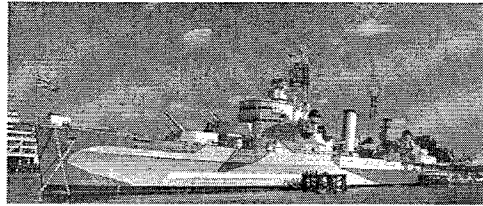


C S FORESTER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER No. 4 July 2000

NEXT MEETING:

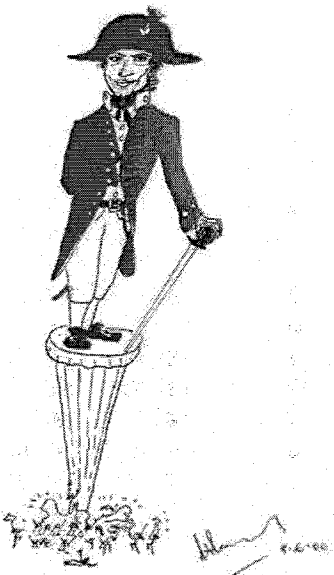
Saturday 22 July 2000
A Royal Naval theme on-board
HMS BELFAST



at 1.00pm
to discuss *The Ship*

Guest contributor - **Sanford Sternlicht** :Author of *C S Forester and the Hornblower Saga*.

'HORNBLOWER,' a cult figure for the millennium?



Stir-free in Britain; big stir-up success in USA

followed the Meridian TV series starring Ioan Gruffudd, supported by notable thespians Antony Sher and Robert Lindsay. Hardly a stir in Britain. The national press contemplated the naval niceties and the failure to convey the spirit of Hornblower. Poor publicity for four irregular spaced episodes gave Hornblower no chance in the ratings.

Not so in North America. British Airways broadcast 'Hornblower' to transatlantic passengers. The Arts and Entertainment TV channel publicity gave the series a regular viewing slot and found a devoted, growing audience.

"Hornie" fans

The publicity machine spotted the potential in the Celtic good looks of Ioan Gruffudd – little matter that no-one could pronounce his real name, when you have a stage name like Horatio Hornblower. AandE set up a discussion book club on the eleven Hornblower novels in sequence. Each month a novel was discussed and dissected. A moderator could intervene to steer or stir discussion and contribute information. John Forester and Sanford Sternlicht were among them.

Adulation

Meanwhile these discussions were proving popular and a fan club for the actor and for 'Hornblower' was then added to their website. Internet conversation sprang up between

pseudonymous fans, presumably mostly female, describing their sensations, travel plans to visit the 'Indy' in St Katherine's dock in London and even to camp outside Gruffudd's flat for a glimpse of their idol. It looks like a reverse of *Notting Hill*.

Napoleon blown apart

The final novel in the closing month was *Hornblower in the West Indies* which I was invited to moderate. The factual bits were difficult enough – the death of Napoleon? Straightforward arsenic poisoning, or, gastric cancer? But, he was putting on weight when he died. One biographer claimed four separate poisons killed him. *Nature* gave one theory, other authorities differed. Slavery was abolished earlier in Britain than by the United States, how did that affect the plot?

Passions persist

The discussion turned to the passions of Hornblower and Lady Barbara and stayed there! No more literary tangling when Barbara had reassured the insecure Hornblower that she had only ever loved him. But, he had not only ever loved her. And they all lived happily ever after.

Still forging ahead with technology!

SOON – A direct link on our Website to A&E's C S Forester Book Club. Enjoy being part of the discussions. The present book is *The Captain from*

Connecticut and the next two will be *Death to the French* (UK) or *Rifleman Dodd* (US) and *The Gun*.

www.csforester.org / www.aande.com

Colin E Blogg

FANTASTIC NEWS – John Forester has finally obtained permission to publish his biography on C S Forester, *The Novelist and the Storyteller*. The proposed format is two volumes, paperback, 6x9", approximately 400 pages per volume. No date yet set for publication.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIETY BUSINESS

The AGM was held on Saturday 1 April 2000 in the Chapel Public House, Chapel Street, London NW1 at 2.15 p.m.

