

C S FORESTER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER No. 2 October 1999

NEXT MEETING:

A tour of 'The Grand Turk' (HMS Indefatigable) Sunday 21 November 1999 at 2.30pm –

visit the wooden ship created for filming 'Hornblower' as *HMS Indefatigable*. It is currently moored at St Katherine's Haven, Tower of London. Meet and eat at the Dickens Inn, St Katherine's Dock from 12.30pm.

The C S Forester connection? Monica Dickens, Charles Dickens' great granddaughter, shared CSF's literary agent and publisher.

C S FORESTER CENTENARY – BORN 27 AUGUST 1899

Cecil Scott Forester's name at birth was Cecil Lewis Troughton Smith. His father was George Foster Smith and his mother Sarah Medhurst Troughton Smith. He was the fifth to be born in Cairo.

Leaving London

CSF's parents, both teachers, had moved to Egypt with their first-born, Geoffrey, so that George, who had grown up in the Channel Island of Jersey, could make use of his fluent French. They went to Cairo and taught the children of the upper echelons of local society. Preferment had been denied to George Smith in the teaching system then current in London, since he had no degree. Egypt offered a chance to earn money, enjoy social privilege and be waited on by servants, and enjoy a warm climate.

Birth tragedies and successes

There were drawbacks too- soon after arriving in Cairo, Sarah was delivered of twin girls. One died almost immediately but the other lived two or three days. It was distressing that they had to

be buried in separate parts of the churchyard. Geoff Foster-Smith later suggested that one twin had been baptised but not the other. Perhaps the first was technically stillborn and therefore to be buried apart from her sister.

Two further pregnancies followed and sisters Grace and Madge were both born in Cairo, and then followed by Cecil. Mean-while Geoff had been left in England with an Uncle and Aunt.

29 Shoobrah Road, Shubra Road or Shoubra Street?

C S Forester's birth certificate records his birthplace as '29 Shubra Road'. I could not find Shubra Road, only Shoubra 'STREET' on a quick search of the Shubra district north of the centre of Cairo. Number 29 has vanished, under a new

road, but the building next door fits brother Geoff's description of a ground-floor shop and two floors of flats above.

Cairo in the 1900s



When Sarah again became pregnant, she returned to England in 1892 with George and Geoff, to ensure that this pregnancy should end happily, and Hugh was safely born.

(see back page)

ROYAL NAVAL MUSEUM, PORTSMOUTH

On 21st October 1999 HRH Princess Royal will officially open the Victory Gallery, a third new gallery to complement the Nelson and Sailing galleries. Opens unofficially on 11th October 1999.

Well worth a visit. Open 364 days/year



THE SECOND MEETING AND SOCIETY BUSINESS

Second Meeting of the Society: Sunday 4 July 1999, Horatio Hornblower's 223rd birthday(!), held courtesy of the Luna Caprese Restaurant, North Parade, Oxford.

Minutes of the first meeting had been summarised in the newsletter and published, and were agreed.

Resolutions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Compile a definitive bibliography and record ephemera. ❖ To set up a central bibliographic register listing collections ➤ Members are invited to send in lists of collected books and ephemera and indicate willingness to allow access to other members. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Subscription to continue at £5.00pa for UK and agreed \$10.00pa for North America. ❖ Agreed to join Alliance Literary Societies ❖ Unanimous support for John Forester to be an honorary member ❖ Next meeting possible dinner for centenary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Venues and format of meetings discussed. As high proportion of members close to Oxford, agreed to keep venues accessible to Oxford for the time being. ❖ Membership now 38. ❖ The meeting concluded with a presentation by the Chairman on the Forester family tree. |
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Pat Millard, Hon Sec

CENTENARY DINNER OF THE OXFORD CHAPTER of C S FORESTER SOCIETY

An impromptu, informal gathering was held on Thursday 4 September to mark the centenary of C S Forester's birth. Nine members and one juvenile guest were present. C S Forester's memory and John Forester's health were toasted. Food was provided by the Chairman and Mrs Moss, wine by Captain Beadle.

OPINION by Colin Blogg WHO WAS THE REAL HORNBLOWER?

Nelson? Pellew? Gordon? Boscawen? Popham? Cochrane? CSF himself

Dr J D Grainger threw more potential contenders into the ring in *History Today* (Vol 49)(10) October 1999. The Sunday Times (12 September 1999) reporter (York Member) grappled with the story and telephone interviewed your Chairman and John Forester too.

CSF read voraciously and retained a great deal of what he read. He never gave his sources, even when writing biographies or histories. His personal library probably included the *Naval Chronicle* in which the activities of the Royal Navy would be recorded. CSF's fertile and practical mind coupled

with a supreme gift for story-telling could easily pluck a possible story from the stark official record and turn it into a yarn any potential model would be proud of. Hornblower's career was carefully fitted into the historical context, avoiding major battles eg Trafalgar but touching reality sufficiently to make his career sound totally authentic – if more fortunate and active than most so-called models.

