Theme issue: Atropos

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Hornblower’s canal voyage from Gloucester to London, 1805 vs 2009
Ludwig Heuse

During our AGM in Lechlade-on-Thames this August we enjoyed a reading of the first two chapters of "Hornblower and the Atropos" plus a presentation about the background to the Captain’s journey from Gloucester to London in December 1805. Hornblower was travelling on the canal boat Queen Charlotte, accompanied by his wife Maria and son Horatio. Having arrived and reported to the Admiralty, he received instructions to organize the procession of ceremonial boats through the City of London for Admiral Lord Nelson’s funeral and afterwards to sail with HMS Atropos into the Mediterranean. Click on “Meetings” on our website to see photos of the AGM and of the presentation.

The purpose of this article is to cast light on some peculiar aspects of the first two chapters of the book. The first question we discussed was why did Forester send Hornblower on a trip with a small canal boat through the midst of England anyway, given that our hero was a naval captain used to much bigger ships sailing the oceans? An explanation may be some family activity. According to the Hornblower biography written by C. Northcote Parkinson, he had been busy in October 1805 with some secret service action in France and Spain, which was in connection with a forged letter to Pierre Charles de Villeneuve, the French vice admiral in charge at the battle of Trafalgar. This mission being completed, Hornblower was sent on leave by the Admiralty and joined his pregnant wife Maria in Plymouth. There he received his letter of appointment to HMS Atropos lying at anchor in London. At the same time he was asked for a meeting by his uncle Jonathan Carter, who had supported Hornblower as a midshipman and who wanted to ask him now to find a berth for his grandson, another Jonathan, aged 11, in the Atropos. Uncle Jonathan at that time was working in Birmingham, so the two Hornblowers agreed to meet somehow midway in Gloucester from where Horatio Hornblower continued his voyage via the canal system to London. So much for Northcote Parkinson.

The second possibility to explain Hornblower’s travelling on a canal boat far away from the seas is that Forester’s personal experience of boat trips on English and European waterways grew into a plot for his literary creation, a technique he describes in the Hornblower Companion. So it is evident that Hornblower’s escape route down the Loire in “Flying Colours” is based on the author’s trip on that river in 1928, which he describes in “The Voyage of the Annie Marble”, a name based on one of the characters in an earlier Forester novel.

C S Forester with his wife Kathleen passing under the bridge crossing the Loire in Beaugency. Their boat is the flat-bottomed fifteen footer “Annie Marble”, basically the same design as the one used by Hornblower 120 years earlier

So fiction turns into reality turns into fiction, turned into reality again when I followed Hornblower’s route down the Loire with my boat Genevieve in 2004. Although Forester makes some references to boating on the Thames in his Annie Marble books (the second one is “Annie Marble in Germany”), I do not know whether he ever did the full route from Gloucester along the Stroudwater Navigation, the Sapperton Tunnel, the Thames & Severn Canal and the Thames itself down to London. He would barely have had the chance to do so as much of the canal, including Sapperton Tunnel was abandoned in 1927. A western section survived until 1933, and the Stroudwater Navigation was not closed until 1941. Today you have difficulties to find even the remains of the canal. Large sections have been paved over, converted into parking lots and made into fields in the open countryside. You may find a complete history of the canal in Humphrey Household’s book “The Thames & Severn Canal”.

As you further explore the history of the Thames & Severn Canal and compare it with “Hornblower and the Atropos”, you will see that Forester massaged the facts a bit, as he does in his other novels, to make them fit his story and to heighten the dramatics. For example, in 1805 when Hornblower is marvelling at the speed of the Queen Charlotte and the efficiency of the canal operations, there were – on this canal – no passenger services available and no fly boats either; these were introduced only in the late 1820s, shortly before even quicker passenger transport became available with the advent of railways. At the time of Hornblower’s trip there were only very slow transport barges to be found on the Thames & Severn Canal. After the fly boat services became available, they covered the slightly more than 180 miles between Gloucester and London in 4 days travelling night and day, a remarkable feat for a boat with the power of two horses only, which had to be changed every half hour.
A fly boat as used in the English canals in the early 19th century.

After passing the Thames & Severn Canal and having reached the river Thames at Inglesham, Hornblower passes the Halfpenny Bridge in Lechlade, built in 1792 and standing still beautiful there today.

