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Reflections

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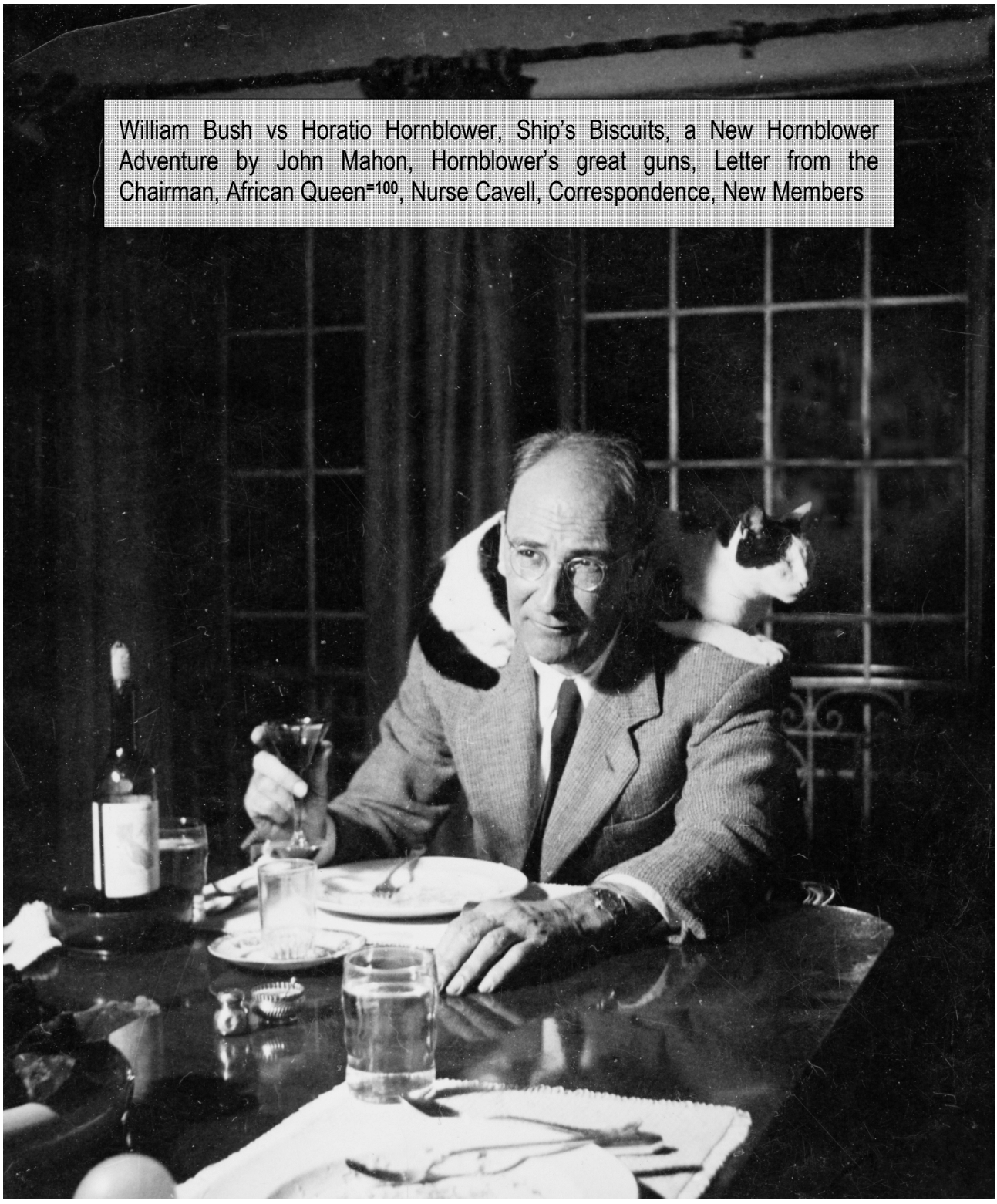
William Bush vs Horatio Hornblower, Ship's Biscuits, a New Hornblower Adventure by John Mahon, Hornblower's great guns, Letter from the Chairman, African Queen$^{=100}$, Nurse Cavell, Correspondence, New Members



Wiliam Bush vs Horatio Hornblower

Dirk Scholten

When I attended my first AGM in 2010 I had a conversation with Lawrie Brewer about William Bush. I mentioned my fascination for him - his qualities, his personality and above all his courage. I remember that Lawrie introduced the word “stolid” when it came to Bush. Although my English is not too bad and my vocabulary is sufficient, the word was not familiar. I looked it up and found out that it is one of those English words that are just a little more subtle than “sturdy” or “courageous” or even “phlegmatic”, words I was familiar with. I therefore focus my story around the word “stolid” when I talk about this remarkable figure in the books of CS Forester, lieutenant, commander and finally captain William Bush.

Hornblower (Gregory Peck) and Bush (Robert Beatty) in the 1951 movie

But first a brief personal introduction: my name is Dirk Scholten, I turned 60 years old on 11 September this year, and I am a police commissioner in the Netherlands (staff as well as operations). I am married to Toos and we have 3 children. I have been a member of the Society since 2009. Having started reading CS Forester - and in particular the Hornblower cycle - when I was 12 years old, I have developed a specific interest in the history of the 18th century, especially the British part of it, and more specifically the naval history (fact as well as fiction). I have become an avid reader about the ships – from the VICTORY and TEMERAIRE to my favourite, the BELLEROPHON (the Billy Ruffian) – the men (and women), the sailing, the rigging, guns and canvasses, the conditions on board, the naval policy, the battles, the prominent figures (and not only Nelson). I mention these facts because they play a part in my story.
So William Bush vs. Horatio Hornblower.
First: in all the other books of naval fiction that I have read (Pope, Parkinson, Kent, Stockwin and O’Brian) the main character has a close friend, be it a fellow seaman or another figure. Forester has set the standard for this principle. Perhaps not spectacular, yet a fact and sometimes intriguing. So, William Bush is the first in line.

What kind of person is Bush? Some personal facts and figures about him:
The birthplace and date of William Bush are not revealed by Forester (nor of Hornblower by the way, we need Northcote Parkinson for that). We know that he is 3 years older than Hornblower so he is born in the year 1773. Because we know in which year he was killed - in a typical Bush-like action – namely 1813, he lived to become 40 years old.

Contrary to Hornblower we do not know much about his personal life. He has a mother and four sisters who live in Chichester. He supports them financially. That poses a question: why four sisters and not one or two? Are they one of the reasons why he went to sea? He had - no doubt - an early talent and drive to become a seaman but what is the exact reason? Has this fact influenced his character? I have not been able to find an explanation for this.

We do know that he started as a midshipman in 1790. That implies that there must have been a proper education (perhaps by one of his sisters) and some money to finance this. Bush is not married, nor does he have a relationship but apparently likes women as is shown in Lieutenant Hornblower when he is confronted with the (scarcely dressed) wives of the Spanish captives and also when he and Hornblower throw themselves into a sort of orgy of (we assume) drink and women in Kingston, Jamaica in 1801.

Forester reveals something of his life as a naval officer: he was commissioned as a lieutenant in July 1796 (and Hornblower one year later). His previous ship, before Hornblower and Bush meet for the first time in 1800, was the sloop DOLPHIN. He was a lieutenant in TEMERAIRE at Trafalgar, which implies that he has not risen fast in the ranks (yet we know that this is not unusual). He must have been assigned to TEMERAIRE around May 1805 when he and Hornblower parted after they sailed in the water hoy back to Portsmouth in Hornblower and the Crisis. They meet again on the Lydia in February 1807 and their cooperation continues until the death of Bush in 1813 in France. So they have known each other some 13 years.
If in the stories we gather the qualities of Bush– good, neutral and bad – I come to the following summary:

Good: Bush has common sense, phlegmatism and above all courage. He is a workaholic (before the word was invented). He has a sort of basic sense of justice (for instance dealing with Wellard, with the death of Roberts and even with the fate of Buckland). On the other hand he has no illusions of a (somewhat) better world (“there is no

such thing as justice since the world is simply not fair or just and will never be"). He is diligent and reliable as well as magnanimous. And stolid.

Bush on RENOWN by Geoffrey Whittam in the Cadett edition

To his more neutral character aspects belong his shyness and his love of the English climate. He is never seasick. As a seaman he is a disciplinarian but not in a cruel way. In no way is he of a romantic. He has some doubts in his own ability to learn. Finally he is reconciled to whatever happens to him and his men.

Negative of even bad elements: He has no imagination and he sticks too long to a dogma or even prejudice. He does certainly mutter and also swear, is sometimes uncontrolled and not so tolerant. He distrusts strangers. In *The Commodore* he is cruel (Hornblower thinks) when he sees no objection in hanging a severely wounded English renegade. And he loves to fight and to kill enemies.

What does he think of Hornblower? In the beginning he certainly finds him intriguing and eccentric. He instinctively knows that he can trust him but is sometimes irritated by him (but who would not be?). But very soon he knows he has a true friend. We come to that later.

