

## **Louise Moon - Sailorhoods: sailortown and sailors in the port of Portsmouth circa 1850-1900**

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This thesis is a detailed study of sailortown as an urban entity and sailors as urban inhabitants. Using the naval port-town of Portsmouth as a case study across the period circa 1850 – 1900, this thesis directly challenges the notion of sailors being ‘men apart’ and that sailortown districts simply existed to cater for sailors’ entertainment whilst ashore. It will achieve this by offering an analysis of Portsmouth’s sailortown as a socio-demographic entity and an exploration of the urban experiences of sailors, particularly naval sailors. This study thus aims to bring together the fragmented historiographical discussion relating to sailors and sailortowns and ameliorate historians’ understanding of them. It seeks to do this by readdressing the balance away from sea-based, merchant, economic and labour contexts that have hitherto dominated research. In doing so, this thesis fuses quantitative and qualitative approaches and sources, exploring the street-level interactions between sailors and port inhabitants and the socio-demography of Portsmouth’s sailortown district. Indeed, as an aid to identifying a sailortown area in port, this thesis proposes a ‘Sailortown Prerequisite Model.’

By spatially mapping Portsmouth’s sailortown district using over fifty thousand census records, this thesis argues sailortown was built on interrelated and interconnected networks of sailor neighbourhoods, or ‘sailorhoods,’ formed on their occupational, familial and local ties. In turn, this facilitated a street-orientated sailortown culture to be fashioned that helped to ensure Portsmouth’s sailortown remained a sailor’s town. Moreover, this thesis argues sailors maintained ties to land, and more so than previous research has suggested. Indeed, despite popular assumptions to the contrary, this study demonstrates sailors possessed a street-wise sensibility. More widely, the thesis highlights the relativity of coastal living in sailortown areas and reveals there is not a monolithic socio-cultural experience of sailortowns or for sailors as urban inhabitants; they were multifaceted ones embracing differing temporal, social, cultural and spatial experiences for individuals and groups. Thus, the parameters and conclusions presented in thesis offers an original contribution to debates surrounding sailortowns, sailors and naval sailors’ lives ashore, enabling this thesis to make major contributions to urban, naval and maritime history, and to the emerging field of ‘New Coastal History.’