Halfpenny Bridge in Lechlade with the tollhouse visible left above the arch.

So much, so possible. But the exciting weir with a fall of five to six feet, which Forester forces Hornblower to run next, steering the Queen Charlotte “with his palms, as they rested on the tiller, distinctly damp” is actually a lock built already in 1790, very practical but much more boring. This slight change of the historical facts makes us partner first in Hornblower’s anxiety when approaching the weir and second in his joy after having it passed successfully making him “laugh out loud” and feel so exhilarated “that it did not occur to him to condemn himself for his earlier misgivings”.

The lock is named after St. John, a priory established nearby in 1250, which no longer exists. It is adjacent to the Trout Inn where we held our AGM.

But Forester does not only make the facts fit his narrative from time to time, he makes very nice use of his “Annie Marble” experiences on the French rivers and canals too, when describing how Hornblower managed – or better mis-managed – his first passage of a lock:

This is an excerpt from “Hornblower and the Atropos”

“The gates were open, the lock-keeper standing by them. Hornblower steered for them, greatly helped by the Queen Charlotte’s abrupt reduction in speed as her bow wave passed ahead of her. Hornblower grabbed for the stern rope, leaped for the bank, and miraculously kept his footing. The bollard was ten feet ahead; he ran forward and dropped a loop over it and took the strain. The ideal method was to take nearly all the way off the boat, let her creep into the lock, and stop her fully at the next bollard, but it was too much to hope that he could at his first attempt execute all this exactly. He let the line slip through his hands, watching the boat’s progress, and then took too sudden a pull at it. Line and bollard creaked; the Queen Charlotte swung her bows across the lock to bump them against the farther sides and she lay there half in and half out, helpless, so that the lock-keeper’s wife had to run along from the farther gates, lean over, shove the bows clear while seizing the bowline, and, with the line over her sturdy shoulder, haul the boat the final dozen yards into the lock — a clear waste of a couple of minutes. …

“Ee, man, you know little about boats,” said the lock-keeper’s wife, and Hornblower’s ears burned with embarrassment.”

Compare this with Forester’s “The Voyage of the Annie Marble”, where he describes his first experiences with Seine-locks, at a time when he had just started out with his brand new boat and felt still very insecure as a motor boat captain:

“Manoeuvring a tow into a lock is an interesting performance. Naturally, the tug enters first, goes up to the farther gate, and moors. The vast barges come gliding on with their own momentum. As each passes the gate the bargee flings a rope to some one who awaits it – their always is some one, although we could never discover whether he was an employee of the lock, or of the tow, or just an idle spectator. The rope is hitched to a bollard on shore; the bargee passes it in two turns round a bollard on the barge. His wife, flinging her weight fiercely first on one side of the tiller, then on the other, steers through the gate. The first barge in goes up alongside the tug; the others take up position two by two behind them. As they near their correct berth the bargee takes a good grip of his rope, which tightens in its turn round its bollard. With a mighty...
rumbling the rope slips round, dragging itself through the bargee’s hands. The resultant friction robs the barge of its momentum, and she slowly loses way. But the pull at the same time tends to alter her course. The whole proceeding depends on a nice judgment on the part of the bargee and frantic steering on the part of his wife. Generally everything goes well; the barge stops exactly where she ought to be, and the bargee can then devote his time to running up and down his fifty yards of barge, casting of the tow-rope at the stern, gathering in the tow rope at the bow, and pitching another rope up to the bank so as to have another mooring. But if the whole movement is not nicely timed, if the bargee's grip on the slipping rope is an ounce too heavy, or if his wife cannot put enough strength on the tiller, excitement rises to fever heat. The barge swings around, for one ecstatic moment it seems certain that she will jam diagonally across the lock and be broken in half by the following barge.”

Admiralty Steps, which were rebuilt to a new design in the late 19th century, therefore not in the form Hornblower knew them. Choppy waters plus anxiety on the side of the pilot prevented a photo of the complete monument.

My “palms, as they rested on the tiller, (were) distinctly damp” too when we approached London, as we had been warned by numerous well wishing boat captains and lock operators about the perils of navigating the tidal Thames amongst the dense traffic in the capital. We had been also advised to “keep clear away from the House of Parliament, they shoot at you without warning”. So we steered a safe course along the opposite bank of the river, no broadsides were fired upon us and we reached Admiralty Steps in good health, the end of our journey.