The characteristics mentioned are part of an event, usually of course dealing with shipboard life or a fight. And why are they significant and why has Forester portrayed Bush the way he has?

One of the first things I learned about Bush is that through his personality and the way he conducts his profession as an officer and a seaman, he is for Hornblower the ultimate enabler. He facilitates, he makes things possible, works tirelessly to keep the ships on which they serve together run smoothly, whether it is on SUTHERLAND on a quiet, fresh Sunday morning before the religious services and the Articles of War or on the battered LYDIA after her engagement with NATIVIDAD. In every aspect he allows Hornblower to grow in his role as a true leader of men and of a man-of-war.

The Hornblower books were as we all know not written in a logical chronological sequence. Therefore Bush too (like all the other characters) enters the stories in 1811 when he is only 3 years from his heroic death near Caudebec. We meet him in *Flying Colours* only one sentence after Hornblower appears in the book.

In this first Hornblower book, Forester of course has to make Hornblower the character he wants him to be which necessitates all the others – including Bush – not getting as much attention as in later stories. Yet, William Bush is important and in a way he struggles with Lady Barbara. Who is more important – him or her? And reading the books in the sequence in which they were written leaves you sometimes puzzled why he accepts so much from an erratic and often irritated Hornblower, not as his superior officer – because there were of course other captains who were simply much worse and sometimes terrible in their behaviour – but as someone who is so dedicated, works so hard and diligently.

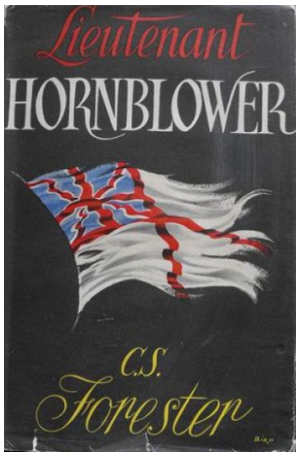
The first major event where Bush enters the limelight - as far as I am concerned - is when he is severely wounded in the battle between SUTHERLAND and the four French ships of the line in the bay of Rosas. And although in the beginning he is helpless, in the Chateau de Gracay he becomes important and assumes a more prominent role (just as coxswain Brown by the way). This continues right until the end of the next book in the sequence - *The Commodore* - in which he is very important as the captain of NONSUCH. And then, one year later, in an heroic attack on barges at Caudebec-en-Caux in the Seine estuary suddenly he is dead. Not as a seaman – which he would have wanted – but blown to pieces, without even a seaman's grave. Vanished, all of a sudden.

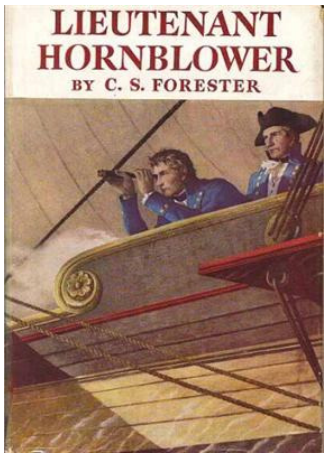
Last goodbye in *The Commodore*

It goes beyond the scope of this introduction to establish why Forester made this choice. I cannot find a reason for it. I do not know enough of his personal life to be able to understand it but I know that Forester does not hesitate to let his heroes die while performing their duty. For instance, in *The Commodore* the very promising Lieutenant Mound

is killed which distresses Hornblower very much; likewise promising good seamen in other books die (Galbraith, Clay, Longley).
The final word is of course for Hornblower: in *The Commodore* he mourns and thinks:

"Had Bush survived this one last skirmish, he would have been able to enjoy the blessings of peace for many years, secure in his captain's rank, in his pension, in the devotion of his sisters. Bush would have enjoyed all that, if only because he knew that all sensible men enjoyed peace and security. This though made the personal loss even more bitter. He had never thought he could mourn for anyone as he mourned for Bush"





UK and US 1st edition (1952) of *Lieutenant Hornblower*

But then in 1952 *Lieutenant Hornblower*, is published. William Bush is the first personality to appear in the book - that is to say before Hornblower himself - when he comes on board HMS RENOWN in July 1800 and meets Hornblower for the first time. And he remains a prominent figure in this story, in many respects more prominent than Hornblower himself. And we also learn the full truth about his qualities, his character, though unfortunately not about his personal life which remains more or less a mystery (except his always present mother and 4 sisters on the background).

Compared with the earlier stories and Hornblower books, to me *Lieutenant Hornblower* belongs to the best Forester has written in the whole cycle. His characters are fuller, more balanced, the stories more complex but in many respects more interesting. History itself plays a more significant role. And finally (and I know I am on thin ice, as I say this) the stories move more in the direction of "literature". Because no matter what definition you use for writing literature (in contrast with storytelling), Forester has not written literature.
Literature for me is if an author wishes to express something in a book, an essay or a story. He wishes to express a view, an emotion, a conviction and he does that with the best words, usually with significant and in-depth characters and sometimes a certain plot. Usually complicated and in an indirect way. And yet, although Forester does not write literature but excellent stories, he is close to it in Lieutenant Hornblower. And Bush plays an important role in this.

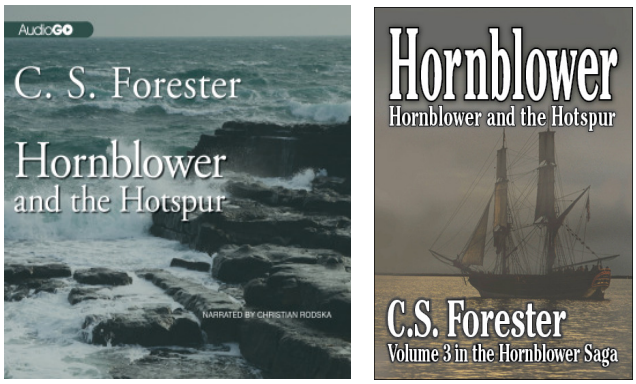
Two examples.
First the key to a better understanding of the (later) relationship between Bush and Hornblower without doubt lies in this book. It evolves from the truly miserable situation all the senior officers experience when they are faced with the insane Captain Sawyer. It deals with the decisive moment where Bush realises who Hornblower really is.
We all remember the satisfaction when the crew of Renown deals with the Spaniards. Their ship – LA GADITANA - is captured and send off with a price crew with Hornblower in charge.

But then things go wrong. The English on board RENOWN are overwhelmed by the Spaniards, Captain Sawyer murdered, acting-Captain Buckland tied in his cot — and Bush? Bush literally fights himself almost to death against the overwhelmers. We see the real, hard, outraged Bush, ferociously fighting his enemy. He is almost cut to pieces before Hornblower and his men retake the ship. But beside this admirable, stolid, reliable second lieutenant of RENOWN, later in the story we see a thinking and contemplating Bush when he lies wounded and exhausted in the sick bay.

In chapter XVII of Lieutenant Hornblower Forester describes the change, almost metamorphosis which has come over Bush, rethinking everything that has happened. And because in my view this part is so significant I quote here in full:

Bush had learned something during the past few weeks which his service during the years had not called to his attention. Those years had been passed at sea, among the perils of the sea, amid the ever changing conditions of wind and weather, deep water and shoal. In the ships of the line in which he had served there had only been minutes of battle for every week at sea and he had gradually become fixed in the idea that seamanship was the one requisite for a naval officer. To be master of the countless details of the managing a wooden sailing ship; not only to be able to handle her under sail, but to be conversant with all the petty but important trifles regarding cordage, and cables, pumps and salt pork, dry rot and the Articles of War; that was what was necessary. But he knew now of other qualities equally necessary: a bold and yet thoughtful initiative, moral as well as physical courage, tactful handling both of superiors and of subordinates, ingenuity and quickness of thought.

The fact that Bush realises that there is more between heaven and earth, creates unrest and he feels uncomfortable with it; and is almost happy when he has to deal with all the bugs, lice and other insects that infest RENOWN after the Spaniards have left. But Forester has made a crucial point: that if people like Bush become aware of the significance of acts of other capable men (like Hornblower) and allow this into their minds and to their deeper thoughts and to inform their prejudices, they gain understanding. This – besides the fact that it deals with leadership in the true sense of the word – has also in it the depth that gives the story almost a significance of literature.
The second important passage concerning the place of Bush in the books lies in an interesting aspect of naval history. This aspect is directly related to events in "Hornblower and the Hotspur".



Hotspur as audio book and as ebook

When we read about the political and military situation around 1800 we all know that it was an immense struggle. No matter what you think about who was right and who was wrong (I am glad the British won, but that is not the point here) it was a huge struggle indeed. One off the key issues was to prevent an invasion of Britain by Napoleon. Broadly speaking, British strategy had two main priorities.

