

Online Resources at the National Maritime Museum

As Britain's National Maritime Museum (NMM) prepares to build a new library and will be having to limit access to many of their print resources during renovation, it's a good time to take a look at the electronic resources they offer to anyone, anywhere, and without a visit to Greenwich. The site for the Museum, Observatory, and Queen's House is <http://www.nmm.ac.uk>, and the web site for researchers begins at <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/researchers/>. Together, the collections and library sites offer a great deal of information about what is available at the NMM. The NMM site—or at least sections of it—is available in an impressive eleven languages, from major European languages to Welsh, Japanese, Hindi, and others.

For maritime researchers, the most valuable parts of the NMM's web site are their research guides, at <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/researchers/library/research-guides/>. The NMM library offers more than 70 guides, covering topics from uniforms, medals, music, or animals at sea, to the *Titanic* and the Spithead and Nore Mutinies. They give instructions on how to access charts, maps, ship's plans, photographs, and illustrations within the library's and the museum's collections. The guides provide brief information on the topic in question, then follow with an overview of the sources available at the NMM or at other institutions. Other guides offer directions on searching for information about ancestors, shipping companies, using Lloyd's Lists, and much more.

In addition to the traditional library services, the NMM library is exploring a variety of new technologies. One interesting new project is the addition of more than 150 images to Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalmaritimemuseum/>), where anyone can view and annotate them. Many illustrations are added as sub-sets of the entire NMM set and in connection with related exhibits. Individuals can add comments, tags, links, and other media to these images. In several examples, including an 1854 image of a church in Greenland, a contributor named "art_traveller" has

added a contemporary photo of the same location. This contributor, who also works at NMM but contributes to Flickr as a personal project, referenced the NMM images before taking the photos; the results make valuable contributions to the presentation of the historical images.

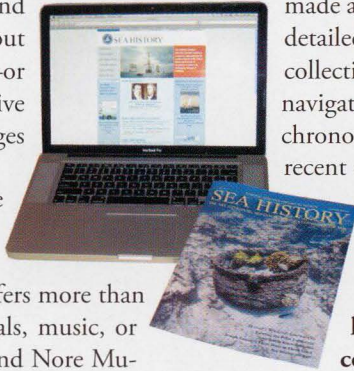
On the museum side, the "Collections Online" site at <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/> describes features that the staff have made available online. For example, the museum has posted detailed images of more than 200 ship models from their collection, as well as photographs of numerous other items: navigational instruments, globes, coins, medals, clocks, chronometers, uniforms, and much, much more. Several recent exhibitions have online components. After the exhibition closes, there's no need to take down the web site related to it, so these often remain long after the exhibition is over.

The museum has a particularly interesting "Collections Blog" at <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/blogs/collections/>, where curators, exhibitors, and others within the institution describe recent acquisitions, research they are pursuing, items they discover in the collection, NMM-related trips they take, and other topics. The blog is authored by many different individuals, and it's a nice way of highlighting a varied collection of events and topics that the museum staff are pursuing.

The library's blog at <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/library/> shares information about conferences that staff have attended, and particularly information about changes to their delivery plans while the library is being renovated. Closure of any library for any amount of time is bound to cause concern among the institution's patrons. The NMM is no exception, as one will see from comments added to various posts regarding changes in access hours.

Suggestions for other sites worth mentioning are welcome at shipindex@yahoo.com. See <http://www.shipindex.org> for a compilation of over 100,000 ship names from indexes to dozens of books and journals.

—Peter McCracken



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