

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 email
admin@csforester.org

Volume 2 Issue 16

June 2004

VICTORY FOR THE CSF SOCIETY!

Ten members, several guests, and two members of the public (an initiative by John Roberts!) met at the Royal Naval Museum at Portsmouth on 9th May 2004 (Minutes on page 4 of this Newsletter). A hurried AGM was followed by an illuminating talk by Admiral Richard Hill on "The Prizes of War". Lunch was followed by a guided tour of HMS Victory, for which we had been prepared by a tour of the Nelson Exhibit. Although HMS Victory and Nelson did not figure directly in the Hornblower novels, apart from Hornblower's involvement in Nelson's funeral procession on the River Thames, it was a good opportunity to relate the real battleship to what we had become familiar with from the books. Crouching to avoid the low beams might have been easier before the excellent lunch, but somehow we managed without any cracked heads.

We now look forward to the next meeting in Bristol on 2nd October 2004, when we will consider the report of the working party to be convened by David Stead (see Minutes).

Colin Blogg

NEXT MEETING: BRISTOL, 2nd October 2004

Organiser: John Dobson, tel: 0117
9732135

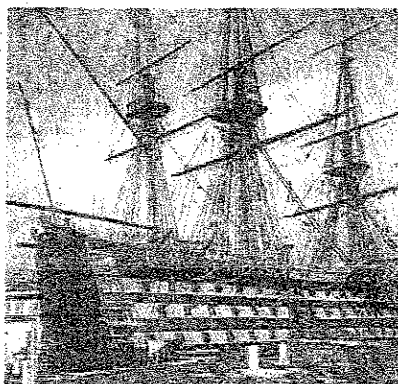
11.00 Arrive. Coffee in Mezzanine of the Great Britain Museum. Society business meeting

12.00 Guided tour of the Great Britain

12.45 Drinks and lunch in the Mezzanine

After lunch—return visit to Great Britain, if wished, or visit to replica of John Cabot's Matthew. Members are also invited to tour the Great Britain Maritime Centre and Museum.

Travel: There is ample car parking. Members who come by train are advised to take a 10 minute taxi ride.



HOPES RAISED AND ERASED

Searching through book catalogues is often an unrewarding exercise. Imagine my excitement when reading the Barnes and Noble catalogue and finding a new C S Forester book. Its title was given as *The ship that would not die. The USS Laffey*. A few days later a package arrived thanking me for my order and enclosing the nice, scarlet-bound volume of.....*The Ship!* It

proved too difficult to return the book for a refund or replacement and eventually Barnes and Noble generously waived their bill and the book is now in the CSF Library. It appears that the catalogue was at fault in mistaking *The ship that would not die* for *The Ship*. That book probably does not exist but for an excited few days the prospect of reading it was very real.

Colin Blogg

Inside this issue:

Book review by
Christopher Smith 2

PBFA Book Fairs 2

A Mystery Title by
Adrian Taylor 3

Rare Manuscripts for
sale 3

Correspondence 4

Minutes of the meeting 4
on 9th May

Special points of Interest

- Note the date of the Bristol meeting in your diary—**2nd October**
- Have you any contributions to make to the next issue?
- Do you know of any other book fairs or sales?
- All letters, emails or comments are gratefully received

Peter Padfield, *Maritime Power and the Struggle for Freedom*, John Murray, 2004 (paperback), pp.451, £9.99, ISBN 0-7195-6293-7

At University, students of literature are taught to pause for a while and wonder who the 'intended reader' of any particular book might be. Once that has been settled, many an issue will fall into place. When considering *Maritime Power and the Struggle for Freedom* it is perhaps not too frivolous to suggest that the intended reader would probably be someone who wears bifocal glasses because Peter Padfield sees his grand subject in two different perspectives.

Recreating, in the words of his subtitle, the 'naval campaigns that shaped the modern world', between 1788 and 1851, he makes the best of a thrilling story. After a dozen exciting engagements, Nelson dies before our very eyes. Duncan, the colossus of Yarmouth Roads, dangles the mutineer over the waves before sailing to defeat the Dutch. Broke trains his gun-crews to the highest pitch of efficiency and reaps his reward, albeit at a high personal price. This is stirring stuff. Enough space is allowed to convey the nature of every action and the spirit of each intrepid captain. Technical matters too are explored with acumen, and tactical issues are described carefully. Even the processes for manufacturing opium are revealed. We can see the scene and hear both the roar of cannon and the immortal words. What is more, all this fascinating, vivid material is placed within the context of the great conflicts of the age.

Doubts rise, however, when Padfield stands back from the detail and advances an ambitious over-arching interpretation. He presents it first in a lengthy Introduction that ranges across a great tract of time. He seeks to link the political rise of nations to their prowess as maritime powers. Supremacy at sea translated into success in commerce, and this, in turn, was related to the emergence of a powerful middle class that demanded its due share in political institutions.

