

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION IN EAST INDIAMEN SHIPPING (1600-1858)

A unique project by Stepney Community Trust

Are you interested in learning about how scientific progress and technological innovations influenced East India Company ship building and navigation?

Do you want to write about East India Company ships and how Britain increased its economic and military power through reducing distance, expanding capacity and boosting trade?

Do you want to learn how to build old ship models and help commission an East India Company model ship?

If yes then please apply to join the project a volunteer heritage explorers.

Who should apply?

Ordinary members of London's diverse communities, with a special focus on people living in East London and from different walks-of-life, are invited to apply. This project is particularly suitable for individuals who are interested in developing their knowledge about how scientific discoveries and technological innovation influenced East India Company ship building and navigation. We are not looking for established academics and historians or professional ship model makers to join the project.

Project details

The London-based East India Company's early voyages to Asia and back took about two years to complete with many sailors dying of diseases and shipwreck. Over time, in addition to conquering the deadly scurvy disease, the Company continuously improved its capacity for goods transportation and reduced the time taken for the return journey. Navigation became more accurate and safe with sturdier and larger ships, improved instruments and the discovery of the longitude. Scientific discoveries and technological innovations helped improve ship building, navigation and increased British sea power. Now a group of volunteer researchers from East London are setting out to uncover that story, backed by a £52,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The project will explore how scientific progress and technological innovations applied to East India Company shipping and long distance navigation changed Britain's links and relationship with Asia during 1600-1858. Sixteen community volunteers, known as Heritage Explorers, will be recruited and provided with training, sources of information and mentoring support. They will examine records and objects linked to East Indiamen shipping, some of which are stored at the British Library, National Maritime Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum. Each Heritage Explorer will write a chapter in a book and collectively commission the building of a museum quality model ship, designed to help illustrate the impacts of scientific progress and technological innovations on East India Company shipping.

The project will explore how scientific progress and technological innovations applied to East Indiaman shipping and long distance navigation impacted on the way trade and journeys were carried out and the way that changed over time. The participants will research and write about the history of ships of the East India Company and how the application of new knowledge and techniques, derived from scientific discoveries and technological innovations, helped Britain increase its economic and military power through reducing distance, expanding capacity and boosting trade.

The Heritage Explorers will visit heritage institutions and receive training on archival research and technical drawing, study ship drawing, explore heritage objects and receive support from mentors to undertake their explorations and produce their chapters in a book. They will also receive training in model ship building and together they will choose one East Indiaman ship, collect drawings, understand the science and technology that underpinned elements of the ship and the total ship, and then commission 'Premier Ship Models UK' to build a Museum-quality ship model about one meter in length.

There will be a project end celebratory event at the National Maritime Museum and a touring exhibition.

The project is being supported by the National Maritime Museum, British Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, St Matthias Community Centre, Rich Mix Centre and Strawberry Hill House

If you are interested in applying please visit www.stepney.org.uk or email heritageproject@stepney.org.uk for more information and an application form. Closing date: Monday 27 July 2015.

PROJECT LAUNCH

6.30-8.30pm, Thursday,
19 March 2015
Lab 1A, Idea Store
Whitechapel, 321
Whitechapel Rd, London
E1 1BU

PROGRAMME

- 1. PROJECT INFORMATION**
- 2. SHORT CLIP FROM THE 1930S FILM 'CLIVE OF INDIA'**
- 3. SHORT PRESENTATIONS FROM GUESTS AND EXPERTS**
 - **Researching the East India Company at the British Library** - by Penny Brook (*British Library*)
 - **East Indiaman; their design, construction and development** - by Simon Stephens (*National Maritime Museum*)
 - **Walpole and the Wider World: Strawberry Hill Houses and its Part in the Story of the EIC** - by Claire Leighton (*Strawberry Hill Houses*)
 - **Historical Ship Model Making Training Course** - by Premier Ship Models UK
- 4. THE NEXT STEP**