

C S FORESTER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Produced and edited by Dr C E Blogg for the C S Forester Society

Please send any contributions you wish to be included in the Newsletter by post or e-mail admin@csforester.org

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'HORNBLOWER' (HH3) 'NAPOLEONIC NAUTICAL NONSENSE'

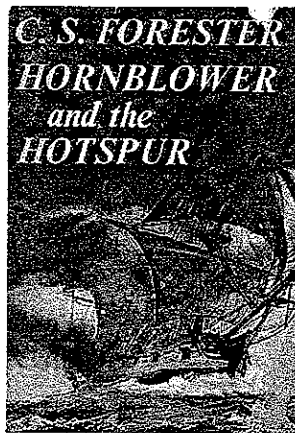
The third TV series of 'Hornblower' was shown on 6th/7th January 2003. The critics seemed to like Hornblower (HH3), especially as they could poke fun at the two episodes, loosely based on *Hornblower and the Hotspur*. Paul Hoggart found that the episodes were charmingly unsophisticated and the ratings "just that bit too clean", noting that they remained "salty hearts of oak, Jolly Jack Tars", even after an unjust flogging. He has little praise for the episodes, but admits that there is "something charmingly unsophisticated" about the drama.

The strong cast is headed by Ioan Gruffud, Paul McGann and Greg Wise. This was really a bit unfair on any other dramas needing a handsome lead. There was "much running and shooting and keeping a straight face", (Guardian, 6.1.03).

It was all about loyalty, really. Styles could be flogged and yet not condemn his Captain for the unjust punishment. Hornblower makes up for it by carefully staging an escape for Styles' successor as personal steward when condemned to death by hanging. Martin James in *The Sunday Times* includes Lorcan Cranitch and

Robert Lindsay in the strong crew. Julia Sawalha (Maria) persuades Hornblower to commit matrimony. Nevertheless, Hornblower's loyalties die with the Royal Navy and not beside his landlady's daughter. "Fine bracing entertainment with an excellent cast" - *Daily Telegraph*. "It's all terrific stuff, full of derring-do" - *Alison Graham, Radio Times*.

Colin Blogg



A&E website interviews with the cast of HH3

Ioan Gruffudd thinks that the two previous series were brilliant and he was very excited to be back filming the new series.

He was full of praise for Andrew Gieve, the Director. It was different filming on a set instead of having a real ship, but it allowed special effects to be used, which made it look much better. They were not able just to 'do the books', as some things were not possible and any changes had to be agreed. Friendships made from the first series helped new actors coming in to the series. It helped that they had, unusually, spent six months together. Ioan Gruffudd admitted to having read all the books and

liking *Hornblower and the Hotspur* the most. He was overwhelmed by the interest on the internet and is flattered by the whole thing. He was grateful for the devotion because it brought more people to Hornblower and probably to reading the books. He was keen to do more Hornblower films. The films touched their audience because of the interest in the account of what had actually happened. His favourite episode was *The Frogs and the Lobsters*. He felt that Hornblower's personality was very cerebral, compassionate and loyal. By instilling confidence, he got people to do things they didn't necessary want to do.

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Special points of interest

- **Next meeting** will be on Saturday 12th April at **The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich** at 11.30 am
- Can you help? Please see Letters, page 2
- Quiz on the Flawed Biography, page 4
- John Forester's E-mail, page 4
- See insert for details and booking form for **courses at Greenwich 21/22 March 2003**

BOOK FAIRS

P.B.F.A. Summer International Fairs

Sunday 1st/Monday 2nd June,
Hotel Russell, Russell Square,
London WC1

Friday 6th/Saturday 7th June,
Commonwealth Institute, Ken-
sington High Street, London

Title Page Book Fairs

Sundays 27th April, 22nd June,
St Peter's School, Horseshoe
Lane East, Mellow,
GUILDFORD, 10-3.30

Sundays 23rd February, The
Ravensbourne School, Hayes
Lane, BROMLEY, Kent, 10-3.30

Saturdays 1st March, 7th June,
All Saints' Church Institute, High
Street, BANSTEAD, Surrey,
9.15-3.30

LETTERS

From Steve Carroll

I have some letters from CSF to a person in Farnborough, Hants, ref the Hornblower books. Are they worth selling?