To claim so much is to claim a great deal, and Padfield is aware that not everything fits snugly in his beguiling jigsaw. A difficulty lies in the relationship between what he sees as the great forces of history and the unrolling of events at particular times. After an account of the Hundred Days, Padfield delivers a verdict on Napoleon:

"He was merely the charismatic representative of France's warrior and agricultural past." That "merely" sticks in the craw. As for Britain, not all will confidently embrace Padfield's view of the 1689 settlement. In hindsight it takes on great importance. But by no means all could at once rejoice in new freedoms. The 18th century was a grim time for many, and the programme belatedly started in William IV's reigns shows how great was the need for major reforms after the four Georges. Prize money was, as Padfield suggests, one of the factors motivating commanding officers, but the rewards for the lower deck were scanty in comparison with the risks and hardships. To see the soldiers and sailors of the period as the unwitting agents of historical necessity is an interesting speculation. It remains worthwhile, however, to ask exactly what inspired them to fight.

The closing date of 1851 may cause readers whose interests are primarily naval a moment of puzzlement. The explanation is that Padfield ends with the Great Exhibition as a demonstration of the sea-borne triumph of British trade and industry across the world.

Any consideration of what C S Forester would have made of Padfield's interpretation of the conflicts that were the focus of his naval fiction must, in large degree, be speculative. Early in *Lord Hornblower* the mutineers aboard *Flame* express the desire to "fight on for England's liberties". But patriotism plainly has a larger part in that declaration than any awareness of political forces fostering economic and social change. A few pages later we are told that Hornblower himself has an "uncontrollable yearning for peace as a cessation of war". Yet he battles on. Reputation is a factor in his resolution, and Forester deftly reminds us of the importance of prize money, but duty is still the spur, even if the Prince Regent is a sorry symbol of the nation. Expecting fighting men to enquire more deeply into the meaning of their service is probably unrealistic. Forester would have most likely admired Padfield's descriptive powers and endorsed his emphasis on sea power in history. Whether the novelist would then have followed the historian further in his analysis seems uncertain.

Christopher Smith

**PBFA MONTHLY
BOOK FAIRS**

Le Meridien Russell
London WC1

Sundays 12-6pm

11th July

8th August

12th September

10th October

14th November

12th/13th December

Entry FREE

A MYSTERY TITLE

In the 'Books for Sale' section of *The Book and Magazine Collector* for January 2000, there appears under the heading 'Modern Fiction' a book by C S Forester entitled *Wanton Fate* (1st. 1963, Diner's Delight, VG d/w)VG. The volume was being offered for £20.

Such a title certainly doesn't appear in C S Forester's 'collected works' and there appears to be no mention of it in John Forester's biography. Is the book a novel or a collection of short stories or articles? Perhaps some members of the C S Forester Society has a copy of *Wanton Fate*, which sounds rather like a murder mystery in the mould of *Payment Deferred*. Or perhaps the mention in the magazine is some error, some typesetter's slip to tantalize unwittingly or perplex those who scan the volumes listed for clues relating to Hornblower's creator.

However...when one refers to *The Oxford English Dictionary* the most likely meaning of 'wanton' in this case is 'of clothing, diet: luxurious' and, therefore *Wanton Fate* may be a collection of restaurant reviews and the volume has been misplaced amongst modern fiction. It is possible indeed that

Wanton Fate is merely a single article in a volume entitled *Diner's Delight*. It would be interesting to learn the truth of the matter regarding *Wanton Fate* by C S Forester.

Adrian Taylor

Editor's reply: *Wanton Fate* originally appeared as a short story in *Diner's Club* magazine in 1945. Then it was published in an anthology of short stories from the magazine. CSF was in good company as others in the book included Ogden Nash, Somerset Maugham, Arthur Miller and John Steinbeck.

The story is set in WWII in Greenland when two Germans landed their plane to set up a weather station to provide invaluable barometric measurements for the German forces. The pair had quarreled bitterly. One fell, or was pushed, into a crevasse and left to die. His murderer meets him again at the point of his own death four years later when the block of ice, containing the corpse, is struck by the sinking submarine, commanded by the murderer! - a typical CSF circular theme with a nice twist in the tail. My copy is not very pretty and has no dj—but then it only cost me £6.00.

RARE MANUSCRIPTS FOR SALE

Despite looking quite hard at booksellers' lists, auction catalogues and surfing the net, it is rare to find any authors' manuscripts for sale. It was therefore exciting to find in the catalogue from Peter L Stern and Co., Boston, not only a manuscript, but a first publication of *Beat to Quarters*. This may pre-date Little, Brown's first hardback edition, coming at a price of US\$650,000.

