TROZE
The Online Journal of the National Maritime Museum Cornwall www.nmmc.co.uk

Women Aboard Vessels in Late Nineteenth-century Cornwall

By Joanna Thomas

September 2011
Volume 3 Number 1

TROZE

Troze is the journal of the National Maritime Museum Cornwall whose mission is to promote an understanding of small boats and their place in people's lives, and of the maritime history of Cornwall.

'Troze: the sound made by water about the bows of a boat in motion'
From R. Morton Nance, *A Glossary of Cornish Sea Words*

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Please contact the editor at troze@nmmc.co.uk or
National Maritime Museum Cornwall
Discovery Quay
Falmouth
Cornwall
TR11 3QY
United Kingdom

Joanna Thomas

Joanna Thomas was born and raised in Switzerland, but has strong ties with Cornwall as her father, who is a boatbuilder, is a Cornishman who learnt his trade in the West Country. Growing up around boats and learning to sail when she was eight years old, she followed her fascination for history and all things maritime and completed her MA in Maritime History at the University of Exeter in 2009. She is now working for the SS *Great Britain* Trust in Bristol, where she is training as a maritime curator for the Trust.

Women aboard Vessels in late Nineteenth-century Cornwall

Joanna Thomas

In nineteenth century maritime history, there is still a strong image of men going to sea while the women stayed at home, on shore, to mind the children. The research on maritime women on board ships is still developing and has so far been restricted to captains' wives, stewardesses and the small number of women who dressed as men. It is known that women went to sea as stewardesses on board passenger liner vessels as early as the first half of the nineteenth century and there are studies, which show that on occasion the wife of a master mariner or a captain went to sea with her husband.[1] The image of the maritime world as an exclusively male environment has been, and still is, challenged and adapted.[2] However, as the research about women in the maritime world is still in its infancy, there are many unanswered questions and areas that need further research. One of these is the question about possibilities and opportunities for women on board ship in the late nineteenth century, and how open or restricted these were. This study attempts a closer look at these 'maritime women' with a local study of late nineteenth-century Cornwall and sets out to discover some possible opportunities for women to go to sea and being involved in the maritime world. However, the sources revealing any aspects of women in the maritime world are sparse and at times difficult to find. The points discussed in this paper are intended as starting points and more research needs to be done before it is possible to draw some final conclusions.[3]

If this was the case on shore, what of the women on board ships? Other historians emphasise that the view of maritime women as exclusively shore-based would be too simple, and that there always were regional differences in customs.[4] Brit Berggreen found examples of women going to sea, as relations of the master, or being involved in maritime businesses in late nineteenth-century Norway. She points out that 'maritime women' - which she defines as 'women who live on a vessel during a voyage, whether short or long, and who have tasks to perform in connection with the purpose of the voyage, or who are personally associated with crew members'[5] – were often invisible to contemporaries and to historical record. They were not part of the crew, but they were participants in this floating world even though officially, in one way or another, they should not have been there.[6]

Developments in the maritime economy of the nineteenth century did create formal opportunities for women who wanted to go to sea. With the change from sail to steam and the building of iron hulled ships, passenger shipping became more convenient and comfortable. From the 1850s onward, women were employed as stewardesses on board passenger vessels in order to provide a better service for travelling female passengers. Competition between the liner companies caused the improvement of comfort for passengers and, as Sari Maenpaa points out, 'women were part of that 'new maritime labour' force which made the luxurious passenger transport across the oceans possible.[7] The nineteenth century was a time when shipping and the seafaring trades changed incredibly fast and in multiple ways. The idea of women going to sea as stewardesses on luxury passenger liners throughout the later half of the nineteenth century is now widely acknowledged. But what other opportunities were open to a woman to be involved in the maritime world, or even go to sea? So the historians seem ambivalent about women on board ships so this study takes a closer look at the evidence relating to women in Cornwall and their

presence on the ships.

