



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

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THE TALL SHIPS' RACE 2005 Newcastle Gateshead, Monday 25th-Thursday 28th July

Ahoy there! This is your first call to get on board for **The Tall Ships' Race in 2005**—and be part of a truly world-class event.

A magnificent fleet of over 120 tall ships will drop anchor in the Tyne in July 2005 before setting off in glorious full sail on the final leg of the historic race across the North Sea to Fredrikstad, Norway.

While they're on Tyneside, there will be festivities celebrating Tyneside's great maritime and sea-going past in the world-class carnival style for which Newcastle-Gateshead is famed.

Make sure you don't miss out. Visit the website www.tallships2005.com and register for up-to-date information, or call information hotline on 0191 2778000.

Everyone can take part in the Tall Ships' Race 2005, and you don't have to have your sea legs!

From Paul Boyle

If anyone is interested in coming to the North East for this event, I'll be happy to assist in any way I can.
36 Fawcett Way, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 1TT, Tel: 0191 4567063

From Ted Howard-Jones

I wondered if any members would be interested in actually sailing on board a Tall Ship.

I'm running a week on board the Stavros S Niarchos in March next year, sailing in the Canary Isles. The voyage is open to anyone aged 18-75 and no experience is necessary. As it is the bicentenary of Trafalgar, we hope to have some 'themes' on board, one of which might be to sample some recipes of the era!

There's nothing to beat actually sailing on board a real square rigger to bring the books alive!

Cost: £685 including flights and insurance
Email: tedtallship-chilterns@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 01491 639311
www.tallships.org

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WAR AT SEA IN THE AGE OF SAIL Sunday 4 September—Friday 9 September 2005

Christ Church, Oxford and the National Maritime Museum have combined to bring together the finest speakers from Britain and the USA, in a conference on the enduring subject of life—and war—at sea in the age of sail.

During this five-day residential conference you will hear the most distinguished international speakers and participate in a diverse cultural and hospitality programme.

For a brochure with detailed information please contact:

War at Sea in the Age of Sail,
The Steward's Office, Christ Church,
Oxford OX1 1DP.

Tel: +44 (0)1865 276174/286848

Email: waratsea@chch.ox.ac.uk

or dlivingstone@nmm.ac.uk

Special points of interest coming soon

- The Tall Ships' Race, July 2005
- War at Sea in the Age of Sail, Oxford, September 2005
- Nelson 200 Year Anniversary, October 2005

CSF'S SECRETIVENESS by John Forester

In reference to the article *C S Forester and the British Information Service* that is in the February 2004 issue of the Newsletter, Colin Blogg recognizes that CSF was secretive about several aspects of his life, but I think that he exaggerates the instances. He lists four periods.

As Colin writes: "There is very little first-hand record of his time at Guy's Hospital in London as a medical student". That is understandable, because he spent very little time at Guy's, even when he was supposed to be attending. Of course some recollection from other students about Cecil Smith would be nice, but at this date I doubt that those who noticed him then ever later placed him as CSF. The Guy's Faculty knew him, for when CSF's eldest brother asked for Cecil's record, the registrar knew that Cecil had ceased attending long ago.

Colin adds to this paucity of information of CSF's time "as an office worker in the 1930s". CSF worked in a business office only once: for the Imperial Advertising Agency, from 29 September 1925 to 31 October 1925. Always after that he avoided such work, and could do so because he lived with his parents until he had sufficient money from writing to move out.

The third item is the supposed time as war correspondent in the Spanish Civil War. It was a very short period. Not even his wife knew of anything published under his name, or the name of the newspaper, or even of any money resulting. The only information concerns going out into the Spanish mountains carrying a typical Spanish peasant's meal stuffed into a pocket, and of being so horrified that he could not bear to tell the tale, whatever it was. Well, he was horrified in medical school, also.