- ◆ There were eight members present.
- ◆ The Chairman produced an annual report* and announced the Society was in good shape with 65 members, including many from overseas. The website had generated a lot of interest and correspondence, mainly from the USA.
- ◆ It was decided to keep the Society based around C S Forester and all his works.
- ◆ The Treasurer reported that the Society was just about covering its costs. It was agreed, in order to save administrative costs, that membership renewals should be requested twice a year on either 30 June or 31 December depending on when members joined.
- ◆ The original aims of the Society were still relevant and the compilation of a bibliography of all his works was the most exciting. Colin Blogg was thanked for all his efforts. It is hoped that members will let the Society have a note of all their books, ephemera, etc to ensure completeness.
- ◆ An aim not yet achieved was the advice on how to preserve and protect precious books.
- ◆ No change was necessary in how the Society was run at present.
- ◆ The three Committee Members were re- elected.
*copy available on request
- ◆ The real event of the day then followed – reading of *U97*. Robert Willox judiciously cut the play by one third and members at the meeting were volunteered for the different characters. There being only two female members present, several of the men had to speak in high voices! This all added to the drama and fun. Robert was congratulated on having done such a good job. We now await its appearance on the stage!

Pat Millard

DON'T FORGET SAN FRANCISCO MEETING – OCTOBER 2000

C S FORESTER - superb storyteller - turning pages of fiction into pages of history

The ability to write superb stories of the sea is given to few authors. When one such is found, his works are given a place of honour on the bookshelf and all others who seek to reach his peak of excellence are measured against his standards.

Such a man was C S Forester. For more than fifty years I have read and reread his "Hornblower" stories. With the reopening of the lovely books once again, I step back into the days of "Nelson's Navy". To my mind the secret of Forester's success is that he wrote not so much as a teller of rattling good tales, but as recounter of events in the life of a sea officer who seemed to stride from the pages of fiction into the pages of history.

The seasick Hornblower on board *HMS Justianian* became the dashing frigate captain and, climbing the ladder of promotion, at last hoisted his flag as Admiral.

The climb was not easy. His outward face revealed nothing of the inner man. He lived as all men do with fear, doubt and anxiety as his travelling companions.

The sheer brilliance of Forester's narrative is utterly breathtaking. For example, when Leighton's flagship *Pluto* is dismayed and drifting on a lee shore, Hornblower in the *Sutherland* decides to take her in tow. The ships come dangerously close to one another. Here, I quote "blasphemy cracked all round." A lesser writer would dredge the gutter and give us the filthy words. This ability to create vivid word pictures is a prime example of masterly writing.

One day I chanced to see *The Hornblower Companion* in the window of a bookshop reputed for its steep prices. It was in a sale and priced twelve shillings and sixpence. I would not now part with that book for a King's ransom.

It tells the story behind the creation of the Hornblower books, and includes exquisite drawings of daily happenings in Hornblower's life.

Another book complimentary to the works of Forester came from the fluent pen of C Northcote Parkinson entitled *The Life and Times of Horatio Hornblower*. Whilst taking liberties with Forester's work, it is so brilliantly penned that it does not diminish, but rather whets, the appetite of readers to return to the original novels. I am fortunate in possessing all the Hornblower books together with the Daily Express series in 1966 of Hornblower and the Crisis, for whilst that book graces my shelves, the drawings in the Express are utterly captivating. Others may seek to emulate C S Forester but none can ever aspire to his brilliance.

Richard W S Miller
June 2000

Previously published in the Nelson Dispatch

10th Earl of Dundonald : Hornblower inspiration?

BBC Radio Scotland are making a second run of their series *First Editions*. In this series they are exploring the "real life" inspiration behind literary characters. In a forthcoming programme they will be focussing on Thomas Cochrane, 10th Earl of Dundonald, as the possible original for Hornblower. Provisionally scheduled for transmission during August 2000.

MEDIA NEWS

Radio 4 Thought for the Day, 22nd June 2000. Mention was made of the human frailty of Hornblower who was concerned about the appearance of his skinny legs despite being an apparently courageous naval officer.

Channel 4 broadcast *The African Queen* on Saturday 2nd June. Recommended viewing by *The Week*.



READ THEM. COLLECT THEM?

No 1 in an occasional series

Collecting C S Forester books

"The keeping of pets separates humans from lower animals"***, but reading and collecting books must come a close second as a discriminator. The first book read and retained was often a gift. After that, success depends on timing and cash.

GIFTS: The ideal favourite Aunt has a deep affection, a bottomless purse and provides a new C S Forester volume each birthday and Christmas for 25 years to complete the set. Sadly, my fairy godmother died before the Hornblower saga was completed and so the magazine *John Bull* had to fill the gap. To make a wish list for the kind Aunt, look at the first left-hand printed page near the front of one of CSF's books. There should be listed most of his works, and certainly those published by the same publisher, usually Michael Joseph in UK, and Little, Brown & Company in US (often in paperbacks as Penguin or Back Bay). Each of these publishers has most of the Hornblower saga novels in print, and others besides, and they are therefore readily obtainable.