First there was an overall challenge to face the French and her allies (including the Dutch) almost anywhere in the world and to secure British political and economical interests, including freedom in all its manifestations. That could be the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the Caribbean, the Far East or wherever. You could say that commanders like Lord Vincent, Howe, Hood and finally Nelson were responsible for that part (Glorious First of June, St. Vincent, the Nile, Camperdown, Copenhagen and finally Trafalgar). Fleets of various sizes played their part.
The other part was the Channel, the part of the Atlantic that was the closest to Britain from a French point of view. Forester has paid much attention to this aspect of the conflict in Hotspur and other stories. Enter Sir Wlliam Cornwallis, the blockader. It is simple; in the many books on naval history I have read about the period this monumental figure is seldom mentioned.


Admiral Sir William Cornwallis

Yet he was an outstanding admiral who really did the hard work, the constant cruising off the coast of France during crucial years, riding out the winter storms in all conditions, with a lack of fresh water and other provisions and in weather-beaten ships. He had a huge responsibility. Relatively little attention is paid to this huge effort and success that kept the French confined in Brest and other harbours. In fact Cornwallis did the hard thankless work, while Nelson and his fellow admirals before and after him got all the credits (and the prize money). Partly justified but also partly due to their better PR!

What has this got to do with Hornblower and Bush (and Forester)? While other naval fiction writers pay a lot of attention to Nelson, Forester does not. In Flying Colours, Bush says to Lady Barbara that Hornblower resembles Nelson in a way, but other references to Nelson are scarce. Instead Forester pays a lot of attention to the important figure of Cornwallis when he was in command and he fulfilled his duty so admirably.

My theory is this: where Hornblower in many (but certainly not all) aspects is a Nelsionan figure in character, behaviour and qualities, Bush is a symbol of the unknown toilers who are not in the limelight, who work hard, are diligent and in a practical sense indispensible in winning the war at sea.
In a certain respect Bush can be compared with toilers like Admiral Cornwallis. Perhaps through Bush, Forester wanted to point on the fact that although you need "heroes" like Nelson (and Hornblower) everywhere in society – be it naval, military or civilian – you need these stolid toilers. Through Bush he has given them a platform, attention and pointing out that for every hero the Bushes and Cornwalisses are vital and indispensible indeed. And do sometimes die....Lest we forget....

Ship's Biscuits

By Tony Meyer

In December 1677 Samuel Pepys (Naval Administrator and member of Parliament) drew up a victualing contract which set out the ration for each man per day of 1 gallon of beer and 1 lb of biscuits. A weekly ration of 8 lbs of beef or 4 lbs of beef and 2 lbs of pork or bacon with 2 pints of peas.

Samual Pepys (1633-1703)

Meat to be served on Sun - Mon - Tues –Thurs. The rest of the week they had fish, either fresh cod or hake either salted or wind-dried. Two ounces of butter and 4 ounces of cheese, either Suffolk or Cheddar or both.
Week ration was 7 lbs biscuit – 7 gall beer – 4 lbs beef – 2 lbs pork – 2 pints pease – 3 pints oatmeal – 6 ounces butter – 12 ounces cheese plus vinegar max ½ pint week. Average daily intake of 5000 calories.

The ships biscuits are commonly claimed to contain and be eaten by Weevils. It was supposed that the cause of biscuits moving like clockwork was due to black-headed maggots, which tasted metallic. This comes from Smollett. He probably got it from Antonio Pigafetta who sailed around the world in 1520 with Magellan. Stories were embroidered to the extent that it was assumed that all biscuits were like this. Real accounts of damaged biscuits claim cockroaches reduced the biscuits to powder, assuming that as cockroaches were present, they were the culprits. This was wrong on several accounts, as was Pigafetta, Smollett and everyone who repeated their stories.

Cadell beetle with its larvae

The reddish-brown beetle taken for a cockroach was actually the Cadell Beetle (Tenebroides Mauritanicus) and its larvae which, up to 20 mm long, are the black-headed white maggots called 'Bargemen' by sailors. They were called 'Bargemen' because they came out of the biscuits into the bread barge (the tub used to hold biscuits on the men's table). The Bargemen did not eat the biscuits, but ate the minute Bread Beetle (Stegobium Paniceum) or its larvae.

Bread Beetle with its larvae

The Bread Beetle, no bigger than 4 mm, is not a weevil either, but a relative of the woodworm. It is the larvae of this insect which eat the biscuits. These are no larger than 0.5 mm and, since they cover themselves in a mixture of saliva and flour dust, to the naked eye would be indistinguishable from the dust. If they had not infested the bread in the bakeries, they would have done so when they were packed into reusable bags.

Weevils are a different type of beetle with a very long snout (Curculio family) and may also have been present in the flour, as there are several varieties which live on grain.

Curculio Weevil

These are also very small and would have been impossible to see in their larval stage. All of these insects lay tiny eggs and all breed and mature more quickly in warm damp conditions. They would have been in or on the bread from the moment it came on board the ship, but as long as the bread stayed cool and dry, no-one would have noticed, or not until the bread was very old.

Ship's biscuits with maggots

Ships Biscuits – the original method

The biscuit making process at Deptford Victualing Yard (mentioned in *Hornblower and the Atropos*) was on a grand scale, producing almost 25,000 pounds of biscuits a day from 12 ovens. Each oven baking 20 batches a day and being fed by a team of 7 men. It was the largest of the Admiralty yards, processing beef, biscuits and cocoa for the navy. The yard was an important site for industry as it boasted the world's first factory assembly line and monorail. Although the complex closed in 1961, the gates and a number of buildings still survive.

The gates of the Deptford Victualing Yard in 1841 with bakery chimneys in the background.

To knead the dough they used a device called a horse. This consisted of a circular platform on which a big lump of flour and water dough was placed. A wide lever mounted on a central pole which a man rode like a hobby horse, jumping it up and down to knead the dough to the desired state. It was then passed, in sequence, to a series of men who cut the dough, moulded it into shape, stamped it, split it into 2 biscuits, arranged if on a peel and shot it into the oven to bake.

The entrance gate of the Victualing Yard at Plymouth

A modern version

Ships biscuits are easy to make by hand if you do not mind spending time to knead the dough sufficiently. Otherwise you can either put the dough through a pasta machine as many times as it takes to achieve a desired silky texture, or put the ingredients into a bread-making machine and run the dough cycle, then roll the dough by hand. Use white flour for the Captains table, wholemeal for the mens decks. If intending to keep the biscuits for any length of time it is best to omit the salt as this will attract moisture from the atmosphere.

1lb (454 g) (5 cups) plain (all purpose) white or wholemeal flour, 1 teaspoon salt, Approx ¾ pint (150 ml) (1 ½ cups) water. Put the flour and salt into a large bowl (or mixing machine), add the water a little at a time (you may need more than suggested) and mix until you can pull the whole together into a ball of dough.
Alternatively put the flour, salt and most of the water into a bread machine and start the dough cycle with the lid open, adding water a little at a time if the dough appears too stiff, then close the lid and leave the machine to do the rest.

Sprinkle flour on a level work surface, turn the dough out and allow to rest for 10 mins. Flour your hands and knead the dough for as long as it takes to make it smooth and silky – about 30 mins. Turn the oven to heat 160 ^{0}C (or 325 ^{0}F, Mark 3). Roll the dough out until approximately ¼" (6 mm) thick. Cut it into 3" (7.5 cm) squares, prick the surface with a fork. Lay the biscuits out on a lightly buttered (greased) baking sheet, not quite touching and bake for about 60 mins. They should not be too dark. Put them on a wire tray to cool completely before storing in an airtight container

I take no responsibility for any damage to teeth, dentures, crowns etc. Do not use the biscuits for throwing at the neighbour's cat (they make excellent missiles if baked in a round or star shape), as an unfortunate miss could break a window.

If anyone is interested, I have original recipes for the following: Salt Beef, Salt Pork, Sauerkraut, Pease Pudding, Pea Soup, Duff – the basic recipe for jam roly-poly, spotted dog, plum duff or sea pie, Sea Pie, Lobscouse, Burgoo Portable soup, Punches – Negus, Rum Punch, Claret Cup, Lemon Pepper, Syllabub and Macaroons.

Tony's ship's biscuits served at the AGM

The Jamaican Affair of 1805

A new Horatio Hornblower adventure by John Mahon

Forester's unfinished novel Hornblower and the Crisis (1967) resulted in several fictional Endings by Hornblower fans. Several of them have been featured in Reflections. Society member Bob Smith in 2010 wrote an excellent one that has already sold 200 ebook copies through Lulu.com, Barnes and Noble and the iBook Store. See the link on the Society website.

