

## BOOK REVIEWS

Edwyn Gray, *British Submarines in the Great War: A Damned Un-English Weapon*. Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Leo Cooper (distributed by Pen and Sword Books Limited), 2001. 259 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, index. £19.95, cloth; ISBN 0-85052-776-7.

This account of British submarine operations during World War I originally appeared in 1971. It was republished in 2001 to honour the centennial of the British underseas arm.

Before discussing his primary subject, Edwyn Gray presents a brief account of the development of the Royal Navy's submarines from 1901 (when the Admiralty accepted its first boat) until the outbreak of the Great War. North American readers will be interested to note that most of these craft were designed or built by John Holland and his associates. The author is critical of non-Holland boats, including the highly unreliable steam-driven, K-class units completed during the war years. With regard to the early development of submarine tactics, Gray gives major credit to Sir Roger Keyes.

The author faults senior officers of the Royal Navy for their failure to recognize that submarines were best employed on offensive, independent war patrols. Instead, Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty sought to integrate submersibles into the British Grand Fleet. Again and again, however, inadequate communications and other problems made that integration impossible.

Despite the views of the Royal Navy's senior leaders, British boats undertook a number of successful independent operations, especially during the early years of the war.

A shining example was their deployment to Turkish Waters during the Gallipoli campaign of 1915-1916. After hair-raising transits through the minefields and defensive nets guarding the Dardanelles, Royal Navy submarines launched an assault on enemy merchantmen and warships. One outstanding war patrol was undertaken by an obsolete B-class boat commanded by Norman Holbrook. Holbrook's sinking of a Turkish

battleship earned him the Victoria Cross. Eventually, due to the British underwater threat the Turks were forced to use difficult land routes to reinforce and resupply their troops in Gallipoli.

Another close-in offensive campaign, reflecting the Royal Navy's Nelsonian tradition that so often seemed to be lacking in the Great War, took place in the Baltic. As in the waters off Gallipoli, the British faced a major challenge in entering a narrow sea, this time due to the German minefields, net barriers, and patrol ships deployed in the Danish Straits. But two submarines reached the Baltic in the fall of 1914 and they were followed by several other submersibles. These units were based at Russian ports.

The initial Baltic operations in 1915 were highly successful. In fact, the sinkings scored during this "happy time" by Max Horton, Martin Nasmith, and other British commanders forced Berlin to suspend its critical iron ore trade with Sweden. In order to provide escorts for Baltic convoys, the enemy also needed to detach ships from its main battle fleet. As easy targets disappeared, the British scored fewer sinkings in 1916 and 1917. Due to the exit of Russia from the war, and the German threat to seize the Royal Navy's bases, British authorities ordered the scuttling in 1918 of the seven submarines then assigned to the Baltic station.

In comparison to the audacity of British underseas warfare in the Marmora and Baltic Seas, submarine operations were less aggressive in the critical North Sea area. Yet, Gray describes a number of independent war patrols off the German North Sea coast. Here, British submarines sank a number of warships, including several U-boats. Gray also makes fleeting reference to mines laid by Royal Navy submarines in German coastal waters, an important subject that deserves greater attention.

The contributions made by the British undersea fleet in the Great War were all the more remarkable due to the highly unreliable

technology of the boats and their torpedoes. The professional skill and heroism of Royal Navy submariners overcame many of these problems. But no one should forget that the submarine arm suffered heavy casualties. The scope of these losses is indicated by the sinking of almost half of the 58 E-class boats -- a type that was the backbone of the British underseas arm -- throughout the Great War.

Edwyn Gray states that his book is intended for a general audience. But it also stands as a useful reminder for naval officers and professional scholars of the extent of Allied underwater operations in the First World War. Edwyn Gray's account is especially useful since many of the patterns and problems he describes will emerge once again in the 1939-1945 conflict.

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Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *USS Olympia: Herald of Empire*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2000. xiv + 277 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index. US \$34.95, cloth; ISBN 1-55750-148-3.

The protected cruiser *Olympia* is one of the dozen most famous ships in US history. As Commodore George Dewey's flagship at the Battle of Manila Bay its fame was approached during the Spanish American War only by that of the battleship *Oregon* which made the epic 15,000 mile voyage from Puget Sound to the Caribbean in 66 days. The career of the *Oregon* has been chronicled by Sanford Stemliche in *McKinley's Bulldog* (1977), but until now the *Olympia* has never been the subject of a book-length study.

When commissioned in 1895, the *Olympia* looked both backward and forward: Backward in role since she was designed to execute the traditional American naval strategy of commerce raiding; forward in technology because among other innovations the *Olympia* was the first US warship equipped with a refrigeration system, the first to employ electric priming for her principal gun batteries, and among the first powered by vertical-stroke three-cylinder triple-expansion

engines. In his opening chapter *Cooling*, author of *Gray Steel and Bluewater Navy: The Formative Years of America's Military-Industrial complex, 1881-1917* (1979), describes construction of the *Olympia* at the Union Iron Works in San Francisco and clearly places her in the technological setting of the time.

The heart of the book traces *Olympia's* operational career as flagship of the Asiatic Squadron during which its seven vessels destroyed the Spanish squadron at Manila, laid the basis for acquisition of the Philippine Islands, and helped launch the United States as a world power; her inner war voyages to the Caribbean and Europe and service at the Naval Academy, both to take midshipmen on practice cruises and as a static training vessel during which *Olympia* was in reserve status; and finally, her antisubmarine work during World War I, voyage to Murmansk and Archangel as part of the Allied force that intervened in Revolutionary Russia followed by a cruise in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, and topped off by the honor of being selected to return the body of the Unknown Soldier from France to Washington, DC, for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. The final chapter sketches the struggle to save the *Olympia* from being used as scrap metal (the fate of the *Oregon* during World War II), her restoration in the late 1950s, and her current role as a museum ship in Philadelphia.

Frank Cooling, a former historian for the Cruiser Olympia Association, has thoroughly researched the *Olympia*, presents her story with telling anecdote, and deftly places her in the context of her times, the nascent years of American imperialism and international humanitarianism. The *Olympia* played a key role in the war that launched the now long-gone American experiment in territorial empire, served on convoy duty in the "war to end all wars," opposed Bolshevism in Northern Russia, rescued refugees in the Adriatic, and evacuated Americans from eastern Turkey. The optimism of early twentieth-century Americans, as well as their naiveté, shines through this highly readable

book. The *Olympia*, the oldest steel warship afloat today, has finally received the book she has long deserved.

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William H. Flayhart III, *The American Line: 1871-1902*. New York, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2000. 404 pp., plates photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$39.95, CDN \$55.00, cloth; ISBN 0-383-04710-5.

