Stanford



Jack Pink

Postdoctoral Scholar, Environmental Social Sciences

Bio

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I am primarily a marine researcher; my PhD is in maritime archaeology specifically focusing on the archaeology of ships. I have been fascinated by the sea and by shipwrecks since reading Jacques Cousteau's The Silent World as a child. The combination of diving and archaeology seemed to me then, and still seems to me now, an unusually fortunate way to make a living.

I read Archaeology and then Maritime Archaeology at the University of Southampton. I then spent two years as Assistant Rural Surveyor at the National Trust's Lanhydrock estate in Cornwall. Whilst that might look like a tangent (and it felt like it at the time) it was an experience that proved more formative than I had anticipated. My responsibilities covered a substantial portion of the Trust's Cornish portfolio, including areas of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape UNESCO World Heritage Site. Managing working harbours and conservation sites in an operational context, answerable to communities as much as to institutional objectives, gave me an understanding of coastal and marine heritage that you frankly cannot get as an academic.

I completed my PhD in 2023, under the supervision of Professor Jon Adams and Dr Julian Whitewright. I examined an assemblage of two hundred merchant vessels through the integration of archaeological remains and historical records, using this dataset to explore the impact of changing systems within the British Empire on merchant shipping and the development of shipbuilding technologies across the nineteenth century. During and around this period I worked to build the practical experience that underpins good maritime archaeology. Underwater, this took me to Roman harbour sites and anchorages in Lebanon (at Anfeh, Batroun, and Tyre) to an underwater excavation in Kalmar, Sweden, to survey projects across the British Isles from the Isle of Lewis to the Pembrokeshire coast, and to geophysical work in Uruguay. On land I directed and contributed to geophysical surveys across Europe, including at Ephesus in Turkey and at a British Museum excavation of an Indo-Roman trade site in northwest India. The range of these projects was deliberate: I was trying to become the kind of archaeologist who could work anywhere and with anything, and fieldwork in different countries and conditions is the only reliable way to do that. Something worked because I found myself being consulted on the archaeological standards for the wreck of Shackleton's Endurance following its discovery in 2022.

A period at Historic England followed, first as Senior Policy Advisor for Underwater Cultural Heritage where I supported the development of government legislation and prepared guidance on the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage. I moved to Technical Manager of the Marine Data Exchange Heritage Accelerator, where I led a team integrating offshore heritage data from commercial contractors and wind farm corporations into the National Marine Heritage Record. This work required collaborating with the Crown Estate, DCMS, and DEFRA, and gave me an understanding of how the marine sector operates commercially that sits alongside but distinct from my research background.

I joined Stanford in September 2025 as a Postdoctoral Scholar holding a joint appointment between the Stanford Robotics Center and the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability. At the Robotics Center I manage the Oceans Flagship, a programme developing next-generation remotely operated vehicle capabilities for scientific discovery at depth, working with Professor Oussama Khatib and Dr. Steve Cousins. In parallel, I work with Dr. Krish Seetah on research into the environmental impacts of shipwrecks, exploring the interactions between anthropogenic material and the marine ecosystem within the developing field of Maritime Heritage Ecology.

STANFORD ADVISORS

- Krish Seetah, Postdoctoral Faculty Sponsor

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Modest doubt: enabling discovery across maritime heritage records.** *International journal of digital humanities*
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- **The Archaeology of Ocean, a 19th-Century Merchant Schooner Wrecked in the Solent 1865** *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*
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  2026
- **Paper Ships on Digital Seas** *JOURNAL OF MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY*
  Pink, J.
  2025
- **The Archaeology of the Rhoda Mary, a Cornish Schooner Hulked in the River Medway** *JOURNAL OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY*
  Pink, J., Pedrotti, F., Whitewright, J.
  2025; 50 (7): 653-677
- **A Life Less than Ordinary: The Schooner Ocean (1821–1865)** *Historical Archaeology*
  Pink, J., Whitewright, J.
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