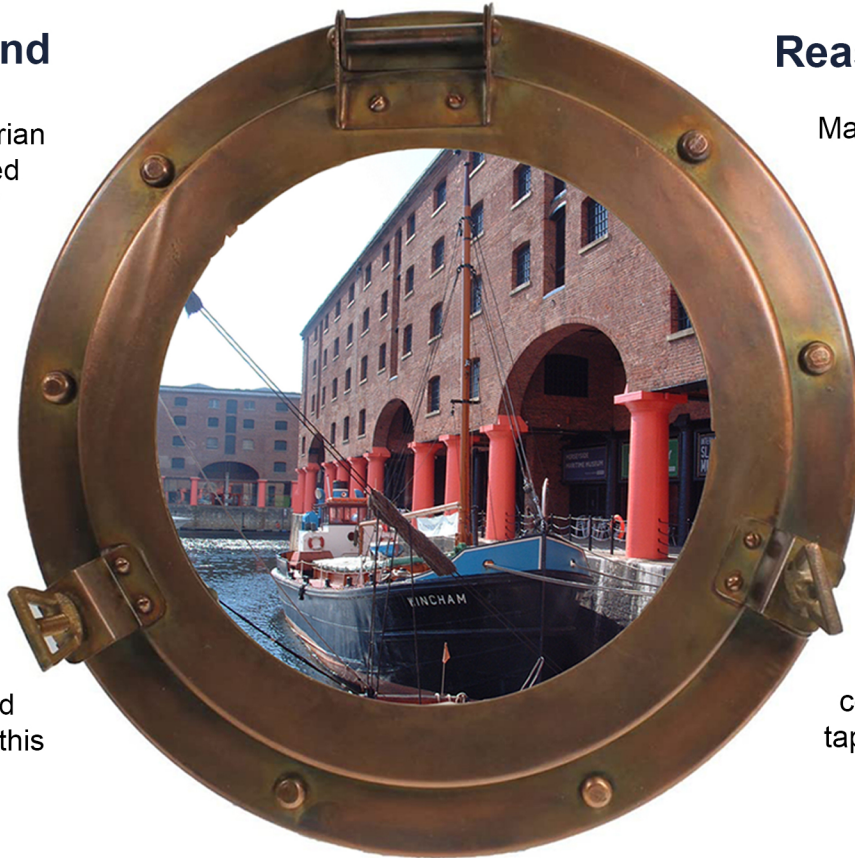


“Education beyond the norm”

Investigating the origins, establishment and legacy of the Liverpool Nautical College

Background

Britannia ruled the waves in the Victorian era through trade, much of which passed through Liverpool (the ‘second city of Empire’). Maritime expansion offered substantial profits but also big risks. Parliamentary enquiries into shipwrecks and the resulting Mercantile Marine Acts of the 1850s led to the professionalisation of technical education and the certification of ship-masters and -mates, despite reluctance of successive governments to interfere with ‘free trade’. In 1892 the Liverpool Nautical College was launched, offering ‘education beyond the norm’. How and why the College was established, its impact upon the city and its enduring legacy form the basis for this research project.



Research Materials

Many of the original records of the Liverpool Nautical College are held in the Special Collections Archive at Liverpool John Moores University. Admissions registers, minute books and the papers of the founding Principal James Gill form a unique resource for the investigation of the origins, establishment and legacy of the Liverpool Nautical College. Additional sources, held in local museums and record offices, provide supplementary evidence and contemporary newspaper reports offer detailed context. Biographical and demographic information about the students of the college (including data from census returns) facilitates the construction of a tapestry of micro-histories.



Origins

This project explores the national and local contexts from which the Liverpool Nautical College emerged. It traces the social and political developments in maritime education in Victorian Liverpool, from a culture of ‘self-help’ in the mid-19th Century to the growth of civic activism and municipal investment, which led to the formation of the Nautical College in 1892. The pivotal role of James Gill, educator and innovator of nautical education in Liverpool, will be examined and formally commemorated.



Establishment

This project investigates the membership, governance and deliberations of the college’s governing body. It explores the creative tensions between headteacher James Gill and his relationship with Nautical Instruction Sub-Committee to which he was responsible. The decision to publicly fund (from local taxation) the Liverpool Nautical College in 1892 was not universally applauded, yet the aspirations of the educational pioneers responsible for the establishment of the College succeeded in spite of the prevailing political climate.