William H. Flayhart III's *The American Line: 1871-1902* fills a void in the annals of North Atlantic steamship history that has been in existence for far too long. While there are no shortage of books available on the history of such august lines as Cunard, White Star and P.&O., there is a genuine dearth when it comes to lines such as the American and Red Star. Mr. Flayhart has set out in masterful fashion to address this scarcity; at least up until the year 1902.

*The American Line: 1871-1902* is a quality publication written by a consummate author. Mr. Flayhart has also embellished his informative and highly entertaining history of the American Line with a wealth of photos and illustrations of the ships involved: both externally and internally. He has chosen to reproduce deck plans, sailing and fare schedules and virtually every one of the highly collectable artistic postcards of the Red Star and American lines in full colour!

*The American Line 1871-1902* is a very detailed and authoritative history of the American and Red Star lines, which delves deeply into the financial finaglings and wheelings and dealings that took place throughout their existence. As such, there are lengthy passages to be waded through by those less than thrilled by practices of finance and generally accepted accounting principles. This is to be expected, when one sets out to write a definitive history intended to satisfy all interests. Fortunately, much of the book pertains to the careers of the ships themselves, and the thrilling incidents that occurred in their checkered lives.

Throughout his book, Mr. Flayhart gives

vivid and detailed accounts of the incidents which involved or plagued ships of the American Steamship Company of Philadelphia (1873), and its lineal descendant, the American Line of 1893. First up, is the tremendous storm of 1874 which swept away the *Pennsylvania's* bridge, wheel house and virtually all of the ship's officers, leaving it to a passenger to save the ship and all those aboard. There is the train wreck, which cast a pall over the formal transfer of the *New York* to American registry, and the launch of the *St. Paul*, which took more than two full weeks to complete. Groundings are well represented by the *St. Paul* at East Branch, New Jersey, while racing the Cunarder *Campania* in a dense fog, and by the *Paris* on The Manacles off the Cornish coast, leaving her out of commission for two years. The role which the American Line's big four – *St. Paul*, *St. Louis*, *Paris* and *New York* - played as armed, auxiliary cruisers in the Spanish-American War is well documented; detailing their invaluable service in tilting the scales of battle in favour the United States. The humanitarian efforts of the *Paris* in rescuing all but the one of the crew of the sinking British tanker *Vidobala* are not forgotten.

Besides the historical accounts of the activities of the ships of the American Line, the book provides some fascinating insights into the era in which they sailed. We see the pivotal role, which the Pennsylvania Railroad Company had in building the American Line; both in expanding their business and in funding an inevitably futile attempt to contest the supremacy of New York City as the United States' principal port. The reader also comes away with a keen appreciation for how perilous an Atlantic crossing was in the days when you had to invest all your trust in a captain to use his experience and intuition to inch you and others across the ocean to safety. And when that failed, the terrifying realization that rescue was more often than not strictly left to chance. Finally there is the reality that no matter how superior shipbuilding in America was to that of Europe, the cost of construction was always significantly higher and the mail subsidies provided by the

US government never sufficient to allow an American-registered mercantile marine to flourish. *The American Line: 1871-1902* concludes with the formation of the International Mercantile Marine and the efforts of J. P. Morgan on behalf of a trust to end cutthroat rate wars that were an anathema to profitable business.

There are only two faults that I could find with *The American Line: 1871-1902*; one an omission and the other an oversight. Surprisingly, they both occur in the fascinating chapter pertaining to the American Line involvement in the Spanish-American War. The omission is in not providing the reader with even the briefest overview of the root causes of the war. The oversight was in not providing a more detailed description of the Battle of Santiago de Cuba. The result is that we see the *Harvard* picking up 900 Spanish survivors, without any idea of how they came to be overboard in the first place. Only an illustration of the *Almirante Oquendo* being destroyed by a magazine explosion gives some idea as to how they 'came to be plucked from the sea.

William Henry Flayhart III's *The American Line: 1871-1902* is a substantial history of a line about which little has been written. For those who are aficionados of the history of the Frantic Atlantic and the ships and lines which made it so, this will be an indispensable addition to their libraries. Mr. Flayhart has done such an admirable job in detailing every aspect of the American Line's history that the reader need not be on the lookout for other titles to fill in the gaps; there are none.

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Robin Broadhurst, *Churchill's Anchor: the Biography of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound*. Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Leo Cooper (Pen and Sword Books), 2000. xv + 320 pp., maps, photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. £25.00, cloth; ISBN 0-85052-765-1.

This meticulous biography, the first full treatment of its subject, shows that Dudley Pound was a

success throughout his naval career. But in 1938, after more than two years in the top seagoing job in the Royal Navy, he learned that a rival would be appointed First Sea Lord. A telling vignette describes how Pound, never flamboyant, reacted outwardly. "... ....I can hardly believe my luck", he told a trusted subordinate, " It's exactly what I would have hoped for, but never expected to get. Just think, I am not to be the First Sea Lord, but instead am to stay with the fleet for another year ... they will then make me an Admiral of the Fleet, and I can retire straight from the sea" [110]. Aside from the Navy, Dudley Pound's lifelong passions had been hunting and fishing but he was not independently wealthy. The news of his coming retirement also prompted him to buy his first new gun.

Circumstances changed and Dudley Pound became First Sea Lord in June 1939, short months before the outbreak of war and remained in this post for four arduous years before dying on Trafalgar Day 1944. His parents – an American mother and an English country gentleman – had separated by the time that he became a naval cadet at the age of thirteen. Dudley Pound, obviously intelligent and industrious, had topped the entrance examination, and then passed out top of his class two years later, establishing a pattern of consistently standing out. The author, Robin Broadhurst, is a product of Sandhurst who spent several years as an infantry officer. He is particularly good at tracing how Pound soon came to the notice of rising officers and formed associations with colleagues who would hold key appointments when he came to be First Sea Lord. Characteristically, rather than an introspective diary Pound from 1892 to 1938 painstakingly recorded his shooting and fishing. The author did extensive archival research and had the cooperation of the Pound family but found no letters which shed light on Dudley Pound's inner thoughts.

Broadhurst notes that apart from three early years in the Pacific with opportunities to shoot and fish in British Columbia Pound's entire career was in the main fleets or Whitehall.

He had a series of choice appointments and was captain of the battleship *Colossus* at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. Two spells at the Admiralty working closely with Admiral Fisher and Jellicoe exposed Pound to severe conflicts between these two First Sea Lords and their First Lords. Experience of these "clashes of titans" shaped Pound's views of how he as First Sea Lord should manage his crucial relationship with the mercurial Winston Churchill.