With the “Geneviève it took Claudia (pictured above) and me about 5 days on the water for the 140 Miles from Lechlade to the Admiralty Steps passing more than 40 locks on the way. Our engine had 5 HP, which makes the 4 day travelling time with the 2 HP fly boats for the full distance from Gloucester to London even the more remarkable although one has to consider they were travelling night and day which we did not. For most of the distance you are allowed to go only at 8 kilometres per hour today, much less than the Queen Charlotte, which in Hornblower’s estimate made a good 9 miles per hour.

Admiralty Steps, the last lock down river, at low tide. At high tide you don’t even realise there’s a lock, you just drive over it.

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A special Atropos theme issue of Reflections should pay attention to Atropos editions and their availability. I therefore used my favourite 2nd-hand books search engine¹. The 1st edition book is not hard to obtain. Published in 1953 with Forester’s (and Hornblower’s!) reputation well established, the 1st print run by Michael Joseph (cover by Biro) was 50,000 copies. The Little Brown 1st edition had another cover, by Ralph Pallen Coleman and 15302 copies were printed. Currently some 330 second-hand ‘Atropos’s’ are offered for sale, including 28 Michael Joseph 1953 first edition hardcover, half of which offered for less than 25 pounds. Take your pick.

But why should the most expensive of the first editions cost 650 pounds? This is the description by bookseller: Adrian Harrington Rare Books, London:

Michael Joseph, London, 1953, 1953. With ORIGINAL COVER ARTWORKS. 8vo., pp. 302, 190 x 140mm. Publisher’s cloth. Near fine (slight lean) in fine dustwrapper, with one neat tear at upper joint. FIRST EDITION. Together with two sketched drafts for the cover by wrapper illustrator Biro: 1. Pastel. Image 130x190mm, on larger paper, front panel illustration with three-quarters view of sailing ship, author and VARIANT title in colour above/beneath. The working title for this book was ‘The Captain of the Atropos; A New Hornblower novel’. Paper lightly foxed, instructions and dimensions in pencil to left of image, one short tear, folded (not affecting sketch). 2. Pencil. Image 155x185mm, on slightly larger tracing paper, showing front panel and spine with side (chosen) view of sailing ship with smaller boat to spine, lettered as finished design. Some minor creasing.

¹ http://abebooks.co.uk

So it is just an “ordinary” 1st edition in good condition, but with original artwork by Val Biro, one with an alternative title! Colin Blogg on August 8 had just shown me a hardcover printer’s proof of Atropos with the title: “The Captain of the Atropos, a new Hornblower novel".
After contacting Val Biro through his website\(^2\), he wrote:

Thank you for your enquiry via my website. Cameron has kindly forwarded your two images of my sketches for the ATROPOS cover. As far as I can remember, they were done by request of Michael Joseph, who were trying to decide which of the two titles to use “The Captain of...” must have been a second thought, hence my more elaborate sketch: whereas “Hornblower and...” was the original title suggestion, hence my more sketchy treatment. In the end the original title got through; quite rightly, I think, since “Hornblower” was the “brand” (though not called by that description in those less commercial times) and it was right to have it in the title, as of all the other books.

I so enjoyed doing the Hornblower jackets (which, incidentally, also helped me to receive wider acknowledgement of my work as a designer); my only sorrow was that I had never got an opportunity to meet Forester himself.

Best regards,
Val Biro

C S Forester rules the Waves

A recent trawl through available CSF titles on eBay resulted in the most unlikely of catches – a trawler itself. A trawler named CS Forester – how unlikely and how heart-warming. We had previously tracked down a horse named Homblower (‘Reflections’ passim), and now a ship named C S Forester.

The vessel (illustrated) is a stern trawler. This type of vessel became common in the 1950s and the design featured the operation of fishing gear from the stern. This is more feasible than side trawling – ‘sidewinders’ – and used space more efficiently; it can be fully mechanised, enabling faster and safer operation of the gear, and better performance in heavy weather.

