and the Technical Instruction Act, 1889* (National Association for the Promotion of Technical and Secondary Education, 1889).

Ensor, Robert. *England, 1870-1914* (Clarendon Press, 1936).

Elton, Geoffrey. *The Practice of History* (Fontana Books, 1967).

Evans, Gillian R. ‘‘University’: The History of the Search for a Definition in England’, *History of Universities* 31, no.1 (2018): 187-212.

Evans, Richard. *In Defence of History* (Granta Publications, 2012).

Farge, Arlette. *The Allure of the Archives* translated by Thomas Scott-Railton (Yale University Press, 2013).

Fidler, Geoffrey. ‘The Liverpool Trades Council and Technical Education in the era of the Technical Instruction Committee’, *History of Education* 6, no. 3 (1977): 309-322.

Fielding, Henry. *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (Routledge & Co, London, 1857).

Floud, Roderick. ‘Technical Education and Economic Performance: Britain, 1850-1914’, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 14, no. 2 (1982): 153-171.

Foggo, Anthony N. ‘The Radical Experiment in Liverpool and its Influence on the Reform Movement in the early Victorian Period’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Liverpool (2015).

Foggo, Nick. ‘The Rise and Fall of Diversity in the Liverpool Newspaper Press’, *Media History* 27, no. 2 (2021): 129-147.

Fraser, Derek. *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 1992).

Fraser, Hamish. ‘Municipal Socialism and Social Policy’, in Robert Morris and Richard Rodger (eds), *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914* (Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd, 1993): 258-280.

Froeyman, Anton. ‘Reading Microhistory: Three Layers of Meaning’, in Julian Wolfreys (ed.), *New Critical Thinking: Criticism to Come* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017): 99-122.

Fry, Michael. *Glasgow: A History of the City* (Bloomsbury, 2017).

Funnell, Warwick. ‘Victorian Parsimony and the Early Champions of Modern Public Sector Audit’, *Accounting History* 9, no. 1 (2004): 25-60.

Furneaux, Holly. *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Gallagher, Tom. ‘A Tale of Two Cities: Communal Strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914’, in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in the Victorian City* (Routledge, 2021): 106-129.

Gibb, Andrew. *Glasgow: The Making of a City* (Routledge, 2021).

Gill, James. *Text-book on Navigation and Nautical Astronomy* (Longmans & Co, 1898).

Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller* (JHU Press, 1976).

Gregory, Brad. ‘Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life’, *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (1999): 100-110.

Griffin, Emma. *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy* (Yale University Press, 2020).

Hager, Kelly and Talia Schaffer. ‘Introduction: Extending Families’, *Victorian Review* 39, no. 2 (2013): 7-21.

Haggerty, Sheryllynne, Anthony Webster and Nicholas White. ‘Introduction’, in Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas White (eds.), *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester University Press, 2008): 1-16.

Halliday, Stephen. ‘Duncan of Liverpool: Britain's First Medical Officer’, *Journal of Medical Biography* 11, no. 3 (2003): 142-149.

Hanham, Harold. *The Nineteenth-Century Constitution 1815-1914: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge University Press, 1969).

Hartnell, Roy. 'Art and Civic Culture in Birmingham in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Urban History* 22, no. 2 (1995): 229-237.

Hattendorf, John. 'Maritime History Today', *Perspectives on History* 50, no. 2 (2012): 34-36.

Herdman, William. *Herdman's Liverpool* (The Gallery Press, 1968).

Hérubel, Jean-Pierre. 'University, College Institutional Histories, and University Presses: General Observations of a Unique Publishing Phenomenon', *Publishing and Research Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2019): 352-361.

Hewitt, William. *The Technical Instruction Committee and Its Work; 1890-1903 a Chapter in the History of Education in Liverpool* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1927).

Higgs, Edward. 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal* 23, no. 1 (Oxford University Press, 1987): 59-80.

Hill, Kate. '"Thoroughly Embued with the Spirit of Ancient Greece": Symbolism and Space in Victorian Civic Culture', in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain 1800-1940* (Manchester University Press, 1999): 99-111.

Hitchcock, Tim. 'Confronting the Digital: or how Academic History Writing Lost the Plot', *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 1 (2013): 9-23.

Hobbs, Andrew. 'When the Provincial Press was the National Press (c. 1836-c. 1900)', *International Journal of Regional and Local Studies* 5, no. 1 (2009): 16-43.

