

# Reflections

The Journal of the *CS Forester Society*

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- The *US Armed Services* editions of CS Forester titles

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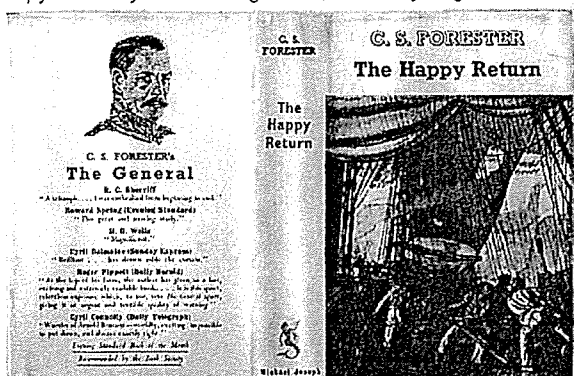
A new cache of letters and new biographical information about CS Forester

The inspiration for Lady Barbara

# Spoilt for Choice: how to obtain a copy of *The Happy Return*

## Jetse Reijenga

*The Happy Return* was the first book in the Hornblower series, written by C.S. Forester in 1937. It began the most successful fiction series featuring a naval war hero of all time. The book was filmed in 1951 and reprinted over and over again. And now a new 2006 paperback issue is on sale everywhere. So why bother about getting an older copy? And if you want to get one, how do you go about it?

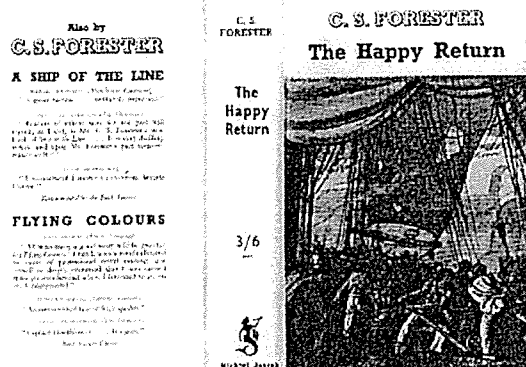


1: Michael Joseph First Edition, 1937

I have my own reasons for seeking hardcover older (and preferably first) editions. Paperbacks can be read several times, but if "several" runs into many, and the books are carried around in a pocket, as they can be, the spine falls apart and pages get lost. All the Hornblower Penguins from the 1950's which I inherited from my father have been re-read and browsed to pieces. But I came to love hardback first editions with complete dust jackets in protective transparent sleeves. One sees, feels and smells some of the thrills of the first owner. At least that's what I imagine. I soon found out that imagination can be an expensive hobby - or should I say addiction?

Illustrations 1-2 reveal a change of back-cover text between the Michael Joseph first edition of 1937 and the second of 1938. Number 1 reveals that Mr. H.G. Wells (1866-1946) the famous "father of Science Fiction" thought *The General* was "magnificent", while number 2 carries reactions to *A Ship of the Line* and *Flying Colours*.

Next to the odd fête, jumble sale or car boot sale (you never know...), secondhand bookshops and the internet provide the best opportunities for obtaining Forester novels. It helps if the bookseller knows what he has in stock, and on which shelf he put it. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case in my country. So for me, a stay in the UK means treasure hunting. I once bought six Foresters in an Edinburgh bookshop and there were still some expensive first editions on a top shelf when I left.



2: Michael Joseph Second Edition, 1938 (?)

On the internet, I have used eBay<sup>1</sup>. As I write, eBay lists 6 copies of *The Happy Return*. There is one first edition hardback without dj (dust jacket) at \$70 BuyitNow, meaning the first bidder wins. The use of the word "win" is interesting: it means you pay for the item and the postage! Then there is one 1952 Michael Joseph hardback with dj and a starting bid of £8. The other four are Penguin paperbacks priced at \$1-\$4.



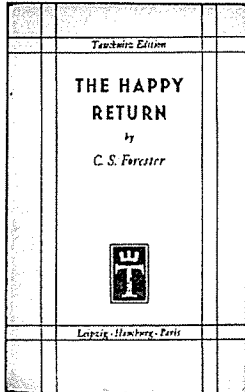
3: Two Hardcover Michael Joseph editions of 1949

Besides such auction sites as eBay, the internet offers many more possibilities. Most bookstores have their complete database on line, and for an increasing number of them, the internet is the only sales outlet. Another development is the appearance of websites that search the combined databases of many individual bookshops. There are even meta-search sites that browse the aforementioned search sites! Their quality differs in many respects: advanced search tools, detail of description, inclusion of cover scans, prices and of course choice.

For comparison, and without claiming completeness, I have searched on these different kinds of site for *The*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ebay.com/>

Happy Return. The results are in the first bar graph (5). Abebooks<sup>2</sup>, Usedbook<sup>3</sup> and Bookfinder<sup>4</sup> offer most choice. As to content, it is logical to assume there is a large overlap in the copies they offer and one might argue that Abebooks is best because it has the largest choice. It is my first choice of convenience for advanced search, but it is always worthwhile to try several sites. Choosebooks<sup>5</sup>, for example, finds a first edition of *The Happy Return* in English, published 1937 by Tauchnitz of Hamburg and Leipzig, who published books in English from 1841 until 1955. In other words, the seller assures me it was published the same year as the Michael Joseph edition. There is also a 1949 edition in German from the same publisher.<sup>6</sup> Neither was found by Abebooks.



4: First Tauchnitz edition of *The Happy Return*, 1937.

At the time of writing, Abebooks (with more than 13,500 booksellers) listed some 11,000 books by CSF, of which 5,200 were offered by booksellers in the USA, 3,200 in the UK, 1,100 in Canada, 450 in Australia and the rest from 25 other countries. This includes translated issues.

Currently some 360 copies of *The Happy Return* or *Beat to Quarters* are for sale through Abebooks. Of the 185 *Happy Returns*, 125 were from UK booksellers, and of the 154 copies of *Beat to Quarters*, 128 were from US booksellers.

Looking at prices of different editions of *The Happy Return* produces a nice shallow bell curve (6). The expensive top segment of course comprises older hardback editions, and the bottom blip cheaper paperback "reading copies only".

The number of available copies varies daily, on account of sales and additions to the stock. I monitored the number during a period of 5 weeks.

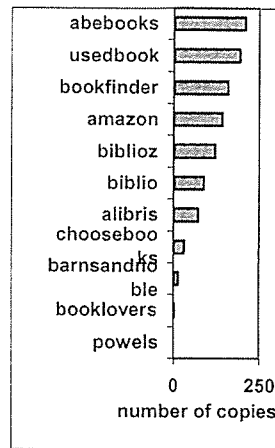
<sup>2</sup> <http://abebooks.co.uk>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.usedbooksearch.co.uk/>

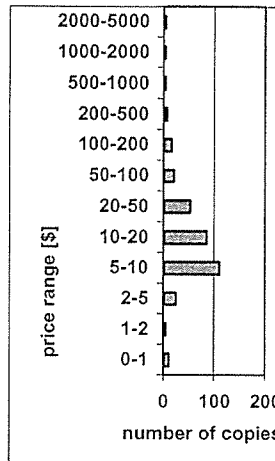
<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bookfinder.com/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.choosebooks.com/index.do>

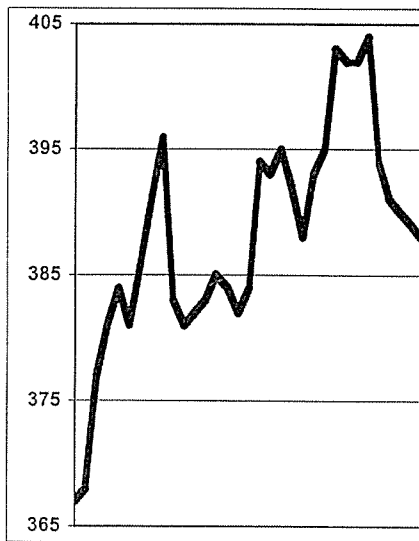
<sup>6</sup> [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_Bernhard-Tauchnitz](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Bernhard-Tauchnitz)



5: Copies of *The Happy Return* listed by different web sites



6: Editions of *The Happy Return* available through Abebooks



7: Day-to-day fluctuation of available copies

## Advanced Search

Not everything is on the internet, and Google or Abebooks do not find everything that is there, but Abebooks advanced search option seem a good starting point, as seen from the choice of search fields.