(See Books in Print)

A sign of the times is that even so-called best-sellers soon vanish from the hardback shelves and the titles are to be found only second-hand in that form unless taken up in a book club edition.

BORROWING: Once all available new books have been acquired, read and retained, the reader will either be sated or hooked. I was hooked, and spent a week of every school holiday re-reading my growing collection; walking, three miles each way, reading, to the public library to borrow three volumes a day.

SALES: Other inexpensive sources of reading copies are yard sales, garage sales, jumble sales, estate sales, and charity shops etc. Dealers often get there first and strip out anything of value but will leave otherwise perfect books without dust jackets.

The car boot sale is a peculiarly British form of Sunday worship and may yield the occasional collector's gem.

BOOK FAIRS: More disciplined by far are the increasingly popular Book Fairs. They tend to be

held in the largest room with access to a bar in market towns. Career, or occasional booksellers, load up their vans and collapsible bookshelves and sit close to their pitch whilst swapping news, prices and selling to one another and the public, who pay a modest entrance fee and may browse all day thereafter. The catalogue deserves scrutiny to ensure that those who specialise in what you want can be identified. Prices (marked in pencil on the first available right-hand page) may be negotiable, particularly if already high and you make several purchases. It often pays to look widely and ask around. As for instance, I recently found a 1st edition Harry Potter, £100 cheaper than an identical copy at another pitch ten yards away (just one month post-publication!). Our own John Norman of **Surprise Books** is often there too.

Advance notice will be given of the Book Fairs in the local press and in second-hand bookshops.

SECOND-HAND BOOKSHOPS: These vary immensely in quality, selection, price, stock and helpfulness. Some specialists, such as **Nigel Williams** in London, have an immense stock of dust-jacketed, good quality, first editions, but the prices reflect the effort that went into finding such a treasure trove. **Ulysses**, near the British Museum is knowledgeable, friendlier and less expensive. In the United States, in CS Forester's own Berkeley, California, '**Serendipity**' is the ultimate bookshop. Here is even a special glass-fronted cabinet containing gems of C S Forester's works, hosted by Mr Howard, a leading expert. Maritime bookshops are worth visiting such as **Columbia Trading Company** in Hyannis, on Cape Cod, MA. (A handy diversion whilst waiting for ferries to Nantucket) or **Anthony J. Simmonds**, close to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London.

Most general booksellers will have a few CSF's in stock in various conditions. Once in a collecting lifetime you may stumble across a collection before anyone else – as I did, thanks to returning my ancient gardener to the **Blackwell's** family home containing the 'antiquarian shop' in a nearby village.

BOOKS/AUDIOTAPES OF C S FORESTER NOVELS CURRENTLY IN PRINT

- Hornblower & the Commodore A**
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- Hornblower & the Ship of the Line**
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- Hornblower & the "Atropos"**
ISBN 0-7871-1960-1 (Dove Audio). 1999 New Star Media
- Hornblower and the Atropos**
ISBN 1-85998-977-2 Hodder & Stoughton Limited. Audio 1998
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ISBN 1-8599-8996-9 Hodder & Stoughton. Audio. 1998
- Hornblower During the Crisis**
ISBN 0-7871-1963-6 Dove Audio. 1999
- C S Forester & the Hornblower Saga** (by Sanford Sternlicht)
ISBN 0-8156-0621-4 Syracuse University Press. Revised. 1999
- Hornblower**
ISBN 0-316-28735-0 Little, Brown & Company. (no date yet)
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ISBN 1-85998-998-5 Hodder & Stoughton Limited. Audio. 1999
- Flying Colours (Horatio Hornblower Adventure)**
ISBN 0-7540-0252-7 Chivers Audio Books. 1999
- Happy Return: complete & unabridged**
ISBN 0-7540-0137-7 Chivers Audio Books. 1998
- Hornblower and the Crisis : complete & unabridged**
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- Lord Hornblower : complete & unabridged**
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Hornblower: Beat to Quarters

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ISBN 0-316-28943-4 Back Bay. 1989

Admiral Hornblower, Omnibus

ISBN 0-1401-1940-X Penguin Books. 1990

Admiral Hornblower in the West Indies (Hornblower Saga)

