



## SCARBOROUGH MARITIME HERITAGE CENTRE

### News - Spring 2024

#### New Exhibition

From March to June our exhibition is about 'Women at Sea'. Life at sea used to be hard physical work in cramped difficult conditions. It seems to many that it was not very suitable for women. It is also a common belief that in previous eras it was thought unlucky to have women on a boat or ship. This exhibition shows us that females have been at sea for many centuries. The earliest records show that Artemisia I of Caria, Queen of Halicarnassus, was a successful naval commander in 500 BC and Princess Sela was the first Norwegian pirate in 400 AD. There were women captains and pirates through the 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Once we enter the great age of sail, in the 1700s, we find many women listed, sailing under male names. Finally, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century women began to break world records for sailing single handedly around the globe. Dora Walker was the first skipper on the Yorkshire Coast and women began working in the Royal Navy and RNLI. In 2016 four Yorkshire women 'Yorkshire Rows' became the oldest female crew to cross the Atlantic. In partnership with the Lloyd's Register '[She\\_Seas](#)' project we debunk the myth that women don't have a place in maritime history.

#### What the Sea Saw project

'What the Sea Saw' celebrates the heritage of fishing along the East Yorkshire coast, particularly the communities in Scarborough and Staithes. It will capture the memories of the fishing community from the 1950s to the present day. In partnership with *Digital Drama*, a series of events will be organised including an audio trail inspired by oral histories, workshops in schools, and a final performance combining stories and sea shanties sung by local choirs. This will be accompanied by fish and chips for the audience and participants. The project is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and volunteers are welcome to get involved.

### The forgotten casualties of the 1914 bombardment of Scarborough

The bombardment of Scarborough by German battlecruisers on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1914 was one of the iconic moments of WW1. In its immediate wake, posters implored potential recruits to 'Remember Scarborough'. Over a century on, the bombardment lingers in the cultural memory. But who remembers the 108 sailors killed and twenty-one ships sunk as a result of the sea mining operation that took place alongside the bombardment? The mines laid by the Kolberg sunk ships and drowned sailors but has generally been presented as a footnote to the bombardment of the town. This maybe because the sinkings took place over several months and often went unseen. The losses were placed in the context of the growing stalemate of trench warfare on the Western Front. As casualties mounted the British public became grimly accustomed to death in a manner that was unthinkable in peacetime.

This new project, spearheaded by Dr David Pendleton, will bring research information together from many sources to add more details about the ships and men. The Scarborough Sub Aqua Club are helping with new information gained through their records and may undertake new dives to examine the wrecks. We will create new webpages of information and put on an exhibition, conference and commemoration in December 2024.

#### Book reviews by our librarian, Jennifer King

**Sea Adventure: A Sturdy Whitby Collier 1724-1810.** Author, M A W Salter, kindly donated a copy to us. A fascinating history of a three-masted Collier thought to have been built on the west bank of the river Esk. As the author says, 'it is a testament to the skill of the shipbuilders and to the skill, endurance and tenacity of its Masters and crew that she lasted for 86 years with an average of 5 trips per annum in the treacherous waters of the North Sea and the Baltic'. One sobering incident occurred in October 1806 when a "fine boy" fell from the top mast of Sea Adventure in Shields harbour and drowned.

**The British Herring Industry: the Steam Drifter Years 1900 - 1960.** Author, Christopher Unsworth, kindly donated a copy of the book published by Amberley Publishing in 2013. At different times of the year, herring were found in commercial numbers in the North Sea, the Moray Firth, the Minches, the Firth of Clyde, the Irish Sea and the English Channel. Because the herring grounds were close to land, British herring

could therefore be caught, gutted, properly salted and packed in barrels within 24 hours. This meant that Russian and German buyers preferred them to those of their French rivals. Christopher tells the story of this once huge industry, and the advent and decline of the steam drifter. His book is enlivened with short biographies of interesting characters involved in the trade, and copiously illustrated.

**Leith-Built Ships Vol. 1 They once we're ship builders.** Author, R O Neish, donated a copy to us published in 2019 by Whittles Publishing Ltd. This book was written by a proud shipbuilder who is actively involved in the ship building industry. Leith had begun building ships some 400 years before the great shipyards of the Clyde and was once Scotland's main port with many firsts to its name. The book includes a most useful glossary of shipbuilding terms, and details of famous ships with tales of adventure and new trade routes.

### New Website Articles

Recent donations of photographs, video and audio recordings, have been added to our website on topics such as: Arthur Miller, ex harbour master; Alan Richmond's family history, ex RNLI; William Milner, customs / preventive officer in the 1800s; Scarborough Trinity House history; Reg Warrener, Scarborough's first traffic warden; Dennis Allen, Bill Scales, Richie Oakes, Bob Walker and Eddie Temple talking about their lives at sea (see the 'Featured Articles' and 'Gallery' sections on our website).

### Available to buy in SMHC

**The Outport of Scarborough, 1602-1853:** A Maritime History by James Buckley, warden, merchant seaman, Trinity House trustee. Over 200 pages of fascinating information about Scarborough shipbuilding during the 18th and 19th century. £10 plus £4 postage. Thanks go to Fred Normandale for donating the books to us.

### Junior School and Sixth Form College Student Visits

SMHC volunteer, Stewart MacDonald, has been helping Scarborough Sixth Form students research and prepare heritage information for guided walks as part of their tourism course studies. Stewart has also been in demand to help Filey Junior School pupils learn about Scarborough during World War Two. Medals, bits of uniform and binoculars were handled by the children bringing the era back to life.

### Heritage Conference in Hull - May 2024

We will be participating in the 3rd Yorkshire Heritage Summit in Hull Minster on the 11th & 12th May. It will include an exhibition of heritage organisations, a symposium with key note speakers and the awarding of the *Harry Gration Yorkshire History Prize*.

### Christmas Boatyard Exhibition

Our thanks go to James Corrigan and Molly Newham for hosting an art and history exhibition at the old boatyard on Sandside last December. The SMHC put on a special 'Boxing Day Traditions' display. Over 4000 people visited and £70 was raised for us from donations.

### New Audio Recordings

SMHC trustee, Huw Roberts, has been interviewing local people about their memories of Scarborough. Audio recordings and typed summaries can be seen on our website page 'Scarborough Memories'

### Summer Exhibition

Our summer exhibition, from June to September, is entitled "**Oh I do like to be beside the seaside**" and is a fascinating look at 35 important elements that make up the traditional seaside holiday and resort.

We are run entirely by volunteers and public donations.

**We always need volunteers. No special knowledge or skills are required. Please contact us if you can spare a few hours a week?**



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