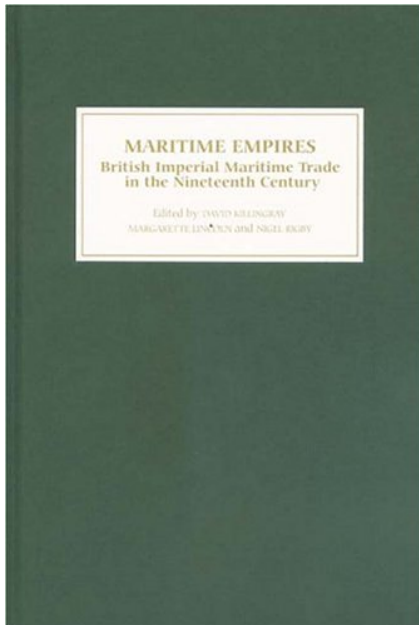


**Maritime Empires: British Imperial Maritime Trade in the Nineteenth Century**  
edited by David Killingray, Margarete Lincoln and Nigel Rigby. Woodbridge: The  
Boydell Press, 2004, pp.xii + 229, £75.00, hardback, ISBN: 1 84383 076 0.



*Maritime Empires* is a collection of disparate essays arising out of a conference of the same name held at the National Maritime Museum in 2001. The essays cover many different areas of the world and explore the question of whether nineteenth century Britain was a maritime empire. Only one of the essays is primarily about Australia. Jordan Goodman looks at British settlement and naval surveying with special reference to Melville Island, Port Essington, the Torres Strait and Cape York during the first half of the nineteenth century. Britain wanted to secure its sovereignty over northern Australia, but not only was the harsh environment of this region unsuitable for white settlement, it also delayed the completion of the naval surveys. As Regina Ganter has also shown more recently, northern Australia was already part of a pre-existing trade network that brought together Malay

fishermen from the southern Dutch East Indies and the local Aborigines. Goodman argues this also made it difficult for the British to establish a pioneering foothold in the region.

Three of the other essays have references to Australia. William Gervase Clarence-Smith shows, in his excellent essay on the trade in equids, that Australia became a major supplier of horses to the Indian and Mauritian markets during the period 1861-1920. Marjory Harper compares nineteenth century emigrant voyages to Australia and New Zealand with those to North America. She notes that the Passenger Acts designed to provide minimum standards were easier to enforce on government-chartered ships to Australia than on the trans-Atlantic routes, where there was no regulatory agency. Robert Bickers in his essay on Shanghai refers to a familiar imperial trajectory of many of the men who served in Britain's formal and informal imperial possessions. During the mid-1880s, many of the Britons who had recently been recruited at great expense by the Shanghai Municipal Police left to take up positions with police forces in Victoria and New South Wales.

The book also has several other essays, including an intriguing one on British explorers in the Arctic during two decades following the Napoleonic Wars and their use of canned food, a then recent innovation in food processing.

RICHARD A. HAWKINS  
*University of Wolverhampton*