\* Author:  \* Publisher:

\* Title:  Published Date:

\* ISBN:  Price (€):

\* Keywords:  Bookseller Country:

Boolean Searching:  On  Off  
(Use AND, OR, NOT to modify results. [Here Info](#))

(or clear fields)

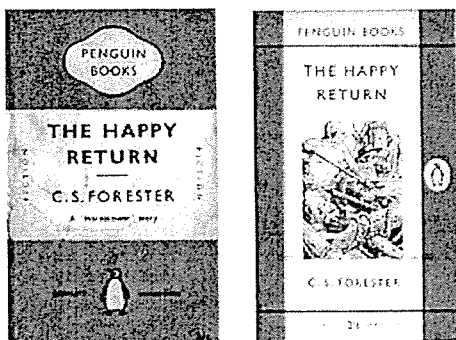
Refine your search with the following (optional) attributes.

Binding:  Sort Results By:

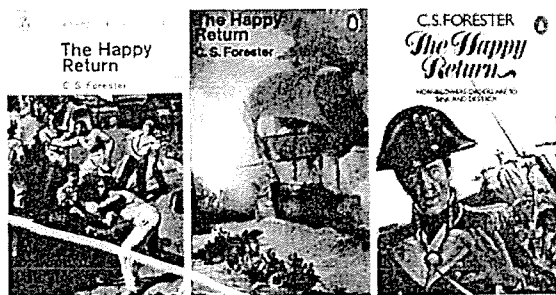
Attributes:  First Edition  Signed Results Per Page:   
 Dust Jacket

## Cover Art

The cover art of *The Happy Return* reprints reflects trends in the publishing world spanning half a century, or even the history of publishing houses such as Penguin, who eventually bought Michael Joseph.



7: Penguin editions of 1952 and 1959



8: Penguin editions of 1965, 1971 and 1980

## Translations

Forester's first Hornblower novel was published in numerous languages: some of the titles are tabled below.

GB	<i>The Happy Return</i>
USA	<i>Beat to Quarters</i>
D	<i>Der Kapitän</i>
NL	<i>Met verzegelde orders</i>
S	<i>Order och kontraorder</i>
N	<i>Den lykkelige hjemkomst</i>
DK	<i>Kaptajn Hornblower</i>

FIN	<i>Hornblower Laivanpaallikkona</i>
F	<i>Retour à bon Port</i>
E	<i>Aventuras de Horacio Hornblower</i>
I	<i>Il felice Ritorno</i>
P	<i>O Feliz Regresso do Hornblower</i>
PL	<i>Szcześliwy Powrót</i>
RUS	<i>Все по местам!</i>
ISR	<i>החזרה השמחה</i>
	Also titles in Chinese and Japanese

Foreign language titles are in most cases literal translations of "The Happy Return" or variations thereof but the Russian title *Все по местам!* literally means "Beat to Quarters". Some exceptions are German and Danish ("the Captain") where the German publisher probably thought it a good companion for *The General*, published in the previous year. The Dutch ("Under Sealed Orders") and Spanish titles ("Adventures of Horatio Hornblower") are rather vague, but the Swedish title ("Order and CounterOrder") clearly refers to the fact that *Natividad* had to be fought twice, on account of the intervening change in the political balance. Currently available through Abebooks are 102 German, 13 French and 2 Dutch editions.

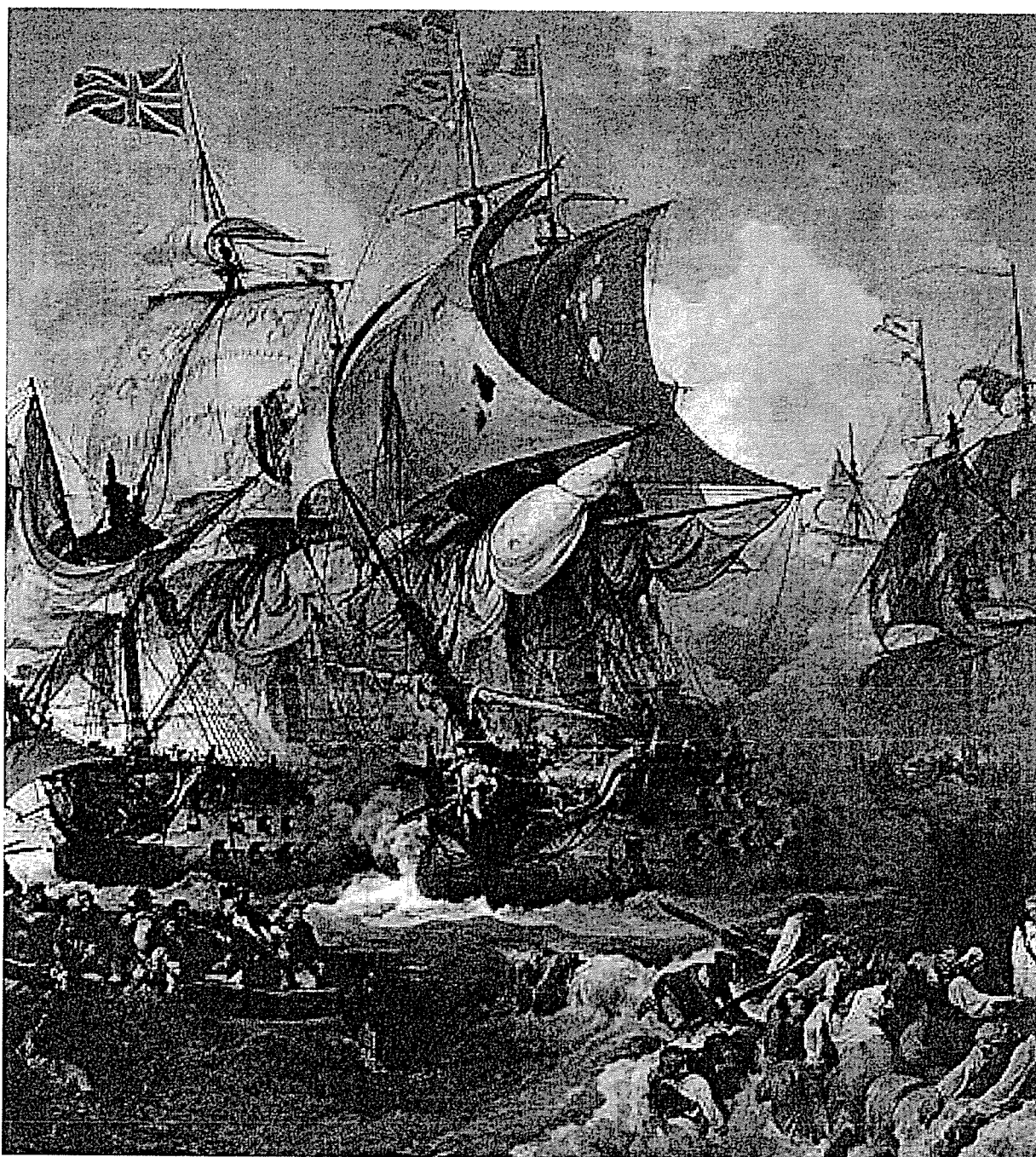
## Conclusion

The number of available copies of *The Happy Return* or *Beat to Quarters* (from 1st editions up to recent re-issues) fluctuates daily. There's one for every kind of budget. More reissues will undoubtedly appear in future but of course the number of 1st editions will remain limited. Those precious copies present in libraries of collectors like me, will eventually become available again for a new generation of Hornblower aficionados, in just a few decades.

I sometimes wonder about past and future owners of these latter-day treasures. For example, I have a hardcover Michael Joseph 1st edition of *The Ship*, with a torn dust jacket but well preserved. An inscription reveals that it was first read by RAF squadron members on the important base of Saint Athan (Wales) in September 1943.<sup>7</sup> It came to me when I "won" it on eBay last year.