Hobbs, Andrew. 'The Deleterious Dominance of *The Times* in Nineteenth-century Scholarship', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 18, no. 4 (2013): 472-497.

Hobbs, Andrew. *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855-1900* (Open Book Publishers, 2018).

Hobbs, Andrew. 'Readers' Letters to Victorian Local Newspapers as Journalistic Genre', in Alison Cavanagh and John Steel (eds.) *Letters to the Editor: Comparative and Historical Perspectives* (2019): 129-146.

Horrell, Sara and Jane Humphries. 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-breadwinner Family, 1790-1865', *Economic History Review* 89, no. 117 (1995): 89-117.

Hudson, Pat. 'Closeness and Distance: A Response to Brewer', *Cultural and Social History* 7, no .3 (2010): 375-385.

Hughes, Everett, David Riesman and Howard Becker. *The Sociological Eye: Selected papers* (Routledge, 2017).

Humphries, Jane. *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Inkster, Ian. *Science and Technology in History: An Approach to Industrial Development* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 1991).

Jackson, Dan. *The Northumbrians: North-East England and its People, a New History* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

Jeans, Clifford. 'The First Statutory Qualifications for Seafarers', *Transport History* 6 (1973): 248-267.

Jones, David. *The Origins of Civic Universities: Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool* (Routledge, 2019).

Kelly, Thomas. *For Advancement of Learning: The University of Liverpool, 1881-1981* (Liverpool University Press, 1981).

Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (Random House, 1988).

Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (Penguin, 2017).

Kennerley, Alston. 'The Education of the Merchant Seaman in the Nineteenth Century', unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Exeter (1978).

Kennerley, Alston. 'British Seamen's Missions and Sailors Homes 1815 to 1970: Voluntary Welfare Provision for Serving Seafarers', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Plymouth (1989).

Kennerley, Alston. 'Merchant Marine Education in Liverpool and the Nautical College of 1892', *International Journal of Maritime History* 5, no. 2 (1993): 103-134.

Kennerley, Alston. 'Ratings for the Mercantile Marine: the Roles of Charity, the State and Industry in the Pre-service Education and Training of Ratings for the British Merchant Navy, 1879-1939', *History of Education* 28, no. 1 (1999): 31-51.

Kennerley, Alston. 'Seafaring Missionary Societies and Maritime Education and Training, 1815–1914', *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 35:sup1 (1999): 244-257.

Kennerley, Alston. 'Early State Support of Vocational Education: the Department of Science and Art Navigation Schools, 1853–63', *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 52, no. 2 (2000): 211-224

Kennerley, Alston. ‘Nationally-Recognised Qualifications for British Merchant Navy Officers, 1865–1966’, *International Journal of Maritime History* 13, no. 1 (2001): 115-135.

Kennerley, Alston. ‘Writing the History of Merchant Seafarer Education, Training and Welfare: Retrospect and Prospect’, *The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord* 12, no. 2 (2002): 1-21.

Kennerley, Alston. ‘British Merchant Seafarers and Their Homes, 1895–1970’, *International Journal of Maritime History* 24, no. 1 (2012): 115-146.

Kennerley, Alston. ‘Welfare in British Merchant Seafaring’, *International Journal of Maritime History* 28, no. 2 (2016): 356-375.

Kennerley, Alston and Percy Seymour. ‘Aids to the Teaching of Nautical Astronomy and its History from 1600’, *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 36, no. 1 (2000): 151-175.

Kerr, Clark. *The uses of the University* (Harvard University Press, 1963).

King, John. ‘An Inquiry into the Causes of Shipwrecks: Its Implications for the Prevention of Pollution’, *Marine Policy* 19, no. 6 (1995): 469-475.

King, Stephen. ‘Configuring and Re-configuring Families in Nineteenth-Century England’, in Beardmore *et al* (eds.), *Family Life in Britain, 1650–1910* (Springer, 2019): 229-254.

Kingdon, Zachary and Dmitri van den Bersselaar, ‘Collecting Empire?: African Objects, West African Trade and a Liverpool Museum’ in Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas White (eds.), *The Empire in One City? Liverpool’s Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester University Press, 2008): 100-122.

Kuper, Adam. *Incest and influence. The Private Life of Bourgeois England* (Harvard University Press, 2009).

Laite, Julia. ‘Schooners and Schoonermen, My Grandfather and Me’, *History Workshop Journal* 87 (2019): 251-261.