The fourth item of secrecy that Colin lists is CSF's time at the British Information Service in New York City during the first part of World War II. There's no secret about this, and Colin has not recognized either the literary work that CSF did or his non-literary activities. The arrangement that CSF made with the British government allowed him to support himself and his family. His task was to aid in keeping American public opinion favourable to Britain's cause. He spoke to

journalists, military and naval personnel, diplomats, university lecture groups, sometimes individually and sometimes in public lectures. He wrote news accounts about the progress of the war, opinion articles and similar items, often for use by others. He wrote wartime fiction, much of which is collected in *Gold from Crete* and *The Man in the Yellow Raft*, stories that were published by *The Saturday Evening Post* (which at that time occupied the position now held by network television, and paid the highest prices in the world), and in *Argosy*. He wrote two films, *Eagle Squadron* and *The Commandos Strike at Dawn*. He wrote *The Captain from Connecticut*, a naval novel of the War of 1812, which showed that, a hundred years earlier, they had been drawn into war. He wrote *The Ship*, a fictionalized account of a gallant and successful action in the Mediterranean by the Royal Navy against the Italian Navy. As he told me, the most effective propaganda is that which people pay their own money to read or to see. In non-fiction, under his own name, he wrote historical accounts, such as *How the British Sank the Scharnhorst*, which also appears in the *SEP*. During this time, CSF was considered by the founders of OSS, and was interviewed by them, for some unspecified undercover work, but was rejected. CSF knew some secrets rather earlier than they were publicly admitted, such as the airborne radar, but that is the extent of his secret work.

Editor's reply: I should like to thank John Forester for putting the record straight. By the time he left Guy's CSF was practised in concealing his footsteps. He changed his name to Cecil Scott Forester and even signed copies of his novels for his parents as 'C S Forester'.

He concealed his marriage to Kitty Belcher and persisted in a bachelor lifestyle. His second married to Dorothy Foster was also kept secret while they remained on opposite sides of the Atlantic.

I find it curious that there appears to be no record of his time in the Spanish Civil War. We do not know for which newspaper he was correspondent. Having searched, I found no recognisable trace of CSF. I am beginning to doubt that the truth will ever come to light. Withholding or embellishing his life story—maybe it is all part of the trade of being a novelist and storyteller.

OXFORD BOOK FAIR

The Oxford Centre,
333 Banbury Road,
Oxford
4th/5th February
14th/15th October
2005

BLOOMSBURY AUCTIONS

Bloomsbury House 24
Maddox Street
London W1S 1PP
7th December 2004
General Books

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

AGM 2005 will be hosted by the Charles Lamb Society on Saturday 14th May 2005 at Swedenbourg Hall, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London W1

KING GEORGE AND THE AFRICAN QUEEN

By Christopher Smith

Racing *Britannia* off Cowes, shooting birds at Bolton Abbey with impeccable efficiency or placidly sorting his stamps at Sandringham, these are abiding images of George V at leisure. They are not far out either. But the King was also a reader, and in his methodical manner he kept to his life's end a record of "Books I have read since May 1890". Part of the list, covering his last years, was printed by Sir John Gore in *King George V: A Personal Memoir* (1941).

No doubt out of loyalty, Gore dwells on the serious side of the monarch's reading. But doing so rather warps the image. As well as perusing historical memoirs and weighty accounts of recent events, George plainly turned to less demanding fare. He can hardly be reproached. Well into his sixties, he had carried the burdens of state since 1910, and his accident in France in 1915 took a lot out of him. It was natural for him occasionally to prefer something less indigestible than state papers. So quite a range of the fiction of the day figures in the King's booklist. It includes, for instance, not only D H Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and such an insignificant detective story of Francis Beeding's *The Norwich Victims*, but also two of C S Forester's novels, *The Peacemaker* (1934) and *The African Queen* (1935).

Of the two, it is the second that might be thought to have made the most obvious

appeal to George V. In *The Peacemaker*, however, he no doubt responded to a swift and graphic tale linking personal affairs with technological matters related to the more scientific side of warfare. Over the years the King heard of plenty of inventions that would, it was asserted, make a crucial difference if it came to combat. Something of his, perhaps unsuspected, progressive attitude is revealed by his (unsuccessful) attempts to secure a knighthood for a man who designed flying boats.

It was apparently a little later that the King turned to *The African Queen*. He must have found it easy to respond. As a naval officer, he had commanded *TB 79* in rough conditions, and when awarding Agar the VC, he had been eager for every detail of his exploits in a coastal motor boat at Kronstadt in 1919. So Forester's realism could be counted on to strike a familiar chord, and after the grim Great War, a little romance may well have been welcome. The patriotic element would have been a positive point too.

