

# 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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## FIVE YEARS ON

Five years since we began!

We have survived and evolved for longer than an American presidency or the duration of a British parliament.

What have we achieved in that time?

There have been two or three meetings in England each year, ranging in location from 'the dreaming spires' of Oxford, to the pub, handily sited beside the Sapperton Tunnel. We have tramped through various museums, read plays in upper rooms of pubs and are now planning visits to the naval museums and exhibits relevant to C S Forester, in both Portsmouth and Bristol. Who could ever forget the amazing highlights of some of the meetings—the late John Perrott play reading so brilliantly U97 in a high falsetto or the grandeur of HMS Belfast in her magnificent setting in the pool of London?

We have published fourteen Newsletters, seven volumes of the literary review, established a library and a website. We hope soon to be able to publish stories that have previously been unpublished. All these have been supported by contributions from members, lively and informed correspondence and have included many letters seeking information from non-members, ranging from advice on the buying of books to C S Forester's diet.

The AGM and meeting in Portsmouth on Sunday 9th May are approaching fast, at which I shall stand down from the Chairmanship. It is time for new ideas as well as development of what is good. Nominations are invited so that someone else can have the fun.

Colin Blogg

## THE AFRICAN QUEEN LILY

I came across *African Queen*—*Phygelius* and planted it in a large tub against a south-facing wall last year. It produced many dusky deep pink trumpet-shaped blooms from June to September. I have moved house and *African Queen* has kindly followed, now planted in a border and thriving—60 cm spread and still growing up to 1 metre in height. *Phygelius x Rectus African Queen*: Flower bright orange red + yellow mouths; calyx green flushed bronze; petals barely reflexed. Delightful.

Mentioning this to Pat Millard, she helped me discover a lily also named *African Queen*. Whether or not these refer to the CSF book, or to the film, or quite simply

to the beauties of Africa, is not known to me. Is there a member who knows about plant origins? The lily classification is *Lilium African Queen (Aurelian Hybrid)*. Vigorous, flowering mid-late summer. Fragrant outward facing to nodding. Browning-purple outside, apricot-melon shades inside blooms. Very colourfast and sturdy in even the hottest climates. I planted six specimens and they achieved a dozen stunning blooms, with a scent heady enough for Rosie and Charlie.

I obtained both plants from Geoff Soulsby, at Hiller's Garden Centre near Alcester, tel. 01789 491342.

Lawrie Brewer

### Inside this issue:

<i>CSF and the British Intelligence Services</i>	2
"...there can be no love without respect..."	2
<i>Bookseller of the Month—Tall Ships Books</i>	3
<i>C S Forester Society Library</i>	3
<i>New CSF Story + medical explanation</i>	4
<i>Correspondence</i>	4

### Special points of interest:

- Next meeting Sunday 9th May in Portsmouth—see enclosed booking form
- Note Saturday 4th October, meeting in Bristol— see page 2
- Can you contribute to the Newsletter?
- A visit to the cinema to see Master and Commander, starring Russell Crowe, is well worth the effort

## C S FORESTER SOCIETY MEETING IN PORTSMOUTH

Sunday 9th May, organised by Captain John Roberts and Captain Don Beadle

10.30-11.00	Meeting of the Society in the Princess Royal Gallery
11.00-12.00	Talk by Admiral Richard Hill, Naval historian and writer, on 'Hornblower and Prize Money', followed by lunch in the Gallery
Afternoon	Visits to HMS Victory, HMS Warrior, the Mary Rose, Nelson Experience, Action Stations, as required

Booking form enclosed with Newsletter

## C S FORESTER AND THE BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICE (BIS)

### Next Meetings of the Society

**Sunday 9th May**  
organised by **Captain John Roberts and Captain Don Beadle**

Talk, lunch, visits to **HMS Victory, HMS Warrior, Mary Rose, etc.**  
Further details on page 1, and booking form enclosed with Newsletter.