Cornwall in the late nineteenth century was a county closely connected with the sea. Moreover, there was, and still is, a longstanding maritime tradition and, as David Starkey points out, 'for centuries, ocean-going and coastal vessels had been built, owned and manned with West Country resources'.[8] Influenced by the industrial revolution, the volume of seaborne trade increased in the nineteenth century and with it the size of ships. Thus, trade focused more and more on ports which were able to cope with the bigger vessels, which had the infrastructure to handle the goods, and which served a manufacturing hinterland.[9] Cornwall's ports were mainly smaller harbours – with the exception of Falmouth – and industrialisation was not as widely spread as in London and the North East of England. However, the smaller ports in the South West were used by vessels carrying bulky cargo which was mostly transported in the coastal trade, and agricultural products needed in industrial centres like London. Further, the ports were frequented by sailing vessels mainly engaged in the transatlantic transport of low-value goods and the fruit trades with southern Europe.[10] Moreover, and partly also because of geographical restrictions, steamships were not as widely used in the South West as in the rest of Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century and mostly they mostly frequented the deep-water port of Plymouth. This also meant that the overseas trade which was increasingly using steamships shifted more and more to the bigger ports.[11] Thus, sailing vessels accounted for a higher percentage of tonnage in Devon and Cornwall until the early twentieth century. A further aspect of this maritime economy in the West Country was that 'shipowning remained a common feature of the local maritime economy' as opposed to the 'emergence of the highly capitalised "big" business unit, and … the accelerating increase in tonnage registered at London, Liverpool, Glasgow and other major ports'.[12] Indeed women held a significant numbers of shares in shipping and were active in the growth of the Cornish industry.[13] It is within this economic and social context that the maritime men and women of Cornwall have to be seen.

The sources which tell us about maritime women in the late nineteenth century are sparse and one needs to search the archives in great detail in order to come across shipping documents in which women are mentioned. Captain William C. Smith's 1887 log book of the *Gem* is such a document. The *Gem* was a wooden brigantine of 164 tons built at Fowey in 1871 and *Lloyd's Register* at the time shows it was owned by M. H. Haynes & Co. In fact the managing owner was Mary Hicks Hayes, aunt of Captain Smith. [14] In 1881 Captain Smith of Polruan became master of the *Gem* and in 1887 he took his wife Selina with him to sea. Selina Smith is on no official shipping documents for this journey as such, but it was she, not her husband, who wrote the log book of the *Gem* in 1887, and she signed the log on several occasions with her name. As an introduction to the ensuing log, Selina describes the extent of the journey for which she had joined her husband on board. They left Fowey in October 1886 and sailed to Malta and Greece carrying a cargo of grain, before returning to Fowey for orders. In March 1887 the *Gem* returned from a round trip to Bridgwater and was then towed to Cardiff to load coal for Curacao in the West Indies. From there she sailed to Aruba and crossed the Atlantic to sail for London, and then back to Fowey once more. In September 1887 the *Gem* sailed to Cardiff to load patent fuel, after which she sailed on to Galveston in the Gulf of Mexico to load oil cake and return to Plymouth in January 1888.[15]

The log of the *Gem* shows that Selina Smith had accompanied her husband on several extensive journeys throughout 1887 and they also took their son Percy with them. In the log, Selina not only recorded the weather and the movements of the vessel, but also how she spent her time on board the *Gem*. Besides looking after her son and instructing him in various subjects, Selina was

constantly mending cloths, sewing new shirts for her husband or making a new dress for herself; she cooked and cleaned and saw to the welfare of her husband and his crew. However, she also regularly comments on navigation, the routes chosen, the weather and the handling of the vessel, and she seemed to be very well acquainted with the life at sea.[16] This might be an indication that this was not the only journey on board the *Gem* Selina made with her husband, and she certainly seems to have had a good understanding of the trade and life at sea.