So, why name the vessel ‘C S Forester’? Recall the housing estates that blossomed in England after the Second World War: the roads might be named Wordsworth Crescent, Shelley Drive if the town-planners felt an interest in the romantic poets; or Ullswater Road and Windermere Avenue if they had recently enjoyed a holiday in the Lake District. Now, the Hull stern trawler belonged to a large and long-established firm named Newington; the C S Forester’s sister ships were named Hammond Innes, Arnold Bennett, James Barrie, Rudyard Kipling, Warwick Deeping (‘Sorrel and Son’) and Hugh Walpole; so it seems likely that Mr Newington was expressing an interest in 20th Century British novelists. Mr Newington clouds the issue slightly with a further trawler named Peter Scott but the ornithologist was also the son of Captain Scott the arctic explorer so maybe that was a trawling family’s method of thanks to another great family.

This ship gets a small ‘s’ as opposed to CSF’s The Ship. But Forester’s name is written so large over maritime history, that it is extraordinarily fitting that our Society has collected this picture of a vessel bearing the name of the man himself.

\(^2\) http://cunninghamh.tripod.com/books/valbiro/valbiro-index.htm
Whitehall Steps revisited
Lawrence Brewer

London was looking her best, as I came out of Westminster tube station: the sun shone on the strolling tourists as they mingled with the City types who hurried past the mother of Parliaments, and across the Thames turned the London Eye. I was seeking the pathway Hornblower took after he climbed Whitehall Steps which are the topographical centre point of the first six chapters of ‘Hornblower and the Atropos’ – whither he takes the wherry from his Deptford lodgings to report to the Admiralty; where he offloads Nelson’s coffin; and where he lands prior to being presented to the Prince Regent.

So I knew about the location of the Steps – near the street ‘Whitehall’ whose name is now synonymous with government, and next to Scotland Yard. But 50 years after Nelson’s funeral, the burgeoning trade which Maria observed as she arrived at the Pool, fuelled by peace and the success of the Industrial Revolution, had resulted in a population so great that London’s river stank of sewage and its population was diminished by cholera; Joseph Bazalgette the great engineer (of Huguenot extraction) built the Victoria Embankment with its massive sewers beneath – and had demolished Whitehall Steps.

I walked down Whitehall to the Admiralty, admiring its frontage designed by Robert Adam in 1788. Here then, Hornblower came to rescue his watch and met with Bracegirdle and ‘Jervie’. In Chapter VI of the ‘Atropos’ we are told that 150 yards lie between the Admiralty and the Steps. Allowing for changes in pathway, street and shoreline I paced out the distance, and found myself at…. the Battle of Britain Memorial. The senior service had given way to the most junior.

I went for a consoling drink on one of those barges moored on the river these days as a ‘drinking platform’ – and suddenly, Whitehall Steps appeared. The tide had gone out, and there after all stood Hornblower’s destination!

I discovered later that Queen Victoria last used old Whitehall Steps in 1849 when she came downstream from Windsor, for the opening of the Coal Exchange. A few years later the new Embankment had fittingly incorporated a set of ceremonial Steps, and - exactly where Hornblower climbed to their top – 100 years later another celebration of the British nation resisting another tyrant was built, for the RAF. So Whitehall Steps still stand, 5 sea miles up river from the ‘George’ at Deptford where Maria gave birth, and five minutes’ walk from the Admiralty and the Court of St James.
I have an original copy of ‘The Times’ dated 10 January 1806, covering Nelson’s funeral. There is a good illustration of the Coffin, and of its ‘Car’ upon which it will have been carried on Hornblower’s barge.
In Greek mythology, Atropos (from Greek Άτροπος, "without turn" or "inevitable") was one of the three Moirae, Goddesses of fate and destiny. Her Roman equivalent was Morta. Atropos was the oldest of the Three Fates, and was known as the "inflexible" or "inevitable." It was Atropos who chose the mechanism of death and ended the life of each mortal by cutting their thread with her "abhorred shears." She worked along with her two sisters Clotho, who spun the thread, and Lachesis, who measured the length. [6]

From another source it is evident that the three Moirae, and especially Atropos are assigned a key role in Greek mythology:

It is said that only Zeus, the King of the Olympian gods, can weigh the lives of men and that it is he who informs the three sisters of his decisions. In that case, the Fates are viewed only as the instrument of Zeus. Others claim that not even Zeus is beyond the power of the Fates and that he is subject to their whim. That would make the Fates the most powerful of all the deities.[7]

The bottom line of the above is that Atropos symbolizes inevitable death. Is it a ship's name? Among the 13000 ships of the Royal Navy [3], the larger part of names from Greek Mythology is represented, from Achilles and Artemis right up to Zephyrus. But the names Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos are not and maybe for good reason. Atropos would do as a name for a weapon of mass destruction, but who would gladly volunteer for a ship called "inevitable death"?