I hope someone in the 2040's will similarly enjoy reading this copy, about heroes in vividly painted action in a long-tortuous war. Which is exactly how you and I enjoy *The Happy Return* and all the other Hornblower novels!

<sup>7</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF\\_St\\_Athan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_St_Athan)



*A SEASICK SAILOR – at war with his own inadequacy*  
*TILMAN SPRECKELSEN (translated by ROLF VOGEL)*

*POWDER-SMOKE IS NOT THE PROBLEM: amid the thunder and flame of the guns, and with shipmates falling all around him, Horatio Hornblower is in his element. He instantly recognizes the exigencies of battle and instantly gives the orders that will inevitably win a surprise success over a far-superior enemy. It is only afterwards that things become really difficult. It's only then that he quails before*

*the hostile broadsides and agonises over a problem already resolved or its horrendous butcher's bill of dead and wounded. It's only then that the conquering hero struggles to retain his mask of grim determination before his peers and subordinates (and sometimes his superiors) – and takes welcome relief in the solitude of his cabin, dog-tired and mired in inconsolable depression.*

The bedrock of the Hornblower Saga is the sheer tension between the flawed hero's self-image and the image he shows to the world. Perhaps the hero just had to be like this, to continue to hold the interest of so many readers through eleven books. And perhaps the English author CS Forester, who created the Saga between 1937 and 1966, might still be writing, but for his untimely death halfway through his work on Hornblower and the Crisis. The eleven have now been republished, after being out-of-print for several years, in a new German paperback edition, from which Hornblower may well draw a new lease of life.

### A contrary hero

For contemporaries of the era of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, Hornblower's career in the Royal Navy was a success story without precedent. A story which opens in 1794 with Mr Midshipman Hornblower and runs until 1823 (Hornblower in the West Indies) – not to mention a short coda, set in 1848 and entitled *The Last Encounter*. Coming from comparative social obscurity (by the standards of the day) and with no aristocratic patron, Hornblower works his passage by sheer ability and against all odds from the midshipmen's berth to flag rank. Forester lays great stress upon the unprotected isolation of the seventeen-year-old Midshipman, whose steady and improbable promotion is made all the more ironic by the author himself. Forester makes Lieutenant Hornblower start his voyage as the fifth of the five lieutenants on a ship of the line, but as the novel progresses he methodically eliminates anyone and everyone who could have prevented his hero's advancement.

Hornblower's own embarkations present a completely different prospect. In book after book, the beginning of voyage after voyage sees him stricken with chronic seasickness. Every substantial wave will turn his stomach, its endurance already been taxed to the limit by the slight rocking of a ship at anchor or underway on a calm swell. To add to these torments, and his ingrained self-doubt, Hornblower is also so tone-deaf that he even fails to recognize the British National Anthem played by the band of a French frigate encountered during the last days of the Peace of Amiens. His intellectual capacities are fuelled by his classical education and a considerable flair for mathematics; nonetheless he remains irremediably introspective and self-critical, attributing the most contemptible motives to his actions and regarding himself as utterly ridiculous, even in his own eyes. To cap it all, this very British character's birthday is the anniversary of his country's greatest humiliation. Hornblower was born on 4 July 1776 – the very day on which, far across the Atlantic, the American Declaration of Independence was signed!

Torn between his duty as an officer and his overwhelming sense of his own insignificance, Hornblower recognizes that although life in the Navy seems to present a series of crises, in reality it is one endless crisis.



While struggling to cope with one emergency, he must already be thinking about the next one, be it (as in the second volume) an obviously paranoid but all-powerful Captain on a single-ship mission to the West Indies, or the intrigues of high politics, which in the blink of an eye turn enemies into allies and allies into mortal foes, or the final irony of a sudden ceasefire which sees Lieutenant Hornblower back ashore in England but unable to see his well-earned promotion to Commander put into effect. In times of peace, commanders are ten-a-penny to the Admiralty, and so Hornblower is plunged into what is probably the nadir of his career, forced to earn a crust as a professional gambler at the card tables of Portsmouth. This – and a misconceived sense of obligation – motivates his premature and obviously doomed marriage to Maria, the daughter of the down-at-heel landlady of his lodging house. A more durable result is the consolidation of his relationship with his only friend, the brash warhorse Bush who will accompany him on many further commissions.





What ultimately attracts the reader to Hornblower and his world is not only his depressive, contrary and utterly engaging character, but – in at least equal measure – the skill and detail with which Forester delineates the nautical scene. In 1963, when the author was seriously stricken with a longstanding and soon-to-be fatal illness, he was writing an essay to be incorporated into a book which would be an apologia for himself and his hero. He explains how, in his much younger days, he had acquired several bound volumes of *The Naval Gazette*, an in-service journal of the era of the Napoleonic wars, how he conceived the profile of his unlikely hero and how he created the first Hornblower novel. But although the first to be written, this novel begins in the middle of the chronological sequence of the Saga, with Hornblower married for some time and firmly established upon the ladder of the Captains' List. Two more volumes quickly followed – but it was only the sustained popularity of their sequels which motivated Forester to tell the story of the early stages of Hornblower's career. In the course of which, he would relate in careful detail the story of Maria and her two children – all of whom he had already killed off in sickness or labour, to enable Hornblower to win the hand of his admiral's wife Lady Barbara after an affair with yet another woman.

### Readers and their dreams

It was Forester's intensive and enthusiastic interest in naval history which stimulated the page-turning descriptions of the sailor's life which his fans so love and for which others all-too-often choose to ignore him.

Given the subject-matter, no-one should have undue expectations of a too-refined style. Forester's writing is almost consistently precise; only occasionally does there creep in something so obviously crass as to be funny, howlers reminiscent of those made on the course in *Creative Writing* which is so memorable a feature of the film *Throw Momma from the Train!*<sup>8</sup> In *Hornblower* and the

<sup>8</sup> *Throw Momma from the Train* (1987) is a comedy film inspired by Hitchcock's 1951 thriller *Strangers on a Train*, to which it refers. It had mixed reviews but was a major box-office success.

*Hotspur*, for instance, having emerged unscathed from a desperate second confrontation in dangerous waters with the big French frigate, Hornblower announces: "We are going back to watch Brest again." The melodramatic pause. "Loire or no Loire." And after another dangerous night encounter, it is the privilege of Hornblower's best friend Bush to ridicule the poorly-aimed salvos of a French battery – from a safe distance – with the words "Fire away, Monseer le Frog... The damage is done." But such nonchalant triumphalism is untypical of Hornblower himself. He too fights wholeheartedly against "Boney" (who is soon to crown himself Emperor), or against the "Dons" and "Dagoes", but because he is incapable of either human warmth or outbursts of emotion, he always remains somewhat aloof. For that reason, it was hardly surprising that Gregory Peck should have been the obvious choice for the lead role in the first big Hornblower film of 1951.

Nowadays hardly anyone knows that Forester wrote many novels apart from the Hornblower Saga, or that one of them was the inspiration for the film *The African Queen*. In the public consciousness, Forester is cast as the author of what Friedrich Sieburg, writing in 1958 and referring to the Saga, called "the best and most straightforward literary entertainment of our time". Sieburg notes that, despite Forester's effort to avoid any kind of misrepresentation in his descriptions of the naval milieu, it was nonetheless inevitable that these fine books should, after all, contain some element of delusion. But he finds no fault with Forester. For the delusions are the kind which, time after time, will induce adventure-hungry boys to dream of a parent-free life on the High Seas.

