

Marine Technology Special Collection, Newcastle University, United Kingdom

The Shipbuilding Collection

Britain was the world's pre-eminent shipbuilding nation for over a century. It pioneered iron steamships and many novel ship designs, both merchant and naval, which revolutionised world trade. There were over 5000 shipbuilding companies from the 19th century on, operating from around 1000 sites. They built over 80,000 ships, which are recorded on the British Shipbuilding Database, accessible in the Special Collection.

[Link to BSD page]

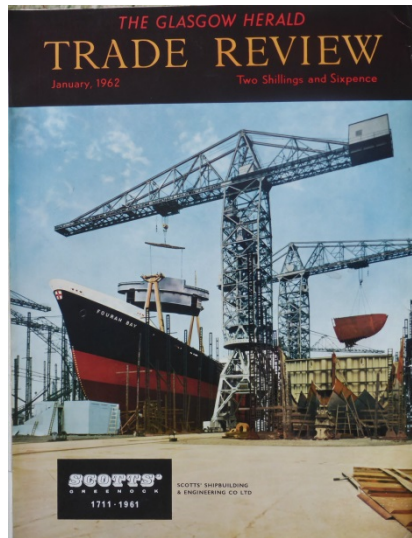
The Special Collection holds a wide range of shipbuilding records, some unique, some in published form. Some of this is technical, particularly including material from north east of England businesses. For example shipyard data books record details of ships built by a particular company. Much of this data has been incorporated into BSD. An example is from Sunderland shipbuilder Bartram.

[insert Bartram image from Blyth poster 2016]

Other sources of information which we hold include a good run of annual Lloyds Registers in the 20th century, recording every seagoing ship in the world. We have almost complete runs of most ship technical journals, including The Shipbuilder, Shipbuilding & Shipping Record, Motor Ship and the Marine Engineer. These include descriptions and illustrations of new ships, as well as shipbuilding and engineering works.



The Transactions of technical learned societies like the North East Coast Institution of Engineers & Shipbuilders (whose library we inherited) also record developments in the industry. The annual Glasgow Herald Trade Review recorded shipbuilding output for much of the 20th century.



In addition we have a good range of information on shipbuilding and marine engineering facilities, including works plans and typical plant such as cranes, and photographs of ships under construction.

[Insert a pic of ship under construction e.g. BP Achiever in 1980s at Hebburn ask BN]

Note that personnel records of such companies where they exist tend to be held at Tyne & Wear Museums & Archives (link ...).



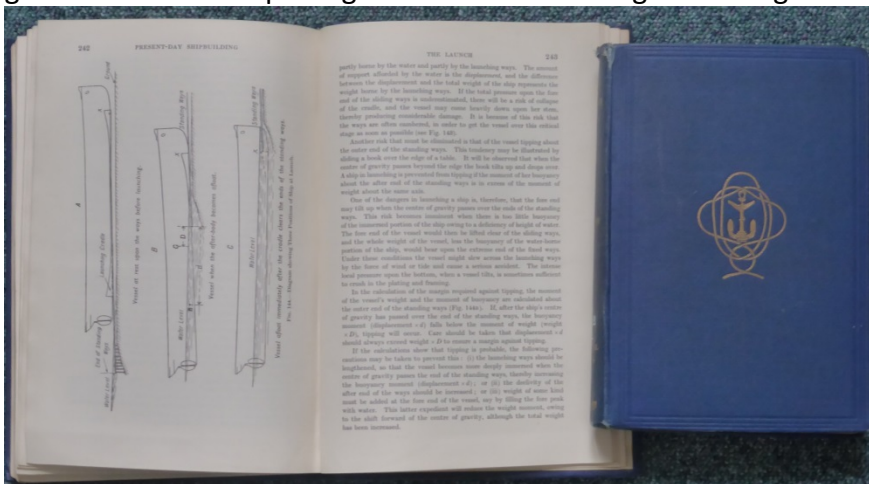
Shipbuilding companies often produced publicity brochures describing their products. Some also commissioned company histories, of which we have almost a complete collection. We have a number of photographs commissioned by shipbuilders.



Smiths Dock Teesside yard in 1962.

We have some original ledgers and documents from companies as well as photocopies of other documents, e.g. Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson directors minutes. When the nationalised British Shipbuilders closed in the 1990s, they deposited some records including annual reports, statistical reports and publicity material.

We also have a wide range of textbooks describing shipbuilding processes with diagrams. Regulations on ship design and construction (e.g. Lloyds Register rules) enable changes to be identified, e.g. from riveting to welding. Similarly textbooks on naval architecture discuss general issues of ship design and construction e.g. launching.



John Scott Russell's "A Modern System of Naval Architecture" is a classic describing ships and their design and construction in 1865 in three huge volumes of text and plates. [Insert a pic of volume, open at page with text and diagrams]

Shipbuilding periodicals were published in other countries, for example we have runs of Werft, Reederei & Hafen and Schiffbau (both German) and Schip en Werf (Dutch)

How to contact the Collection:

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