Editor's reply

It is difficult to say. If they are just impersonal business mail, you may get £20-50 for each signature. Anything new and revealing would probably fetch more. Take them to Christie's or Mailams and ask for their expert advice. Good luck! Let me know if we can help.

From Junko Salmon,
salmon@nsuok.edu

I am trying to buy audio cassettes of 'Midshipman Hornblower', read by Joan Gruffud. The cassettes are, I was told, no longer available. I am willing to buy used cassettes. Would you be able to help?

Editor's reply

I was not aware that the cassettes are no longer available. If any members can help, would they kindly contact Junko Salmon direct.

'PAYMENT DEFERRED' CALLED UP AND DEMOBBED

Bibliography is not the dry subject it might appear to the uninitiated, nor is it simply a matter of collecting rarities, often at inflated prices, and keeping the previous volumes in glass-fronted cases. For books themselves tell stories, just like their authors, and everything turns out to be grist to the mill. Take my copy of *Payment Deferred*. I picked it up for 20p from a car-boot sale. It hardly looks a bargain with a corner roughly torn off its faded red cover, with its dog-eared pages and with a pair of rusting staples that crudely hold the book together. Finding an earlier price of just 10p scrawled in ball-point on the title page made my purchase seem even less judicious. But then I looked more closely.

Before finding, so to speak, his sea-legs with Hornblower, C S Forester tried his hand in a number of literary forms. First published in 1926, *Payment Deferred* was reprinted in 1934 and 1941, which is testimony to quite a degree of success. (See Martin Edward's article "C S Forester in Crime Fiction" in *Reflections 2* (November 2002, pp.3-5.) In 1944 came the call for yet another edition, to which my unprepossessing copy belongs. It was presented as "Guild Books No. S111" and was published by John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., London, for the British Publishers Guild. The printing, on 144 pages, was undertaken by the Amalgamated Printing Works, London SE1.

As the title page notes, this is a "Services Edition". That laconic designation is fleshed out on the back page of the paper cover.

"This Edition is produced for the SERVICES CENTRAL BOOK DEPOT, Artillery House, Handel Street, London WC1, for circulation to the FIGHTING FORCES OF THE ALLIED NATIONS

At the foot is this stipulation:

THIS BOOK MUST NOT BE RESOLD

The intention, then, is clear, and the thought that as World War II worked up to its climax English-speaking troops might beguile tedium by reading, among other things, *Payment Deferred*, is pleasing, though the story was, of course, anything but Forester's major contribution to keeping up morale.

In war things do not, however, always go with the proverbial efficiency of a military operation, not even, it appears, in publishing. Either demand had been estimated too optimistically or distribution was not efficient enough. The front cover of my copy of *Payment Deferred* bears a sticker that runs:

The surplus Government stock of this edition has been purchased by W H Smith & Son Ltd for sale at 1/- THE BRITISH PUBLISHERS GUILD LTD.

Readers who recall the post-war era have memory of the often incongruous bargains available at 'Government Surplus Stores' at a time when many things were still in short supply. So, even though it may be that *Payment Deferred* was not to pass into the hands of so many service-men as was anticipated, this reprinting may still have served a function by helping to bring Forester's twenty-year-old detective story to the public.

Christopher Smith

From the Auction Rooms

Following the withdrawal from Christie's Auction of the eight manuscripts, four of short stories and the photocopies MSS of two novels by CSF, they were offered again and sold for a more reasonable price. The literary executors for CSF have agreed to their publication on a limited edition, non-profit basis, which we hope to be able to do shortly.

More A&E website interviews

Jamie Bamber (Kennedy): The second series portrays the power struggle when the captain goes mad and has to be relieved of his duties. The situation results from the captain by-passing the officers and attempting to run the ship directly—whilst thinking the officers are being punished ineffectively. The punishment ordered by Captain Sawyer included extended night watches, requiring night-time filming. He thought that the attraction of the series was the combination of good stories, told well, nice actors and the romantic attraction of the sea.