Figure 1: Selina Smith and her family on board the *Gem*.
Source: Private collection; Mrs Isabel Pickering

Selina Smith makes an interesting note in the *Gem*'s log on April 16 during the crossing of the Atlantic to the West Indies. She mentions that they had passed a German vessel bound for Sierra Leone and that the German captain also had his wife on board. The vessels had come close enough that Selina was able to speak to the other woman.[17] This reinforces the statement that it was not such an unusual thing for captains' wives to accompany their husbands to sea in the second half of the nineteenth century. At least, nobody was surprised to see these two women on board a vessel in 1887. This was also seen in American ships, Druett's research shows that it was not unusual for female family members to accompany their men to sea in the late-nineteenth-century Atlantic trades. [18]

However, even though the log book of the *Gem* gives a good insight into the situation of one woman on board a vessel in the late nineteenth century, it does not show how common such opportunities were. These women who accompanied their husbands to sea on board merchant navy vessels are very much obscured in shipping documents as they were not officially employed on board these vessels. To find women actually employed in maritime businesses the reports on the census in the Parliamentary Papers can give more information. These reports were conducted every ten years after the census was collected and the returns were analysed to provide the Government with information about age, health, civil condition and occupation of the population.

Table 1: Women's Employment in the Maritime Sector in Devon and Cornwall

Description	1871	1881	1891
Boat- or Bargewoman	6	2	1
Merchant Service (Seaman, Pilot)			8
Stewardess, Cook	4	15	
Navigation Service (not crew)		11	2
Harbour, Dock, Wharf, Lighthouse		3	3
Others	5		

Sources: British Parliamentary Papers, Dataset 1871 – 1891, Population Tables, RG 30/4 C.872LXXI Part 1; RG 30/5 C. 3722 LXXX Part 1; and RG 30/6 C. 7058 CVI Part 1

The above table shows how fluctuating and fragmentary the information on women working in the maritime sector is. Moreover, the definitions of the different occupational categories changed over these three decades in the late nineteenth century, which makes a statistical comparison difficult. However, the occupational tables still provide the researcher with a basic idea of the women officially registered as being employed in the maritime sector.

In 1871 there were 922 men registered in the category of 'boat- and bargemen', but there were also six women acknowledged. While the men are registered separately as 'bargemen' or 'boatmen on seas', the occupation of the six women is not closer specified.[19] The number of women in this category declines over the years. However, in 1891 the 'bargewomen' were also made a separate category as has been the case for the men during the two previous decades and the 'boatwomen' were now counted in the category of 'merchant service', where in 1891, eight women were registered. Thus, their numbers do not seem to have declined, but were just transferred to another category.[20]

The high number of women listed in the category of merchant service in 1891 stands out and seems astonishing given the apparent restraints for women in these occupations, as there are no women listed in this category at all during the previous two decades. Even though this category is further defined as containing individuals working as seamen or pilots, there is no further explanation as to what exactly these eight women were doing. This category included the 'boatwomen', but they were not separated from any other possible employments within the merchant service.[21]Since the category of Stewardess and Cook seems to disappear in the 1891 dataset, it is possible that stewardesses had been incorporated into the category of the merchant service. However, this has not been specified in the Parliamentary Papers for 1891 and it remains unclear if the eight women listed as being employed in the merchant service are stewardesses, boatwomen or indeed women working as seamen and pilots.

An interesting aspect is the number of women registered in the category of 'navigation'. These women are explicitly described as 'not crew' and so were based on shore. Women as navigation teachers were not unusual such as Mrs Janet Taylor, whose father taught her navigation and who ran her own nautical academy in London for more than 30 years throughout the mid-nineteenth century.[22] The women working in the navigation service in Devon and Cornwall were probably working on a much smaller scale than Mrs Taylor. Nevertheless, it is an interesting point to make that in 1881 there were eleven women teaching seafaring men the skills of navigation.[23]