ISBN 0-316-28941-8 Back Bay. 1989

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ISBN 0-7089-4215-6 Ulverscroft Large Print Books. 2000

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ISBN 0-14-011939-6 Penguin Books. 1989

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ISBN 8-43223-138-X Seix Barral Paperback. 1998

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ISBN 0-87021-230-3 Naval Institute Press. 1989

ISBN 0-8488-2267-6 Amereon Limited (date not set)

ISBN 0-7838-0363-X Macmillan Library Reference. 1998 (Large Type)



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New books can be bought at a discount (and a commission to the CSF Society) from www.amazon.com/ / www.amazon.co.uk

Colin E. Blogg

Sources:

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- Understanding Book-Collecting Grant Uden 1982 Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, Suffolk.
- ** BBC Radio Home Service, in a play ca. 1968

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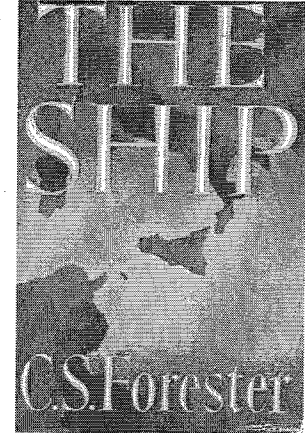
QUESTIONS & CORRESPONDENCE

"I am a scout and I am working for my Forester badge. I was wondering if you would be able to send me information on Oak, Ash, Sycamore, Beech, Elm, Birch, Horse Chestnut, Lime, Plane, Field Maple, Spruce and Pine, and how they look in Summer and Winter. Could you also send me information about tending for woods and plantations?" Thank you.
Barry

A question has been asked 'How much interest would there be, if an effort was made to compile a book of Hornblower short stories previously unpublished in book form? Would you buy it?'

QUIZ 3 answers

- 1 = d; 2 = c; 3 = b; 4 = c
 5 = d; 6 = d (p125); 7 = a
 8 = c Captain the Honourable Miles Ernest Troughton-Harrington-Yorke
 9 = a
 10 = Allied Submarine Detection Investigation Committee



HORNBLOWER'S UNLUCKY PROTÉGÉS by ©Ronald W Meister, June 2000

A milestone in the young Hornblower's career came with his presentation at Court in January 1806, following his supervision of Nelson's funeral procession. On that occasion, Lord St Vincent introduced the twenty-nine year old Hornblower as his *protégé*, leaving Hornblower 'wondering how much was implied by that word'.¹ On returning to the Admiralty, St Vincent expressed hope that Hornblower himself might some day present another young officer at the Palace.

Hornblower was fortunate enough to have not one, but two patrons during his early career. Before St Vincent, Admiral Cornwallis aided Hornblower's advancement, exercising his prerogative as retiring Commander-in-Chief by promoting Hornblower to post rank.²

Alas, Hornblower himself never fulfilled St Vincent's prediction, and except for Bush, never saw any of his subordinates succeed. To the contrary, virtually every promising young officer serving under Hornblower came to grief.

The first of these of whom we know was young Henry Wellard, the volunteer aboard the *Renown* who suffered so cruelly at the hands of the mad Captain Sawyer.³ Though Wellard continued to serve well aboard the *Renown*, and may well have played a role in Sawyer's death⁴, he was drowned two years later in the capsizing of HM Cutter *Rapid*.⁵

Hornblower next saw promise in Midshipman Longley, the nephew of Lt Gerard, who was serving in the *Sutherland*. 'Something might be made of that boy,' Hornblower thought.⁶ Longley showed courage and skill helping Hornblower escape from a French attack, but he was killed in the battle of Rosas Bay.

Peter Snow, noted broadcaster, chairman of Radio 4 Mastermind admits to a liking for 'racy novels, good adventure stories,... and books about the sea. I'm an absolute glutton for CS Forester's Hornblower novels.'

Later in his career, Hornblower showed a fatherly fondness for the likeable Lt Perceval Mound, commander of the bomb ketch *Harvey* during the Baltic campaign. Mound performed many valuable services, including bombarding the *Blancheffleur* and spirited the villainous ship's clerk Braun away from the Peterhof after his attempt on the life of the Czar.⁷ Hornblower developed a genuine affection for the twenty-year-old Mound, thinking that his own first son, had he lived, might have grown up to be like him. Mound was killed soon after, during the siege of Daugavgriva.