Laite, Julia. ‘The Emmet’s Inch: “Small” History in a Digital Age’, *Journal of Social History* 53, no. 4 (2020): 963-989.

Laite, Julia. *The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey: A True Story of Sex, Crime and the Meaning of Justice* (Profile Books, 2021).

Land, Isaac. ‘The Humours of Sailortown: Atlantic History meets Subculture Theory’, in Glenn Clark, Judith Owens and Greg T. Smith (eds.), *City Limits: Perspectives on the Historical European City* (McGill, 2010): 325-347.

Landes, David. *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the present* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Lane, Tony. *Liverpool: City of the Sea* (Liverpool University Press, 1997).

Lepore, Jill. 'Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography', *Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 129-144.

Levi, Giovanni. 'Microhistory and the Recovery of Complexity', in Marjatta Rahikainen and Susanna Fellman (eds), *Historical Knowledge: In Quest of Theory, Method and Evidence* (2012): 121-132.

Levi, Giovanni. 'The Uses of Biography', in Hans Renders and Binne D. Haan (eds.), *Theoretical Discussions of Biography* (Lewiston, 2013): 59-74.

Long, Jason. 'The Surprising Social Mobility of Victorian Britain', *European Review of Economic History* 17, no. 1 (2013): 1-23.

Lord, Walter. *A Night to Remember* (R&W Holt, 1955).

Luria, Kieth and Romolo Gandolfo. 'Carlo Ginzburg: An Interview', *Radical History Review* 35 (1986): 89-111.

McArthur, Jan. 'Reconsidering the social and economic purposes of higher education', *Higher Education Research & Development* 30, no. 6 (2011): 737-749.

McGeevor, Sophie. 'How well did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's 'Regular' Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *History of the Family* 19, no. 4 (2014): 489-512.

McKay, John. 'Married Women and Work in Nineteenth-century Lancashire: The Evidence of the 1851 and 1861 Census Reports', *Local Population Studies* 61 (1998): 25-37.

Magnússon, Sigurdur. 'Social History as "Sites of Memory"? The Institutionalisation of History: Microhistory and the Grand Narrative', *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 891-913.

Mandler, Peter. 'Comment: Social Mobility and the Historians', *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 1 (2019): 103-107.

Martin, Willard. 'Letters and Remarks by Mark Twain from the Boston Daily Journal', *Mark Twain Journal* 18, no. 1 (1975): 1-5.

Mathias, Peter. *The First Industrial Nation: The Economic History of Britain 1700–1914* (London: Methuen, 1969).

Matthews-Jones, Lucinda. '"I still remain one of the old Settlement boys": Cross-class Friendship in the First World War Letters of Cardiff University Settlement Lads' Club', *Cultural and Social History* 13, no. 2 (2016): 195-211.

Matthews-Jones, Lucinda. 'Settling at Home: Gender and Class in the Room Biographies of Toynbee Hall, 1883–1914', *Victorian Studies* 60, no. 1 (2017): 29-52.

Mayer, Karl. 'New Directions in Life Course Research', *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 413-433.

Meister, Daniel. 'The Biographical Turn and the Case for Historical Biography', *History Compass* 16, no. 1 (2018): 1-10

Melling, Joseph. ''Non-Commissioned Officers': British Employers and their Supervisory Workers, 1880-1920', *Social History* 5, no. 2 (1980): 183-221.

Melville, Herman. *Redburn: His First Voyage* (Richard Bentley, 1849).

Miles, Andrew. 'How Open was Nineteenth-Century British Society? Social Mobility and Equality of Opportunity, 1839–1914', in Andrew Miles and David Vincent (eds), *Building European Society: Occupational Change and Social Mobility in Europe, 1840–1940* (Manchester University Press, 1993): 18-39.

Milne, Graeme. 'Maritime Liverpool' in John Belchem (ed.), *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History* (Liverpool University Press, 2006): 257-309.

Mitch, David. '"Inequalities which every one may remove": Occupational Recruitment, Endogamy, and the Homogeneity of Social Origins in Victorian England', in Andrew Miles and David Vincent (eds.), *Building European Society: Occupational Change and Social Mobility in Europe, 1840–1940* (Manchester University Press, 1993): 140-164.

Mortimer, Jeylan and Michael Shanahan (eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2007).

Nelson, Claudia. *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007).

Newman, John H. *The idea of the University* first published 1853 (Oxford University Press, 1976).

Nicholson, Bob. 'Counting Culture; or How to Read Victorian Newspapers from a Distance', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17, no. 2 (2012): 238-246.