Of course in all of the Hornblower novels, death is always a key ingredient of naval action or at least lurking around the corner. I would even go as far as stating that death as in Fate, Chance or Destiny (and especially their randomness) is one of the author's favorite tools in telling a good story. Some of the more obvious examples of this are found in The Even Chance [8], the metaphor of barnacles growing on driftwood [9] and Randall and the River of Time [10].

In case of Atropos, the storyline as a whole seems covered by all three Fates.

- Clotho, spinning the thread stands for imminent child birth and start of a new life, but also for a new command, his first as a captain.
- Lachesis symbolizes the fact that Hornblower is measured up by the King and burdened with a royal midshipman as a result. But she equally applies to Hornblower himself (as always self-conscious and in doubt about his own capabilities) when he is sized up by his own crew.
- Atropos of course symbolizes the final, always unexpected cut of the thin thread between this world and the next. In Nelson's case the thread measured is the Thames river: inevitable death.
The hangman's rope on re-captured Amelia Jane in a foggy Channel, another thread? - initially it seemed so but it turned out to be a threat. In Marmorice Bay the thread of McCullum's life is not cut: Hornblower forces Dr. Eisenbeiss to save it (and Lachesis measures another one for him). But Atropos has a last verdict: arriving home Hornblower finds his children dying of small-pox. Never in any Hornblower novel was a ship's name more meaningful than in 'Hornblower and the Atropos'.

REFERENCES
2. C.S. Forester, Hornblower once again
4. see http://csforester.eu for a direct link
5. C.S. Forester, the Voyage of the Annie Marble, John Lane The Bodley Head, 1929
8. C.S. Forester, Mr. Midshipman Hornblower, Michael Joseph, London, 1950

REPORT FROM THE AGM
The 2009 Annual General Meeting of the C S Forester Society was held on 8 August in Lechlade-on-Thames, more precisely in Trout Inn at St. John’s Lock. Around noon on a perfectly sunny day, the first attendants started gathering informally on the lawn along the Thames. The AGM started at 3 p.m. and citing the minutes, following decisions were made:

"A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that Ludwig Heuse be Chairman, Jetse Reijenga be Secretary and Lawrie Brewer be Treasurer. It was further agreed that Jetse would act as Editor and Webmaster; and noted that Tony Meyer would consider taking over as Editor within 12 months. In continuing the book-of-the-year system, 2010 would focus on Mr Midshipman Hornblower, with subsequent years pursuing Hornblower’s career in chronological order. Next meeting would take place in Portsmouth on 25 September 2010, this to be announced in Reflections 15."

At 4 p.m. the public part of the meeting started: “a reading of parts of Chapters I and II of Hornblower and the Atropos, describing his voyage on the Thames & Severn Canal in December 1805”. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Cotswold Canal Trust and the Lechlade History Society.

After this meeting, Society members took a boat trip from St. John’s Lock to the round tower at the place where the Thames & Severn Canal meets the river Thames. The vessel was the 27 feet Genevieve, which has served already to follow Hornblower’s escape route down the Loire in 1811 in “Flying Colours”. Dinner in Trout Inn concluded the meeting. The meal served was Steak and Kidney pie, as served by Captain Pellew in HMS Tonnant in “Hornblower and the Hotspur”.

A magnificent pie was revealed. The pastry top was built up into a castle, from the turret of which flew a paper Union Jack. "Prodigious!" exclaimed Cornwallis. “Sir Edward, what lies below the dungeons here?”. Pellew shook his head sadly. Our ship's bullock this time, as ever, was too tough for ordinary mortals, and only stewing would reduce his steaks to digestibility. So I called in the aid of his kidneys for a beefsteak and kidney pie."
Atropos sources, facts & fiction
Jetse Reijenga

Forester's research for his novels was unique in many respects: The author during his life time is reputed to have read innumerable libraries rather than innumerable books. He had a good memory for historical facts and a vivid imagination in weaving facts and fiction into a compelling story. And he never mentioned his sources. Hornblower and the Atropos however seems to be the only exception. In The Hornblower Companion we read about Marmorice Bay:

Leaving fantasy aside, it is worth noting that Marmorice Bay had actually been the anchorage of the fleet and convoy when Keith was assembling his forces for the conquest of Egypt in 1801, and a good deal of curious information can be gleaned from the Keith papers written at that period. Fact can frequently rival fiction.[1]

The last sentence is of course an understatement of what we already know. The former sounds like a generous acknowledgment, which made me suspicious.