**Saturday 4th October** organised by **John Dobson**

Lunch, followed by a tour of **ss Great Britain** in the **Great Western Dock** in **Bristol**. Built after the **Hornblower** era, but **I. K. Brunel** conceived her as a six-masted sailing ship with power assistance, which is sure to be of interest to members of the **Society**. More details to follow.

**Note the dates and make the most of the superb opportunities!**  
**We shall look forward to seeing you there**

CSF kept several aspects of his life secret or embellished. In his autobiography (*Long Before Forty*, published posthumously in 1967 by both Michael Joseph and Little, Brown and Co.) he set up a partially fictional account of his early life. Latterly the biography published privately by his son, John, (*C S Forester Novelist and Storyteller*, 2000) has given a closer view of the truth, based on personal recollections and more than 1400 letters to Kitty Belcher (CSF's first wife) and to Frances Phillips, one of his mistresses. Even when these additional biographical sources are considered, there are major gaps in what has reached the public domain.

For instance, there is very little first-hand record of his time at Guy's Hospital in London as a medical student, as an office worker in the 1930s, war correspondent in the Spanish Civil War, the time spent in the USA when England was at war with Germany. CSF explained his virtual silence about his wartime activities by his need to maintain secrecy. Surprisingly, he does not even mention his illustrious colleagues at the BIS. For example, Isaiah Berlin was also employed at the BIS from late 1939 but, despite CSF's penchant for name-dropping, Berlin is not mentioned in any subsequent biographical archival material that I have seen.

Indeed, there is very little published material to find relevant to his time at the

BIS and I have only a copy of the first volume of a small journal, 70 pages long, of various pro-British articles (*Britain Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1942*). CSF's contribution was a nice story about testing the readiness of a repaired Royal Naval cruiser to withstand the rigours of warfare at sea. Other authors included Sir John Masefield, Walter de la Mare, Rose Macaulay, Dorothy L. Sayers, etc. It would be fascinating to know if there are more editions in the BIS library.

Examples of his writing at that time are scarce. He did not publish any Hornblower books during the war, even though Hornblower short stories were occasionally published in magazines such as *Collier's Magazine*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Argosy*, etc., and subsequently bound together as novels.

CSF wrote (6th September 1939) to Hugh Walpole seeking support for his wish to write propaganda, that he had 'some reputation as a journalist and novelist'. Presumably his journalistic credentials refer to his time spent as a correspondent in the Spanish Civil War. There is otherwise no account in his biography of his time in Spain.

We look forward to learning more from the BIS.

Colin Blogg

### "...there can be no love without respect..."

I see from the December newsletter that you are trying to locate the source of the quotation: "...there can be no love without respect and no love without a twinkle of amusement..."

This line appears in *Hornblower in the West Indies*, about two-thirds of the way through the last chapter, entitled "The Hurricane", and is one of Hornblower's thoughts just after his wife, Barbara, asks him to give her £200 (ostensibly to settle gambling debts, but in reality to...well, I won't tell you what exactly, in case you haven't read the book—I would hate to spoil the plot for you!).

The whole paragraph reads:

"Perhaps on the voyage home they would have a few hands of piquet—if Barbara had any fault at all it was a tendency to discard a little thoughtlessly when playing the younger hand, and he could give a little unobtrusive advice. And there was a smug pleasure, and a tender pleasure, in the thought of Barbara not caring to admit, to a husband who notoriously won, that she had lost at cards. The deep respect he felt for her was accompanied (as the flavour of a beef steak may be accompanied by that of mustard) by the knowledge that she was still human. Hornblower knew that there can be no love without respect—and no love without a twinkle of amusement as well."

Sue Forbes

## BOOKSELLER OF THE MONTH TALL SHIPS BOOKS

I have never been to the Tall Ships Bookshop in Monticello, Indiana. Indeed I suspect it may only exist in virtuality—that new internet fantasy world. If it does indeed exist I could imagine an old clapboard house, filled to overflowing with old and new books, ships' models, discarded bits of naval gear and the odd ship's cat or two.