It is pleasing to think that Forester beguiled the leisure hours of the aging Sailor King. A couple of decades later, after Hornblower's emergence, a former naval person at a similar stage in his life would be following the old monarch's lead. The readers of Forester keep good company.

TWO SNIPPETS

By Adrian Taylor

The engrossing biography of Julian Maclaren-Ross by Paul Willets, *Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia*, has two references to C S Forester.

Maclaren-Ross had published in *The Strand Magazine*, which had recently (in the mid-forties?) been re-launched in pocket format, his story *It Won't Be Long Now*. And so "Julian joined a roster of big-name

authors such as C S Forrester (sic) and Agatha Christie" (page 157).

Later, in his amphetamine-fuelled career, Maclaren-Ross earned twenty-five pounds for writing a *middle*, "celebrating the storytelling skills of C S Forester (sic) in the TLS (Time Literary Supplement). Arthur Crook was then the editor, in the early sixties (page 345).

THE OPEN MUSEUM AT THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

Greenwich, London SE10 9NF

Nelson's Contemporaries
NM011 Tuesdays, 8 weeks 25th January-15th March, 10.30-12.30. £40.00 (£30.00) or £7.50 per session

How to Trace the History of Ships
NM013 Saturday 5th February, 10.30-16.15. £29.00 (£22.00)

The Nelson Letters
NM014 Wednesday 9th February 10.30-16.15. £37.00 (£28.00) includes lunch

Tel: 020 8858 4422
Fax: 020 8312 6632
www.nmm.ac.uk

Please send any contributions you wish to be included in the Newsletter by post or email
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The Society for all those interested in the works of C S Forester. Membership £10/\$15 a year

PLANS FOR NELSON'S 200 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Although it is nearly a year until the 200 year anniversary of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805, plans are already underway for a year long celebration organised by, amongst others, the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

Coming together to present a year long series of events and festivals during 2005, on the theme of Britain and the sea, are the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and Visit Britain, together with the Official Nelson Commemorations Committee (ONCC), the National Trust, Sea Vision UK, Trinity House and a large number of other national and local organisations, with the support of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

At the heart of the celebrations will be the Trafalgar Festival, a series of events to mark the bicentenary of Admiral Lord Nelson's death and the Battle of Trafalgar, culminating in the Trafalgar Weekend, 12-23 October 2005.

The whole programme of activities will take place under the brand SeaBritain 2005, which was launched on October 21, 2003 at Trinity House.

Keep an eye on the press for further details.

CORRESPONDENCE

From Judith Edwards

On the BBC News website today: Quiz: Do you know your battles? Half of Britain's 16-24 year olds don't know that Sir Francis Drake defeated the Spanish Armada and more than a fifth thought Alexander the Great put in an appearance at the Battle of Hastings. Question 3 on the quiz is: Horatio Hornblower beat the Spanish Armada in 1588 according to 11% of those surveyed. (I can't quite see our HH playing bowls, though.)

From Louis A Troughton

"A note about C S Forester..." found in the back of a Back Bay (Little, Brown and Company) edition (1998) of Mr Midshipman Hornblower, states that C S Forester "was born Cecil Louis Troughton Smith". Most biographical references I find refer to Cecil "Lewis" Troughton Smith. Are you able to tell me definitively whether Louis or Lewis is the correct Spelling? I am sure you understand my interest.

Editor's reply: CSF's birth certificate, of which I have a copy, states his birth name to be Cecil Lewis Troughton Smith.

From Clint Collier

I realise it has been quite a while now since Mr Forester's death, but do you know what happened to the source material that he must have had at the time he was writing? He was the editor of and published *The Adventures of John Wetherell* in 1953 and I'm trying to find out where he obtained access to the original 3 volume MS that Wetherell wrote and where this document is archived today. Although he talks of the document itself in the introduction, he never does discuss its providence.

Editor's reply: I am stumped. I cannot find any reference to this in John Forester's biography or Sanford Sternlicht's review. A 3-page MS is held at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research library in Austin, Texas. CSF always resisted declaring his sources, preferring to distil it all into the story when he wanted.

STEPHEN FRANCIS CLARKE

of Clearwater Books, Bridport, Dorset, UK, died recently. He was notably a fine, traditional bookseller, who did his best to support the Society by searching for the sometimes quirky volumes sought by our members. He will be sadly missed.