And now in 2012 there is another one and it is called The Jamaican Affair of 1805. It is written by John Mahon, an elderly American gentleman, ex-Navy Pilot in the 1940's and 1950's. More information about the author can be found on the following website: http://www.johnmahon.us/

This new book is published by eNetPress and is decribed on their website (http://enetpress.com) as:

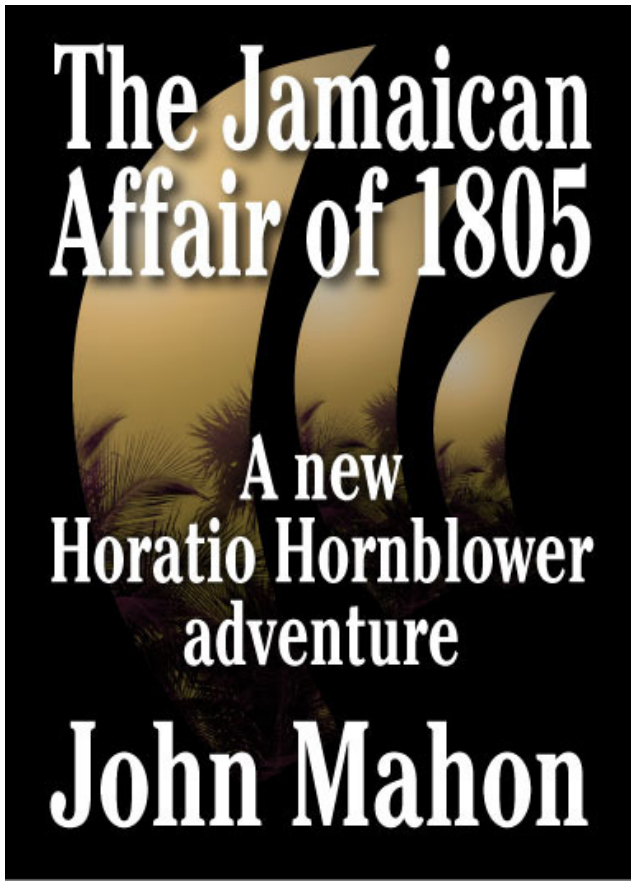
"Here we meet again Horatio Hornblower by the new author, John Mahon, in a new adventure approved by the sons of C S Forester. The stirring action begins where the unfinished last Hornblower adventure, Hornblower During the Crisis, written by C S Forester ends.

Hornblower travels as a spy disguised as a servant through Spain attempting to carry out the orders of the First Lord of the Admiralty. After a short spell in Portugal where newly invented spinnaker sails are fitted to his ship, he's off to Jamaica to protect the island against a possible French invasion by four ships loaded with Napoleon's soldiers. Several attractive women interfere with his conscience as he carries out his duty; his wife has an interlude with Lord Nelson. All the intricacies of the plot click together in this very good read about Hornblower, while keeping his history and character intact."

I ordered the book from the eNetPress website ($ 8.50) and read it immediately after download. As the title indicates, it is not just an ending to a story that began with the sinking of Hotspur, the trip back to England and resulted in Trafalgar by way of Ferrol. In John Mahon's book the events at Ferrol are totally different from Bob Smith's version. What seems an anti-climax at first becomes more and more spectacular with every page that you turn.

After leaving Ferrol and after an interesting and exciting interlude in Lisbon, a completely new adventure in the West-Indies develops, which also fills in some details of the events at Kingston covered by (and hinted at) in Lieutenant Hornblower. Throughout Hornblower allows himself some liberties: informally hoisting a Commodore's pennant as 601st Captain on the list after taking prizes, and even developing a sense of humour. And there are women.....

Which brings us to the one character that has had a complete metamorphosis: Maria Hornblower. The lonely Hotspur years as a young mother have made her an independent, determined and courageous individual. With her dearest husband away in the East-Indies Maria has her own original chapter, which is situated in Portsmouth on the historic day of Saturday 14th. September, 1805. It would be unfair to say any more.



The ending of the book matches perfectly with the beginning of Atropos, even more closely than the Ending by Bob Smith. Both books are a must and an excellent read for those who read and keep on re-reading the Forester originals. I agree with what John Forester told me recently: WE WANT MORE!!!

EDITOR

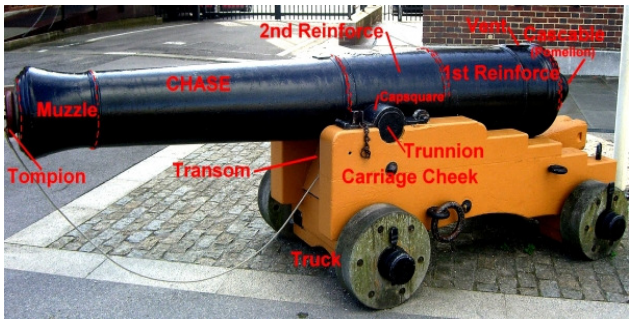
Hornblower's Great Guns

John Roberts

"Without allowing false modesty to enter into the debate, he could rely on himself to lay a gun better than Bush could. Hornblower estimated the range, twirled the elevation screw and fired. The shot hit the water ten yards from her bow and ricocheted clean over her, when he looked along the sights she was still heading straight at him. A tiny reduction in elevation, he stepped aside and jerked the lanyard. The bows of the boat opened like a fan by the impact of the shot, which had hit clean and square upon her stem at water level. Her bows were lifted out of the water, the loose strakes spread wide and the water surged in…" (From *Flying Colours*)

Hornblower's ability to use, serve, lay and fire naval cannons (more correctly known as the 'great guns' or the 'long guns') with a considerable degree of accuracy, even at long range, comes through in quite a few of the Hornblower books. Whilst his successes against the French and Spanish may seem rather implausible, in fact, as C S Forester would have known, the British naval guns of the Napoleonic era really were greatly superior to any French or Spanish naval artillery of that era. This was due to Captain Sir Thomas Blomefield. The Blomefield pattern guns of the Napoleonic era were one of the most important and successful, but least-known, weapons in the history of the Royal Navy. The story of those remarkable guns is a fascinating one.

Well served and with the gunlock fitted, a Blomefield cannon was a sure battle winner with Trafalgar providing the ultimate proof. At the time of the Napoleonic Wars the "ship of the line" was regarded as the most technologically advanced fighting machine of its age and we learn much about how it all worked from CS Forester's detailed technical explanations.



A Blomefield pattern gun of the Napoleonic era at the National Museum of the Royal Navy. The distinguishing eye bolt above the cascable at the rear of the gun is clearly visible (John Roberts)

In truth though, despite the many innovations emerging from the Industrial Revolution, it was still basically the same type of warship that had defeated the 'Invincible Spanish Armada' well over two hundred years earlier. Though not termed "ships of the line" in the sixteenth century they were wooden hulled sailing ships armed with smooth bore, muzzle loading, cannons which are mounted in broadside batteries firing solid round shot. The tactics of forming line of battle and firing broadsides were still to be developed after the defeat of the Armada but otherwise naval design, development and warship construction only progressed gradually, despite the impetus of constant naval wars against the Spanish, Dutch and French. The wooden sailing warship was to dominate naval warfare for well over three centuries, only very slowly becoming stronger, bigger, more powerful, and, in the right weather conditions faster and more manoeuvrable, though the latter qualities were somewhat restricted by the evolving tactics of line of battle.

Gun batteries mounted in ship's sides led to the tactics of firing broadsides, which in turn evolved into the rigid "line of battle" concept enshrined in the 'Fighting Instructions' of the Royal Navy, which Hornblower would have studied. French warships tended to be better designed and built than ours, though British guns were generally of superior quality to French guns. The capture of several French 74s (seventy-four gun battleships) in the early eighteenth century led to the design of a very successful British 74, which was found to provide the optimum balance of size, speed, firepower and cost. Hornblower served in several 74s and the majority of the ships of the line at Trafalgar were 74s.

The evolution of the naval gun was as slow as that of the ship of the line. From the end of the fourteenth century through the Napoleonic Wars and well into the nineteenth century the smooth bore, muzzle-loading cannon provided the main armament deployed at sea.

The very earliest guns at sea were simple, small breech-loaders, with a very short range and consequently a limited role in the grapple and board style of early naval warfare. The bow remained a much more effective naval weapon than the gun for a long time, right through the fifteenth century. Initially the gun was predominantly a land weapon with only a few light guns mounted in ships. Guns were made either of brass or iron. Brass provided a safer and more accurate gun but was hugely expensive. Iron, because of the rather crude systems of casting the produced guns, which, though considerably cheaper were much less reliable and could explode.

From the end of the fifteenth century improvements in iron founding and casting improved the quality of iron cannons making them less dangerous, more reliable and longer lasting. The improved gun founding methods, extending the power and range of guns, made them more suitable for combat at sea and so guns started to have a marked effect on naval warfare. The other advantage from improved iron founding was that, with iron being considerably cheaper than bronze, many more guns could be produced. At the end of the fifteenth century Henry VII ordered two warships, the REGENT and the SOVEREIGN, each armed with an incredible 180 guns.

