MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

INFORMATION SHEET 9

TRAINING SHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

In 1857 the Liverpool branch of the Mercantile Marine Service Association was established in order to improve the competence and standards of the ships, officers and men. One aim of the Association was to establish schools for the training of boys and men for careers in the Mercantile Marine.

Training Ships

There were four educational ships moored in the Mersey during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The training ship HMS *Conway*, founded in 1859, became a national institution for the training of future officers of the Merchant Navy. There were also two reformatory ships – the *Akbar*, for the reform of Protestant Boys, and the *Clarence*, for Roman Catholic Boys. The fourth training ship, moored on the Mersey, was the TS *Indefatigable*, a charitable institution founded in 1864, to give sea training to boys in poor circumstances.

The Maritime Archives & Library hold the records of HMS *Conway* and some records in relation to the *Indefatigable*. Information regarding these collections is given below.

The records of the *Akbar* are held at the Lancashire Record Office, Preston, but the location of the records of the *Clarence* is less clear. The Liverpool Record Office holds the Admission Registers and reports on the sinking of the *Clarence* but any further enquiries should be made to the Nugent Care Society, 99 Edge Lane, Liverpool L7 2PE.

HMS *Conway*

In April 1858, a committee was formed by the Mercantile Marine Service Association, to establish a training ship on the Mersey to train boys to become Merchant Navy Officers. The Admiralty offered the use of the frigate *Conway*, a coastguard ship at Devonport which, on its arrival in the Mersey, was moored off Rock Ferry. The school opened on the 1 August 1859.

The original *Conway* was replaced after two years by HMS *Winchester* and in 1876 was again replaced by HMS *Nile*. Both were renamed *Conway*. In 1941 she was moved to the Menai Straits to avoid the Blitz. Whilst being returned to the Mersey in 1953 for a refit, she was grounded near the Menai Suspension Bridge and broke her back, then caught fire and had to be broken up.

From 1953-74, the *Conway* flourished as a shore establishment. The British Shipping Federation took responsibility for the nautical training and placements, while the Cheshire Education Authority assumed charge of the general education side. On the 11 July 1974 the last eighty-five cadets laid up the colours in Liverpool Cathedral. Its closure precipitated by the decline of Britain's merchant fleet.

Eminent *Conway* cadets include John Masefield, who wrote its history in 1933 and 1953 and Captain Matthew Webb, the first man to swim the Channel in 1875. In addition, numerous distinguished captains, commanders and admirals, including four recipients of the V.C. and Sir Arthur Rostron, captain of the *Carpathia,* which rescued the survivors of the *Titanic*.

Records

Annual Reports, 1859 - 1894.
Monthly Reports, 1881 - 1908.
Muster Rolls, 1875 - 1959.
Wages Books, 1882 - 1960.
Visitor Books, 1934 - 1975.
Indexes to Registers and Registers of Cadets, 1859 - 1972.
Bound and Loose volumes of the *Cadet Magazine,* 1889 - 1974.
Photographs of Cadets and Sporting Events, 1891 - 1968.

D/CON	1859 - 1984	44 Boxes

Further records regarding HMS *Conway* are held in miscellaneous collections. Please see *Guide to the Records of the Merseyside Maritime Museum*, Vol. 2, pp. 91-93, for information.

The pre 1914 *Conway* admission registers are available through the Find My Past family history website (http://www.findmypast.co.uk or http://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-Records/national-school-admission-registers-and-log-books-1870-1914). Anyone can access the website and use the search facility for free. A charge is then made to see a full transcript or a scanned image of the original admission book. Free access to the online transcripts or scans is available within the Maritime Archives & Library. Many local libraries have free access to the whole website.

TS *Indefatigable* (Liverpool Sea Training School for Boys)

In 1864 John Clint, a Liverpool shipowner, founded a charitable institution to train the sons of sailors, destitute and orphaned boys to become merchant seamen.

The first TS *Indefatigable* was loaned by the Admiralty and was one of the last of the Navy's sailing frigates. Mr. James Bibby contributed £5,000 to transform her from a fighting ship to a training ship and this was to be the start of a long association between the Bibby family and the School. The TS *Indefatigable* merged with the Lancashire and National Sea Training Homes in 1945 and records relating to both institutions are held in the Maritime Archives & Library.