The information of the occupational tables is based on the census returns which were compiled every ten years. However, the methods of collecting the data and the

definition of occupational categories changed over the decades. With it the conception and definition of women's work changed over the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1881 married women were omitted from occupational tables even though government officials acknowledged that wives did work in their husbands' businesses; 'all such women were removed from the category of "occupied" to that of "unoccupied"'.[24] Thus, the work of women – and not just in maritime occupations – was generally under-recorded. Women who worked in their husband's businesses on a part-time basis, or did work that was only required irregularly or seasonally, by definition were excluded from the occupational tables.[25]

Another source for finding women in relation to shipping are the more detailed census returns. In the late nineteenth century people were registered in a separate category in the census when they were on board a vessel on census nights. In the census returns their address of residence was recorded as the name of the vessel they were currently living and working on. Table 2 below shows an overview of women who were registered on board vessels in Cornwall on census nights between 1861 and 1891.[26]

Table 2: Females registered on vessels on Census Nights in Cornwall

Description	1861	1871	1881	1891
Master's Wife	40	20	26	10
Master's Daughter	14	6	9	4
Visitor (family)	7			
Mate's Wife	11	3	2	4
Mate's Daughter	2	1		
Seaman's Wife	19	2		
Seaman's Daughter	11			
Stewardess	4		2	3
Engineer's Wife		1		
Engineer's Daughter		2		
Boatswain's Wife	5			
Boatswain's Daughter	1			
Carpenter's Wife	3			
Carpenter's Daughter	3			
Shipkeeper's Wife	3		1	
Shipkeeper's Daughter	1			
Shipwright's Wife	1			
Shipwright's Daughter	1			
Gunner's Wife	1			
Nurse	1		2	
Lieutenant's wife	1			
Servant	1			
Bargeman's Wife	1			
Total Females	131	35	42	21
Total registered on Vessels (incl. passengers)	9227	1445	4412	1816
% Females	1.42 %	2.4 %	0.95 %	1.16 %

Sources: British Dataset 1861 – 1891, www.ancestry.co.uk, Census returns for vessels in Cornwall

Again, in view of the apparent constraints it is astonishing how many women there were on board vessels, especially when historians have insisted for so long that seafaring and maritime businesses were an exclusively male environment. However, when using the census as a source to find women registered on vessels, there are a few issues that one needs to be aware of. Most of all, the data collected in the census returns only shows the population in a snap shot of a single day. The fact that a woman was registered as being on board a vessel with her husband or father at this point in time does not prove that she was always there, on every voyage or even went to sea at all. A woman might have joined the vessel for one journey only, or she might have accompanied her husband or father during several voyages. Further, people on board foreign going vessels were only registered in the census returns when the vessels were in port on or around the date of the census collection. If a vessel employed in the foreign trade was out at sea and out of British waters, there was no way for enumerators to get the required data and register the people who were on board. Masters of vessels in the Home Trade were issued with blank census forms and these were handed in as soon as possible after the census date. Moreover, the people registered on vessels, not only in Cornwall but throughout Britain, did not have to be British subjects. Whoever was on board a vessel in a British port on census night was registered. The ship herself could even be owned and managed outside of Britain. So besides Scottish and Irish vessels, there were also ships from the European continent listed in these nineteenth-century census returns for Cornwall, as well as their foreign crew.

Most of the women registered on vessels, however, were British and the majority of them were local to Devon and Cornwall. About 65 per cent of women registered on board vessels in the 1861 and 1871 census returns in Cornwall were born in the South West. This figure dropped to about 42 per cent in the following two decades.[27] These figures from the census show that most of the women registered on board vessels in Cornwall were locally born, married to local men, and staying and possibly working on locally registered vessels.[28]

The numbers of women registered aboard vessels in Cornwall show clearly that masters' wives were by far the largest group. In every census for Cornwall of the discussed time period, there were wives of masters registered on board vessels, some in their sixties.[29] There is no way of confirming that those women did accompany their husbands to sea throughout their marriage and not just at a certain point of their lives. However, the greater number of young women aboard vessels shows that many of those who might have gone to sea with their husbands did so during the first ten or twenty years of their marriage and the presence of masters' daughters on board ships, aged between one and twenty years old, confirms that.[30] Indeed, Joan Druett shows in her work on American shipping that many merchant captains took their families to sea with them during the late nineteenth century and sons and daughters were raised on board.[31]