The manuscript is that for *Touch and Go*—a short story, similar to others in our possession. It is in two draft forms, one of 30 pages and the revised draft is 33 pages. The short story is based on the actual experiences of Forester's friend and later secretary, Commander John Dale Pye Hodapp, Jr. It was intended to be published as *The Captain and the Exec*. On the

first draft Hodapp has written, in pencil, a different title *The Triumph of the Boon*, as well as "Based on actual events, J. D. P. Hodapp, Jr." Accompanying are copies of legal documents between Forester and Hodapp relating to the project and a copy of Hodapp's resume. The story was eventually collected in the Forester book *The Man in the Yellow Raft* (1969). It is enclosed in a handsome custom cloth folding box, price US\$850.00.

These and others can be purchased through <http://dogbert.abebooks.com> or direct from Peter L Stern and Co., 355 Boylston Street, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02116, Tel. (617) 421-1880, email: PSBook@aol.com.

Colin Blogg

IN THE MEDIA

****The Weakest Link—**

A contestant was asked by Anne Robinson:

"What is the pen name of the well-known author Cecil Lewis Troughton Scott?"

He could not answer, perhaps because she said Scott rather than Smith, so Anne Robinson said:

"The author's name was Cecil Scott Forester, or C S Forester."

Did anyone else hear this?

****Bernard Cornwell** was interviewed on R4's *Desert Island Discs* and told how he decided on the character of Richard Sharpe in his novels of the Napoleonic wars. He had read the *Hornblower* series and realised there was a gap, which he then filled with a soldier.

****R4 The Write Stuff**

The panel was asked to identify readings.

They eventually reached the right answer with a little help from the chairman—Mr *Midshipman Hornblower*—in which Hornblower joins his first ship, and suffers seasickness whilst at anchor at Spithead.

Please send any contributions you wish to be included in the Newsletter by post of email admin@csforester.org

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C S FORESTER
SOCIETY

The Society for all those
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£10/\$15 a year

CORRESPONDENCE

From Katherine Williams

Can you answer a question on our quiz? In which book does Captain Horatio Hornblower appear?

Editor's reply: Thank you for your interesting question. There are several answers.

He first appeared in 1937 in *The Happy Return* (Beat to Quarters, U.S.) as Captain HH.

However, he had the courtesy title of Captain when he 'captained' a ship, so he would be addressed as captain whilst still a midshipman in *Midshipman Hornblower* (1953), when he commanded the *Marie Galante* in 1794.

He made the transition from Commander to Captain at the opening of *Hornblower and the Crisis*, an unfinished story, published posthumously in 1967. At the end of *Hornblower and the Hotspur* (1962), the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet, Admiral Lord Cornwallis, rewards HH by promoting him Captain on March 14th 1805. He had previously written to HH addressing him as 'My dear Captain

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PORTSMOUTH 9.5.04

Present: 10 members. Apologies from 10 members.

Election of Officers: The Chairman said that he and the Secretary, Pat Millard wished to stand down. Ray Wright had taken over as Treasurer as previously agreed. The current officers of the Society present confirmed that they were content to continue for the time being, in view of the decision on the next item.

Constitution: It was agreed to form a working party to review the organisation of the Society and draft a constitution. The working party was also to recommend the number of officers and committee members needed and clarify what their respective responsibilities should be. It was agreed that David Stead should convene the working party, which should include the present officers and committee members of the Society. It was also agreed that the current officers should continue to serve until the working party reported to a reconvened AGM at the meeting in Bristol in October 2004.

The Society to date: Peter Tessier said that the Society had worked very well so far. Ray Wright thanked the Chairman for all his good work in running the Society. Both statements were very strongly endorsed.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer presented his report. He pointed out that subscriptions from the USA were expensive to change to sterling. A better web site could be very expensive. Overall the Society had only slender reserves, which would therefore curtail any initiatives, which entailed significant costs.

"Reflections": David Stead reported on the production and costs of "Reflections" (£1.10 printing + 40p postage, etc. a copy, with a run of 80-100 copies, 3-4 times a year). It was agreed that the production of "Reflections" should be referred to the working party.

MINUTES(cont.)

Unpublished Manuscripts: Andy Hooker gave an updating report on the very good progress achieved with the three publishing projects. *The Pursuit* (272pp) was finished and the dust jacket needed to be considered. Differential pricing (CSF members/non-members) was agreed and could prove an excellent incentive to membership. Funding and distribution needed to be decided with the Treasurer. The short stories were nearly finished. Andy Hooker was warmly congratulated on the excellent progress made.

Next meeting: To be held in Bristol on 2nd October 2004.

Hornblower'. The appointment is not gazetted until June 1st 1805 and he is appointed to command the *Sea Fencibles*. Hornblower is already styling himself 'Captain' when he leaves HMS *Hotspur* on May 17th 1905.

From Jehuda Straschnow

While browsing through the internet I got aware that "FIRSTS—The Book Collector's Magazine" (PO Box 65166, Tuscon AZ 85728-5166, USA, tel. 520 529 1355, fax 520 529 5847, email: firstmag@aol.com) recent published monthly issues (February, March) were devoted to C S Forester. I ordered same at a cost of US\$6 each + postage and find same most interesting. I believe these publications may be of interest to the Society.