Philip Glenister (Hobbs): Glenister thought that the relationship between Hobbs and Wellard was one of bully

and victim. The bond of serving Captain Sawyer for many years persuades Hobbs not to join the mutineers and to stay with his Captain. Hobbs is more than a one-dimensional character. "He develops from a nasty bully eventually into a stronger, wiser and better person for it". He found the tunnel scenes very spooky and the relationship between Sawyer and Hobbs to be strong, as with father and son. Ultimately Hobbs is a good sailor and a good gunner. He takes orders only from Sawyer, but has a grudging respect for Hornblower. He felt that Sawyer's problems resulted from ageing and not knowing when to step down. Glenister enjoyed working with the director, Andrew Gieve, who was very good at the action stuff and with the actors.

Flawed Biography

Found by Adrian Taylor in 'Twentieth Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary', edited by Stanel J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, New York, 1946

"Forester, Cecil Scott (August 27, 1899-), English novelist and miscellaneous writer, was born in Cairo, Egypt, the son of George Forester and Sarah (Troughton) Forester. He saw Corsica, Spain and France before spending his boyhood in a busy London suburb, with all its 'bustle and jollity of life'. From 1910 to 1917 young Forester was in the lower school of Dulwich College, then attended the college itself. For a time he studied medicine at Guy's Hospital, but a number of reasons, 'laziness and indiscipline' among them, impelled him, like Somerset Maugham and A J Cronin, to forsake medicine for a career as a writer. Some verse contributed in 1917 to 'Nash's' and 'The English Review' has never been collected.

With 'Payment Deferred', a painfully gripping study of the disintegration of the mind of a murderer, Mr Forester made an auspicious entry into the writing of prose-fiction. Dramatized, the book also firmly established the reputation of Charles Laughton, who repeated the impersonation in New York on the stage and, soon after, in the talking pictures. In 1926, the year of the publication of 'Payment Deferred', Mr Forester married Katherine Belcher (they have two sons) and went voyaging on the 'Annie Marble', a punt-built dinghy 15' long and 5' wide at its widest point, which was

named after a character in the thriller. They explored the backwaters of Germany, France and England. The first log of the journey, published in 1929, was followed next year by 'The Annie Marble in Germany'. 'The Gun' (1933), which was a novel of the Peninsular War, anticipated Mr Forester's later triumphant career as an historical novelist. 'The General' (1936), a dispassionate study of the mentality and behaviour of some of the higher command in the 1st World War, had an inexplicably—for the author—large sale in Germany, until he discovered that it was regarded by the Nazis as a sublime deification of the militaristic spirit.

Mr Forester, who chooses to regard himself as a newspaperman who writes novels, rather than a novelist who occasionally takes foreign assignments for 'The Times', was a correspondent in Spain in 1936-37 and covered Prague during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. In 1937 'The Happy Return', soon followed by 'Flying Colours' and 'A Ship of the Line', inaugurated the appearance of Captain Horatio Hornblower in the gallery of British romantic heroes of fiction. Combining the prowess of a Marryat character with the psychological complexity of a Conrad sea captain

Flawed Biography (Continued)

Captain, Hornblower won his creator the James Tait Black Memorial prize for literature. The Book Society of England the Book of the Month Club in the United States (which names the trilogy 'Captain Horatio Hornblower') sent the work in its entirety to their subscribers. The New York Times praised the book's 'fine forthright prose and careful anti-quearianism'. William McFee commented that Mr Forester 'writes as if nobody had ever written a tale before'. One of his critics thought some of Hornblower's mannerisms and obsessions too insistently pointed up. The novelist wrote a play, 'Nurse Cavell', with C E Bechhofer Roberts in 1943 and has spent some time in Hollywood, a place which he violently dislikes. Most recently he has been living in Berkeley, Calif.

Physically Mr Forester is slightly built; weighs about 135 pounds; and has a pleasant, low-pitched voice that 'could be easily drowned out by one small bellow from Captain Horatio Hornblower according to Anne Ford. Retiring by nature, he makes no pose of undue seclusiveness and willingly goes through the expected interviews and public appearances. He claims to be the fastest eater in the British Isles."

