

**Further Particulars**  
**AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship**

**Empire and useful knowledge: mapping and charting the British Atlantic world,  
1660-1720**

This project is a joint venture between the School of History, Classics, and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh and the National Maritime Museum (NMM). The PhD is funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under its Collaborative Doctoral Awards Scheme. The project will be co-supervised by Dr Nuala Zahedieh (Senior Lecturer in Economic and Social History, University of Edinburgh) and Ms Gillian Hutchinson (Curator of the History of Cartography, NMM).

**Project summary**

The project sets out to strengthen understanding of the role of maps and map-making in European expansion overseas and, at the same time, enhance the public's knowledge and awareness of the significance of the collections in the NMM and elsewhere. In the 'Age of Discoveries' empire and knowledge were inextricably linked. The success of the drive for profit and power which fuelled Europe's imperial projects rested on a massive investment in the knowledge and skills needed to navigate great oceans and tame unexplored territories. Improvements in chart and map-making were central to the success of overseas expansion and it is unsurprising that, as England moved ahead of other nations in the race for empire, London established itself at the hub of an international knowledge network which allowed it to become a leading centre for the production and distribution of maps. The state, major players in the scientific revolution, practical mariners, and craftsmen all contributed to this success. However, despite the economic, scientific, and political importance of the trade, scholarly attention has tended to focus on maps as artefacts of beauty and curiosity and they have been less appreciated for their role in the knowledge economy. The aim of this project is to move beyond seeing maps as mere artefacts and reinsert them into history at large to show how the history of cartography was bound up in the course of British economic, social, and political development in important and unsuspected ways.

**Research aims**

The overarching aim of the project is to assess the impact of overseas expansion on the development of Britain's cartographic skills and, through them, the broader accumulation of useful knowledge in the period between 1660 and 1720. The precise research questions will be developed by the student within three broad areas of concern:

- How were maps used by late seventeenth century navigators and imperial administrators and how did the rise of Atlantic trade and empire change the market for cartographic skills?
- How was the London map-making trade organized from surveying, to material production, sale and distribution? How did British statesmen, scientists, mariners, craftsmen, and retailers collaborate to construct knowledge networks

which could function over long distances and solve problems of measurement, standardization, and validation? What impact did the demands of map-making have on the development of mathematical and mechanical skills and tools?

- What was the narrow impact of better maps and charts on the safety and efficiency of ocean navigation and what was the broader impact of the enhanced skills on the store of ‘useful knowledge’ and the technological capabilities of the British economy?

### **Sources**

The collaboration will allow an Edinburgh student to extend their research beyond the Scottish collections, which are of high quality but small, and more narrowly focused than the larger national collections in London.

The National Maritime Museum will provide the key resources. It has a rich collection of maps and charts, and will also provide ship logs, naval papers, contemporary training manuals in navigation and mathematics, and other valuable printed materials apart from its collection of instruments for measuring and navigation.

It is expected that the student will consult material in other Scottish and London archives to perhaps include:

- British Library (maps, logs, miscellaneous personal papers, and printed manuals)
- City of London Record Office (Mayor’s Court records)
- Edinburgh University Library (maps, merchant correspondence, microfilm of colonial probate inventories and various electronic resources)
- Guildhall Library (records of Mathematical School at Christ’s Hospital)
- The National Archives (Admiralty Court records, colonial correspondence, ships logs, wills and probate inventories)
- National Library of Scotland (maps, merchant correspondence)

The student will be in a good position to apply for the annual short-term fellowship at the John Carter Brown Library in association with the NMM which would enable him/her to consult the excellent cartographic material in New England archives.

### **Proposed timetable**

It is expected that the student will spend most of the first and third years in Edinburgh and in the second year will be based at the NMM in Greenwich.

#### **Year 1**

The student will undertake a literature review in Semester 1 and attend relevant doctoral research training courses in the School of HCA. In Semester 2 the student will undertake a survey of the sources (including a period at the NMM in Greenwich) develop research questions and a thesis proposal, chapter structure, and timetable and also give a presentation on their work to the School Doctoral Seminar. An end-of-first year review will be held with the academic and non-academic supervisors in August – the outcome to include recommendations for further training and a schedule.