A dream that will last for eleven volumes. At least!<sup>9</sup>

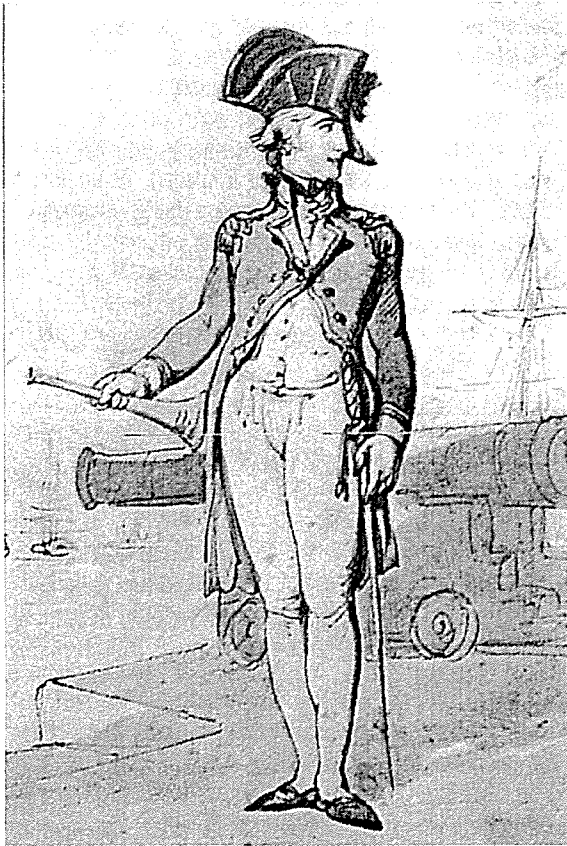
### The Hornblower novels, in the order they were written

1. *The Happy Return (Beat to Quarters)* – 1937
2. *A Ship of the Line* - 1938
3. *Flying Colours* – 1938
4. *The Commodore (Commodore Hornblower)* – 1945
5. *Lord Hornblower* – 1946
6. *Mr Midshipman Hornblower* – 1950
7. *Lieutenant Hornblower* – 1952
8. *Hornblower and the Atropos* – 1953
9. *[Admiral] Hornblower in the West Indies* – 1958
10. *Hornblower and the Hotspur* - 1962
11. *Hornblower and the Crisis* (unfinished, & 2 short stories) - published posthumously in 1967.

<sup>9</sup> This article first appeared in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 14 November 2004.

# A “thin angular line upon the rim of the sea”

The Times reviews *The Happy Return*, 5 February 1937



## A FRIGATE IN THE PACIFIC

The detective novel and the travel book between them have almost ousted the good adventure story. What is a ship at sea but a convenient alternative to the outworn device of a week-end murder party: or what a port but a stepping-off place for any number of literary travellers collecting their polite, romantic observations upon its palaces lying side by side with its beggars, its rococo beauties or its ancient monuments? Unless we see the one from the stokehold and the other from a wharveside slum, when, of course, we have a “real life” novel. So it is with relief that we find that Mr Forester’s ship, being a frigate at sea in 1812 or thereabouts, has no stokehold, and that his story offers no mysteries except those of the sealed orders under which it begins and of the extraordinary capacity of seamen a century ago to survive the rigours of seven months at sea without once touching land. But it is plain, as Lydia goes gliding on into the Pacific, making a perfect landfall in that volcano-guarded bay, revictualling luxuriously in return for ammunition and supplies delivered to El Supremo, a self-styled deity whose rebellion against the Spanish Government in

Central America it was to England’s advantage to encourage, that she has a very remarkable commander. Hornblower, a modest, diffident, obstinate and capable man, is sickened by the sight of El Supremo’s tortures among the “unenlightened”; he has the utmost difficulty in concealing his dislike of the disciplinary floggings that are occasionally necessary even in his own command, yet in professional matters like the successful surprise attack on the Spanish frigate as she casts anchor in the bay after dark he shows himself an exceedingly good commander, and he is scrupulously attentive to duty.

It was then that fortune turned against him. It is not pleasant to have to inform the Viceroy of a country with whom one’s Government has overnight exchanged war for alliance that one has made over his only man-o’-war to the insurgents; nor is it consoling, when one has put her out of harm’s way in a second and more desperate battle, to be refused permission to enter any Spanish port to carry out urgent repairs. Even in the face of this, and with the added discomfort of being obliged to carry as a passenger a sister of Sir Arthur Wellesley, Captain Hornblower is angry but undaunted. All this and the voyage home and the Captain’s friendship with Lady Barbara, Mr Forester describes vividly and vigorously, making us see the thin angular line upon the rim of the sea that is an alien and exotic shore, making us hear the roar and crash of a broadside splintering enemy bulwarks and the flap of canvas before the occasional and useless puffs of air as Lydia lies becalmed.<sup>10</sup>

## Contributions to Reflections

Finished articles and letters on the Works and Days of CS Forester, or the contents of Reflections, are welcomed.

### GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Articles should be sent as email attachments in MS Word to: [velero@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:velero@tiscali.co.uk).

Text should be complete, coherent – and in English.

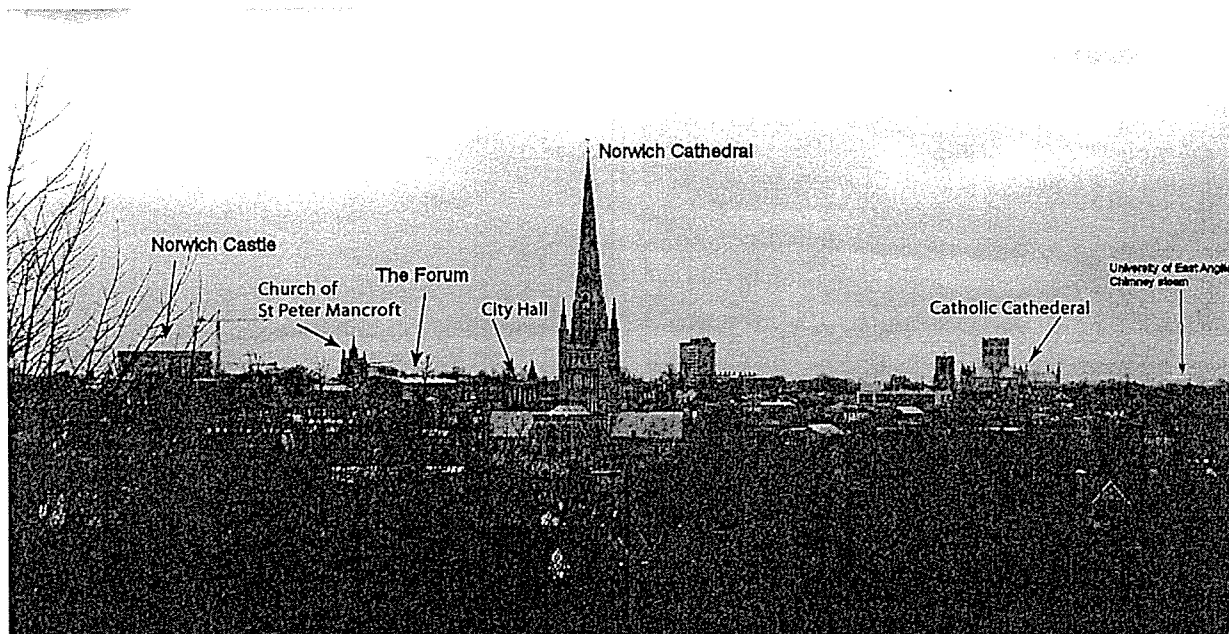
Statements made in articles should be referenced as they are done throughout this issue: i.e. author (if known), title, date of publication, page numbers.

In case of difficulty, the Editor will be glad to help.