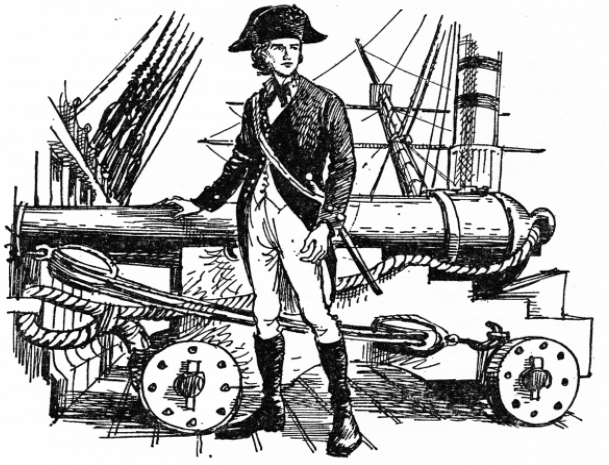
The earliest guns had been crude fixed barrel weapons on the upper deck making them difficult to move, train and load. The construction of gun carriages enabled guns to be manoeuvred on deck and gave flexibility for both aiming at a target and reloading. The introduction of cartridges to replace loose powder simplified and speeded up the loading of the guns. As guns became bigger, heavier and more numerous they had to be mounted below decks so as not to jeopardize stability and this entailed piercing the ship's sides. Henry VIII had gun ports cut into the sides of his royal ships but this was not without problems. His powerful MARY ROSE tragically sank in the Solent in 1545. She had opened her lower gun ports to engage the French but as she altered course she heeled over, allowing water to pour in through the open gun ports.

Warships were armed with a wide range of different calibre guns, which complicated the arrangements for provisioning, stowing and then serving the guns with the correct sizes of shot and powder charges. It was clearly necessary to simplify and reduce the number of different calibres to improve the production and supply of guns and ammunition as well as magazine storage onboard. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Board of Ordnance set about organising a uniform pattern for British cannons.

In 1712 Colonel Albert Bogard was appointed to the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich and was set the task of reviewing the system of artillery including redesigning the guns of the Royal Navy. He revised the range and variety of guns, introducing a new standardised system based on the weight of the shot fired by each gun. Unfortunately Bogard was seriously wounded in an explosion in a gun foundry in 1716 and was relieved by Colonel John Armstrong. Armstrong redesigned the system of guns introduced by Bogard and in 1725 established a standard gun pattern (the "Armstrong Pattern Cannon") and his Armstrong pattern, with only minor modifications was to last nearly seventy years. The pattern was modified in 1753 by Charles Frederick, the Surveyor General, with the result being known as the "Armstrong-Frederick Pattern Cannon".

In 1780 Captain Thomas Blomefield was appointed Inspector of Artillery and Superintendent of the Royal Brass Foundry. Blomefield was dissatisfied with the poor quality of the cannons he surveyed. Improvements to gunpowder had increased the pressures from gasses in the breech causing misfiring, damage and bursting. Blomefield introduced a new method of hot proving guns with specific proving charges and this led to him condemning nearly five hundred guns during an inspection carried out in the Naval Ordnance Depot in Plymouth.

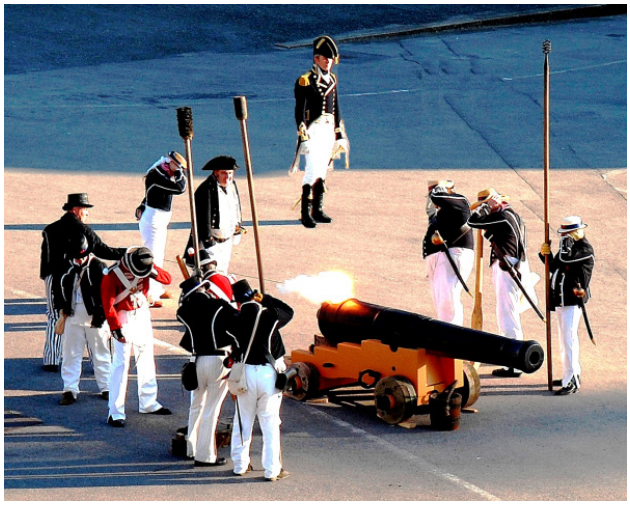
Following his discontent with the poor quality of British guns Blomefield decided to take advantage of the emerging technology from the Industrial Revolution and design a new gun. His aim was to make a stronger, safer, lighter and simpler gun. Whilst retaining a strong breech he trimmed the barrel, strengthened the breech and introduced a uniform thickness of metal. He also removed unnecessary decorative features and further trimmed the chase. Finally he forged an eye bolt or loop over the cascable (the rounded ball at the rear of the cannon, also known as a pomelion) to take a rope and thus make it much handier to manoeuvre. The ring or loop on top of the cascable is a good indicator of a Blomefield pattern cannon. The "Blomefield Pattern Cannon" was introduced in 1787, just in time for the forthcoming wars with France, and by 1794, when young Midshipman Hornblower was onboard the JUSTINIAN, the year after war broke out, it was firmly established as the standard pattern cannon for the Royal Navy.



Young Midshipman Hornblower stands beside a Blomefield pattern gun onboard the JUSTINIAN (from *Hornblower Goes to Sea* Cadet edition)

It was a well-balanced, strong, light and reliable gun not prone to drooping, splitting, misfiring or bursting, and with its strengthened breech it was able to use the more powerful gunpowder being introduced. It was carefully weighted with a bias towards the rear of the gun to provide greater stability. Britain's iron founding technology was the most advanced in the world and Blomefield took full

advantage of this to ensure that his guns were manufactured to the very highest standards. Due to the high quality of the boring it was possible to reduce the windage (the space between the diameter of the shot and the internal circumference of the barrel) giving a tighter fit for the ball and hence a greatly improved muzzle velocity, which ensured greater range, accuracy and destructive power. The result was an excellent gun, which became the most successful weapon in the Royal Navy and was to continue in service through the nineteenth century up to the Crimean War. The firing of an 1805 Blomefield gun, at Fort Nelson for the CS Forester Society, can be seen at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bYRc0nm8WQ.



Firing a 12 pounder Blomefield pattern gun alongside HMS VICTORY (National Museum of the Royal Navy)

The Blomefield guns were fitted with the new gunlock firing mechanism, which had been very slowly coming into the fleet. The gunlock was an important technical innovation of much greater value to naval guns than land artillery.

A gunlock fitted on a Blomefield pattern gun onboard HMS *VICTORY (National Museum of the Royal Navy)*

Prior to the introduction of gunlocks a slow burning match on the end of a staff, or stock, called a "linstock", had been used to fire guns. To fire the gun the gun captain had to stand to the side, clear of the recoil, and touch the linstock to the priming powder, in the vent on the top of the gun. There was then a delay before the gun was discharged. On land these limitations posed no serious problem but at sea with the gun muzzle constantly moving, as the ship rolled, pitched and moved ahead, the time lag between igniting the touch vent and the gun actually going off made accurate gunnery very difficult. In addition the gun captain standing to the side of his gun could not see his target through the narrow gun port. The gunlock was a spring loaded flint striker operated by a lanyard pulled by the gun captain, standing directly behind the gun, who was thus able to aim and time his firing.

The Royal Navy first conducted experiments with basic gunlocks in July 1745 but Admiralty Ordnance Inspectors reported unfavourably on the trials. Nevertheless ten years later the Admiralty issued instructions for the fitting of gunlocks to all quarterdeck guns when ships were refitted.

Progress was very slow and most guns continued to be fired by the old linstock method. In 1778 Captain Sir Charles Douglas took command of the DUKE (98) and at his own expense fitted all his guns with gunlocks and goose-quill firing tubes. Then, when Douglas was appointed Captain of the Fleet in 1781, he commanded the FORMIDABLE (90), Admiral Rodney's flagship, and again fitted gunlocks to all guns. In the Battle of The Saints the following year FORMIDABLE and DUKE proved their much superior gunnery achieving greater accuracy and a much higher rate of fire. Following battle experience Douglas introduced a number of modifications, including brass locks, and in 1790 the Admiralty finally approved these for use throughout the Fleet, this was in time for them to be fitted to the new Blomefield cannons being brought into service. It was reported after the Battle of the Nile in 1798 that the gunlocks had worked well, improving the rate of fire in the battle and at Trafalgar gunlocks certainly "…helped VICTORY's gun crews maintain a devastating rate of fire in battle" (1).

Lieutenant Hornblower explaining the workings of a Blomefield gun to John Forester and John Roberts at Fort Nelson (Odile Roberts)

Endlessly repeated gun drills at sea, as ordered by the Board of Admiralty, perfected the gun teams in the speed and efficiency with which they served their guns. In complete contrast the inexperienced French and Spanish gunners had little opportunity to practice their gun drill and consequently had a very slow rate of fire. On 21 October 1805 Lord Nelson gained his great victory off Cape Trafalgar; it was an outstanding triumph against a numerically superior combined French and Spanish fleet. The combined fleet was armed with over 550 more guns than the British but had much inferior guns, prone to bursting and misfiring and very few were fitted with gunlocks. Trafalgar has gone down in history as the greatest naval battle fought under sail and the vastly superior gunnery of the British fleet was the most decisive factor.