After the Great War Pound was selected for positions of increasing responsibility afloat and ashore. Broadhurst quotes extensively from contemporaries and other records such as performance assessments to produce a balanced portrait of Pound in the inter-war years. Remembered by a contemporary as an "electrifying" Chief of Staff in the Mediterranean in the mid twenties Pound was "respected by most, but not the weaker brethren" [55], who typically found time to produce a detailed guide called "Shooting in the Mediterranean". By 1929 he was in command of the Battle Cruiser Squadron and described by his flag lieutenant as ".... a man with terrific energetic vitality and loyalty to the Service, who drive himself to the utmost limits....and expected the same from his juniors." [68].

Almost sixty percent of the book is devoted to Pound's role at the helm during the Second World War. Unfortunately, many of Pound's official papers were destroyed soon after he died. Broadhurst thus faced a formidable task in grappling with precisely what were Pound's roles in strategic and operational issues. The author includes some vivid accounts and trenchant character sketches by Pound's contemporaries, but in official papers, the records which have survived, are cited extensively to illustrate Admiralty positions. In general, Broadhurst's wartime narrative is workman like and readable but not particularly insightful. Issues in which Pound was involved such as the struggle to secure long-range aircraft for the critical Atlantic campaign are described. However, the narrative does not pinpoint Pound's personal priorities or how he tried to influence decisions on policy. Pound's working relationship with Churchill is discussed at length.

However, the author is determined throughout to dispute earlier critical assessments of SW Roskill and others and his almost strident tone detracts from the narrative flow and the sense of a carefully considered portrait. His repeated denials that Pound was unwell before 1943 are not convincing.

While the author does not reflect on the scope of the First Sea Lord's responsibilities or pass judgement his narrative shows that Pound was in an untenable position and was unwilling or unable to effect changes. Alone of the three service chiefs he had both heavy operational and administrative responsibilities. Technological advances, including successes in signals intelligence, enabled the Admiralty to collate what at the time were unprecedented overviews of operations at sea. There were compelling reasons for making certain operational decisions from a central headquarters ashore. Circumstances had changed over the two decades since the end of the previous war. However, the basic organization for running the war at sea and the navy had not evolved to reflect these new realities. In addition, Pound was chair of the Chiefs of Staff Committee until early 1942. A centraliser for years, Pound attempted to shoulder his many burdens and passed up chances to lighten his load. For example, he unwisely accepted poor advice and rejected appointing a Deputy First Sea Lord to share administrative duties when war came.

Not surprisingly, the combination of a dynamic and interfering Winston Churchill and his nocturnal habits, the sheer administrative burden of being the First Sea Lord combined with a determination not to delegate, the responsibility of also chairing the committee weighing strategic decisions and the strain of having to make ultimate operational decisions contributed to flawed judgements.

Broadhurst has occasional problems with time sequences and sometimes draws on superficial judgements. An example is a simplistic assertion that "The blame here [for the state of the defences at Scapa Flow in 1939] rests squarely on the Treasury." [129]

Robin Broadhurst properly emphasizes Pound's overriding sense of duty. The Admiral remains a very private and remote figure and perhaps this will always be the case. Broadhurst says little about Pound's family life and character. The reader learns that he delighted in driving his Bentley very fast, found relaxation in fishing and hunting right to the end, and had a lady friend he could visit for a quiet evening drink. Broadhurst's portrait underlines the fact that Pound had no outside means or influential connections. It is typical that he declined a peerage at the end of his life because he felt that his family could not afford it.

Based on extensive research, this readable biography sheds new light on Dudley Pound's career prior to shouldering the arguably untenable responsibilities of the First Sea Lord. Coverage of the Admiral's important role in the Second World War is comprehensive. Pound's role in celebrated operational episodes is identified but the reader is left without a clear sense of Pound's personal stamp on broader developments.

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Eric Purdon, *Black Company: The Story of Subchaser 1264*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2000. 255 pp., photographs, appendix. US \$16.95, paper; ISBN 1-55750-658-2.

*Black Company* is the story of the United States Navy's *PC 1264* in the Second World War. First published in 1972, it is not only the history of a ship but of a social and naval experiment, its title coming from the colour of the crew. *PC 1264* and the frigate *USS Mason* were the first ships of the United States Navy to employ African American sailors. Eric Purdon, the author, volunteered to be the first captain of this ship and served in that capacity for most of its career.

Prior to 1944, African Americans could only serve in the US Navy as messmen. The Selective Service and Training Act of 1940, however, stipulated that the armed forces would not discriminate against any person on the basis of race

or colour. The US Navy was slow to respond to this edict. The naval brass believed that blacks were not suited to life at sea and that white sailors would not accept blacks in a position of authority over them. Pressure from the NAACP and the rhetoric of a democratic war against tyranny made this position untenable as the war progressed. Eventually, the Bureau of Personnel agreed to test its assumptions about African Americans in uniform by manning two ships with black crews. Out of necessity, the ships would have white officers and petty officers. The plan called for the white petty officers to train their replacements so that ultimately the entire crew would be African American.

Purdon describes the selection of the crew and the officers (all of whom were given the option of refusing the posting) through to the commissioning of *PC 1264*. The ship excelled at its shakedown training at the Submarine Chaser Training Center in Miami and the Fleet Sound School in Key West. Predictably, the officers and crew experienced more difficulty in overcoming the prejudices of naval establishments and civilians ashore than they did in performing their duties at sea. After the completion of training, *PC 1264* was assigned to the Eastern Sea Frontier escorting merchant convoys between New York, Key West and Guantanamo. By this stage of the Atlantic war, the U-boats posed little threat in coastal waters and the ship only carried out one depth charge attack in earnest. Like any escort vessel, its greatest enemies at sea were the weather, boredom and the monotonous routine of convoy duty.

In November 1944, Purdon recommended that the white petty officers be replaced with promising black sailors who had been identified from among the crew and groomed to fill these posts. The Bureau of Personnel agreed and promoted the men to petty officer rank. The experiment was considered a success and a fierce pride had developed among the officers and crew in their ship. Towards the end of the war, the ship took the next step with the assignment of Ensign Samuel L. Gravely, USNR, a black officer. Gravely (who wrote the foreword to the

book) later became the first African American Rear Admiral in the US Navy. In fact, his arrival precipitated the worst racially-motivated crisis experienced by *PC 1264*. An altercation between some enlisted men at a restaurant in Miami had resulted in a call to the shore patrol to restore order. With the ruckus over, the shore patrol spotted Gravelly sitting at a table, apparently uninvolved, and charged him with impersonating an officer, a federal offence. Gravelly established his identity at the shore patrol office and received an apology. The affair was seemingly over. Purdon received a summons to the Commandant of the Naval District the next day, however, who demanded that he immediately introduce court martial proceedings against Gravelly for "conduct unbecoming an officer" for associating with enlisted men in the restaurant. Purdon refused, as was within his rights as captain of the ship, and the Admiral retaliated by confining the officers and crew to the ship for the duration of their stay in Miami. It was with relief that ship sailed for Key West in a few days with its reputation and Gravelly's career preserved.

