The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord
Volume 34, Number 2
(Summer/Été 2024)
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Editorial

The present issue marks the beginning of some significant transitions for the journal. Pete Kikkert, our departing editor, invited guest editors to assemble this and the following two issues to allow time for our new editor, Michael Moir, to pick up the reins. Michael, in his recent tenure as President of the Canadian Nautical Research Society, regularly pitched in to help the editorial team. So he is well prepared, and, it must be admitted, we are all pleasantly surprised that despite these tours in the trenches he is willing to carry on in a more formal role.

Pete will be sorely missed. He broadened submissions to the journal, generously served authors, and invariably supported his teammates with good humour and his prodigious capacity and willingness to get on with the hard slogging.

Our new book review team, Jean-Michel Turcotte and Melissa Davidson, both historians at the Directorate of History and Heritage at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa, make their debut in this issue. They have not had a great deal of lead time and have already demonstrated impressive efficiency.

Jean-Michel completed a PhD in history at Université Laval in 2018, and then held postdoctoral fellowships in Berlin, Potsdam, and Mainz in Germany. His first monograph, *Comment traiter les "Soldats d'Hitler"?*, published in 2022 by Ottawa University Press, explores the detention of German prisoners of war in Canada, Britain and the United States during the Second World War. At the DHH, he is currently working on the official history of the Canadian military observers in Indochina from 1954 to 1973, as well as on an Official History of Canadian Peace Support Operations, 1945-1971.

Melissa completed a PhD in history at the University of Ottawa in 2019 and a certificate in Digital Archives Management at McGill in 2022. Before starting at DHH in 2023, she worked as a contract researcher, including major contributions to a volume in preparation for the UK's Navy Records Society. Her own research has centred on the period of the First World War with a focus on the intersection of military, cultural, and religious history in both French and English Canada. Her work at DHH is on the third volume of the official history of the Royal Canadian Navy and in support of the Casualty Identification Program.

We are fortunate that two such talented scholars have come forward. Faye Kert, after twenty-four years as book review editor even while filling other

important roles in the society, was ready to move on to other interests. Under Faye, a noted historian with wide experience in marine archaeology, the book review section has become a powerhouse for the journal, setting the standard among volunteer-staffed publications for the numbers and wide-ranging coverage of reviews. No matter what crisis arose in gathering articles for the journal, Faye has always been ready to fill any gaps with a rich selection of reviews. Her good humoured "let's just fix it" ethic in all her work as an executive and editor for the society comes from decades of experience as a communications officer in several government departments and agencies.

The design of the present number began with the intention of presenting papers from the Annual Conference of the CNRS held at the Memorial University of Newfoundland on 17-18 August 2023. Participants' response to our invitation was so strong that we will be publishing additional papers from the conference in the next number of the journal.

The conference organizer and host was Dr. Meaghan Walker, the Ewart A. Pratt Post-doctoral Fellow. Meaghan works in the local merchant records and British imperial seafaring documents at the Maritime History Archive. The conference took place in the archive meeting room, surrounded by the boxes and volumes of that remarkable collection. One of the high points of the conference was a tour of the maritime history collections by David Bradley, the head archivist.

There could not have been a more suitable venue, as the collection was acquired through the efforts of Professors Keith Matthews, Gerry Panting and Skip Fischer, all of whom were among the original organizers of the CNRS. Gerry Panting was an early editor of *Argonauta*, and Skip Fischer the founding editor of this journal.

The conference was a successful "hybrid" event, thanks to Meaghan's skill with Zoom and the support of the university's technical services. Johnathan Thayer of Queen's College, City University of New York, a new participant in the society's activities, was able to join us virtually. Such was the quality of the video link that he was very much "in the room." His paper on the legal status and popular image of US seamen in the 1890s to early 1900s, and the attentions of social reformers to this transient population, is the first in this issue.

Jeff Noakes of the Canadian War Museum and Chris Bell of Dalhousie University, the authors of the other papers in this issue and long-time supporters of the CNRS, were able to travel to St. John's.

Jeff's paper, the third in this issue, traces the provenance of a Soviet torpedo and mine long held by the war museum. Although often displayed, these artifacts, like so many in the museum's collection, had a murky past. The present paper is an excellent example of Jeff's work in fulfilling one of the

key objectives of Dr. J.L. Granatstein when he built up the museum's research staff during his tenure as head of the museum in 1998-2000: to document the collections to a high professional standard, an essential mission in making the museum a centre for research.

Chris Bell's paper on air power in the Battle of the Atlantic during the Second World War is, sadly, among his last publications.

His recent passing came as a particular shock because Chris and his partner Deanna Foster were such buoyant and keen participants in the conference. Chris had won a research grant for a book on the Battle of the Atlantic; he and Deanna were excited by the chance to share his early findings, and to do so in St. John's, a key Allied base in the struggle. We celebrated St. John's wartime history in an evening event at the Crow's Nest Club on St. John's waterfront, established by Captain Rollo Mainguy, RCN in 1942 as a retreat for officers of the convoy escorts, exhausted by the North Atlantic crossings in appalling weather in the face of a U-boat forces that then had the upper hand. Our host, Margaret Morris, past President and currently Treasurer of the club, gave a colourful history of the club, and the many artifacts left by Allied officers during both the Second World War and the Cold War. Chris and Deanna obviously took special pleasure in the proceedings, encouraging our host and the Battle of the Atlantic specialists in the crowd to share their stories. Only a few months later, Deanna, on Chris's behalf, sent the final revisions

CNRS conference attendees Wes Cross, Rich Gimblett, Alex Comber, Chris Willmes, Chris Bell, and Roger Sarty at the Crow's Nest Club, St. John's, NL, 17 August 2023. Photo by Deanna Foster

of the article to the editors with the grim news of his recently discovered and fast-moving illness.

For all the changes in the editorial team, we luckily still have our anchor, Walter Lewis, production wizard, who, as usual, has also contributed to the copy editing and illustrations research.

Roger Sarty and Richard Gimblett, Guest Editors