

CDA-5-Maritime-Migrations

Maritime Migrations: Transfers and Displacements in Britain's and Australia's Nineteenth-century Exchange

How to apply and further details: <https://www.sww-ahdtp.ac.uk/prospective-students/apply/collaborative-doctoral-award-projects-2021/>

Supervisors

- Prof. Simon J. Potter (University of Bristol, simon.potter@bristol.ac.uk)
- Dr James Boyd (SS Great Britain Trust, jdb@ssgreatbritain.org)
- Dr John McAleer (University of Southampton, j.mcaleer@soton.ac.uk)

Prof. Potter is Head of History at the University of Bristol and has published extensively on links between Britain and Australia in the 19th and 20th centuries, including the application of concepts of networking. He is a former Menzies Centre for Australian Studies Rydon Fellow and Bicentennial Fellow, and former Harold White Fellow of the National Library of Australia. He has supervised nine PhD projects to completion, including one CDA project with the Trust. Dr Boyd is full-time Research Fellow at the Trust. He has worked across both the university and museum sectors to develop teaching and research programmes designed to capitalise on collections material, focusing on 19th-century international migration. He collaborates closely with the Jean Golding Institute, University of Bristol, on the development of historical network-graphing and visualisation. The research of Dr McAleer situates the history of empire in its global and maritime contexts. Before joining the University of Southampton, he was Curator of Imperial and Maritime History at the National Maritime Museum. He has supervised five PhD projects to completion. Potter and McAleer have worked together on museums and empire since 2012, recently as members of the British Empire and Commonwealth Collections Advisory Group for Bristol Museums and Archives.

Subject

This project examines the role played by empires, oceans, and trans-national maritime networks in laying the foundations for modern processes of globalisation, deploying a range of methods and approaches from within and beyond the discipline of History. The student will examine how intersections between maritime networks, markets and states shaped migratory transfers and displacements between Britain and Australia in the 19th century. Research will be grounded in the collections of the SS Great Britain Trust. The project seeks to overcome the 'blue hole' – the often absent factor of maritime forces – in our historical understanding of the ways in which populations, commodities, markets and ecosystems interacted with and confronted one another. Candidates are encouraged to interrogate the ways in which maritime agents – ship owners, brokers, recruiters, global merchants – worked to influence migratory transfer of people, markets in material goods, flora, fauna and ecosystems, and/or symbiosis among these.

Research questions and methods

Over-arching research questions might include:

- How, and to what extent, did 19th-century maritime networks shape later patterns of globalisation?
- How did trade networks cultivated to support ships like the ss *Great Britain* shape contemporary processes of migration and ecological transplantation?

Supervisors anticipate that candidates may develop further specific questions, based on one aspect of migration and transfer (for example human, ecological or economic) within the evidence available. However, the PhD project must contextualise that aspect within the wider framework of maritime networks of exchange.

Candidates may compare different networks of maritime agents or analyse a single network which had a particularly significant impact. Primary and secondary source material is readily available, and to facilitate large-scale and intricate analyses of networks of exchange, digital tools developed by the Trust to advance museums-based source analysis will be utilized. These include network-graphing software, developed by the Jean Golding Institute (University of Bristol) and the Trust, to examine and demonstrate historical communities of innovation, as well as text-recognition software used in the Trust's historical research on handwritten material. Other academics and visitors to the HEI and non-HEI partnership will form a supportive community of scholars from a range of disciplines. The supervisors therefore anticipate an immersive, interdisciplinary environment in which the management, interrogation, and interpretation of source material supports multiple pathways to discovery.

Research context

In the existing literature on 19th-century global transfers, maritime studies and trans-national network capital rarely converge. Network capital is often studied from the perspective of migrants or, in the Australian case, imperial institutions. Maritime studies typically explore voyage experience or biography – either of shipping lines or individual ships. For Britain and Australia, we lack detailed study of how maritime agents connected and had the capacity to influence imperial policy, migratory decisions, market transfers, and social and ecological displacements. It is in this context, against rising awareness that vessels themselves were technological, cultural and political expressions, that the study is placed.

Main resources/collections in this area

The Trust's collection is unique, representing a coherent and extensive body of material about the entire operating life of a single vessel engaged in global exchange across multiple decades. Archives are held for each of the 25,000 passengers who transited on the ship from 1845-1886, predominantly to Australia, and there is extensive material on operation and ownership, and trade in cargoes, including flora and fauna, of every kind. Although the collection has supported engineering history, heritage study and biography, it has not been exploited to analyse the dynamic movement of objects, people and ideas across borders and cultures, or indeed the maritime mechanisms underpinning these.

Skills developed by student and employability enhancement

Throughout the CDA, candidates will gain skills in digital interpretation, data management, stakeholder engagement, and public presentation (written and oral) which will each be vital to future professional capital. Whilst skills in digital interpretation and research methods will be addressed by the supervisory team and HEI provision, the non-HEI environment will be leveraged to cultivate external engagement skills. Candidates will have the opportunity to communicate research to non-HEI external partners from community groups to industry to charities, developing effective methods of adapting data, information and thematic content to maximise engagement across diverse audiences.

In addition to training and expertise in public presentation and stakeholder engagement, the student will receive all relevant non-HEI internal training. This will include necessary software training and expertise, and all training and support required to build, host and manage collaborative events such as workshops, seminars and conferences. It is anticipated that the candidate will also contribute to enrichment events held at the non-HEI for all SWW-DTP students, to demonstrate the benefits of the host partnership, and wider CDA concept. To integrate the student into all relevant non-HEI activities and ensure constant access to research material, a permanent workstation will be available in the non-HEI library and archive for the CDA's duration.