George and Amy Jepson run Tall Ships and publish a regular newsletter, *Bowsprit*, which is a goldmine of relevant information on the books and authors relating to the sea. George Jepson contributes a whimsical editorial: "By George!" This month he describes a visit to the English house of Alexander Kent/Richard and Adam Bolitho/Douglas Reeman. Every edition of the newsletter contains a reported interview with a selected author. They are asked: "What inspired you to write...?" And you would not be surprised to find how many current authors began by reading *Hornblower*. Among the latest are Des Pawson (an expert on knots), Joseph L. O'Steen (a novelist) and Paul Garnett (an historian). Tall Ships Books covers far more than naval fiction, since there are sections devoted to naval history, collectible and used editions. Submarines are listed separately! New books are generously reviewed, together with pictures of the author and the dust jacket. Curiosities are included, for instance *Jane Austen and the Navy*, by Brian Southam who of Jane Austen's brothers became

Admirals). Naval prints are advertised too. Other pieces of useful information include the publishing schedule of books soon to be published.

The books in print are listed in an extension document several times each year, including reference numbers and prices, to make it easy to buy the books (20 C S Forester books in print). A typical mini-review is as follows: C S Forester *Nelson 1756-1805* ...Competent account of Nelson's life really scores when the novelist's imagination is brought to bear on Nelson's often mysterious motivation. A significant interest in the book is its probable influence on the *Hornblower* novels. Not only is the background information necessary for the biography to be found throughout the novels, but aspects of the character of the fictional Horatio can be glimpsed in Forester's view of the real-life officer. Hardcover \$34.00.

An order form is included. *Bowsprit* is published monthly by Tall Ships Books, PO Box 188, Monticello, IA 52310-0188, USA. Email: [books@tallshipsbooks.com](mailto:books@tallshipsbooks.com). Website: [www.tallshipsbooks.com](http://www.tallshipsbooks.com). You need Adobe 6 to download their catalogue, but they will download Adobe for you, free of charge.

Are they efficient? Yes. Books are dispatched promptly, beautifully wrapped and they follow through if you have any queries. All in all, a model bookseller.

Colin Blogg

**The Writer's Handbook 2004**  
Published by  
Macmillan  
Available 29th  
February 2004

Over 5,500 entries, giving full details of all aspects of writing. Includes lists of all literary societies as well as practical help, eg. coping with the Inland Revenue, writing for radio, the latest on agents, contracts, royalties, copyright, etc. Price £10.99.

**MASTER AND COMMANDER**  
Set during the Napoleonic Wars, Jack Aubrey is the Captain of the HMS Surprise. When a powerful enemy unexpectedly attacks his ship, leaving much of the crew injured and the vessel badly damaged, Aubrey makes a bold decision to set sail across two oceans to intercept and capture their foe. Russell Crowe and Billy Boyd star in this high seas adventure. Based on the book by Patrick O'Brian, but still very much worth seeing.

## C S FORESTER SOCIETY LIBRARY

These books are reading copies and are kept for that purpose. Borrowers will be required to pay postage and packing and an appropriate refundable deposit.

### From the library of Douglas DeVoe

The Captain from Connecticut  
Captain Horatio Hornblower  
I Beat to Quarters II Ship of the Line III Flying Colours  
Mr Midshipman Hornblower  
Commodore Hornblower  
Lord Hornblower  
The Gun—paperback  
Plain Murder—paperback  
Rifeman Dodd—paperback  
The African Queen—paperback

The Ship—paperback  
The Captain from Connecticut  
The Good Shepherd  
Eine Bootsfahrt in Deutschland (in German)

### C S Forester Society Library

Payment Deferred  
The General  
Randall and the River of Time  
Flying Colours, including A Ship of the Line  
Death to the French  
The Nightmare  
The Earthly Paradise  
Captain Hornblower RN  
Horatio Hornblower  
Lieutenant Hornblower  
The Ship—from Barnes and Noble