Sources:

- Explosion!' Museum, collection & archives
- Hogg & Batchelor Naval Gun (Blandford Press)
- Masfield, John Sea Life in Nelson's Time (Sphere)
- (1) Ballantyne & Eastland HMS Victory (Pen & Sword)

John Roberts works in the Research & Archive Department of 'Explosion!' the Museum of Naval Firepower.

The museum has a full range of naval cannons including Blomefield pattern guns. For more information on EXPLOSION! The Museum of Naval Firepower visit the web site www.explosion.org.uk

Letter from the Chairman

Report on our AGM in Oxford, Outlook 2013

Dear Members of our Society,

28 – 30 September 2012 we held our Annual General Meeting in Oxford, starting with dinner on Friday night at the Head of the River-Restaurant on the Thames, the place where "undoubtedly" Horatio Hornblower had a pint of beer too on his way to London to take up the command of *HMS Atropos* in 1805. To commemorate this we had a joint reading of the respective chapter of the book. Different members took the roles of the canal boat captain, the boy pouring the beer from a keg, Maria; and of Hornblower himself, who was very forcefully impersonated by John Forester who had come over from the States.

We had quite a number of participants coming from abroad this time and were 34 in total, thanks to the delegation from the Swedish Horatio Hornblower Society (SHHS) too, which attended our AGM as the last leg of their tour through the UK to a number of Hornblower- and navy-related places.

Saturday lunch in the impressive dining hall of Oriel College, the venue of our AGM.

Saturday morning the sun was up and the sky was blue and we started the day with a tour though the Bodleian library dating back to the 14th century, one of the three places in the UK where one copy of each published book is stored.

After lunch the "officialities" of our AGM were quickly dealt with under the experienced management of John Roberts. The minutes of our 2011 AGM and the Treasurer's report were approved unanimously, Jetse Reijenga was elected Editor and Webmaster, Ineke Reijenga Treasurer, Lawrie Brewer 'Home Secretary (C S Forester Society)' with responsibility for UK coordination, and myself, Chairman. You will find the complete minutes on the website (Publications/Archive).

Thereafter we listened to four presentations; Dirk Scholten on “Lieutenant Bush”, Rolf Ahlström from the SHHS on “Hornblower in the Baltic”, Jetse on ‘Edith Cavell’ and myself on “Hornblower vs. James Bond”. You will find the written version of these presentations in Reflections 22 (Hornblower vs. Bond) and in forthcoming editions.

In the evening everyone was dressing for dinner. Lawrie as an alumnus of Oriel and organizer of the AGM had hinted very discreetly beforehand, that the serving staff would be dressed formally and that therefore matching socks, at least, would be appreciated. And voilà gathering in the Oriel professors’ reception room before dinner, everyone was dressed up in his and hers finest, thanks to, most likely, the educational influence of our Swedish friends and the impressive surroundings too. No more T-shirts and jeans like in the old Lechlade days, just three years ago! The Society sure has come a long way.

Society meetings in Lechlade 2009 and Oxford 2012

In the reception room Lawrie had laid out his collection of C S Forester first editions which we studied with interest. Following the reception we had a very nice dinner in the Champneys room. The Castle Pie served was good, although did not reach, in my view, the quality of earlier versions, last year’s in London, for example.

Sunday morning, after a last breakfast in the Oriel Dining Hall, we said our farewells. Some of us had to head home, another group went for a punting trip on the Cherwell, a tributary of the Thames, on a misty mystic autumn day, one of those where you feel the year is coming to a close. By the way, it turned out to be faster paddling with the pole than punting, but for appearance’s sake I did (mostly) stick to the traditional way.

Punting on the Cherwell with Pia Brewer, John Forester, Ineke and Jetse Reijenga relaxing.

What will we remember of this AGM in Oxford? First, having the members of the Swedish Horatio Hornblower Society as our guests was a great success. We mingled well and enjoyed our conversations very much. We look forward to keeping contact and seeing each other again and we thank our Swedish friends for having us invited for a future joint activity in their realm. Second, Oriel College as our venue together with the entire Oxford atmosphere was superb and we all thank Lawrie very much for having proposed it and organizing everything so well. It will be quite difficult to keep up on that level in the upcoming years.

A vote was taken about the book-of-the-year for 2013, and we agreed on *The Ship*. We had a vote too on the date and venue for the 2013 AGM. The date was settled for 28 September 2013 and as for the location the Château de Graçay in Nevers, the place where Hornblower had his sentimental times with Marie (see Reflections 18), attracted most votes. The real name of the place, to be precise, is Château du Four de Vaux and is run as a hotel (http://www.chateaudufourdevaux.com/index.php?lang=en).

I recently talked to the owner and he would, as can be expected, very much welcome us. As we are a Society with members from so many nations, I think, it just fits to hold every now and then an AGM abroad too and which place could be more suitable than the Château de Graçay? The original and sleepy village Graçay is about 140 km to the west, not a must in my view, but the Musée de la Marine de Loire (www.loirevalleytourism.com) in Châteauneuf-sur-Loire, 140 km to the northwest on the way to Paris, is very much worth a visit. This museum retraces the history of bargemen, river transport and of the Loire navigation. They have decent restaurants in France too……..

This for now; we welcome your input and hope to see you next September.

Best regards

Ludwig Heuse

1912 - AFRICAN QUEEN - 2012

Full restoration marks centennial of historic vessel

The first edition of our Magazine was published in July 2002. It was announced as "a literary supplement to the C S Forester Society Newsletter". That 20 page issue of Reflections was largely devoted to the AFRICAN QUEEN: book, movie and historical context. Contributions were written by Colin Blogg, John Forester, CS Forester himself, editor David Stead and others. One of the articles was entitled "The 90-year Odyssey of the real AFRICAN QUEEN".

New impression of the Reflections nr. 1

Conclusions: 2012 marks 10 years of our Magazine Reflections and the centennial of the AFRICAN QUEEN. I was reminded of this coincidence last week when I received an email from our member Arnold Romberg of La Grange, TX, USA. He sent me a magazine clipping from Sea History, Summer 2012 issue. This clipping led to the vessel's web site: http://www.africanqueenflkeys.com/.

The vessel has been recently restored in the original state by Captain Lance and Suzanne Holmquist.

The following is from this website:

1912 *- The African Queen was built in 1912 at Lytham shipbuilding in England. Originally she was named the S/L LIVINGSTONE. She was immediately shipped to the British East Africa Railways company on the Victoria Nile and Lake Albert. Lake Albert is located on the border of the Belgian Congo and Uganda. She was built in a narrow way to navigate this river and was used to carry mercenaries, missionaries, cargo and hunting parties on their voyages.*

1951 - *John Huston saw the vessel and commissioned her for the movie he was directing "The African Queen" She was renamed after her starring role.1*

Humphrey Bogart and Catherine Hepburn in the 1951 movie

1968 *- The vessel was purchased by a restaurant owner in San Fransisco and brought to the US for charter operation.*

1970 *- A man called Hal Bailey from Oregon purchased the boat for the price of her boat yard bill and took her to Oregon for charter operation which was so successful he decided to bring her to Florida for year round charter operation.*

1982 - *In 1982, late attorney (and Bogart buff) Jim Hendricks, Sr., discovered the vessel languishing in Ocala, Fla. and purchased the piece of movie history for a reported $65,000. An equal amount of funds was invested to get the boat operational and Hendricks began offering visitors rides in 1983 while the vessel was homeported at Key Largo's Holiday Inn.*

Among the vessel's highlights outside of the Florida Keys, Hendricks shipped the AFRICAN QUEEN to England for the Queen Mother's 90th birthday celebration and for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of

Dunkirk evacuation in the English Channel. It also visited Sydney Australia, New York and Ireland.

In 2001, the vessel's engine broke, yet it remained on display for curious tourists and film buffs to view.

***2012 -** Captain Lance and Suzanne Holmquist signed a long-term lease with Jim Hendricks' son to restore the vessel in time for her centennial year celebrations. The Holmquists have overseen repairs and have taken pains to date it as it appeared in the film, replacing steel in the hull, replacing the boiler and oiling the black African mahogany to condition the wood. Once finished they put her back into operation as she once was offering canal and dinner cruises in Key Largo.*

See the actor's son Steve Bogart in the "re-launch party" earlier this year, on YouTube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTEC83bWwqU

So, to book your cuise when in Key Largo, Fl, USA:
call: 305.451.8080

CORRESPONDENCE

Society member Simon Karner was kind enough to answer my question about a short story by Forester entitled *That Old Computer.*

It was published in the August 1958 issue of ELLERY QUEEN'S Mystery Magazine. If there is anyone who has this issue, I would be delighted to receive a copy of the article, PLEASE.

MORE CORRESPONDENCE

Chris Paparone from USA asked:
I am looking for the citation for the following C S Forester quote. Can you help?
"The greatest evils in the world will not be carried out by men with guns, but by men in suits sitting behind desks."

EDITOR: Nice quote, and I tend to agree.
But http://www.coverfire.com/files/quotes.txt says that it is attributed to C S Lewis. While it is not listed on http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis, a primary source could be this: Wayne Mardindale & Jerry Root, The Quotable Lewis, Tyndale House Publishers, 1990.