*Black Company* succeeds most as a ship's history; it is a briskly paced and highly readable account of the late war experiences of an anti-submarine escort. Purdon has a shrewd eye for detail and tells lively anecdotes of the crew's experiences ashore and at sea. It is less successful as a portrayal of the black wartime experience in the United States Navy because of his own colour and his remoteness as commanding officer. Often one wishes to hear the voices of the "black company" that would complement the top-down perspective of the captain. Still, that is a subject for another book, and the Naval Institute Press is to be commended for making this valuable work of naval and social history available to another generation of readers in an affordable and attractive edition.

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Fridtjof Nansen, *Farthest North: the Incredible Three-Year Voyage to the Frozen Latitudes of the North*. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2000. xviii + 508 pp., maps, plates, photographs,

diagrams, appendix, index. £25.00, cloth; ISBN 0-7156-3031-8.

This edition of *Farthest North* is an abridgement of Nansen's original text published in English in 1897. Accordingly, this account of the *Norwegian North Polar Expedition 1893-1896* (also known as the *Fram Expedition*) - an attempt to drift in the Polar Ice Pack from the New Siberian Islands across the Pole to the east coast of Greenland, presents no new insight of the matter. However, an introduction, by Roland Huntford, the recent biographer of *Nansen*, provides a setting of the times and of Nansen's place as a Polar explorer at the time of the expedition. Thus the book is well suited to a collection of popular history.

Written in the first person narrative, Nansen tells the story of the *Fram Expedition* its objective, the building, outfitting and manning of the *Fram*, the passage from Norway to the polar ice (September 1893) then the drift during the next eighteen months. Leaving the *Fram* and its story, Nansen relates the effort of he and Johansen to reach the Pole some 450 miles away and of their turning back when within 226 nautical miles of the Pole - the 'farthest north' by 170 miles. Nansen's and Johansen journey to Franz Joseph Land archipelago, their wintering over in a hut of their own making, the setting out for Spitzbergen in the following spring, 19 May 1896, and finding the English Expedition Station at Cape Flora, Franz Joseph Land, 23 June 1896, and, two months later, 25 August 1896, at Tromso, reunited with their comrades and the *Fram*, ends Nansen's tale. *Fram* had cleared the ice on the 13 August 1896 and arrived Tromso that day [XVII].

An Appendix "Report of Captain Otto Sverdrup on the drifting of the *Fram* from March 14, 1895" and a short Conclusion by Nansen complete *Farthest North*.

Nansen establishes his case for a drift across the polar sea on an examination of the drift of items from the ill fated American *Jeannette Expedition 1879-1881*, crushed by the ice in the vicinity of the New Siberia Islands and

found three years later on the southwest coast of Greenland [13]. The style of the expedition was sufficiency with efficiency many dogs few men [8] " I propose to have a ship built as small and as strong as possible –just big enough to contain supplies of coals and provisions for twelve men for five years"[ 17]. The design drawings of the vessel [28] clearly show the framing technique adopted so as to lift the vessel when the ice under pressure would be creating a crushing moment on the hull. The vessel was named *Fram* which in Norwegian means "forward".

The desire to be part of Nansen's team can be measured by the many hundreds that sought a position and the superior qualifications that several of the members possessed e.g. the steward /cook of the *Fram* had been captain of a ship many years and a stoker was a lieutenant in the Reserve. [36]

Nansen draws vivid pictures of the *Fram* under ice pressure " The ice is pressing and packing round us with a noise like thunder. It is piling itself up into long walls, and heaps high enough to reach a good way up the *Fram*'s rigging; in fact, it is trying its very utmost to grind the *Fram* into powder. But here we sit [..... ] just chatting and laughing as usual". [116] Tales of bears abound [111] "Peter tumbling in the door the bear had bitten him in the side". [133 ]

On turning from the Pole Nansen's ability to see clearly the few essentials that were important to success, which in this case was survival, was never more clearly demonstrated "There is not much sense in keeping on longer: we are sacrificing valuable time and doing little. If there be much more such ice between here and Franz Joseph Land, we shall, indeed want all the time we have. I have therefore determined to stop, and shape our course for Cape Fligely [289].

The maps show the tracks of the *Fram* and of Nansen's and Johansen's sledge journey. Though somewhat difficult to read at the binding they are essential to the story. They show the geography as it was thought to be in 1893/96 and thus the basis for all navigation during the expedition.

The many photographs sketches diagrams

and drawings effectively illustrate the text.

This edition, an abridgement, is not likely to meet the requirements of scholars. It would however serve most admirably in the library of institutions teaching leadership or survival, as a classic case of a personal leader with an indomitable spirit. [xii]

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Morris O. Mills, *Convoy PQ13: Unlucky for Some*. Bramber, West Sussex: Bernard Dunford Publishing, 2000. 221 pp., photographs, appendices, £17.99, cloth; ISBN 0-9535670-2-8.

This is a vivid and gripping personal experience narrative. Mills, as a young Merchant Navy apprentice, made two voyages to Murmansk in convoy. On the second, while in port, he lost a foot and most of his lower leg during an enemy attack. The book details his experience of the Merchant Service on the North Russia run and of life ashore in Murmansk and Archangelsk, both as an active seaman, and as a hospitalised survivor. It also deals with relations between British merchant seafarers and the Royal Navy, the US Navy, American merchant seamen, medical caregivers (both in the UK and the USSR), and the British public in general.

The book is well bound and the photographic illustrations are interesting and appropriate. There is, however, one overriding weakness, which runs throughout – a severe lack of editing and proofreading. This is not just an occasional typographical or printer's error, but a plethora of misspellings, fragmentary sentences, improperly used words, punctuation deficiencies, and the like. Errors are so numerous, in fact, that they interfere severely with comprehension and enjoyment of the narrative. It is a shame that the publisher should have allowed the book to go to press in this state as the content is well worth reading, but not necessarily worth the added effort of having to grapple with every page.

A second shortcoming involves the three appendices, each excerpted from another

printed source. Two of these sources are newspapers. The data in all three appendices, however, are presented in the same print format as the rest of the book. They would be much more effective if displayed in photographic or other facsimile of the originals. If this were unfeasible for some reason, an attempt might at any rate have been made to submit at least the newspaper excerpts in a typeface and format closer to that of a newspaper. This is especially true of the lengthy Appendix A, an extract from *Soviet War News* in the form of a letter from eight of the survivors to their Soviet caregivers. It loses much of its impact by the format of its presentation.