- David Stead, Editor: Reflections

<sup>10</sup> The Times, 5 February 1937. Thanks to Colin Blogg for sending this historic Review. Illustration: Thomas Rowlandson





## Crime, punishment and... serendipity

### Adrian Taylor

*I regularly browse for CSF in the second-hand bookshops of Norwich; but over the last few years, at least three such outlets have closed in that "fine city".*

*In St Benedict's there used to be a quite rambling bookshop, which was run by an elderly gentleman who had started up the shop in the sixties, I think. I seem to recall that the shop sign stated "Scientific Instruments", though why it should have been called this, I do not know. Here there were precarious looking piles of books of a quite bewildering cross section of subjects. The gentleman himself sat to the rear of the shop and – if it is not too much to say of such a delightful old fellow, who passed on a few years ago – gave the impression of some sort of Lampwick figure (Lampwick being one of Dick Emery's characters, of course), as he walked with uncertain step between precipitous piles of books. Perhaps "Lampwick" is a mis-description for he was evidently a highly educated individual, a geologist by training and – I think – a member of CND. The shop closed down not long before the gentleman's demise and it is now being refurbished.*

*The other more recent closure was Freeman's Corner Bookshop, which was on the corner of King Street, not far from what used to be the Cattle Market. This bookshop was owned by the proprietor of The Tombland Bookshop (of which more later). The assistant at Freeman's Corner Bookshop was a highly-efficient gentleman who somehow called to mind the main character in Arnold Bennett's novel, Riceyman Steps. The bookshop was quite a large one, composed as it was of two large rooms and a cellar, which was reached by some winding stairs. In the cellar there were volumes which were perhaps less saleable than those in the rest of the shop. The assistant was evidently highly knowledgeable, particularly*

*as regards his present stock, which was as it ought to be one supposes, in a properly run concern. When Freeman's Corner Bookshop closed down a short while ago, all volumes were priced at £1.*

*The Magdalen Street Bookshop, which was almost opposite The King's Head public house, was a short-lived enterprise which closed down a few months ago. The assistant here was an attractive young lady and one couldn't help wondering whether some of the customers were as much attracted by her charms as by the volumes on offer. There was piped music playing, usually jazz, when I went there and this did not seem wholly appropriate to any studious pursuit. I certainly found it intrusive.*

*Now for those second-hand bookshops which are, thankfully, still in operation.*

*The Tombland Bookshop is in a fine location in the busy quarter of Tombland, which is not far from the Anglican Cathedral. From its doorway one can see the Erpingham Gate and the statue of Edith Cavell which was moved from its previous location near The Maid's Head when a roundabout was constructed some years ago. The bookshop itself has two floors, the upper one being reached by some winding stairs. Halfway up the stairs, on a landing, there is a bookcase of first editions, where one sometimes sees books by CS Forester: *Hunting the Bismarck* has been there, for instance. The bookshop also carries out a trade in new books. It may be noted that bags must be left at the counter.*

*On Elm Hill is to be found The Doormouse Bookshop. As its name suggests, this is a small bookshop but all the same it is worth a visit, particularly perhaps for those who*

are searching for the works of CS Forester. A few years ago, I picked up for a relative song a first edition of *The Peacemaker*, although it was a former public library book. To the rear of the shop the customer can see a cupboard-like room where the proprietor makes the tea. One section of the shop is a bit of a squeeze to enter. Goodness knows how those of a certain proportion manage to do so, very likely they give this part of the shop a miss but it is worth the effort if one has ventured there in the first place. So to the shelf near the counter (where the proprietor sits, perhaps pretending not to be too interested in your progress round his volumes) – and there is a selection of books by CS Forester. Elm Hill itself is a cobbled street – and not far from The Doormouse Bookshop there is a house with a blue plaque, which proclaims that the Paston family once lived there.

At St Giles, not far from the Roman Catholic Cathedral, is a second-hand bookshop which I have visited on perhaps four occasions. That is not to denigrate it, though, for it is well stocked with books on a good cross-section of subjects. There is a second-hand bookshop not far from the Market Place which for some reason I have only visited once. This is also well-stocked. There is also, of course, a fair smattering of charity shops in the city. Particularly to be recommended is the OXFAM shop in Magdalen Street. For the eagle-eyed book buyer, there are some real bargains to be acquired here. And one could close this brief survey by recommending that the visitor to Norwich, if they have tired of the bookshops and are in need of refreshment, go for a pint of “real ale” at The King’s Head in Magdalen Street, or a pot of tea at the new Cathedral refectory, where the oak structure is most admirable. And mull over a good book!

*Payment Deferred* shows CSF’s fine narrative qualities, as well as his marvellous skill at plotting a novel in which detail is added remorselessly to detail. I don’t suppose it is an original reflection that it has parallels with Dostoyevski’s *Crime and Punishment*, of which some at least may be fairly obvious to those who have read both works.

*Crime and Punishment* has a character called Marmeladov. He is not the villain, but he does have William Marble’s taste for liquor! “Raskolnikov had for some time been wanting to go and he had meant to help him. Marmeladov was much unsteadier on his legs than in his speech and leaned heavily on the young man.” These last three words might suggest another reversal of roles, though Marmeladov is not the victim either. There is however a more pertinent common factor. Raskolnikov visits Alyana Ivanova, an elderly pawnbroker, on the pretext of pledging a silver cigarette case. As she struggles to unwrap it, she comes within striking distance: “He had not a minute more to lose. He pulled the axe quite out, swung it with both arms, scarcely conscious of himself, and almost without effort, almost mechanically, brought the blunt side down on her head...”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Fyodor Dostoyevski, *Crime and Punishment*, translated by Constance Garnett, Pan Classics (1979) pages 27; 76-77.



• Dostoyevski in 1863, 3 years before *Crime & Punishment*

This murder, committed like that of Medland near the beginning of the story, is rooted in the situation of debt which afflicts the murderer. But if Marble’s motives are simply financial, Raskolnikov’s are more complex:-

“In this novel, Dostoyevski explored some of the most paradoxical puzzles of human consciousness. Raskolnikov is the product of radical western thought. He wilfully murders a vile pawnbroker woman, not to rob her, but to prove to himself that he is ‘strong’ enough to overstep the line of the old morality. Unable to bear the ‘irrational’ consequences of his crime, Raskolnikov ascribes his collapse to his weakness only, because logically he still refuses to regard himself as a criminal (in a higher, extra-legal sense).”<sup>12</sup>

The rest of the book sees the unwinding of Raskolnikov’s *Punishment*. He is not sentenced to death (like Marble), but to prison in Siberia. Dostoyevski had brooded on his dark theme during his own years of internment there, and the brutal murder reflects his own penury. The coda however is upbeat: “But that is the beginning of a new story – the story of the gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his passing from one world into another, of his initiation into a knew unknown life. That might be the subject of a new story, but our present story is ended.”

There was to be no such regeneration for poor Marble! His monetary debts were repaid and he made a mint of money in the City; but the body buried in his back garden runs through the novel like a ghastly design in a piece of Brighton rock, until – as the coda has it – he “went down through history as an extraordinarily clumsy murderer”, by way of *Punishment* for a supposed Crime he did not actually commit.

<sup>12</sup> Janko Lavrin, *An Introduction to the Russian Novel*, Methuen & Co. (1942) pages 102-103.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### *Hornblower – the Vulnerable Hero...*

C.S. Forester created a character Horatio Hornblower that taught me a lot about life. Of course, there is no substitute for actually living life (which we all may regret at times). Still, whether it's learning or seeking comfort, I find that I often return to what Forester wrote and often remember to look for original, older volumes of his work revolving around Hornblower in the local, non-profit bookstore.

Why do I do this? It's the question that has driven me to write this article. I want to know. Not only would the answer provide some self-knowledge but it might help me produce better work, myself, too. Beyond these things, though, I want to pay a sort of tribute to the man and what he created as I am in their debt.

After much meandering in the form of rough drafts, I've come to this conclusion: Hornblower was relevant. Hornblower is relevant because his experience of life is close to our own, at least my own.

How? Well, it's my understanding that C.S. Forester suffered from health issues much of his life. Correct me if I'm wrong but, if true, that could explain a lot. Only a person who has experienced the precariousness of life (whether through sickness or accident, etc.) would create a fictional character like Hornblower.

Why do I say that? Forester's Hornblower allows you to vicariously succeed brilliantly but never causes you to get too far from the humbling reality that things could have, very easily, turned out differently for him. Someone truly aware of their own mortality immediately learns humility and that trait was passed along to Forester's fictional character, I think.

Is the character's humility the reason, then, that I read C.S. Forester? Not entirely. Many people or characters are humble without being as dynamic, or compelling, as the clear-minded naval warrior that many of us admire.

