

superb analysis of the island's vernacular watercraft within broader social and economic contexts. (Regrettably, this sort of contextualization is usually absent in other studies of regional boatbuilding traditions.) Also exemplary is the depth, prodigiousness, and creativity of the author's research, research that makes excellent use of a variety of source materials, from marriage records to oral history accounts to sail plans to naval architectural drawings. The book has some shortcomings, however. For example, it lacks illustrations of the Hampton boat that would have enhanced the discussion of the hypothesis that this vessel was the probable inspiration for the Tancook whaler. Also, as noted earlier, the description of the boatbuilding process is less detailed than

many students of the boat would wish. Finally, the author seems to imply, quite incorrectly in my opinion, that Tancook's boatbuilding tradition has greater significance and higher standards of craftsmanship than other North American regional boatbuilding traditions that have, in fact, produced well-built vessels that have been just as well matched to their own unique circumstances as Tancook boats have been to theirs. On balance, these are relatively minor criticisms of a fine piece of scholarship, one that will serve not only as an exemplary study of the boats of Tancook Island, but also as a useful model for others interested in carrying out comprehensive research on the boatbuilding traditions of other localities.

Julian Mannering, ed., *The Chatham Directory of Inshore Craft: Traditional Working Vessels of the British Isles*

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Mannering, Julian, ed. *The Chatham Directory of Inshore Craft: Traditional Working Vessels of the British Isles*. London: Chatham Publishing, 1997. 239 pp., copious photographs, maps and line drawings. Cloth £35, ISBN 1-861176-029-9.

If a knowledgeable small craft writer had taken a clockwise voyage round all the British Isles late in the nineteenth century with a camera and measuring equipment, this book could have been 100 years old. No one did, so no older directory exists. But no Victorian could ever visualize or produce this fine, clear, well illustrated volume. It has been left to Chatham Publishing to compile the information, select writers, drawings and photographs and produce this comprehensive directory.

This data about the rich variety of traditional working craft once common in the UK is an excellent primary resource for either the expert or novice. Within the covers some 225 vessels are described in varying levels of detail, perhaps relative to their importance to the fishery, coastal trading or simply within the folk memory of the writers. Their historical significance is not always clear and reading the editor's introduction gives no indication. The descriptions are frequently accompanied by lines drawings or sail plans and informatively captioned photographs.

The writers draw heavily from the deep well of resources at the National Maritime Museum

in Greenwich. These materiel and documentary collections were gathered by such notable small craft scholars as Edgar March, James Hornell and Eric McKee. Their drawings and those of other respected researchers are complimented by superb photographs from the turn of the last century from the 12 000-negative Henry Oliver Hill collection.

The editor has divided the British Isles into sections and a short description of each, with a map, precedes each chapter. There are eight descriptive chapters: Scotland, Ireland and Wales each take one, while the other five include two chapters on England's east coast, and one each on the south coast, Devon and Cornwall, and the north west coast. The vessels indigenous to each region are described chronologically in a clockwise direction. While this may make it difficult for those who are unfamiliar with British geography to locate a particular boat, the maps and index make it easy. All the craft are studiously cross indexed by name, purpose, that is, type of fishery or gear, and geographic designation.

Two of the problems facing an editor of this type of reference book are the selection of subjects to be included and the amount of space to be accorded each. This book has covered all the well known and many of the lesser known British craft but there are some notable omissions. While the book's title suggests only inshore craft, some riverine vessels have

sneaked in so why not others? If a coracle, duck punt and turf boat are worthy, why not some of the narrow boats of the canals or working punts that preceded the pleasure variety we know today? One lifeboat has been included, the Norfolk and Suffolk version of 1889; it is a pity no others were considered. Lifeboats were a constantly developing vessel throughout the Kingdom and worthy of inclusion. Small naval craft have also been excluded.

The amount of available source material must dictate the length of the text, but the Oban skiff gets a mere five-line paragraph to accompany a fine Philip Oke lines plan and a small clear photograph. In contrast, the Scottish decked Zulu gets three pages. The two "skin" boats, the Welsh coracle and Irish currach have many variations and both have been well recorded elsewhere. Yet the former is covered by one photograph and a few column inches while the latter receives three pages and numerous drawings. Many of the written descriptions are concluded with a useful list of suggested sources for additional information. It would have been helpful if these had been gathered into an expanded bibliography. There is only one column of reading material listed on the single page dedicated to "General Sources." A directory would seem to require a more extensive reference list of books, periodicals, journals and papers.

The drawings are a pleasure to study for the wealth of information they impart about the shape and construction of these varied craft. The "broken backed" light framework of the curraghs can be contrasted with the symmetrical sturdiness of the St Ives Mackerel Driver. The yacht-like grace of the fine-lined Morecalme Bay Prawner delineates an elegant pleasure boat, not a fishing craft. The names of the varied craft are fascinating in themselves. A mackerel driver or a Galway hooker bring visions other than nautical, and dobles, smacks, stumpies or spritties hardly seem to refer to working boats. These and other names avoid confusion but many boats herein bear generic names, for instance: punt. None resemble the quintessential Oxbridge punts we think of today — but sturdy fishing boats of varied location and line.

All these minor criticisms aside, this directory is a fine, useful volume to add to the increasing number of encyclopedias, dictionaries and reference books currently available from the marine historical press. *The British Museum Encyclopaedia of Underwater and Maritime Archaeology* and *Ships of the World: An Historical Encyclopedia* are the two heavyweights that come to mind as creditable additions to any nautical reference library. They are a recent phenomena and are a welcome, albeit expensive way to acquire sound reference material with the authority of many creditable writers and authorities in their respective fields. The still useful though badly outdated select bibliography published by the National Maritime Museum as *The Development of the Boat* could be revised and added to this selection.

The book has twelve authors, and they deserve more specific credit for their work, perhaps appended at the foot of each entry when they didn't write a complete chapter. Basic linear and tonnage dimensions after each boat heading would also have helped for comparison purposes. This is not as easy to cover in these features as with registered vessels, but where appropriate the size range would be useful. The first chapter, written by Dr Basil Greenhill is a formidable summary of many notable boat historians and ethnologists, not all British. But he touches on North American craft and cavalierly groups the eastern seaboard Jonesport and Cape Island boats together, as a generic craft stretching from Prince Edward Island to Connecticut. This is a pity as there are more variations contained within that generalization, in both form and construction as between some of the boats described in this directory. The description of a Harwich bawley starts out by stating that it is the same as another — only the location and builders differ.

This directory deserves a place in the library of every traditional boat enthusiast and maritime museum. It is the source of much basic information about vessel designs, which often travelled far away from the British Isles. They journeyed as ideas and were later transcribed anew into the ethnic boats of *newfound* inshore waters.