Lastly, there is an unnecessary proportion of material extraneous to the wartime maritime theme. What does it matter if the author and his friends in adolescence spied on a couple having sex in a hayfield? Nor are the aims of the book furthered by details of Mills' own early sexual experiences. While there is no objection to such data if they are relevant to an author's stated purpose, they are indeed undesirable when they detract from that purpose, as they do in this case. Had the book been properly edited, these and other similarly irrelevant passages would have been expunged and possibly replaced by something more consistent with the stated theme. There might have been room for more of the interesting and little-known facts with which the author has seeded both the seafaring and the "survivor" portions of the narrative.

Many readers would have appreciated additional details of his work on the Merchant Navy Reserve Pool in Glasgow and a retrospective of his trip back to Murmansk with other veterans to receive their medals in the 1980s. In fact, since the book is dedicated to his two wives, both of whom he outlived, and his two daughters, there might have been a photograph of at least the first wife, who figures in the book, and perhaps a little bit about what he did after the war and when the daughters were born. Instead, there is merely a picture of him with the two daughters and their husbands, and two pictures of his first girlfriend, the relationship with whom ended with a broken engagement because of his devotion to the sea.

On the whole, I could not recommend this book to anyone whose interest in the basic subject was insufficient to allow him or her to tolerate its multiple limitations. With that caveat, there are some fascinating insights and some extremely interesting data available to the reader who is prepared for a struggle to find it.

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A J Arnold, *Iron Shipbuilding on the Thames, 1832-1915. An economic and business history.* Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000. 208 pp., notes, appendices, bibliography, index, £49.95, cloth, ISBN 0-7546-0252-4.

Hugh Peebles, *Warship Building on the Clyde.* Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd. (distributed by Dufours Editions Inc., Chester Springs, PA), 2000. v + 206 pp., maps, photographs, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$19.95, paper; ISBN 0-85976-530-X.

In the eighteenth century the Thames dominated the most profitable sectors of British commercial shipbuilding, building the bulk of the biggest merchant vessels, and of the battleships that were not constructed in the dockyards. The location, close by the major customers, and the major port, ensured easy access, and a steady stream of raw materials. The introduction of iron shipbuilding in the early nineteenth century witnessed an early and effective transition to the new system, leading to the construction of the such epochal vessels as the *Great Eastern* and *HMS Warrior*, yet by 1915 there were no significant shipbuilding firms left on the river. A re-assessment of this dramatic decline was long overdue. Arnold's important new book takes up the task, examining business strategies, industrial and economic issues. The major problem with previous studies was the incomplete and unreliable nature of the core data, the ship-lists for most yards were

unreliable. Arnold has created new lists, but even he has to base his work on evidence that is; 'Poor, highly incomplete'. The study is chronological, each chapter assessing the general activity of a separate period, before following the fortunes of individual yards. This occasionally leads to repetition, within chapters, or across them. While the commercial development is clearly handled, the physical location of the various shipyards is conveyed by the highly uneconomic method of literary description. A map of the River, with yard locations, and related activities would have been a great help.

The initial advantage for the Thames yards came from the dominance of the local marine engine builders, who had 70% of the national market. This drew builders like Napier and Fairbairn from Glasgow and Manchester, and created a market that was patronised by the biggest commercial customers. The naval breakthrough came in 1844. The Admiralty recognised the need for a large steam frigate programme, but found that the Royal dockyards could not build any more wooden steam warships. Unwilling to build wooden warships in commercial shipyards, even those on the Thames, the Navy elected to build iron frigates. These provided useful experience in large ship construction, but also ruined several builders, including Napier and Fairbairn. This pattern would persist. The yards would secure leading edge work on a large scale, only to find the market collapsed, resulting in business failures and contraction. Iron shipbuilding could be highly profitable, but required much greater levels of investment than wooden shipyards, and remained vulnerable to trade fluctuations. No-where was this more obvious than in the complex story of the *Great Eastern*, an engineering triumph, but a commercial disaster. As a major source of iron structural engineering the yards were often employed building bridges, and this prompted integration with railway engineering concerns.

The Crimean and American Civil wars both led to a sudden expansion in demand, and economic disaster for several firms. The fixed price gunboat contracts of the 1855 were completed at a loss, when labour and material costs rocketed,

while the Civil War speculative boom in armaments and related work attracted some highly dubious money into the sector. Some of this was used to create the Millwall Ironworks, one of only two large scale Thames yards. As part of a business network tied together by the finance house of Overend Gurney Millwall was ruined by the failure of a single, high profile battleship launch. This brought down Overend, and other related businesses. The other big yard, Thames Ironworks survived, being chosen to build the first ironclad HMS *Warrior*, and securing a strong run of large warship orders from the Admiralty and foreign customers. The firm was reconstructed, both physically and financially in 1864-66, and this helped it to survive the downturn in trade. Peace in America and the end of Anglo-French naval arms race brought a sudden end to the last boom on the river. By this time major orders were already being shared with the Clyde, where Robert Napier built the second ironclad, and the Mersey. As ships got bigger the Thames began to suffer from the lack of local supplies; Thames Ironworks saved money by recovering their materials from scrap. The Thames firms were unable to compete with the newer iron shipbuilding centres for basic commercial tonnage, and consequently became overly dependent on naval orders. These did not recover until the naval reconstruction programmes of mid 1880s, with sustained demand thereafter. By this time the Thames had lost any competitive advantage, coal was now significantly more expensive on the River than it was in the northern yards. A shift into ship repair work, to service the massive demands of the Port of London, and the development of high cost per ton specialist work, notably the torpedo boat firms of Thornycroft and Yarrow were the only areas of expansion. Only naval orders kept Thames Ironworks in business, and these began to fluctuate as the northern yards expanded and new firms entered the business. Finally the Ironworks then watered down its capital while purchasing Penn's marine engineering works in 1899. Thornycroft left the River for

Southampton in 1904, Yarrow went to the Clyde in 1908. The Ironworks was only kept alive by massive political campaigns and occasional Admiralty orders. The Navy showed no interest in keeping the yard in business as a strategic resource, and after building the dreadnought HMS *Thunderer* the firm finally closed down in 1913. The only reminder is the old works football team, West Ham whose badge in a pair of crossed rivetting hammers.

Arnold's conclusions are clear. The Thames took an early lead in iron shipbuilding, and remained a centre of innovation into the 1860s, but the rise of new yards in the industrial centres of the north denied the river the steady stream of standard merchant ship orders that it needed to spread the overhead costs and damp out the fluctuations in the warship building market. Problems also arose from the speculative capitalisation, and risky business practices of the pioneers. Unfortunately the economics of book-buying will restrict this text to the library market, unless a paperback edition is forthcoming.