More importantly, however, is the fact that the above table shows that there were far more women on board ship in the late nineteenth century than just masters' wives and daughters. Beside masters' wives and stewardesses, the two groups of women historians acknowledge as being present in the maritime world so far, there were also the wives and daughters of mates, boatswains and engineers registered on board vessels.[32] David Kirby and Marja-Liisa Hinkkanen argued that in the Baltic and North Seas it was exclusively masters' wives accompanying their husbands to sea. Moreover, this was only possible with the permission of the ship owners.[33] With the numbers of women aboard vessels in Cornwall, could the opportunities for women to go to sea have been greater than thought so far?

The census returns show a large number of mates' wives on board vessels, and there are even some daughters registered as being on board ship on census night. It was not just mates who had the opportunity to have their wives with them. In 1871

Eliza Heans was twenty-seven years old at the time and living on board the *Souvenir* which was listed as being moored on the quay in Par. Besides her and her husband, there was the master on board, two other seamen and a boy.[34] If these women did indeed accompany their husbands and fathers to sea on board these vessels, then this would contradict historians who had argued that only masters were able to take their wives with them to sea.

What stands out is that almost all of the women who are registered as mates' wives or daughters were locally born and were married to men from Cornwall and Devon. There are a few exceptions, however, where the women were born in regions somewhat further away such as Somerset, Gloucester or South Wales. But if so, they were married to men who were born in Devon or Cornwall, and thus local. Moreover, there is also a wife and two daughters of a second mate registered as being on board a vessel in 1861. Sarah Nettle, who was born in Plymouth in 1828, is registered on board the *Countess of London* of which her husband was the second mate. With her were their two daughters, aged eleven years and seven months.[35]

Another group of women who appear on vessels in the census are the wives of boatswains, carpenters and engineers on board vessels of the Royal Navy. Those men were, like the master and mate, higher in the hierarchy on board a vessel than the able seamen or ordinary seamen. It is a well known fact that standing officers were sometimes allowed to take their wives to sea when they were serving in the Royal Navy.[36] Wives of standing officers seem to have gone to sea as early as the seventeenth century. It was certainly easier for officers to take their wives to sea and especially for boatswains or carpenters who as warrant officers were 'assigned to a particular ship "in constant employ", unlike both commissioned officers and seamen'.[37] This meant that standing officers practically lived on board the vessel they were assigned to, even when the vessel was out of commission and all other crew were paid off or transferred.

In the 1861 census there are several vessels of the Royal Navy registered in Devonport and living on board were the wives and daughters of boatswains, carpenters, and even the wife of a gunner.[38] The small number of crew on board these Navy vessels indicate that they were out of commission at the time of the census returns. However, as discussed above, the warrant officers often had their family living with them on board Navy vessels. Another great difference to the merchant navy vessels is that most crew members and their wives were not born locally but mainly came from counties like Kent and Hampshire, which had their own long standing naval bases in Portsmouth and Chatham. A good example is the family of the boatswain of the *HMS Hamadryad*, Richard Couzens. He himself was born in Portsmouth in 1817 while his wife Elizabeth was born in Chatham in 1828. His daughter was also on board and three sons, aged between thirteen and one years old. All of the children were either born in Kent or Hampshire.[39]

The high number of able seamen's wives and daughters listed as living on board a vessel in the 1861 census can again be explained with the inclusion of Royal Naval vessels. Of the nineteen wives and eleven daughters of seamen appearing in the Cornish census of 1861 as living on board, only one woman and her daughter were listed on a merchant navy vessel.[40] Moreover, there are two able seamen, William Marsh and William Martin, who are listed on board a navy vessel in 1861 and who both seem to be widowers, and yet both had their daughters on board with them. Sarah Marsh who was fourteen years old, and Elizabeth Martin who was ten years old, both lived with their fathers on board naval vessels. Sarah Marsh was the oldest child in the family and probably had to look after her three younger brothers, while Elizabeth Martin was the only child of William Martin on board.[41] It seems surprising that these two fathers kept their daughters with them on board a naval vessel, even one out of commission at the time of the census, without the support of a wife instead of sending them to stay with relatives or friends on shore.