North, Douglass. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Oldham, Joseph W. *The Ismay Line, the White Star Line and the Ismay Family Story* (Journal of Commerce and Shipping, 1961).

Palmer, Sarah. *Politics, Shipping and the Repeal of the Navigation Laws* (St Martin's Press, 1990).

Pelling, Henry. *Social Geography of British Elections 1885–1910* (Springer, 1967).

Perlmutter, Oscar. 'The purposes of higher education', *Journal of General Education* 11, no. 1 (1958): 56-60.

Phillips, Mark. 'Histories, Micro- and Literary: Problems of Genre and Distance', *New Literary History* 34, no. 2 (2003): 211-229.

Pooley, Colin. 'Living in Liverpool: The Modern City', in John Belchem (ed.), *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History* (Liverpool University Press, 2006): 171-255.

Prichard, David. The Loss of the Vivid. The Biography of a Shipwreck. Third public version, revised 25 July 2015. http://personal.strath.ac.uk/david.pritchard/vivid.pdf

Putnam, Lara. 'The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast', *American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (2016): 377-402.

Quinlan, Alexander and N.E. Mann. *Cookery for Seamen* (The Liverpool Training School of Cookery, 1894).

Rees, David. *Local and Parliamentary Politics in Liverpool from 1800 to 1911* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1999).

Renwick, Chris. 'Movement, Space and Social Mobility in Early and Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 1 (2019): 13-28.

Rideing, William. 'England's Great Sea-Port', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 344, no. 58 (1879).

Robertson, Paul. 'Technical Education in the British Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Industries, 1863-1914', *The Economic History Review* 27, no. 2 (1974): 222-235.

Robertson, Stephen. 'The Differences between Digital Humanities and Digital History' in Matthew K. Gold (ed.) *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012): 289-307.

Roderick, Gordon and Michael Stephens. 'Approaches to Technical Education in 19th-century England: Part II: The Liverpool School of Science', *Vocational Aspect of Education* 22, no. 53 (1970): 151-157.

Rogers, Helen. 'Making Their Mark: Young Offenders' Life Histories and Social Networks', in David Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday (eds.), *Law, Crime and Deviance since 1700: Micro-studies in the History of Crime* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016): 227-250.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiograph*y (New York: Scribners, 1913).

Rothblatt, Sheldon. 'The Writing of University History at the End of Another Century', *Oxford Review of Education* 23, no. 2 (1997): 151-167.

Rubenhold, Hallie. *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019).

Sanders, Valerie. '"Lifelong Soulmates?": The Sibling Bond in Nineteenth-Century Fiction', *Victorian Review* 39, no. 2 (2013): 54-57.

Schürer, Kevin, Eilidh Garrett, Hannaliis Jaadla and Alice Reid. 'Household and Family Structure in England and Wales (1851–1911): Continuities and Change', *Continuity and Change* 33, no. 3 (2018): 365-411.

Seed, David (ed.) *American Travellers in Liverpool* (Liverpool University Press, Second Edition, 2020).

Shakespeare, William. *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Tempest* (Oxford Paperbacks, 2008).

Sharples, Joseph. ''The Visible Embodiment of Modern Commerce': Speculative Office Buildings in Liverpool, c. 1780–1870', *Architectural History* 61 (2018): 131-173.

Shortern, Ann. 'A School for the Mercantile Marine: A Survey of Initiatives in Maritime Education in Australia, 1869-1923', *Critical Studies in Education* 21, no. 1 (1979): 56-92.

Simey, Margaret. *Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool, 1951).

Skeggs, Beverley. *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (Sage, 1997).

Snow, C.P. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1959).

Srinivasan, Venkat. *et al*, 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at Institutional History: A Model for Digital Exhibitions from Science Archives', *Circumscribere International Journal for the History of Science* 21, no. 71 (2018): 71-83.

Stewart, Liz. *Courts and Alleys: A History of Liverpool Courtyard Housing* (Liverpool University Press, 2019).

Steinbach, Susie. *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Routledge, 2016).

Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (Penguin, 1979).

Strange, Julie-Marie. *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Sturmey, Stanley G. *British Shipping and World Competition* (Liverpool University Press, 2010).

Tabili, Laura. *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939* (Springer, 2011).

Tawney, Richard. *Secondary Education for All* (Labour Party Advisory Committee on Education, 1922).