By way of comparison Peeble's study of warship building on the Clyde, first published in 1987 has just been reprinted in paperback. Because the book has not been revised it does not address the significant publications of the past decade and more which includes major studies of John Brown, Beardmore and Harland & Wolff. Peebles demonstrates how the Clyde developed into a major iron shipbuilding centre without Admiralty work, and sustained merchant construction as the basis of the business. Naval orders were only 40% of the business between 1889 and 1940. This facilitated the dramatic take-over of orders from the Thames. When the Naval Defence Act of 1889 expanded naval demand beyond the capacity of the Royal Dockyards and the Thames Clyde yards moved into the business, and within a decade began to integrate with armour and armaments manufacturers to reinforce their market position, following the example set by Vickers at Barrow in 1889. Both Arnold and Peebles make clear that the key to success was a steady order book, with merchant tonnage to spread the overheads. Consequently the new Beardmore yard at Dalmuir

had a similar profile to the Thames Ironworks. These two studies confirm a truism, reliance on naval orders proved to be double-edged, the profits were good, but the business lacked the consistency to form the basis of a truly durable business. Furthermore there were always more yards tendering for the work than orders. This played into the hands of the Admiralty. As a dominant customer with its own building capacity the Admiralty was in a strong position; these studies confirm that it consistently exploited this position to secure the products it required. Novel, complex and innovative work like *Warrior* or the first battle cruisers would be placed with specially selected builders, but standard production orders were generally awarded to the most competitive tender among the recognised suppliers.

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Clay Blair Jr., *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2001 (original 1975). 1071 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, bibliography, index. US \$32.50, paper; ISBN 1-55750-217-X.

In this 25-year old, reprinted Magnus *Opus* Clay Blair offers in 870-odd pages of text a mention of most, if not all, of the 1,682 war patrols made by US Submarines in the Pacific during World War Two. In a narrative sparsely sprinkled with brief segments of analysis, he starts by taking the story back to the early development of submarines in the nineteenth century. After a brief appearance of US Submarines in the First World War, Blair then sets out to show how, during the '20s and '30s, they were to be used as an integral part of the main fleet actions anticipated for the next war. Of course, when that war came in 1941 the plan, like most military planning, was turned on its head and Blair recounts the struggle the US submariners had to adjust to the new operational requirements created by the rapid Japanese

advances. 1942 saw a period of stalemate, with the submarines suffering from technical difficulties: amongst which were torpedoes which failed to work, and diesel engines incapable of withstanding the rigours of operational conditions. There were tactical errors too. But American successes in breaking the Japanese naval codes helped provide intelligence which, according to Blair, ought to have allowed the US boats to be targeted effectively. By 1943 many of the technical deficiencies were gradually eliminated. Younger, more aggressive submariners were getting command, operational submarine numbers were rising and, by the end of that year the Americans were beginning to experiment with their version of the Wolf Pack attack. As a result sinkings rose, but so did losses amongst the US submarines. This year, 1943, set the scene for the last two years of the war when battle was joined in earnest, and by the end of 1944 driving Japanese trade of the high seas. The result was impressive: the relatively modest numbers of American submarines accounted for 55% of the Japanese maritime losses [878-9]. Even so, it was, as Blair points out, a silent victory masked by the more visible and dramatic events of the carrier and their air groups in the Central Pacific campaigns.

The book has survived well the passage of time since it was first published in 1975 and the breadth of Blair's coverage is impressive. He consulted every one of the nearly seventeen hundred patrol reports, interviewed or corresponded with over 200 veterans, and consulted numerous war diaries, orders and so on, as well as a plethora of published material. However, by attempting to cover so many of the patrols, Blair does not do justice to those of real operational significance. The litany of failed attacks in the first twenty months of the Pacific war led eventually to the rectification of the major torpedo defects, but the narrative suggests that there were also errors in tactics. These aspects could have been better drawn together in the analysis.

Blair adopts the term "Wolf Pack" to describe the co-operative tactics slowly worked out by the US submariners, which suggests it was the same tactic as used by the Germans in the Atlantic.

The Americans used the tactic to find targets, but thereafter American system differed in a major way – the pack's were controlled from sea, and not shore as was the German practice. With better communications and radar, the Americans were able to make repeated attacks against individual convoys. In parallel with the new fast submarine technology, this concept played an important part in forming the perceptions of the post-war submarine threat.

Blair also makes a great deal of the intelligence gained from "codebreakers", though as he admits the source of his information was from unattributed personal interviews and not from official documentation. He barely mentions the role of direction finding, while the tactical difficulties of capitalising on the intelligence are submerged in the narrative. He makes the point of its sensitivity – and highlights the evacuation of codebreakers during the Japanese advance – yet says that this information was given to submarine commanders, who knew of its source (one was an ex-codebreaker)! This seems surprising, given the risk of capture.

Although the lack of footnotes is irritating, *Silent Victory* has a comprehensive index and voluminous appendices, which aid the historian in locating the interesting background biographies of many of the US Navy's officers who rose to senior position and drove forward the new offensive Maritime Strategy in the 1940s and 50s. As a historical text *Silent Victory* lacks perspective and judgement. Analysis is sparse and the book would have been better had the editor been more ruthless in demanding a shorter, more tightly crafted and less journalistic text. But for the reader who is looking for a basic narrative of submarine patrols to act as a first point of reference, this is a worthwhile buy.

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Robert A. Bartlett. *The Karluk's Last Voyage: An Epic of Death and Survival in the Arctic*. New York: Cooper Square Press, 2001. xxii +

378 pp., maps, photographs. US \$18.95, paper; ISBN 0-8154-1124-3.

The *Karluk* was the principal vessel of Vilhjalmur Stefansson's Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913 - 1918. On her way to Herschel Island in August 1913, she became trapped in the ice. The next month some members of the party, including the leader, Stefansson, left the ship to go hunting. While they were gone, a storm swept the *Karluk* away to the west. Those on land got on with the expedition; their accomplishments, both scientific and geographic, were to prove considerable. Eleven of the 25 people still aboard were to die. That anyone survived was largely due to the master of the *Karluk*, the Newfoundland-born Bob Bartlett. After the ship was crushed in the ice in January 1914, he managed to get most of his party, which included an Eskimo woman, her two children, and the ship's cat, from their temporary home on an ice floe to Wrangel Island. Bartlett and his companion Kataktovick crossed the treacherous ice of spring time to Siberia and then travelled east, aided by Chukchees and Russian traders, to find a ship to take them across to Alaska. The survivors on Wrangel Island were finally rescued in September 1914.

