John Septimus Roe and the art of navigation, c. 1815-1830


There is a more recent version of this item available.

Text (Author's final draft (Refereed))
4120.pdf - Author's Accepted Manuscript
Download (461kB) | Preview

Official URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hwj/54.1.144

Abstract
In this paper, we consider the ways in which practices of drawing and surveying shaped the geographical imagination of British mariners in the tropics. The art of navigation involved a variety of skills, notably sketching and mapping. The history of naval survey and hydrography is often written from the centre, a more-or-less halting narrative of science, government and empire in which prominent naval officials hold the stage. Here, we start with a different view - that of the surveyor in the field, or rather on board ship, working with his eyes and his hands to make a record of the voyage. The two views are not mutually exclusive: but the perspectives they give differ in important respects. Our focus in this paper is on a single figure - John Septimus Roe, who later rose to prominence as Surveyor-General of Western Australia. We are interested here in Roe's more humble early career, as midshipman and master's mate on a number of vessels during and after the Napoleonic Wars, which took him to various sites across the British empire, formal and informal: to the European theatre of war, to North and South America, the Gulf, India, Mauritius, Burma, South-East Asia and tropical Australia. The images of Rio de Janeiro examined here form part of a corpus which raises much wider questions about the visual culture of navigation and the experience of observation in the early nineteenth century.

Metadata

Item Type: Article
This is a pre-copy-editing, author-produced PDF of an article accepted for publication in History Workshop Journal following peer review. The definitive publisher-authenticated version (History Workshop Journal 54(1), pp.144-161) is available online at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hwj/54.1.144
Additional Information: This is a pre-copy-editing, author-produced PDF of an article accepted for publication in History Workshop Journal following peer review. The definitive publisher-authenticated version (History Workshop Journal 54(1), pp.144-161) is available online at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hwj/54.1.144
School: Birkbeck Schools and Departments > School of Arts > Cultures and Languages

Depositing User: Administrator
Date Deposited: 19 Sep 2011 13:40
Last Modified: 11 Oct 2016 15:27

Available Versions of this Item

- John Septimus Roe and the art of navigation, c. 1815-1830. (deposited 19 Sep 2011 13:40) [Currently Displayed]
- John Septimus Roe and the art of navigation, c. 1815-1830. (deposited 20 Sep 2011 08:33)

Statistics

499 Downloads
John Septimus Roe (8 May 1797 – 28 May 1878) was the first Surveyor-General of Western Australia. He was a renowned explorer, and a Member of Western Australia’s legislative and executive councils for nearly 40 years. John Septimus Roe was born at Newbury, Berkshire on 8 May 1797. He was the seventh son of James Roe, the rector of Newbury. At 10 years of age, Roe was sent to Christ's Hospital School in London, to study for a career as a school teacher. There, he showed a great aptitude for mathematics Art and the British Empire. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, pp. 53-66. ISBN 9780719073922. This is the latest version of this item. Full text not available from this repository. The twenty essays in Art and the British Empire offer compelling methodological solutions to this problematic, while engaging in subtle visual analysis of a previously neglected body of work. Authors from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the USA and the UK examine a wide range of visual production, including book illustration, portraiture, monumental sculpture, genre and history painting, visual satire, marine and landscape painting, photography and film. Together these essays propose a major shift in the historiography of British art and a blueprint for further research. Metadata John Septimus Roe was the first Surveyor-General of Western Australia. Western Australia is a state of Australia, occupying the entire western third of the Australian continent. Newbury is a civil parish and the principal town in the west of the county of Berkshire in England. It is situated on the River Kennet and the Kennet and Avon Canal, and has a town centre containing many 17th century buildings. Newbury is best known for its racecourse and the adjoining former USAF on 8 May 1797. He was the seventh son of James Roe, the rector. Rector. The word rector has a number of different meanings; it is widely used to refer to an academic, religious or political administrator.