CEB

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## A NEW CSF STORY AND A MEDICAL EXPLANATION

On Ebay last week I saw a book for sale with a Forester story in it, and bought it on the offchance...The book was a Pan paperback, *Journeys into the Macabre*, printed 1974, a paperback version of a hardback, 1972, W H Allan & Co, entitled *The Lucifer Society*. The editor, Peter Haining, had spent a lot of time rooting in attics, picking up short horror stories. They are all short, and not very good to my mind, not even the one by Winston Churchill. But I had not seen the CSF story before. **Ken Mackenzie**

What a find! I had not come across this story before and I believe the CSF archive in Austin does not have the manuscript. It is a nicely formed story with a vicious twist in the tail, typical of the early Forester stories.

My thoughts as I read it, with a fair bit of medical knowledge, was that a possible cause of his 'Thing's' malady was the so-called Guillaine Barre syndrome which is infectious, a viral disease and self-limiting. The patient becomes progressively weak but retains sensation, and does not go blind. Death results from an inability to change adequately (nowadays remedied by artificial ventilation until recovery). Painful muscles are common and blindness does not happen. How else could he lose sensation and motor power and vision? Such a wide variety of neurological symptoms suggests that a non-specific set of lesions are to blame. Global ischaemia (absent oxygenation of the tissues) is a possibility. A matter of importance is the description of the spirit being outside the body which is quite often reported in cases of near-death. Possibly a diffuse infection or degeneration, as with bovine spongiform encephalopathy. More likely is the possibility of this being a very high spinal cord injury but preserving neurological control of ventilation, through the cervical 3/4/5 nerve roots. There is little doubt of the influence of CSF's time spent in the dissecting rooms and departments at Guy's Hospital, and that this could have resulted from a single bullet. **Colin Blogg**

## CORRESPONDENCE

### The things we get asked!

From Chris Pantaleoni

Help, please! I'm leaving for London on Tuesday and wish to visit the church/chapel where Hornblower sat at the beginning of *Commodore*. My two local bookstores don't have a copy in stock. If you could, would you please, before Tuesday, give me the name of the church and the specific seat where he sat.

**Editor's reply:** The incident to which you refer is actually in *Lord Hornblower*, and it occurs in the Chapel of the Order of the Bath in Westminster (Abbey). In fact *Commodore* begins with Hornblower in his bath (US = tub). I hope this information is still of use to you.

From Chris Pantaleoni: Of course, I had it wrong and should have known better! I did find, just before I left for London, both *Commodore* and *Lord Hornblower*. Thank you for your help.

From John Dempsey

I want to let you know how much I appreciate the newsletter. It looks like a lot of work and you should know that I for one enjoy it a great deal. Outside of living near the ocean and port in San Francisco and one 35-day excursion on a troop ship, plus some intermediate trips, I have no knowledge of ships.

During some trying times in my life Forester and Hornblower provided excellent diversion. Figuring out how the ships were sailed and the weapons used was an excellent mental exercise. It took me a long time to figure out what the "leach" of a sail is or "far reaching".

I don't enjoy O'Brian's sailing and battles as much, but his descriptions of 18th century life are enjoyable, especially the road trip by coach. I often wonder if there is a dictionary of 18th century terms, but then again some of the enjoyment is in figuring it out. I am sure that CSF was aware of this and used it as some of the allure to us landlubbers.

From James Preston

Could you please tell me if *Ship of the Line* and *Flying Colours* are one and the same book?

**Editor's reply:** They are separate novels, but were published in a three volume set with *Beat to Quarters* by Little, Brown & Co. More commonly your two volumes are combined with *Hornblower and the Atropos* in a single volume.

From Doug Wilkinson

Do you know *Hornblower and George*? I can not seem to find anything on it.

**Editor's reply:** I do not know of *Hornblower and George*. Try *Hornblower and His Majesty*, Bolitho Press, limited edition of 250 copies.