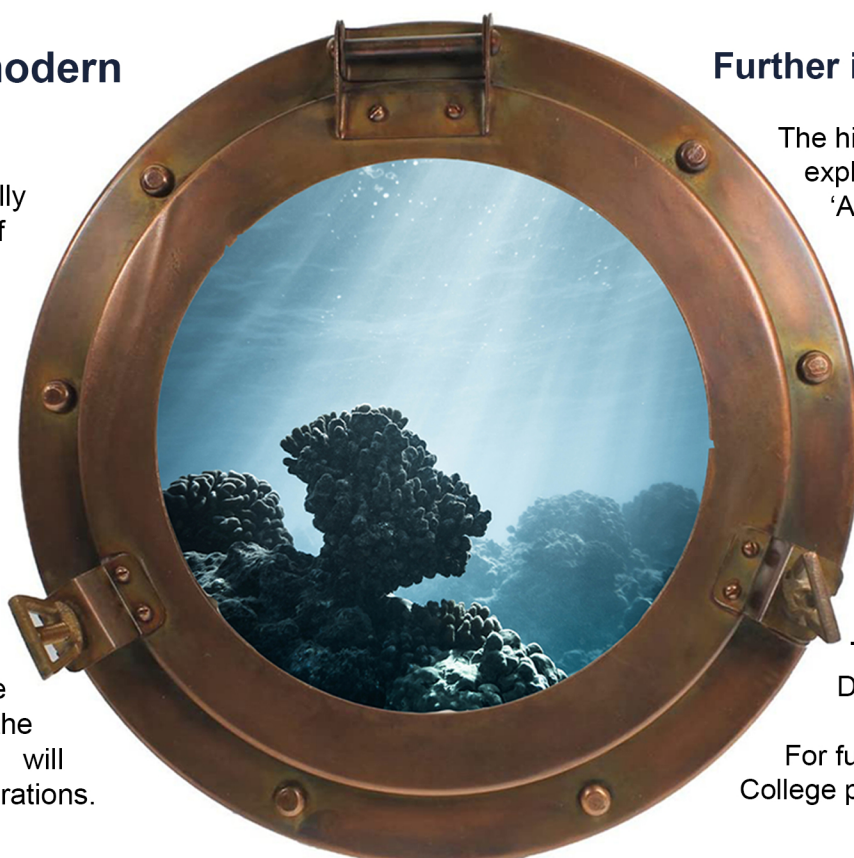


Legacy

This project analyses the social backgrounds of the students of the Liverpool Nautical College to determine whether ‘social class’ was a factor in determining the success of aspirant officers of British merchant ships in the 19th Century. In doing so the life stories of a dozen boys awarded scholarships to study at the Liverpool Nautical College 1892-1900 will be traced. The stories of Nautical College alumni demonstrate how James Gill’s principles of liberal nautical education are testament to his achievements as an educational pioneer.

The making of a modern university.

The Liverpool Nautical College eventually merged with the Liverpool College of Technology which in turn was subsumed within the Liverpool Polytechnic in 1970. One hundred years after the founding of the Nautical College the “education beyond the norm” envisaged by founding Principal James Gill was offered by Liverpool John Moores University in 1992. Today LJMU offers programmes in marine engineering, maritime management and nautical science. As LJMU prepares to commemorate the two-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Liverpool Mechanics Institute (1823) the nautical roots of the University will feature prominently in our celebrations.



Further information and contact details

The history of LJMU’s parent institutions is being explored in a number of projects under the ‘Anniversary Scholarships’ programme, of which this is one. Other projects within this umbrella include:

Student Lives of The F.L. Calder Teacher Training College of Domestic Science 1915-1925 for info please contact L.Wainwright@2014.ljmu.ac.uk

The development of district nursing in Liverpool: the creation of the Liverpool Training School and Home for Nurses in 1862 for info please contact J.Owens@2019.ljmu.ac.uk

The IM Marsh campus for info please contact D.Reynolds@2016.ljmu.ac.uk

For further information about the Liverpool Nautical College project please contact w.turnbull@ljmu.ac.uk