This group of women has to be considered in a separate set from the women on

board merchant navy vessels as there were different traditions, different practices and limitations at work in the Royal Navy. Even though these women were not employed by the Royal Navy, they still lived on board these vessels for extended times and made a home for their families in this somewhat unusual space and were thus fully involved in the maritime world.

However, there are also very different situations to be found within the category of merchant navy vessels. Not all women found themselves in the same position as Selina Smith who clearly accompanied her husband to sea, and who interestingly enough, is not registered in any late-nineteenth century census, suggesting that she continued to go to sea with him. William and Sarah Gilbert, together with their two daughters and two sons aged between sixteen and one year old are listed in the 1871 census as living on board the *Gorilla* in the port of Falmouth. The *Gorilla* is registered as a coal hulk and as such was static and not leaving Falmouth harbour at all. William Gilbert, who is listed as engineer, and his family are the only people listed as being on board and the *Gorilla* was probably their only home.[42] Another opportunity for husbands and wives to be together was in ship-keeping. A vessel lying idle in a harbour whilst laid up or waiting for repair would have an individual paid to live on board to keep an eye on it. In 1871 Mary Uren, aged forty-seven, and her husband Richard, an able seaman, were the only occupants on board the *Columbus* in Falmouth harbour.[43] So even though women might have been recorded in the census as living aboard a vessel, this did not mean that this vessel ever left port during the time the woman was on board. More research needs to be done into the individual vessels to find out about the employment of the vessel and the situations of the women on board.

As can be seen from the fluctuating numbers of women aboard vessels registered in the census returns of the late nineteenth century it is very hard to come to any statistical conclusions. Moreover, the definitions of women's work and place of residence and what should be recorded in the census returns changed from decade to decade. Moreover, the different enumerators working within a region could have a different understanding of what should be recorded, especially concerning women's work and lifestyle.[44] With all these drawbacks the census returns are still worth studying and can uncover women aboard a vessel who were not registered on the any of the official shipping documents and who might very well have accompanied their husbands or fathers to sea.

This early research into women on board shipping does suggest that life at sea or on board ship was not an exclusively male environment and there were some opportunities for women to join them. Just as the view of the passive dependent wife on shore has been challenged and seen to be too simplistic,[45] so the world on board the ship requires further research. Maenpaa's work on stewardesses who went to sea on board ocean liners, and histories of women like Selina Smith who accompanied their husbands to sea, show that there were indeed opportunities for women to go to sea throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.[46] Moreover, to fully understand maritime communities and seafaring people, it is essential to understand the roles women played in this environment. As Brit Berggreen argues, 'the problem of course is that even the proper role of the men is obscured when the women of their maritime lives remain outside the scope of what is being written about them.'[47] The challenge for the researcher is that, unless they were in a paid occupation such as stewardess, women were rarely officially noted on board and log books such as that written by Selina Smith are rare in Britain. The brief look at the census evidence shows a wider range of opportunities for women to be with their husbands or fathers on board and further work would determine just how many of the ships in the census ships were either out of commission or idle in the harbour. It raises new questions also about the life of the wives and daughters who waited on shore. How far, for instance, from their homes did they travel to spend time on board as a couple or a family unit? The census occupational data deserves more research to discover, for

instance, whether the bargewomen were in sole charge or again accompanying husbands.