Taylor, Janet. *Hand-book to the Local Marine Board Examination, for Officers of the British Mercantile Marine* (published by Mrs Janet Taylor, 1853).

Thernstrom, Stephan. *Poverty and Progress; Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Harvard University Press, 1964).

Tiffen, Herbert. *A History of the Liverpool Institute Schools* (Old Boys' Association, 1935).

Turnbull, Wayne. *A Brief History of Credit in UK Higher Education: Laying Siege to the Ivory Tower* (Emerald Group Publishing, 2020).

Turnbull, Wayne. 'Illuminating the History of the Training Ship *HMS Conway* through Stained Glass Windows', in Emma Roberts (ed.), *Art and the Sea* (Liverpool University Press, 2022): 179-206.

Turnbull, Wayne and Harvey Woolf. *Widening Access to Higher Education in the UK: Developments and Approaches Using Credit Accumulation and Transfer* (McGraw-Hill Education, 2022).

Vasey, Thomas. 'The Emergence of Examinations for British Shipmasters and mates, 1830-1850', unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University (1980).

[V.B.] 'New Books and Memoirs', *Journal of the British Astronomical Association* 9, no.5 (1899): 213.

Vickers, Daniel. 'Beyond Jack Tar', *William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1993): 418-424.

Vincent, David. *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Wach, Howard. 'A "Still, Small Voice" from the Pulpit: Religion and the Creation of Social Morality in Manchester, 1820-1850', *Journal of Modern History* 63, no. 3 (1991): 425-456.

Waller, Philip. *Democracy and Sectarianism: A Political and Social History of Liverpool 1868-1939* (Liverpool University Press, 1981).

Walsh, Margaret. 'Gender in the History of Transportation Services: A Historiographical Perspective', *Business History Review* 81, no. 3 (2007): 545-562.

Webster, Roger and Shonagh Wilkie. *The Making of a Modern University: Liverpool John Moores University* (Third Millennium Publishing, 2017).

Weinberg, Steve. 'Biography, the Bastard Child of Academe', *Chronicle of Higher Education* 54, no. 35 (2008): 1-5.

White, Nicholas. 'Liverpool Shipping and the End of Empire: The Ocean Group in East and Southeast Asia, c. 1945-73', in Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas White (eds.), *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester University Press, 2008): 165-187.

Whyte, William H. *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain's Civic Universities* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Wilde, Jane. 'The Creation of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade', *Journal of Transport History* 4 (1956): 193-206.

Williams, David. 'James Silk Buckingham: Sailor, Explorer and Maritime Reformer', in Stephen Fisher (ed.), *Studies in British Privateering, Trading Enterprise and Seamen's Welfare* (University of Exeter, 1987): 99-120.

Williams, David. 'The Rise of United States Merchant Shipping on the North Atlantic, 1800-1850: The British Perception and Response', in Clark G. Reynolds (ed.), *Global Crossroads and The American Seas* (Pictorial Histories, 1988): 67-83.

Williams, David. 'Mid-Victorian attitudes to seamen and maritime reform: The society for improving the condition of merchant seamen, 1867', *International Journal of Maritime History* 3, no. 1 (1991): 101-126.

Williams, David. 'The quality, skill and supply of maritime labour: Causes of concern in Britain 1850-1914', in Jacobus R. Bruijn, Lewis. R. Fischer et al.(eds.), *The North Sea: Twelve Essays on the Social History of Maritime Labour* (Stavanger Maritime Museum and the Association of North Sea Societies, 1992): pp.41-58.

Williams, David. 'The Progress of Maritime History, 1953–93', *Journal of Transport History* 14, no. 2 (1993): 126-142.

Wilson, Walter. *The Bulloch Belles: Three First Ladies, a Spy, a President's Mother and Other Women of a 19th Century Georgia Family* (McFarland, 2015).

Wilson, Walter and Gary McKay. *James D. Bulloch: Secret Agent and Mastermind of the Confederate Navy* (McFarland, 2012).

Woodward, Llewellyn, *The Age of Reform, 1815-1870* (Oxford University Press, 1962).

You, Xuesheng. ‘Women's Labour Force Participation in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales: Evidence from the 1881 Census Enumerators’ Books’, *Economic History Review* 73, no. 1 (2020): 106-133.

You, Xuesheng. ‘Working with Husband? “Occupation’s Wife” and Married Women’s Employment in the Censuses in England and Wales between 1851 and 1911’, *Social Science History* 44, no. 4 (2020): 585-613.