George Keith Elphinstone, 1st Viscount Keith (7 January 1746 – 10 March 1823) was a British admiral active throughout the Napoleonic Wars. At the close of 1798 he was sent as second in command to St Vincent. He returned to the Mediterranean in November 1799 as commander-in-chief. He co-operated with the Austrians in the siege of Genoa, which surrendered on the 4th of June 1800. The beginning of the following year was spent in transporting the army sent to recover Egypt from the French. As the naval force of the enemy was completely driven into port, the British admiral had no opportunity of an action at sea, but his management of the convoy carrying the troops, and of the landing at Aboukir, was greatly admired.[2]

The mention of Keith and the conquest of Egypt however makes it possible to exactly pinpoint the volume and page in the Naval Chronicles. In fact, we now know which volume of the Naval Chronicles Forester took along on his first Annie Marble boat trip on the Loire river in 1928. It was Volume 5 (January-July 1801), because on page 436 we can read one of Keith's Gazette Letters:

Copy of a letter from Admiral Lord Keith, K.B. Commander in Chief of his Majesty's skips and vessels in the Mediterranean to Evan Nepean, Esq. dated on board the Foudreyant, in the Bay of Aboukir, 10th of March (1801).

Sir, my dispatches of the 22nd ult. by the Speedwell, will have acquainted you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the armament on that day quitted the harbour of Marmarice for this place, which the whole fleet reached on the 2nd instant, the Turkish gun boats and kaicks excepted, all of which bore up, by night, for Maeri, Cyprus, and other ports, during the prevalence of strong westerly gales that we encountered on the passage..........[3]

Facts rival fiction indeed: Speedwell did not sink with cash: it sailed with dispatches! Speedwell was a 16 gun
lugger, Lieutenant Tomlinson. And what was in these dispatches? On p. 437 we read:

A Dispatch...........from General Sir Ralph Abercromby K.B. Commander in Chief of his Majesty's troops serving in the Mediterranean.

Sir, although it was not originally my intention to have commenced the operations of the British army in Egypt on the side of Alexandria, yet circumstances arose which induced me to change my opinion. We were much longer delayed on the coast of Asia Minor, than we had at first any reason to apprehend: and we were ultimately obliged to sail from Marmarice in a very imperfect state of preparation. I am fully sensible of the exertions of his Majesty's Ambassador at the Ottoman Porte, as well as of the Quarter-Master-General, and the other Officers who were sent forward to provide for the necessities of the army. Our delays originated from other causes. For a considerable time previous to our sailing, the weather was extremely boisterous, and the winds contrary. The moment that it became practicable to sail with so large a fleet, Lord Keith put to sea; we left Marmarice on the 22d of February, and came in sight of Alexandria on the 1st of March. On the 2d, the fleet anchored in Aboukir Bay. Until the 7th the sea ran high, and no disembarkation could be effected....[3]

Now this is interesting: the General uses twice the excuse of wind and sea for the delay while in fact it would have been supply problems (exertions to provide the necessities of the army...). Naval necessities are not mentioned and one wonders who these "other officers" were. Providing ship's supplies on a hostile-neutral Mediterranean coast was featured in numerous other Hornblower novels, in particular Mr. Midshipman Hornblower. While Forester mentions "a good deal of curious information" on Marmorice Bay, none is found in the corresponding volume of the Naval Chronicle (nor in the other ones between 1800 and 1805). What is found elsewhere in the January-July 1801 volume is the following:

On board of one of the last captures made by Lord Keith, there were found some valuable charts of the coasts of Egypt, and the sounding of the port of Alexandria, the Inner harbour of which the Turks would never permit European vessels to enter. It was concluded that this harbour was shallow: and this deception led the French Admiral Brueys to seek for shelter at Aboukir, after landing his troops. It appears by the French drawings that this Inner Harbour of Alexandria is one of the finest and safest ports in the world, having thirty-two feet of water and the entrance which is narrow, is defended by impenetrable batteries. The Charts are now engraving in London.[3]

Again Forester is creative in misleading us about his sources. He did have an historical one (or rather he hints at one), but it was on the wrong location: the waters off Alexandria were unsuitable for the purpose of the Atropos adventure which he had in mind. Marmorice Bay was. Facts were again useful to enhance fiction, provided they are properly moulded first, but we have learned to trust Forester to do that for us.