It is clear that simplistic views on the lives of men and women in nineteenth-century maritime communities are no longer valid. Women did not simply remain at home and raise the children, while the men went to sea and were absent for most of the time and not able to take part in their families' lives.[48] The wife or mother might be the shore-based business manager of the ship, wives and children were on occasions able to accompany their husbands to sea and when their husband was still on board ship but moored up in a port they could live temporarily as a couple or even as a family. It might be true that the position of stewardess was the only formal seafaring positions available to women at the time. However, as Jane Humphries argues, 'women made money and obtained things of value in many ways other than working for wages. They often did more than one thing at a time, they did different things at different times of year and at different phases of the business cycle, and they adapted their efforts to the structure and circumstances of their families.'[49] Thus, to study maritime women in more detail and to further uncover the opportunities for women to be on board ship or go to sea, it might be worthwhile to take a step away from the idea of 'formal work' and look at all kind of work women did to contribute to shipping businesses and the welfare of crew and vessel.

This regional study has attempted to take a look at women and the possible opportunities for them to be on board and be involved in the maritime world. The study of Parliamentary Papers has shown that there were several women employed in maritime businesses and trades in late-nineteenth century Cornwall, and the study of the census returns shows how many women were registered as living on board vessels in Cornish ports and harbours. More research needs to be done on the individual vessels to find out what the roles of these women on board were and so the points discussed in this paper are very much only starting points. Moreover, the census returns only take place every ten years so many women like Selina Smith who went to sea with her husband in between census information was collected were never recorded aboard vessels in these records. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the contributions women made to maritime businesses and communities to fully understand the life of seafaring communities.

Notes

[1] Sari Maenpaa, 'Comfort and Guidance for Female Passengers', *Journal of Maritime Research*, November 2004, Joan Druett, *Hen Frigates: Wives of Merchant Captains under Sail* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998); Brit Berggreen, 'Dealing with Anomalies? Approaching Maritime Women', in: Lewis R. Fischer *et al* (eds): *The North Sea*. Stavanger, 1992, pp. 111 – 123; Suzanne J. Stark, *Female Tars: Women Aboard Ship in the Age of Sail*, (London: Pimlico, 1996).

[2] See Jo Stanley 'And after the Cross-dressed Cabin Boys and Whaling Wives? Possible Futures for Women's Maritime Historiography' *Journal of Transport History*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2002, pp. 9 – 22; or the forum on 'Women and the Sea in the Pacific' in the *International Journal of Maritime History* vol. 20, no. 2, December 2008.

[3] I wish to thank Tony Pawlyn and Dr Helen Doe for their assistance with this paper.

[4] See the chapter on maritime women in David Kirby, and Merja-Liisa Hinkkanen, *The Baltic and the North Seas* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 231–53.

[5] Berggreen, 'Dealing with Anomalies?' p. 112.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 111 –23.

[7] Maenpaa, 'Comfort and Guidance for Female Passengers', p. 5.

[8] David J. Starkey, 'Growth and Transition in Britain's Maritime Economy, 1870 – 1914', in: David J. Starkey and Alan G. Jamieson (eds): *Exploiting the Sea*, (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1998), p. 18.

[9] David J. Starkey, 'The Ports, Seaborne Trade and Shipping Industry of South Devon, 1786 – 1914', in Michael Duffy *et al* (eds), *The New Maritime History of Devon*, (London: Conway, 1994), pps. 32, 33, 35.