For those interested in the history of polar exploration the story of the *Karluk* has never gone away. The question of Stefansson's role in the tragedy is partly responsible for this. The 1970s saw the publication of Harold Horwood's biography of Bartlett (1977), which followed on the heels of the memoirs of one of the survivors, William Laird McKinlay (*Karluk: The great untold story of Arctic exploration*, 1976). Jennifer Niven's *The Ice Master*, which came out in 2000, is a new telling of the tale which has proved popular. In fact, I have not succeeded in reading it yet as the copies in my local public library system seem never to be on the shelf. From the reviews on Amazon I gather readers come away convinced that Bartlett, the ice master of the title, was indeed a hero, and Stefansson very much a villain.

This edition of Bartlett's *Northward Ho!: The Last Voyage of the Karluk* (1916) does not seem to have come about in response to the success

of *The Ice Master*. It appears to be part of a series of reprints of significant, interesting – and available – titles in the field of exploration and travel, such as Theodore Roosevelt's *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*. But it is certainly a happy circumstance that an inexpensive and attractive edition of Bartlett's book is now at hand for those whose interest has been piqued by Niven's book.

The introduction by Edward E. Leslie is an account of Bartlett's life and personality, largely based on Horwood's biography and the captain's own memoirs, *The Log of "Bob" Bartlett* (1928). It is a good introduction as far as it goes but it is a pity that there was not room for a discussion of the book itself. It is, after all, a literary artifact and not a primary document. It would have been interesting to read something of how Bartlett and his ghost writer, Robert T. Hale, shaped the presentation of men and events so that the captain's undeniable heroism would be clearly revealed.

That quibble aside, we should be thankful to Cooper Square for having made this book once more available. It is a great pleasure to read. It has an unexpectedly light-hearted tone for a tale of heroism and suffering and this must be because it is suffused with Captain Bartlett's personality. A great reader, his favourite book was Omar Khayyam, and he certainly seems to have lived in the moment and accepted and even celebrated life as it came. The playing of Chopin's *Funeral March* on the Victrola as the *Karluk* sank seems to have been typical Bartlett, as is this comment, "Yet I could feel no despair in our present situation, as we had comfortable quarters on a floe..." [p.92] *The Karluk's Last Voyage* will not contribute much to any analysis of what went wrong and how much blame should be attached to Stefansson. It is, however, a fine introduction to one of the Arctic's more engaging heroes.

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Nixie Taverner. *A Torch Among Tapers: The Life and Career of Captain Rory O'Connor R.N.* Bramber, West Sussex UK: Bernard Durnford Publishing, 2000. 335 pp., photographs, bibliography, index. £24.99, cloth; ISBN 0-9535670-3 -6.

"Every man is constantly required to bring credit to the Ship by his individual bearing, dress and general conduct, on board and ashore" – one of ten such guidelines that appeared in the book *Running a Big Ship on Ten Commandments* in 1937. The author was Captain Rory O'Connor, who had just completed a very successful run as Commander of HMS *Hood*. O'Connor was an officer who seemed earmarked for high rank. Tragically, he was lost in HMS *Neptune* when he led Force 'IC into a minefield in 1941. This reviewer acquired a copy of *Running a Big Ship* some years ago, and for a long time wanted to learn more about its author. This biography seemed to be the answer. Unfortunately, it isn't.

Nixie Taverner, O'Connor's niece and adopted by him circa 1932, has laid out his life story from preserved correspondence and her own recollections. There is much family detail and an overview of O'Connor's career: midshipman in *Prince of Wales* from August 1914 till 1917; Sub-Lieutenant in the sloop *Anchusa* 1917; gunnery specialist; service in the Royal Yacht; Commander of *Hood*; Assistant Director of the Plans Division from 29 December 1937 – April 1940; and finally Captain of *Neptune*. No doubt the family vignettes are of great interest to the O'Connor clan, but they don't exactly grab the attention of the outsider. They could have been overlooked had the naval side of the book been better. And the naval side is very sparse indeed.

Although there are a few tidbits of interest, such as one of his letters that notes the loss of ten of his classmates in HMS *Monmouth*, the reader will notice huge gaps where *something* should have been included. The obvious example: while in *Prince of Wales*, he was running a boat during the Gallipoli campaign. Even if surviving correspondence is limited, a bit of research would have provided a wealth of information on his

ship's, if not his own, exploits. Instead, all the reader gets is a very general survey of the course of the war. Jutland is mentioned, with a series of quotes: but O'Connor wasn't there! What's the point? Instead, the reader is left wondering about the supposed *Black Prince* atrocity [86], the murder in HMS *Hercules* [8]) and the seizure of the steamer *Kutwo* [174]. Learning about Taverner's trip abroad in 1930 isn't a satisfactory substitute.

Stricter editing, and better proofing, would have reduced the repetition and a few of the of basic errors: ships' names ought to be italicized; Zeebrugge wasn't "totally blocked" [92]; the Invergordon mutiny was hardly "unprecedented"; and the photograph supposedly showing *Queen Elizabeth* reflected in *Hood's* paintwork is simply a double exposure.

In short, only O'Connor's relatives will value this book – even the casual student of RN history will be very disappointed. The obvious love and respect Taverner has for her father/uncle doesn't make up for the volume's shortcomings. Hopefully, someday, a naval historian will take up the challenge – O'Connor's career, in particular his later appointments, opens a promising window into the tween-wars Royal Navy.

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Maynard Bray and Benjamin Mendlowitz, *The Book of Wooden Boats*, Vol.II. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2001. xi + 191 pp., photographs, index. US \$49.95, cloth; ISBN 0-393-04899-3.

Setting themselves a wide scope in capturing photogenic wooden vessels, Benjamin Mendlowitz and Maynard Bray have selected an eclectic array of boats for this volume of photographs. Following almost a decade astern of *The Book of Wooden Boats*, Volume I, they are appealing to the growing tide of enthusiasm for classic wooden boats in an increasingly 'throw away' society. The very fact that many of

the boats in this book were built at the start of the last century hints strongly at the love, toil and devotion lavished on them over decades and the inherent longevity of this building material. To preserve them in a seaworthy, let alone beautiful, condition is testament to a breed of professional and amateur mariners and craftsmen who share a love both of the sea and the boat-builder's art. This book aims to capture the essence of wooden boats and does so particularly well in a luxurious style of presentation.