Nurse Cavell
a Play in 3 Acts by C E Bechhofer Roberts and C S Forester
By Jetse Reijenga

Forester's plays, *U97* (1931) and *Nurse Cavell* (1933) might be called "minor works". The plays were part of the many different forms of writing by Forester to establish himself as a novelist. The books of the plays were not very successful, only printed once, and at present extremely difficult to obtain second-hand. They are not even mentioned in the 2nd edition of Sanford Sternlicht's C S Forester and the Hornblower Saga. In previous articles in Reflections it has nevertheless been shown that there are many interesting things to tell about *U97*, especially about Forester's research of events of the Great War. It must be concluded that *U97*, perhaps together with *Brown on Resolution* (1929) and *African Queen* (1935) were the foundation stones of Forester's later works on 20th century wars. From the present contribution we might conclude that we should also add *Nurse Cavell*, for several reasons: All of these stories are largely centred around individual self-sacrifice of "common people" for a good cause, in WWI. The background of all of them has played an important role in the author's early development as a writer. *Nurse Cavell* is also special because it is the only book by Forester written together with a co-author (refer to the article about Bechhofer Roberts in Reflections 21 of March 2012).

The story

The story of Edith Cavell is well-known and well preserved. She has been called the Florence Nightingale of WWI and England's Joan of Arc. Edith Louisa Cavell was born in 1865 in a village near Norwich, where her father was a vicar. She was the eldest of four children and was taught to always share with the less fortunate. In 1890, Edith took a post as governess with the Francois family in Brussels. She stayed here for five years and became a firm favourite with the family.

She continued to paint in her spare time and became fluent in French. 1895 saw Edith's return home to nurse her father through a brief illness. This made Edith resolve to take up nursing as a career and she was accepted for training at the London Hospital. After a career in private nursing, she was recruited to be head matron for the Berkendael Medical Institute in Brussels in 1907. By 1911 she was a training nurse for three hospitals, 24 schools, and 13 kindergartens in Belgium.

Her institute, in German-occupied Brussels became a Red Cross hospital as soon as the war began in August 1914. It cared for Belgian, French, British, and German wounded. In addition to providing medical care Cavell assisted about 200 British, French, and Belgian soldiers to cross the border into neutral Holland between November 1914 and July 1915. She was doing this in cooperation with the Belgian architect Philippe François Victor Baucq, who was in charge of the escape network. In the summer of 1915 Edith Cavell was warned that this was very dangerous, but she continued her mission.

On 31st July 1915, Edith was arrested by the German Secret Police and charged with harbouring Allied soldiers and helping them to escape German occupied territory. Victor Baucq had been arrested a few days earlier. It is thought that they might have been betrayed by Armand Jeannes, a Belgian agent-provocateur who at Cavell's clinic for several days, gathering evidence.

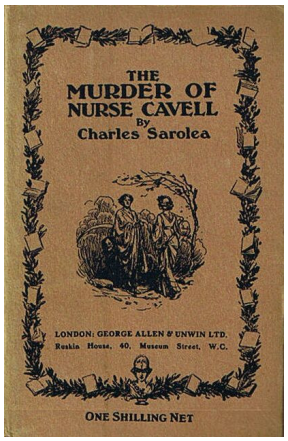
At her court-martial in October 1915, Edith Cavell admitted her involvement in helping Allied soldiers escape. The court found her guilty and condemned her to death. Reverend H. Stirling T. Gahan was the Irish Anglican priest in Brussels who attended Edith Cavell on the evening before her execution. Edith Cavell was shot at dawn together with Philippe Baucq.

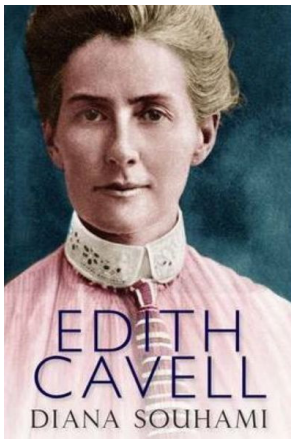
Cavell's execution created an international uproar against the Germans. Prior to the trial however the British did not attempt to intervene on her behalf because they felt that attempts to win her release would only anger the Germans and make it more likely that she would be executed. However, ambassador Brand Whitlock of the United States who were at the time still neutral, advocated for the release of Nurse Cavell and so did the Marquis de Villalobar, the Spanish minister to Belgium. They explained to the German government that executing Cavell would harm the Germans' reputation. In spite of that the Germans executed Edith Cavell by firing squad.

Directly after the execution British propaganda elevated Edith Cavell to the status of a martyr and her death became a symbol of German brutality. The publicity around her fate was even used in army recruitment schemes such as Lord Derby's National Registration Scheme which came into effect in October 1915.

Biographies and movies

At least 5 biographies were published before 1920, and all of them are still available today as print on demand. The first was by Charles Sarolea: The murder of Nurse Cavell, G. Allen & Unwinn (1915). From then on many more have been written, in every decade. One of the latest is by Diana Souhami: Edith Cavell: Nurse, Martyr, Heroine, Quercus Publishing Plc (2011).



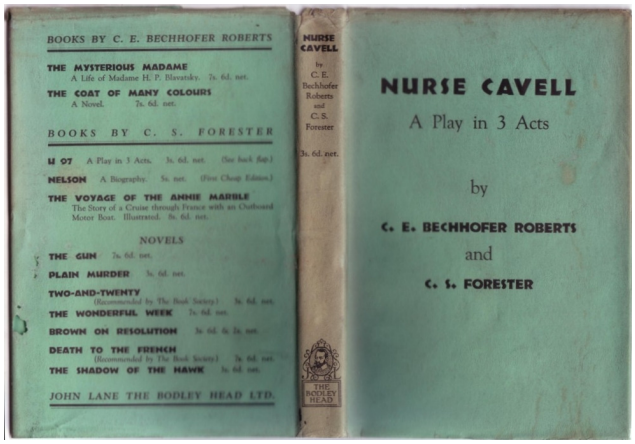


The first and the latest book on Edith Cavell

Immediately after the trial and execution a number of silent movies about Edith Cavell were being made in France, Belgium, Australia, England and the USA.. Finally Herbert Wilcox in 1928 produced Dawn with Sybil Thorndike (1882-1976) in the leading role.

The theme was picked up again when WWII was imminent. Nurse Edith Cavell is a 94 minute sound film by RKO Pictures, again directed by Herbert Wilcox in 1939. There was even a Radio Play on the air in 1948.

Nurse Cavell was published by John Lane the Bodley Head in 1933. Authors are mentioned as C.E. Bechhofer Roberts and C.S. Forester. There was no American edition. The dustjacket of the book (next page) is simply text-only on a light green background. At the bottom of the spine of the dust jacket is shown a nice logo of the publisher, normally not seen on other John Lane books of the period. The book is extremely scarce.



The play written by C E Bechhofer Roberts and C S Forester was performed by The People's National Theatre at the Vaudeville Theatre, The Strand, London, 7th March 1934. The People's National Theatre was founded in 1930 by Nancy Price, the actress who played the leading role of Edith Cavell in Forester's play. The play is discussed in The British Journal of Nursing of May 1934, page 138.

The British Journal of Nursing

Nurses who availed themselves of the opportunity to see if "Nurse Cavell" produced at the Vaudeville Theatre will, we feel sure, congratulate themselves that they did not tarry to witness this deeply moving play which has, alas! had so short a run in London. Perhaps memories of the Great War are still too distressing for this controversial subject to be dramatised; nevertheless, Mr. Bechhofer Roberts and Mr. Forester have written a remarkable play, telling without sentimentality, and so simply, the moving story of Edith Cavell, that we forget controversy. She is, throughout, an individual. We see her as Matron of the Perkendael School for young nurses at Brussels, ever able to meet with calm simplicity domestic and nursing problems, and later, when she is gravely involved in assisting soldiers across the frontier calmness and determination that have distinguished her administrative work, now clearly stand her abiding characteristics in all extremity.

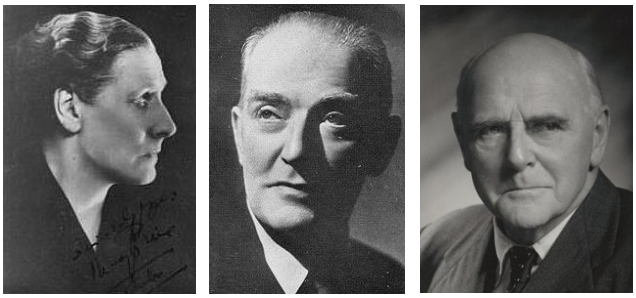
The last scene so perfectly acted, that we forget the stage where the Chaplain sees her after the sentence, and then when she tidies her room, and putting on her bonnet and cloak, walks briskly to face death. Miss Nancy Price's playing of the heroine is most impressive in this part, she portrays to perfection the qualities of the true nurse in Edith Cavell, we see gentleness, selflessness and courage, tempered with a refreshing sense of humour, and we feel that this brave woman was worthy of our loyalty, which is hers for all time.