[10] Robin Craig, 'Steamship Enterprise in Devon, 1852 – 1920', in: Michael Duffy *et al* (eds), *The New Maritime History of Devon* (London: Conway, 1994), p. 97; and Starkey: 'The Ports, Seaborne Trade and Shipping Industry of South Devon', p. 33.
[11] Craig, 'Steamship Enterprise in Devon', p. 91; Starkey: 'Growth and Transition', p. 27; and Starkey: 'The Ports, Seaborne Trade and Shipping Industry of South Devon', pp. 36, 37. 40.
[12] Starkey: 'The Ports, Seaborne Trade and Shipping Industry of South Devon', p. 42.
[13] Helen Doe**,** Waiting for her Ship to come in: The Female Investor in Nineteenth Century Shipping', *Economic History Review*, Vol.63, No.1, February 2010, pp.85-106**.**
[14] *Lloyd's Register* 1887-88; Doe, *Enterprising Women*, p.144.
[15] Private Collection; Captain W. C. Smith's ship's log 1887 aboard the 'Gem', by kind permission of Mrs Isabel Pickering
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] *Ibid*., entry for April 16 1887
[18] Joan Druett, *Hen Frigates: Wives of Merchant Captains under Sail* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), pp. 90 –121.
[19] British Parliamentary Papers (BPP), RG 30/4 C.872 LXXI Part 1, Population Tables 1871
[20] BPP: RG 30/4 C.872 LXXI Part 1, Population Tables 1871; and RG 30/6 C.7058, CVI Part 1, Population Tables 1891
[21]BPP: RG 30/6 C. 7058 CVI Part 1, Population Tables 1891
[22] Doe: *Enterprising Women*, pp. 161 - 164
[23] BPP: RG 30/5 C. 3722 LXXX Part 1, Population Tables 1881
[24] Bridget Hill, 'Women, Work and the Census: A Problem for Historians of Women', *History Workshop*, no. 35, Spring 1993, p. 82.
[25] Edward Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses' *History Workshop*, no. 23, Spring 1987, p. 61; and Hill: 'Women, Work and the Census', pps. 83, 84.
[26] Unfortunately the access to the census returns of 1901 and 1911 are organised in a different way which makes it is a lot more difficult to find women who were registered as being on board a vessel. The researcher needs a specific name of a vessel which had a woman on board, or the name of a woman the researcher is sure was on board on census night.
[27] Dataset 1861 – 1891, census returns for vessels in Cornwall, www.ancestry.co.uk
[28] Dataset 1861 – 1891, census returns for vessels in Cornwall, www.ancestry.co.uk
[29] Dataset 1861 – 1891, census returns for vessels in Cornwall, www.ancestry.co.uk
[30] Dataset, 1861 – 1891, census returns for vessels in Cornwall, www.ancestry.co.uk
[31] Druett, *Hen Frigates*, pp. 90 – 121.
[32] Dataset, 1861 – 1891, census returns for vessels in Cornwall, www.ancestry.co.uk
[33] Kirby and Hinkkanen: *The Baltic and North Seas*, p. 242
[34] The National Archives (TNA): 1871 census: RG 10/2261, folio 62, page 1
[35] TNA: 1861 census: RG 9/4492, folio 67, page 1
[36] David Cordingly, *Seafaring Women: Adventures of Pirate Queens, Female Stowaways, and Sailors' Wives*. (New York: Random House, 2007 [2001], pp. 90 – 105.
[37] Stark, *Female Tarsin the Age of Sail*, p. 47
[38] Dataset 1861 census returns for vessels in Cornwall, www.ancestry.co.uk; The census returns for these vessels were probably handled via Saltash and are thus listed in the Cornwall census.
[39] TNA: 1861 census: RG 9/4493, folio 57, page 11
[40] Dataset 1861 census for vessels in Cornwall, www.ancestry.co.uk.
[41] TNA: 1861 census: RG 9/4493, folio 56, page 9 ; and RG 9/4493, folio 54, page 5
[42] TNA 1871 census: RG10/2295, folio 77, page 2
[43] TNA 1871 census: RG 10/2295, folio 76, page 1
[44] Higgs: 'Women, Occupation and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses', pp. 60 – 77; and Hill: 'Women, Work and the Census', pp. 80 – 82
[45] See Doe, *Enterprising Women and Shipping*
[46] See Maenpaa, Sari: 'Comfort and guidance for female passengers'.
[47] Berggreen: 'Dealing with Anomalies', p. 114
[48] Thompson, 'Women in the Fishing,' p. 15.
[49] Jane Humphries, 'Women and paid work', in: Jane Purvis (ed.): *Women's History: Britain 1850 – 1945*. (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 85.