Hornblower's most faithful follower, of course, was Bush, who at long last achieved promotion after his escape from France. Post rank was the height of Bush's ambitions, and he was the only one of Hornblower's followers to attain it. But even Bush met his end obeying Hornblower's orders, in the attack on Caudebec. Bush's loyalty to Hornblower cost him first his foot, then his life.⁸

At the end of his active career, Hornblower acted paternally towards his young assistants Gerard (who advanced from midshipman to flag lieutenant) and Spendlove.⁹ But it was too late in Hornblower's career for him to see them attain high rank, especially in peacetime. Hornblower was destined never to fulfil Lord St Vincent's hope.

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2. *Hornblower and the Hotspur*, Ch XXV
3. *Lieutenant Hornblower*, Ch II
4. C Northcote Parkinson, *The Life and Times of Horatio Hornblower*, Appendix 2
5. *Lieutenant Hornblower*, Ch XVIII
6. *Ship of the Line*, Ch V
7. *Commodore Hornblower*, Ch IX, XII
8. *Lord Hornblower*, Ch XV
9. *Admiral Hornblower in the West Indies*, passim.



BOOK REVIEW

Sanford Sternlicht; *C S Forester and the Hornblower Saga*. New York, Syracuse University Press.
Revised edition 1999. ISBN 0-8156-0621-4

At first sight this is another by-product of the TV Hornblower industry but it is a welcome re-publication of an elusive literary biography first published 18 years ago. Far more than the Hornblower saga is covered in an eminently readable, (and rarely severely critical) style. Sternlicht succeeds in putting the saga into the contexts of contemporary world events and domestic changes as well as describing his development as a writer.

The popular success of Hornblower is attributed partly to the need at that time of recent and imminent wars, to have a hero who could represent the flawed, self-doubting but nonetheless heroic, common man. Hornblower also faced a world threatened by a tyrannical dictator and the personal tragedies of shipwreck, capture, surrender, deaths of his wife, children and lover. He rose above all, from humble origins to social and professional achievements far beyond any in reality. He provided both escapism and motivation for the English-speaking peoples who had little other encouragement at the time when Hornblower stories were being serialised weekly. The magazine novelettes were as avidly followed by a pre-television public as any modern TV soap. Remember that CSF went to the USA to write pro-British propaganda at the beginning of the war. Ironically, *The General* was distributed to the German forces as compulsory reading.

Sternlicht too, ponders on the model for Hornblower and having emphasised the immense research put into CSF's writing, believes Cochrane to be the closest fit, but acknowledges that Hornblower was CSF's alter ego, and even 'concretized the psychological mainspring of Forester's art'.

An excursion into more philosophical writing (*Randall and the River of Time*) showed promise but not enough to sustain a series for a new hero. Instead, CSF began to emerge as a substantial naval historian of modern, Napoleonic and American wars. *The Naval War of 1812* (US title *The Age of Fighting Sail*) bears comparison to standard texts. I doubt that Forester would have liked Sternlicht's scattered neologisms eg being described as an 'historiographer', but he would have been content that enough mystery is still left. *The Hornblower Saga* fills in some gaps on the why's and wherefore's of CSF's life and works. It becomes clear why the saga should be read in the order of writing to reflect the changing world politics and domestic state. It does not explain CSF's isolation from other writers or lack of literary recognition. Reference to CSF's enormous output and strict discipline in writing is omitted. His mastery of the short story is unrecorded – perhaps left for the next biographer? Other questions are unasked – if CSF's hatred of totalitarianism resulted from his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, why did he not write about it? Did he learn nothing at Guy's? What honour from the Queen did he reject in 1953?

Sternlicht has provided a useful contribution to the knowledge of CSF's life and works, and well worth reading.

Colin E Blogg/ 29.2.2000



FUN SECTION

QUIZ 4 – Hornblower in the West Indies

1. What ships did Hornblower have at his command when he arrived in New Orleans?
2. What were the suggested causes of death of Napoleon Bonaparte on St Helena?
3. St Elizabeth of Hungary is probably a fiction. True or False?
4. The number of ships under Hornblower's command seemed to have varied according to the text, what were they reported to be?
5. How much 'head money' did Hornblower receive for each slave set free?
6. From what height did Spendlove jump to freedom in the dark?
7. Which two nuts almost came to blows over a natural bee?
8. Hornblower had to deal with three mutinies in his career. Name the Captains involved in each case.
9. Name the three flags flown by officers of flag rank in the Royal Navy. For a bonus, to which squadrons do they then belong?
10. Which flag did Hornblower fly?