Mr. Speaight was startlingly realistic as the disguised German by whom Edith Cavell is trapped; Mr. Lewis Casson, as the Chaplain, left nothing to be desired in his interpretation of this part.

The production of *Nurse Cavell* was directed by Frank (Francis Lyall) Birch (1889–1956). The costumes were designed by the leading actress, with the advice of Nurse Cavell's sister, Mrs Wainwright, and Cavell's former assistant, Nurse Elizabeth Wilkins. Edith Cavell's many letters to Miss Wilkins are now at the Imperial War Museum. The final one of those, dated 11 October 1915 ends with "My love to you all - I am not afraid but quite happy".

The Cast

The leading role was for Lilian Nancy Bache Price. She was born in 1880 in Kinver, Staffordshire. Her theatre career lasted from 1900 until 1950, her film career from 1916 until 1952. Nancy Price died in 1970 at the age of 90, a local celebrity in Findon, West Sussex, who left instructions in her will directing her doctor to ...."open a vein to make certain I am dead".



Nancy Price, Guy Le Feuvre and Lewis Casson in later age.

Guy Le Feuvre (1883-1950) was a Canadian-born British stage and film actor who played the role of Philippe Baucq.

Lewis Casson (1875-1969) who played the role of the Irish Priest (Reverend Stirling Gahan) was a British actor and theatre director. Casson was married to Sybil Thorndike who had played the role of Edith Cavell in the 1928 movie.

Cavell and Baucq are the only real names used in the cast, the priest in simply called Chaplain. Nurses have neutral names such as Dubois (a Belgian), Johnson (an English one) and Knoll (a German). Real persons such as the Prince of Croy are briefly mentioned in Act 3.

Act 1 is timed in the Nursing School in August 1914, on the day that Brussels was occupied by the Germans. There is chaos and traces of panic because Edith Cavell is absent (she is on her war back from England). There are rumours of poisoned drinking water and German nurses in training insist on going back to their country. As soon as she arrives and takes control, the situation is normalised.`

In Act 2 it is August 1915, a full year after Act 1. At the Nursing School the Chaplain voices his concern about persistent rumours of the escape route. One event described in the play is also found in historical sources: that one of the wounded English soldiers who was helped

to escape to Holland had sent a postcard from England, thanking Edith Cavell for her help, and signed it with his name, rank and unit. Had the German sensor read this and drawn conclusions? Cavell is also warned by nurse Dubois and by Baucq that there are German spies everywhere.
There were several bad characters involved in the betrayal of Edith Cavell, but the book mentions none of them by name. The newspaper article above mentions "the spy" being played by Mr. Speaight. This was Robert William Speaight (1904-1976), a British actor and a writer. From 1927 he was an early performer in radio plays. He came to prominence in the first production of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral (1935)* and then started playing Shakespearean roles.

Edith Cavell dressing wounds of the spy that would betray her.

In any case the spy in Act 2 of the book is called the Refugee, and described as a German agent, disguised as a Flemish soldier from Antwerp on the run from the Germans. He comes to Cavell under the pretext of having been sent by Baucq, to join an escape party. Cavell is at first suspicious but after some interrogation of the man she is convinced of his story, and explains the escape plan in detail. Then Baucq enters the room, the agent's cover is blown, and both Cavell and Baucq are arrested.

Act 3 consists of three scenes. Scene 1 is the actual trial, where the interrogation is carried out through an interpreter. Cavell admits to all charges. Scene 2 takes place on the night before the execution. A delegate from the US embassy together with the Ambassador of Spain, is pleading for mercy at the German Political Headquarters with Captain Adalbert Freiherr von Hausmann. The German claims that a verdict by the military Court has not yet been reached, but the American and the Spanisch Ambassador try to assure him that the trail ended in conviction and that the execution will be in the morning. The German refuses to believe this and to wake up the Military Governor in the middle of the night. The role of the American delegate was for Australian born actor Ian Fleming (1888-1969).
In Scene 3 of the final act, we see the Chaplain trying to comfort Cavell in her cell, praying together. At daybreak she is called away for transport, to be executed by firing squad. The play ends with distant gun shots.

Reverend H. Stirling T. Gahan (Lewis Casson) with Edith Cavell (Nancy Price) in her last hours

The pictures of the set, taken from the website of the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum show a remarkably simple set design. In contract to this the cast was a "heavy" one. It was a mixture of true professionals with a long stage career either behind and/or ahead of them.
The play is a simplified but moving and dramatic summary of the tragic events of nursing the wounded of WWI. It features aspects of patriotism, self-sacrifice and the debatable role of justice (whatever that might mean in war time), and these were the fields of interest that both authors had in common. We have also seen that they shared the same publisher. They were experienced writers of biographies of historical figures and they shared a fascination for boating the rivers and canals of continental Europe.
Regarding Forester's motivation there is even more. It can be certain that the Forester family with 15 year old Cecil read the headlines of Cavell's murder in the papers of 1915 with close interest. His brother Geoff was a doctor in the Army Medical Corps in Egypt, where he married an Irish nurse by the name of Edith Caroline "Molly" Anderson. His cousin Harry was also a medical officer. Cecil enters Guy's Medical School in October 1917. I imagine him standing in the crowd as Edith Cavell's remains were paraded in the streets of London in 1919 and he probably saw the silent movie Dawn (1928) in the local cinema.

This article is but a brief summary of the extended foreword to second edition of *Nurse Cavell* which is now available as an eBook from http://eNetPress.com, together with a similar edition of the other play, *U97.*

http://www.imdb.com
http://www.revdc.net/cavell/ec.htm
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O102316/hat/
http://www.rnrm.org.uk/edithcavell/ec_13.html
http://rcnarchive.rcn.org.uk
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http://www.artflakes.com/en/products/nurse-cavell
http://www.stephen-stratford.co.uk/edith_cavell.htm
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUmVLTuVf1I
http://www.britishpathe.com/video/

CORRESPONDENCE

Ian Williams on *Nurse Cavell*

Dear Jetse,
I have read the play and your foreword, and also re-read U-97. The foreword I found to be impressive. It gathers together all the bits and pieces I have seen on the internet, and goes much further with the research and background. It answers most of my questions, and throws up several possible reasons for the collaboration between the authors.

1. The publishers liked the idea of a play about Cavell, but wanted the more experienced playwright to hold the hand of CSF.
2. The two authors met socially and decided to collaborate
3. Roberts saw his literary star waning and seized the opportunity of revitalising his career by working with a more successful modern author.

Bechhofer Roberts published a lot of work which was not necessarily original. There were many translations of foreign works, as well as books that were merely edited by him. I cannot imagine that he had the success that CSF had, except maybe for his biography of Churchill.

Significantly, Bechhofer Roberts had previous "form" at collaboration. He partnered a George Goodchilde in writing five detective stories. Hard again to know why, as Goodchilde wrote many such novels alone.

- Now to the play. Frankly I was disappointed by it. I did not think that U-97 was too bad, so I thought that his next venture may have been an improvement. Not so. Whose fault this is, is impossible to say, but consider these points. The dialogue has far more instructions attached to individual characters, than in U-97
- The tone of the play is often blatantly xenophobic in places, and sits badly with the dialogue we know from Forester's novels, where heroism and self sacrifice is more under stated. (The character of Cavell herself is not included in this comment.)

There are several other things that nag at me, but have not crystallised enough for me to put into words just yet. My opinion may not sit too well with other members, but I cannot shy away from criticism of this work. There is no greater fan of CSF's work than me. I read his books because I enjoy it and no one transports me to the action better than he. I even read *Marionettes at Home* from cover to cover.

However I believe that I am not alone thinking so badly of the play. Mark Wilden tells us that it only ran for 37 performances, and the publisher did not produce a second imprint. I think that shows how little regarded the play was when it was introduced.

Just as a historical footnote, the luggage van that transported Miss Cavell's remains from Dover to London, still exists (photo below).

It has been restored and preserved by the Kent and East Sussex Steam Railway, and I believe it is on display at Bodiam station.

Once again I am in your debt for filling one of the two gaps in my collection. With my very best regards,
Ian Williams

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mr Warren Davey and Dick Kooyman in Australia; Mr Ivan Lasso in Colombia; Mr Michael Kress and Mr Burkhard Spinnen in Germany; Mr Henri Kastelein in France; Ms Caroline Petherick, Mr Frederic Cogswell, Mr Richard Cross, Mr Tom McNab and Mr Peter Noel Simpson in the UK; Mr Arnold Carson in Scotland; Ms Rachel Klingberg, Mr Charles Robinson, Professor Sean Benson, Mr Mitchell Green, Dr Leon Higley, Mr Thomas Nosek, Commissioner Buck O'Gooden and Mr Robert Worrall in USA.

Reflections

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Cover: C S Forester with cat Fluffy in 1948