What else, then? I don't know. I think, though, humility will do for now. It explains why Hornblower plans ahead so well (constantly anticipating what may go wrong with his plans), why he is able, only briefly, to enjoy his good fortune (knowing that failure may be just around the corner) and admit when his life and career depended on the smallest, most capricious of circumstances, such as a puff of wind. I like Hornblower, empathize with him, for those very qualities.

Hornblower is more, though. I know that, even if I struggle saying exactly what. He is, to start with, I think, doing things for a purpose. He is even willing to put himself at risk to advance what he believes in. Is that just part of his job, some may ask? No. An officer, apparently, did not have to show so much initiative. Was it just ambition, then? No, he cared more about winning battles than taking prizes.

What remains, I wonder? Again, I don't know what makes him so special as a character and the novels he's in so enjoyable (and collectable) but I'll speculate. I would like to hear other ideas on the subject, if anyone wanted to give them.

Well, he isn't taking such risks thinking that nothing could happen to him. Anyone who has read the novels would agree that Hornblower is fully aware that the chances of war may not favor him. Therefore, I think the answer is conviction. He acts on his beliefs, does so courageously but always with the knowledge that he may be asked to pay a price for doing so. Conviction, as well as humility, paired together help make the character of Hornblower so dynamic.

Hornblower has a career that he is completely committed to. He accepts, although doesn't always like, what comes his way as a result. He realizes that life can be short and intends to make his count for something while involved in that career, acting on his most courageous and altruistic instincts. Even if it's just one life and may not count for a lot, he doesn't expect more than that. As it turns out, fortune favors him and he rises to the very top but he knows he's no different than the bright, promising midshipmen and lieutenants he met along the way who died as a consequence of the chances of war and who he mourned.

He, in essence, is a hero, rising above it all, ultimately, maybe, doomed to failure, but offering few complaints because it's the life he's chosen and it's no harder than any other officer's life. We can share in those triumphs and defeats, certainly, able to understand, at least in part, what they mean to him. We, no doubt, are all capable of the same courage and conviction and, maybe, I read Forester to remind me of it and that we, so to speak, are all in the same boat/ship.

Hornblower, then, is relevant, not as an English sea captain, but as a human being capable of symbolizing the countless (but not unimportant) others who live, really, brief lives in the best way they know how, with courage and purpose.

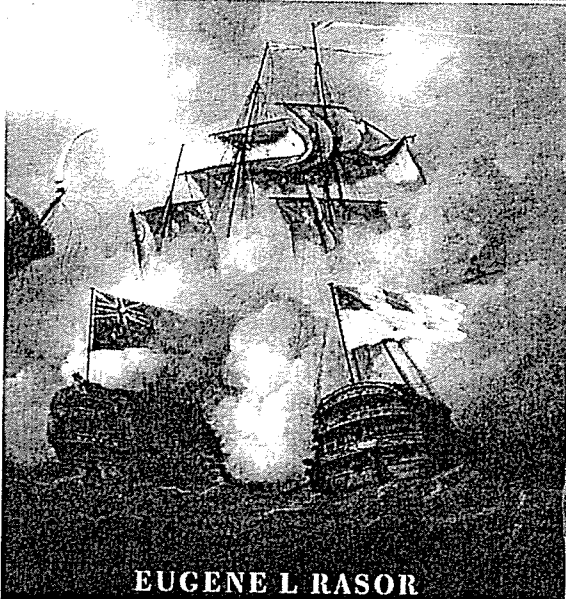
Thanks for letting my opinion be heard and, especially, I thank C.S. Forester, in memoriam, for letting me share the adventures of his most famous character, Horatio Hornblower.

Alexander Spacey, West Virginia

... with his place in the Annals of Naval History!

I have recently been reading *The Seaforth Bibliography*. It is - a huge reference work, which provides a fascinating and comprehensive historiographical and bibliographical review of the naval and maritime history of England and Britain up to 1815. Inevitably C S Forester, described as "the famous nautical novelist", features fairly prominently in it, with numerous references to his books, both fiction and non-fiction. The book also mentions Colin Blogg and the CS Forester Society (page 350).

THE  
**Seaforth**  
 BIBLIOGRAPHY  
 A guide to more than 4,000 works on  
 British naval history  
 55BC-1815



There is a section on the Age of Fighting Sail mentioning CSF, Patrick O'Brian and Alexander Kent, but where CSF scores is with his serious contribution to the non-fiction of the era. His biography of Nelson is linked to the character traits which emerge in Hornblower, and Rasor states there are twenty-seven incidents in the ten Hornblower novels directly linked to the life of Nelson. CSF's book on *The Barbary Pirates* is also mentioned.

Writers on CSF and Hornblower such as Steve Pope and Northcote-Parkinson are covered. Interesting to note that Pope considered Hornblower to be "the most enduring military hero in British fiction", quite right too.

Chapter 20 covers Nautical Fiction and naturally CSF has his own section, pages 348-50, with various gems about him, such as the fact that he was chosen to be the official biographer of Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, with Philip Ziegler being selected after the death of CSF. Steven Maffeo apparently dedicated his book on *Naval Intelligence* to CSF and CSF edited the 1,000-page autobiography of the mariner, and one time prisoner of Napoleon, John Wetherell.

In Part III, the *Annotated Bibliography*, the CSF books are set out in pages 492-4, with entries 1138 to 1156. It claims, rightly, that CSF was the "the original and most popular of the Nelson-era nautical fiction writers", with ultimately eleven Hornblower novels and others related.

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The *Seaforth Bibliography* is most strongly recommended to all those with an interest in CS Forester and the naval history of the sailing era.<sup>13</sup>

John Roberts, Portsmouth

Forester, Winston Churchill - and "low cunning"

*Reflections* 12 contained a lot of new biographical material on CS Forester. Perhaps I could add some snippets? A remark by Winston Churchill – "I find Hornblower admirable, vastly entertaining" – used to appear regularly on covers of orange Penguin editions. I don't know when Churchill actually made this remark, but I have recently come across some hard information about his penchant for Forester in a published book by his doctor: Winston Churchill, *The struggle for survival* (1940-1965): taken from the diaries of Lord Moran.

On 8 August, 1953, according to Moran, Churchill was lurching at Chequers with his Ministers Rab Butler and Lord Salisbury. The conversation turned from Burke to Macaulay. Churchill said that Macaulay had been a great influence upon him in his young days, as had Edward Gibbon. He began to recite the opening lines of chapter 14 of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Then he said, "I have been reading Forester's book about 1814. He has the art of narrative; it is only the harmonious arrangement of facts".<sup>14</sup>

Bound for an international conference on 2 December of that same year, Churchill opted for Rifleman Dodd. On board the stratocruiser *Canopus*, Moran recalls, Churchill gave a cheerful greeting to Anthony Eden, then "took up his book, *Death to the French*, by CS Forester, and kept his nose in it throughout the meal. Eden said the Prime Minister was very anti-Frog". Churchill envisaged that "the French were going to be difficult. They will want everything and give nothing. I have been reading *Death to the French*. I must get Christopher to put it away before they come."<sup>15</sup>

Far more substantial is an archive of correspondence relating to the Hornblower saga which appeared recently on the American market. Its four-and-a-half pages included three letters from CS Forester to the Saturday Evening Post promotion department, with additional clippings and carbons. The offer, from *Between the Covers Rare Books of Merchantville*, New Jersey, was snapped up within days. But I have written it up as follows:-

The first letter in the archive, dated 26 February 1945, was about *The Commodore* (Commodore Hornblower in the USA). It confirmed that the book had been projected long before it was published. Forester had first mentioned it mid-1942, in a letter to his wife, Kathleen Belcher: "The itch to get a new

<sup>13</sup> Eugene L Rasor, *The Seaforth Bibliography (a guide to more than 4,000 works on British naval history 55BC to 1815)*. Seaforth Publishing, Pen & Sword Books Ltd (soft back, 875 pp, £30 RRP).

<sup>14</sup> Winston Churchill, *The struggle for survival* (1940-1965): taken from the diaries of Lord Moran, Heron Books (1966), page 449.