Please send any contributions you wish to be included in the Newsletter by post or e-mail admin@csforester.org

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QUIZ

The task is to find at least 7 mistakes in the Flawed Biography:

1. Died Saturday 2nd April 1966
2. Son of George Foster Smith and Sarah Medhurst Troughton
3. In Alleyn's School before transferring to the upper school of Dulwich College
4. Not like Somerset Maugham and A J Cronin who qualified in medicine (indeed A J Cronin was in practice for several years) - more like James Joyce who abandoned medicine also as a medical student "and thereby saved more lives than if he had qualified"
5. Only the Voyage of the Annie Marble and The Annie Marble in Germany were carried out in *The Annie Marble*
6. I cannot find a reference to CSF regarding himself as a newspaperman—indeed he is rather cagey about any aspect of what he did then
7. C E Bechhofer Roberts
8. Nurse Cavell was published in 1933
9. I expect there are several more points which need corrections, eg, contrast the suggested height given here to the physical characteristics compared to those given in Newsletter #8

A LIFE BEFORE THE MAST

Peter de Lorient's response to John Forester (#9)

Some of my favourite childhood books were the C S Forester 'Hornblower' yarns. I was hooked on them and continued to read these over and over again. I, like many of my fellow Hornblower addicts of the same age, felt the pain and the triumph of the young midshipman and his ensuing career... I sometimes would have to cajole my mother (who had pinched my cherished tomes for her own use) to return them so I could once again delve into 'Hornblower'. I was also a huge addict of his other stories, such as *The Gun*, *The General*, *The Good Shepherd* and others. All these books I still have and cherish.

I was asked by one of the publications I occasionally write for, to write about one of the 'past residents' of south London. I thought that C S Forester would be perfect. It would give me a wonderful buzz to find out more about the man behind my 'hero'. My first port of call was to contact Dulwich College archives, who were extremely happy to oblige. They sent me several photocopies of letters, press cuttings, school valettes, obituaries and excerpts of his autobiography 'Long before Forty', together with photocopies of some internet correspondence and your book.

Some of the information seems to have come from your book as the author of the internet message says as much. C S Forester's height came from an undated and unsigned photocopy of one of his contemporaries' reminiscences.

Yes he did indeed go to the recruiting office before he was old enough for service. This was for a medical examination and attestation—he would shortly afterwards be told that he had a heart condition and was thus ineligible.

The cardboard cut-out model of a Nelsonic warship is indeed mentioned in some of the correspondence, as are the boxes.

The implication that Alleyn's School did not have a dress code is not an implication whatsoever. I was trying to convey what CSF said in his autobiography that Dulwich College was a 'Public School, a Real school... I had a new language to learn, and new conventions... Many of the school rules were enforced not by Authority, but by the boys themselves...' (pp.67-8). Trying to convey the terror, the new, almost harsh, discipline of the students of this school is easily conveyed in the above lines (to col. 3)

THE INSPIRATION FOR EAGLE SQUADRON

Email from John Forester to the Editor

The short story *Eagle Squadron* was the base for a film, but was republished after CSF's death in the collection *Gold From Crete* and concerns an American pilot in the RAF, flying spitfires of course, who is given the task of being the star player in a commando raid on a Luftwaffe airfield in Belgium with the purpose of stealing one of the newest Messerschmitt models.

Here's a bit from the latest *Flight Journal* (listed as Feb.2003), concerning the RAF's 1426 Captured Enemy Aircraft Flight. On June 23, 1942, a German pilot, Armin Faber, thinking that crossing the Bristol Channel had taken him across the real Channel to Cherbourg, landed an Fw 190-A3 at an RAF field. That was a plane that the RAF wanted to know about and had planned to capture by force before this happenstance. Here is what *Flight Journal* says: "Faber's arrival was particularly gratifying, since the RAF, being eager to acquire one of these aircraft, was in the process of planning a snatch operation known as Operation Airthief at an airfield on the French coast. The operation was to take place in July 1942; Supermarine test pilot Jeffrey Quill was to be landed, steal an Fw 190 and fly it home. Luckily, Oberleutnant Faber saved them the trouble."

written by the master storyteller.

The little I discovered about the various facets of CSF has made me appreciate his books and their author even more. His autobiography and biography give yet another insight into what drove the man behind the books, but he still remains a mystery—had he been totally open about himself, I would have nothing more to add.

Whilst I make every effort to find every source available, in the short time I am given to make a contribution to a local magazine, it would take a lifetime to evaluate secondary sources for their veracity and their accuracy. If I am to be negatively criticized—it is indeed for neglecting to cite my sources in this instance.