

‘Maritime History between the Public and Academia: the challenges ahead’

For 45 years the yearly conferences organised by the Centre for Maritime Historical Studies at Exeter have represented a unique privileged meeting ground between academics, local historians and the public interested in maritime and naval history. Throughout the years the Centre’s conferences have been extremely stimulating in translating the 'specialist' interests of the lay audience into research questions, whilst providing academics access to the wealth of knowledge of local institutions and independent scholars.

For the 46th conference we would like to bring this long term relationship centre-stage by bringing together academic and popular historians, museum curators, conservationists and educators to discuss how to strengthen these links and better cooperate in the future. Our aim is to foster a debate on how the academic world can liaise with public and private institutions dedicated to the preservation and education of the maritime world ,and how this collaboration can produce not only ‘outreach’ activities, but also real and tangible ‘impact’ both in Britain and in Europe.

The present economic crisis, paired with new policies in regard to both higher education and charities, make this issue a very topical one, as these factors are forcing a thorough rethink of strategies and objectives. The conference will aim at presenting the different concerns of the various parties, and at stimulating discussion and dialogue on how these challenges can be successfully met. This is a topic with wide European resonance, especially given the growing economic importance of the historical heritage and conservation industries throughout the ‘old continent’. Our ambition is to contribute to the construction of a new agenda which bring forward fresh approaches in the research and writing of ‘maritime history’ and how it can increase its impact on the academic world (through inter and cross-disciplinarity) and on policy (heritage, conservation).

We welcome the submission of papers proposals on all these issues especially on ‘academic and popular histories’; ‘public/private partnerships in the maritime world’; ‘historical conservation and education’; ‘maritime history and heritage’; ‘maritime history and conservation’, ‘maritime history and business enterprise’. We are also interested in paper proposals which describe/discuss successful partnership and potential new ones. We plan a conference format centred around one day of presentations, followed by two round tables, one dedicated to ‘education strategy’ and one to ‘business opportunities’.

The deadline for the submission of papers proposals is 31 January 2012. The conference will take place at the Streatham Campus of the University of Exeter the 1-2 September 2012.

For further information and paper proposals, contact Maria Fusaro (M.Fusaro@exeter.ac.uk)