<sup>15</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, pages 501, 504.

volume of Hornblower finished is growing terribly strong. I'm afraid I shall have to do something about it..."<sup>16</sup>

The new letter apparently pushed the date back further. Forester had gone to the Aleutian Islands in June 1943, and been smitten with arteriosclerosis. He now wrote:- "When I returned from the Aleutians, I was taken ill and the doctors told me not to do a single thing but to lead the life of a cabbage. I tried it for a week or two and found that it was simply impossible. I looked around for some light easy work to do, and found it doing Commodore Hornblower - I had done all the research for it and constructed the plot way back in 1939, and the war had prevented me starting it. Of course, the coincidences attracted me - the close likeness between 1812 and 1941, the decay of the French Empire and the decay of Hitler's Empire; the part played by the English in each of those. It was surprising to find a plot that I thought out in 1939 reproducing itself in real life two or three years afterwards."

The Commodore, therefore, had been on the stocks as soon as *A Ship of the Line* and *Flying Colours* were finished, although it was not finished and published for years.

The second letter sheds light on the story of the film *Captain Horatio Hornblower*. On 20 February 1946, Forester wrote:- "There's a movie script of Hornblower at Warner brothers only waiting to be shot - I wrote it with Leslie Howard in mind, before he was killed, but since then I've heard rumours about Ronald Colman, who ought to do it very well."

Leslie Howard (1893-1943) had preceded Forester at Dulwich School. He was killed in June 1943, when a plane in which he was travelling from London to Lisbon was shot down over the Channel.<sup>17</sup> If Forester's statement is true, and not an addition to the considerable romanticism around Howard's death, then we have another important biographical datum: Howard was the first choice for the part eventually played by Gregory Peck. The other name in the frame was that of an actor forgotten today, but in 1946 not quite at the peak of a long and variegated career.<sup>18</sup>

Hindsight may influence the remarks on *The Happy Return*:-

"I suppose I've told the story of the beginning of Hornblower ten million times. It began in 1936, going round by sea in a freighter from Hollywood to England. We called in at a lot of little Central American ports, picking up coffee, and the idea started to form then. Then during a storm off the Azores came the news of Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland, and I could foresee for the first time for sure the coming of war, and decided then to tell the story of another time when England was fighting with her back to the wall with the sea as her protection."

<sup>16</sup> CSF-K 380, 6 June 1942; cited by John Forester, *Novelist and Storyteller: the life of CS Forester* (2000), pages 448-449.

<sup>17</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie\\_Howard\\_\(actor\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Howard_(actor))

<sup>18</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald\\_Colman\\_filmography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Colman_filmography)

The allusion to the voyage of the *Margaret Johnson*, during which Forester worked out the plot of *The Happy Return*, is well documented. However, the subsequent storm sequence looks all too melodramatic! And to believe that Forester foresaw the coming of war in the mid-1930s would require evidence from that date, not ten years after!

In May 1948, Forester commented on the stories which were to form *Mr Midshipman Hornblower*, and to appear in the *Saturday Evening Post* beforehand:-

"The pleasant thing about writing about midshipmen is that I've done most of the research. A good deal of the material of that period deals with the life of a midshipman in great detail. But I don't think that current events played any part this time in the inception of these stories. The story about the bursting cargo of rice was founded on a similar incident that occurred in a clipper ship last century. Hornblower made a mistake and now he has to pay for it. We know he has a successful professional career ahead of him, and we have to make the two things compatible. That's where an author's low cunning comes in."

I won't even try to identify the clipper which supposedly inspired *The Cargo of Rice*. And as for the author's low cunning, I have already said enough!

I seem to have been out of the loop for some time – in which I am sure that considerable interest must have been aroused by the wealth of new material on CSF's life in *Reflections 12*: his own idealistic account of his Edwardian childhood; the editor's notes on his journalistic career and the origins of *Flying Colours* and *The African Queen*, and the feature on the quasi-autobiographical material in *Two-and-Twenty*.<sup>19</sup> But perhaps I could contribute something on CSF and Poetry, or on CSF and George Orwell, to a future issue?

Paul Ellison Hunter, Philadelphia.

- Other CSF letters in the public domain are of far less interest than this archive – but may yield further biographical data. Meanwhile, another enquiry is producing real results...

### The inspiration for Lady Barbara!

When you asked why the photos Barbara Sutro took of CSF were never used to promote his books, I initially disagreed. I thought that the one I have in my book was used for that.<sup>20</sup> However, when I looked through the copies of his books in my possession, I did not find it. I had been thinking of the one used for the dust jacket of *Long Before Forty*. It is similar to the Sutro portrait, but obviously taken at a different time of life because the details of the bridges of CSF's eyeglasses are distinctly different.

<sup>19</sup> CS Forester, *Hornblower's London*, *Reflections 12* (2008), pages 7-14; David Stead, *Notes on Hornblower's London*, *op.cit.*, page 16; *Arms and the Muse: Two-and-Twenty*, pages 17-20.

<sup>20</sup> *Novelist and Storyteller*, volume 2, cover.



Barbara Sutro was one of the San Francisco Sutros, descendants of the mining engineer and promoter who dug the tunnel through the mountains that drained away the water that was impeding mining in the great Comstock silver lode in Nevada. CSF met her on the voyage from Los Angeles to London that gave birth to *Hornblower*. There's no indication that Sutro made the complete voyage; she could easily have left the ship at Panama. But I never met her. The photograph that I used came from my mother's collection of photographs. It carries two handwritten notes. One, in ink: Barbara Sutro Studio, 44 W 56th Street, New York, N.Y. The note is not in CSF's handwriting. One would think that if the notation were applied by the studio, the studio would use a rubber stamp, as was typical. The other note is in light pencil: C. S. Forester. I suggest that the photo taken in New York was sent to Kitty in Berkeley, as a reminder of her husband in New York.

I do not dislike your biographical speculations in *Reflections* 12 over the question of CSF's knowledge of German. That's up in the air, and will likely never be settled.<sup>21</sup> Here is a bit more, though, that I think I had not mentioned. In the early 1940s we had taken in a German Jew, Max Knight, who had fled Germany by the eastern route, through Russia and China. One of Max's duties was to teach George and me German. I had only a very little from my two summers in Berlin, George none at all. I never heard CSF talk German to Max, or assist George or me in any way, which, one would think, would be suitable for one with some little knowledge of the language.

John Forester, Lemon Grove, California.

<sup>21</sup> See Paul Ellison Hunter, "Für Kaiser und Reich" – U97 and the Annie Marble and the Editor's Reply, *Reflections* 12 (2008), pp 3-4.



Thank you for your patience regarding your query about Barbara Sutro.

Our collection of Johan Hagemeyer's business records includes file cards of 3 different portrait sittings - 1926, 1933 and 1938 - for Barbara Sutro. Each card lists a different address for Sutro...

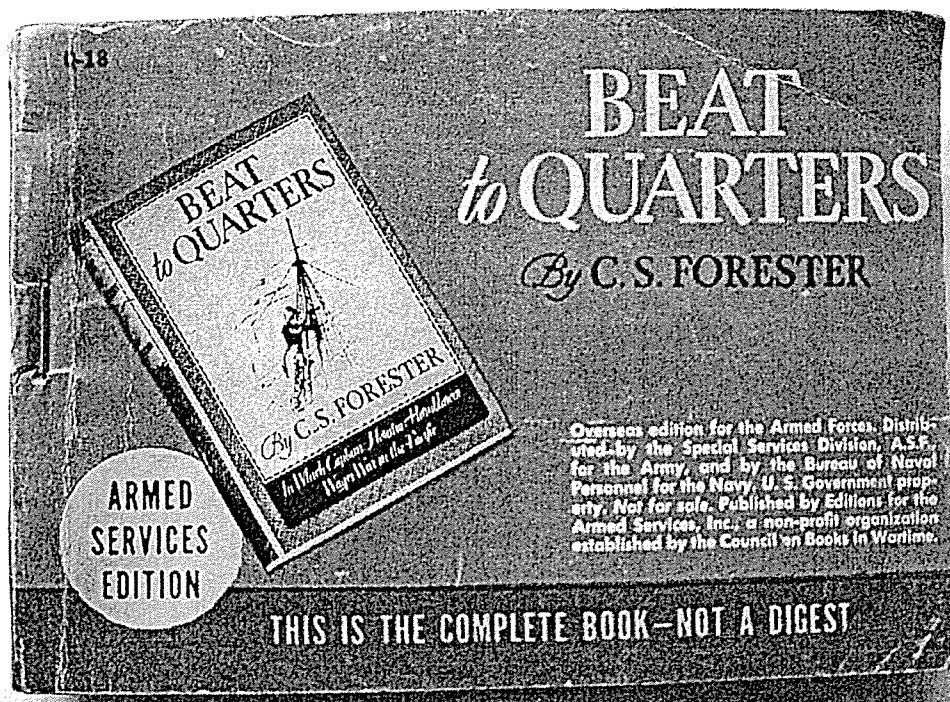
The only other information supplied on these file cards are account balances and dates pertaining to studio sittings, orders and payments.