## Year 2

The student will undertake additional training at the NMM and undertake archival research and reading in the NMM and other London archives including the British Library and the National Archives, Kew. The schedule of chapter production will begin.

## Year 3

The student is expected to be able to spend a short period in London to fill gaps in the archival research but the bulk of the year will be spent in Edinburgh and the focus of activity will shift towards writing including a possible essay for publication and conference papers. A first draft of the thesis will be expected at the end of the year. During the period of the award the student will be expected to help organize a workshop on 'Empire and Useful Knowledge' and will be given an opportunity to organize a small-scale display at the NMM.

### **School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh**

The successful candidate will be based in the History Subject Area of the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh. The subject area provides one of the largest academic groups in the country with 80 academic staff members, 50 Honorary Fellows, and upwards of 300 graduate students. All are housed in one building. This large scholarly community has a national and international reputation for research of the highest quality and provides a lively programme of regular seminars, lectures, and other events. Within the School the successful candidate will join the Economic and Social History (ESH) section, one of three main research groupings which has a distinctive reputation for interdisciplinary historical research in the arts and humanities as well as the social sciences.

### **The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich**

The National Maritime Museum's mission is, through its collections and research, to 'illustrate for everyone the importance of the sea, ships, time and the stars and their relationship with people'. It holds the world's pre-eminent maritime collections. They comprise some 2.5 million objects and include not only a superb collection of charts and maps, but also manuscripts, navigational and astronomical instruments, rare books, oil paintings, prints and drawings, ship models, and decorative objects. The building of a new research library/archive scheduled to open later in 2011 will greatly improve its facilities and service to the research community. The Museum has its own research department as well as its own fellowship programme and has for nearly two decades sought to work in partnership with academic institutions. The project fits well with the Museum's Research Strategy which has identified four main research areas: imperial and maritime history; the history of science; the history of maritime London; and the history of art and it is well placed to support the doctoral candidate both in terms of its collections and the availability of experience and expertise. The Museum has an active and extensive outreach programme and disseminates its work through exhibitions, conferences, seminars, scholarly and general publications, and work with schools and the student will have an opportunity to gain experience and insight into the process of bringing academic scrutiny and rigour to the presentation of public history.

## **Supervisory support**

The precise details of training support will be established formally at the start of the project by the academic supervisor in discussion with the student, the non-academic supervisor, and the advisor. The bulk of the supervisory support will be provided by the academic supervisor. In the first year, meetings with the supervisor will be fortnightly and probably monthly thereafter (including a monthly meeting with one academic supervisor in London during Year 2). The non-academic supervisor will be available for consultation at all times and will participate in annual reviews and other assessments and will provide more systematic support during the student's time in Greenwich.

## **Funding**

The studentship is funded by the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme, first introduced in 2005. Funding is available on a full-time basis for three years or a part-time basis for five years and may include both student fees and a maintenance grant. Postgraduate fees at the University of Edinburgh will be paid by the AHRC. The annual student maintenance grant was worth c. £ 13,500 in 2010-11. The National Maritime Museum will provide the student with an additional £300 annually and in-kind of benefits calculated at £1,200 per year.

## **Application procedure**

Applications with a covering letter should include all of the following:

- 1000 word proposal
- 300 word personal statement saying why the applicant would want to do this project
- 300 word account of any previous relevant study and experience
- Standard CV

Applications should be sent to the address below or by email attachment to

[n.zahedieh@ed.ac.uk](mailto:n.zahedieh@ed.ac.uk)

**The application deadline is 15 June 2011**

## **Selection procedure**

Short-listed candidates will be interviewed on 21 June 2011. The successful candidate will be announced in July 2011 conditional upon acceptance to usual doctoral studentship within the School of History, Classics and Archaeology.

**Further inquiries** may be made to Nuala Zahedieh at the University of Edinburgh ([n.zahedieh@ed.ac.uk](mailto:n.zahedieh@ed.ac.uk)) or Gillian Hutchinson at the National Maritime Museum ([GHutchinson@nmm.ac.uk](mailto:GHutchinson@nmm.ac.uk)).