Me? I think there were many models – but CSF was too clever to pin a character on just one individual, however hard we try to make him.

QUIZ 1 answers

1. All of them!
2. Sir Edward Pellew & Horatio Hornblower/C Northcote Parkinson Sir James Gordon/Bryan Perrett
3. Ships are in right order
4. A species of butterfly
5. All countries except Italy
6. Annie Marble is the central character in CSF's first successful novel, *Payment Deferred*



FUN SECTION

Quiz No. 2

The following are alternative titles used in other English-speaking countries. Please list the correct **British** title.

A bottle of champagne will be awarded in person to the perpetrator of the correct answers brought to the Grand Turk meeting on 21 November 1999. A decider will be used in the event of a tie.

- 1. Lord Nelson _____
- 2. Single-handed _____
- 3. The Pride & The Passion
or One Cannon to Win a War _____
- 4. Commodore Hornblower _____
- 5. Beat to Quarters _____
- 6. Captain Horatio Hornblower _____
- 7. The Daughter of the Hawk _____
- 8. Ship of the Line _____
- 9. Sink the Bismarck!
or The Last 9 Days of the Bismarck _____
- 10. The Age of Fighting Sail _____
- 11. To the Indies _____
- 12. Admiral Hornblower in the West Indies _____

NAME:.....



HORATIO HORNBLOWER'S NAVY – Open Museum at the National Maritime Museum

This autumn, the Open Museum at the National Maritime Museum is offering the opportunity to find out more about the Horatio Hornblower's Navy on Tuesday mornings from 5 October until 23 November. Lectures, which run from 1030am until 1230pm including a coffee break, will take place in the Museum's Lecture Theatre. Coffee/tea from 1000am at each lecture. Fee: £37.50 (Concessions £26) or £6.50 per lecture, including tea, coffee and biscuits. Nearest station: Maze Hill.

For a free prospectus or bookings, telephone 0181 312 6747 / 6627. Further information is also available on the Museum web site:
<http://www.nmm.ac.uk>

Tuesday 5 October – Colin White
Britannia's Bulwarks: The Ships Men and Operation of Hornblower's Navy

Tuesday 12 October –

Peter Goodwin & Brian Lavery
Life at Sea and Ship Construction

Tuesday 19 October – Bryan Perrett

The Real Hornblower – Admiral Sir James Gordon GCB

Tuesday 26 October – Tom Wareham

The Frigate Commanders 1793-1815

Tuesday 2 November – Nigel Rigby

The Sea Fiction of C S Forester

Tuesday 9 November – Michael Duffy

British Naval Intelligence During the Napoleonic Wars

Tuesday 16 November – A J Hill

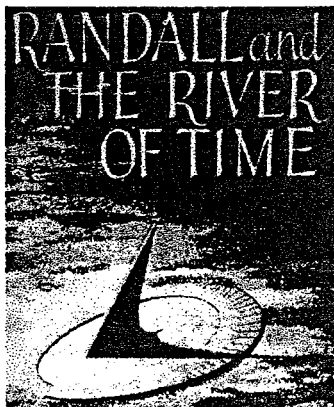
The Prizes of War

Tuesday 23 November – Michael Turk

The Supply and Building of the Ships for Filming Hornblower

UK Bookdealers with special interest in C S Forester

Isis Books (*J Perrott) 01865 779430
Booklovers (David Gower-Spence) 01235 533613
Surprise Books (*J Norman) 01453 887403
(*member of CSF Society)



Clearwater Books 01308 898044
Blackwell's Rare Books 01865 792792
Christopher Heppa 01245 267679
Hawthorne Books
Nigel Williams Rare Books 0171 836 7757
Ulysses 0171 831 1600

Selection of Bookdealers in the USA

Brattle Book Shop, Boston, MA 800 447 9595
James Pepper Rare Books Inc, Santa Barbara
CA 805 966 9737 popbooks@aol.com
Serendipidity Books, Berkeley 518 841 7455

Books for sale/exchange/wanted

Wanted: *The African Queen*.
1st edition, fine + dw. Colin Blogg
Complete set of Hornblower novels. Margery
Exton
Death to the French + Rifleman Dodd in USA +
The Gun. Willard McCoy
wmccoy@us.ibm.com
PooPoo and the Dragon. Michael De Lyall

Books for sale:

Selection of Bookdealers in Australia

Haymes & Sons Bookdealers
www.antiqubook.com/haymes
Time Booksellers-Rare & Collectible Books
www.timebooksellers.com.au

'HORNBLOWER' WINS EMMY AWARD

Top prize in the mini-series section of the 1999 Emmy Awards to Meridian TV's *'Hornblower'*. Three other series were nominated and suitably blown out of the water. The four-part, eight hour-long, series has now been shown on both sides of the Atlantic. Spies in the skies report it to be part of British Airways in-flight entertainment on transatlantic long haul flights.

PLAIN MURDER

Did anyone else listen to The Saturday
Play: *Plain Murder* on Saturday 25
September 1999 on Radio 4?