With the 1933 record as a lead, I would conclude that Barbara was the daughter of Oscar Sutro (the Standard Oil executive and, I believe, a distant cousin of Adolph Sutro).

I hope this will be of help to you.

Chris McDonald, The Bancroft Library.

- Thanks also to David Kessler. I wrote to the curators of the Hagemeyer collection and to the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, receiving much more information about potentially useful archive material. The photo here is one of those dated July 1938, which are thus the closest in time to when CSF and Barbara Sutro were fellow-passengers on the voyage of the *Margaret Johnson* on which CSF devised the plot of *The Happy Return*.
- *Reflections* Series 2, No 2 will contain a full-length article on The origins of *The Happy Return*.



## US Armed Services Editions of CS Forester titles Judith Edwards

In 1942 Ray L. Trautman, head of the US Army Library Section, had the idea of producing low-cost books for US service personnel, using printing presses normally used for magazines (which printed fewer titles and copies during the war). In 1943 the US Council on Books in Wartime, composed of publishers, librarians, and booksellers, established Armed Services Editions, Inc. as a non-profit organisation. It co-operated with the US Army and Navy, several printing firms and large publishers, the latter agreeing that the books could be printed and distributed free outside the United States. Between 1943 and 1947 nearly 123 million copies of 1,322 titles were produced.

Each Armed Services Edition is a stapled paperback, limited in size (to fit in a pocket) and number of pages (to keep its weight down). The books were printed in pairs and then separated horizontally. The two main sizes were 5½ inches wide by 3¾ inches high and 6½ inches wide by 4½ inches high. There is also a rarer vertical format, slightly different from the standard large format (my copy of *Lord Hornblower* measures 6¾ inches high by 4¼ inches wide). The dust wrappers of the original books were reproduced on each cover, supposedly to encourage the purchase of the "real" book after the war.

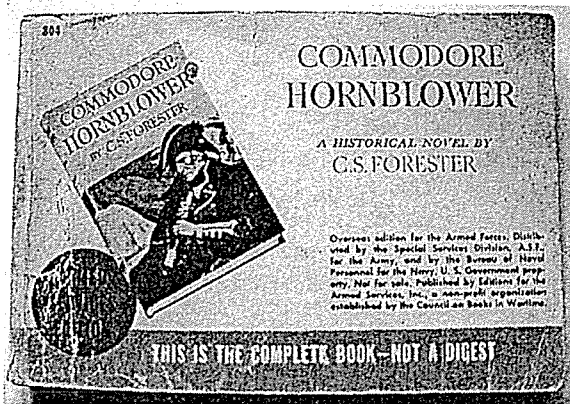
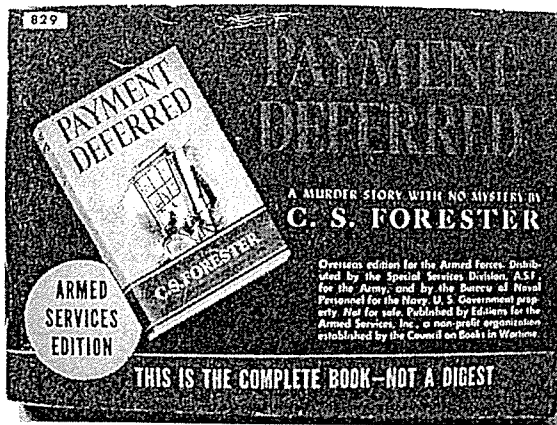
Because of the small size many people thought that the books were abridged, but in fact only about 70 are; they were marked "Condensed for Wartime Reading" on the

cover. All those by Forester are full length. Some were also expurgated, for instance to remove passages interpreted as sympathetic to communism. An advisory committee made selections of many genres of fiction and non-fiction, which tended to be current and forthcoming titles submitted by publishers.

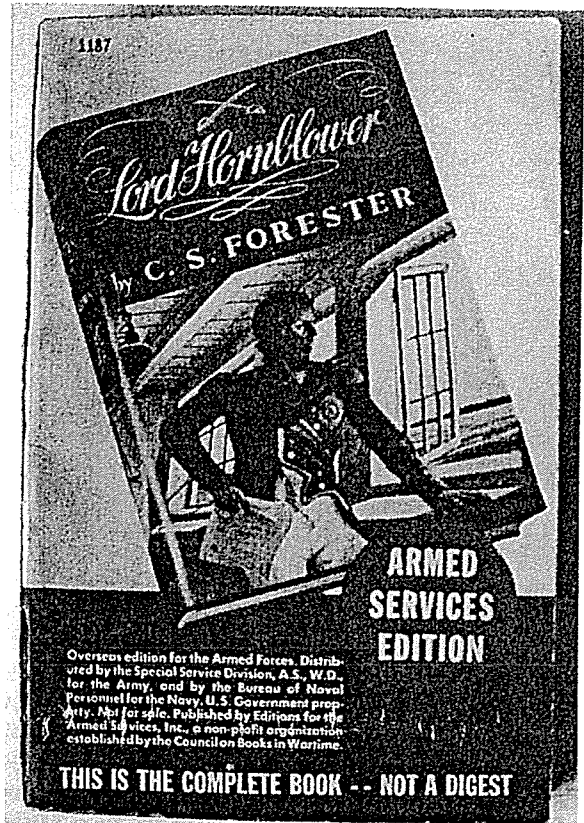
The books were sold to the US Army and Navy (but not the Marines) at the cost of manufacture plus 10% for overheads. Authors and publishers each received a royalty of ½ a cent per copy; five printing firms produced the books at less than half their normal profit. There were two production programmes, 1943-1946 (Series A to HH) and 1946-1947. They were first shipped in batches as freight, but from 1944 were sent as direct mail.

The US Library of Congress holds the only complete set of these books. In 1984, the Library's Center for the Book published a history and bibliography of them as *Books in action: the armed services editions - based largely on John Jamieson, Books for the Army: The Army Library Service in the Second World War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950). There is an online version from which most of my information is taken.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/becites/cfb/84600198.html>: (The website <http://www.armedserviceseditions.com/> only summarises the Library of Congress information).



- 709 To the Indies
- 804 Commodore Hornblower
- 829 Payment Deferred (Reprint)
- 996 Beat to Quarters (Reprint)
- 1187 Lord Hornblower



Except for Commodore Hornblower (large format) and Lord Hornblower (large vertical format), the titles are all in the small format. No dates are printed on the books; in the order they were published they are:-

<u>Series no.</u>	<u>Title (US)</u>
A-14	The Ship
E-133	A Ship of the Line
F-157	Flying Colours
H-213	Payment Deferred
O-12	The African Queen
Q-18	Beat to Quarters
679	The Captain from Connecticut

I have copies of all of them except for A Ship of the Line and the Beat to Quarters reprint. All mine appear to have been read, although fortunately none of them is bloodstained! There are no bullet holes either, so my copies at least never saved a serviceman's life. But it's rather nice to know that my favourite author's books spent part of their life in a soldier's or sailor's pocket, and I hope that they helped them through some hard times.