Records

Committee Registers, 1906 - 1949.
Minute Books, 1913 - 1960.
Annual Reports and Accounts, 1901 - 1934, 1941 - 1988.
Correspondence, 1901 - 1935.
Articles of Association, 1913 - 1952.
Minute Books, 1964 - 1984.
Register Books, 1865 - 1990 (subject to access restrictions).
Visitor Report Books, 1865 - 1978.
Punishment Books, 1951 - 1995 (subject to access restrictions).
Boys Discharge Book, 1961 - 1986.
Medical and Dental Registers, 1937 - 1970 (subject to access restrictions).
Photographs, 1980 - 1990.
Statistics, 1865 - 1949.

D/IND 1906 - 1989

Further records regarding the TS *Indefatigable* are held in miscellaneous collections. Please see *Guide to the Records of the Merseyside Maritime Museum*, Vol. 2, p. 95, for information.

The pre 1914 *Indefatigable* admission registers are available through the Find My Past family history website (http://www.findmypast.co.uk or http://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-Records/national-school-admission-registers-and-log-books-1870-1914). Anyone can access the website and use the search facility for free. A charge is then made to see a full transcript or a scanned image of the original admission book. Free access to the online transcripts or scans is available within the Maritime Archives & Library. Many local libraries have free access to the whole website.

Educational Establishments

Association of Navigation Schools

A School of Navigation was established in the Royal Technical College in Glasgow in 1910 and a marine cadet course commenced in 1912. Although the College asked to be recognised as a navigational training institution, this was refused as the college was non-residential. Therefore a meeting of teachers of navigation was held in Liverpool in November 1917 at the Central Technical School. Representatives of the main maritime cities of Scotland and England were present. The meeting resolved to request the Board of Trade to accept that a period of twelve weeks spent at the Navigation School be sufficient to qualify for the Board's Certificate of Competency as Second Mate.

This body was named the 'Conference of Navigation Schools' and was supported by the Shipowner's Association and the Mercantile Marine Service Association. In June 1918 the Board of Trade accepted the Conference's resolution and a course preparatory to going to sea was drawn up. The organisation was renamed the 'Association of Navigation Schools' in 1933.

No records are known to survive for any individual Navigation Schools, but papers relating to the Association of Navigation Schools formed in 1917 in Liverpool, still exist. In addition, navigation exercise and textbooks can be located in personal papers of seafarers.

Records

Documents, re Merchant Navy Training Board, 1947 - 1953.
File, re Executive Committee, 1935 - 1950.
Correspondence, 1919 - 1969.
Papers and Correspondence on AGM's, 1919 - 1961.

D/ANS	1919 - 1975	4 Boxes

The Lancashire and National Sea Training Homes for Boys

Established in 1896 as the Liverpool branch of the Navy League. From 1907 - 1908 the Home was called 'The Lancashire (Navy League) Home for Poor Boys'. The name was subsequently changed in 1916 to the title 'Lancashire and National Sea Training Home for Boys' and remained so until 1945 when they merged with TS *Indefatigable*.

The Homes were situated at Withens Lane, Wallasey and places were available to any 'British boy of good character, health and physique, regardless of religion or poverty.'

Records

Minutes, 1896 - 1937.

Subscription Records, 1898 - 1945.
Treasury Books, 1905 - 1945.
Sea Registers, 1903 - 1945.
Financial Records, 1913, 1938 - 1945.

D/NL	1896 - 1945	13 Boxes, 14 Volumes

Further records regarding Educational Records are held in miscellaneous collections. This includes records related to the Seafarers' Education Service and College of the Sea and Cookery Training Schools. Please see *Guide to the Records of the Merseyside Maritime Museum*, Vol. 2, p. 97, for information.

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HOWELL, N.W. *The Makings of Seamen. The Lancashire and National Sea Training Homes, Wallasey to Cumbria 1902 - 1945*. Matthew Boulton College of Further and Higher Education, 1997.

Century of the Indefatigable 1864 - 1964. National Sea Training School for Boys.

MASEFIELD, J. *The Conway*. London: William Heineman Ltd., 1933.

RIMMER, J. *Yesterday's Naughty Children. Training Ship, Girls' Reformatory and Farm School: A History of the Liverpool Reformatory Association, founded in 1855*. Manchester: Richardson, 1986.

UNDERHILL, H.A. *Sail Training and Cadet Ships*. Glasgow: Browne and Ferguson Ltd., 1973.