REFERENCES
2. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Keith_Elphinstone
3. The Naval Chronicle, Volume 5, January-July 1801

Volumes 1-38 of the Naval Chronicle are available on the internet as searchable PDF files. A direct link can be found on the website of the Society
http://csforester.eu

Marmorice Bay in 1801
by Elliot Woolford

Elliot Woolford (1778-1877) was a landscape painter and architect. He entered the army at the age of 19. Because of his ability as an artist he came to the attention of his commanding officer, the 9th Earl of Dalhousie. When the regiment took part in the British expedition to Egypt in 1801, Lord Dalhousie commissioned Woolford to make a pictorial record of the campaign. The Egyptian Album marked Woolford's entry into the artistic sphere. Woolford later emigrated to Canada to continue work for Lord Dalhousie, Governor General of Canada from 1820.

This and similar paintings:
http://cybermuse.gallery.ca/cybermuse/search/artwork_e.jsp?mkey=22893
WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS
Since 2008, following members have joined the Society: Dick Kooyman (Australia), John Turfboer, Marlieke de Vos, Erik Abbenhuis and Dirk Scholten (Netherlands), Kai Svensson (Norway), Carl-Gustav Johnson (Sweden), John Muir, John Wallace and Malcolm MacKenzie (UK), Donald Fisher and John Lovett (USA), George Jovan and Tony Sees.

CORRESPONDENCE
The web form on the C S Forester Society web site http://csforester.eu generates more and more correspondence (and new members!). Three questions received the same answer:

Hello,
I produce a weekly audio series called The Classic Tales Podcast. I read classic short fiction, and my archived episodes are released by Audible.com as audiobooks. Currently, my version of Poe's Tell Tale Heart is the #2 audiobook at the iTunes music store. I would like to record some of the Horatio Hornblower novels, and perhaps release some of the shorter stories, such as those found in Mr. Midshipman Hornblower, as podcast episodes. I am trying to track down the copyright holder for Forester's works, so that I can bring his stories to an even broader audience. If you could point me in the right direction, I would be very much obliged.
Thank You, B.J. Harrison (Hong Kong)

We're a young publishing house from Porto, Portugal (http://fio-da-palavra.pt/). Could you let us know who detains the rights for C. S. Forester books?
Maria Castro (Portugal)

Dear C S Forester Society, I publish in Hong Kong a monthly magazine for local secondary school that is designed to encourage students to enjoy their reading of English. The magazine is called the Typhoon Club (www.typhoonclub.com). We have recently been looking at including comic versions of stories as comics are so popular here in Asia. Whilst we already produce our own comic strips, I would really like to adapt the C.S. Forester thriller, Plain Murder, into a comic strip/comic novel. I wrote to Penguin about the rights to do this but they are unable to help. I am now scratching my head wondering who I can speak to and write to ask if you may be able to point me in the right direction. Plain Murder was one of my favourites as a boy and I've recently re-read it and introduced it to my children. I'd be delighted if you could help move this project forward.
Best wishes, Mark Cowley

Editor:
The copyright of the estate of C.S. Forester is held by Peters Fraser and Dunlop, http://www.pfd.co.uk/

Dear Editor,
I just joined the Society and I look with interest at all the information and issues of Reflections. Nr. 9 mentions Novelist & Storyteller, a Biography written by his son. My uncle in California, knowing of my interest in Forester (and in biographies of authors!) sent me a copy of this book. I must say I dislike it very much and I think it would be a fitting task for your Society to see to it that a decent biography of Forester is published.
Best wishes, Kai Svensson (Norway)

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ISSN NUMBER FOR REFLECTIONS
An ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) was applied for at British Library. The number assigned to Reflections is ISSN 2042-1389 and this is valid for both the paper version as for the electronic version on our web site.

This Edition's cover illustration: The Triumph of Death, or The 3 Fates. Flemish Tapestry (probably Brussels, ca. 1510-1520), Victoria and Albert Museum, London.