The images in the book are arranged in chapters broadly by type; Sailboats, Powerboats, Working Boats, Open Boats and Sailing Yachts. This treatment is somewhat arbitrary and the division between Sailboats and Sailing Yachts seems to be based mainly on a boat length of 45 feet. Similarly, a number of the powerboats have their roots in the working boat arena yet are featured as pleasure yachts. No matter. In each chapter, Bray sets the tone for the family of images with a succinct and informative page of text which shows his broad knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Within each section, the boats are presented in a double page layout comprising a main photograph, one or two supporting smaller photos and a short descriptive passage. The information provided on each boat is rich in detail and human interest, often giving technical background and an insight into the design philosophy. In addition, the date and location of building is stated along with details of where the photographs were taken which adds some interest and context.

The real quality of the book is in Mendlowitz' artful photography. Widely regarded as one of the leading marine photographers of his generation, he favours simple camera equipment and not the computer manipulation or 'image enhancement' so often used today as a substitute for photographic skill and sheer patience. Many of the images in the book are clearly the result of painstaking preparation, attention to detail and above all a natural sense of the critical moment to capture a fine boat. He mixes tranquil images of lake and river craft with those of powerful vessels under full canvas which amply illustrate the

changing mood of the sea. It is no surprise that many of the photographs in the book first appeared in the popular *Calendar of Wooden Boats* yet in this volume the main images are much enhanced by being accompanied by smaller ones giving alternate views or features of detail. The close-up shots of a perfectly finished cabin interior, hatch-cover or a gleaming transom add a great deal to the appeal of the book. It is worth noting that the print quality of *The Book of Wooden Boats*, Vol.II is very high in order to show the photographic images to best effect; dimly lit interiors and sunny seascapes are equally well presented.

Any yachtsman would enjoy pouring over the pictures in this volume which evoke so strongly the passions inherent in seafaring or even simply messing around in boats. Not many these days (even in the New England waters where many of the photos were taken!) have the time or resources to keep boats to the standards depicted here yet this book certainly shows what can be achieved. Perhaps a prominent book on the nautical enthusiast or sailor's coffee table once well thumbed. The beauty of the images are timeless and elegant; it would make a most welcome birthday or Christmas present.

One word encapsulates this book; varnish.

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Joseph F. Callo, *Nelson Speaks: Admiral Lord Nelson in his Own Words*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2001. xxi + 216 pp., plates, notes, bibliography, index. US \$29.95, cloth; ISBN 1-55750-199-8.

Biographies of Horatio Nelson abound and no doubt will continue to be published well beyond the bicentennial of the battle of Trafalgar in 2005. One can readily find any number of general works on the man or examinations of more specific aspects of his life and career. New works on Admiral Nelson show that academics and non-academics continue to be fascinated by

him two hundred years after his death. Thus, Joseph F. Callo's new book *Nelson Speaks* will probably find a ready audience.

While acknowledging that Nelson's mystique still has considerable market value, we might ask ourselves if another book on Nelson adds anything to the historiography of maritime history or to our understanding of the Admiral and his age. Callo justifies the publication of his new book as an attempt to understand Nelson the Man through an examination of Nelson's own words; by letting him speak for himself, we can get beyond the somewhat deceptive guise of Nelson the icon. As a secondary goal, Callo hopes his book will illuminate some of the qualities that constitute a great naval leader. Callo seems particularly keen to demonstrate Nelson's significance to his fellow Americans, pointing out that Nelson's importance "transcends geopolitical limits" and that this "quintessential naval combat leader" was an early catalyst for the radical transformation of the US Navy. [xix] He maintains that American readers can learn from the example of Nelson and Britain's use of naval power for global hegemony. [xix]

Callo is successful in his main goal to use Nelson's own words to find the Man behind the Myth. Certainly, Nelson's voluminous and colourful correspondence lends itself to such a study. The author has chosen quotations on various subjects from seapower and politics to issues of life, death, and love. Although a few verbal quotations are included, the work is heavily dependent upon excerpts from both Nelson's private and public correspondence; the selected quotes show him to be a career seaman who is driven by patriotism, duty, and a hunger for validation. Although this constant yearning for admiration had a "downside" as it was one aspect of the break down of his marriage and his scandalous affair with Lady Hamilton, it is clear that it also helped fuel his successes at sea. Callo provides us with context for these quotations; the rookie reader would be very much adrift without the benefit of the author's helpful commentary. There is, however, much repetition of themes and language which could have been eliminated within chapters and in the book as a whole.

The author claims that by "allowing Nelson to paint his own portrait his amazing achievements take on new and highly instructive dimensions". [xix] Congressman Ike Skelton of the US Armed Services Committee echoes Callo's sentiment and recommends *Nelson Speaks* for today's military leaders. If one is looking for instruction, the reader would be best advised to consult a more in-depth work on Nelson to really appreciate the full scope of his victories. Although this book does contain some of Nelson's stirring words on duty and honour as well as evocative contemporary (or near contemporary) engravings designed to illuminate the most glorious aspects of Nelson's career, there are more persuasive reasons why *Nelson Speaks* might not be recommended reading for young naval officers. Nelson is shown to be a renegade with little respect for naval bureaucracy, rather quick to disobey orders if he disagreed with them, trusting rather in his own considerable abilities and those of British naval seamen under his command. In a man of lesser talents and luck, such traits might well spell a quick and ignoble end to a naval career. This hardly seems "instructive". Furthermore, we are never able to fully answer the question of "why he succeeded so spectacularly". [xix] Those who have reached the pantheon of heroes have been gifted not only with great abilities but with timing and opportunity provided by providence; such a delicate and complex mixture defies rigid analysis. This is doubtless one of the reasons why Nelson, like other Great Men, continues to fascinate us.

The lack of notes suggests that this is intended largely for a general audience. Although a fairly clear portrait emerges from Callo's selection of quotations, curious readers might desire a more detailed painting provided by a conventional biography. *Nelson Speaks* could be termed an "hors d'oeuvre" of Nelson books; the Admiral's charisma shines through, urging the reader to dine more sumptuously on a full course meal (on any number of books set out in Callo's bibliography). The reader will delight in hearing Nelson speak for himself and lovers of

history will mourn for a time when letter-writing was wide-spread and provided a wonderful window into men's souls.

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*Sjöhistorisk årskrift for Åland 1999-2000: 12.* Mariehamn: Ålands Nautical Club r.f., Stiftelsen Ålands Sjöfartsmuseum, 2000. 175 pp., photographs, charts, tables, notes, appendices. ISSN 0788-799X.

The twelfth volume of the Nautical Yearbook of Åland follows quite closely the standard set during the preceding years. In addition to the annual reports of the Åland Maritime Museum and the museum ship *Pommern*, plus a number of other reports and obituaries, it contains eight articles written by maritime historians, professionals and amateurs alike. Most of them are local people, and their number certainly is a beautiful proof of the living interest in maritime past which is so typical of these islands.

Of the eight articles, four deal with the era of sail. For those interested in the everyday life aboard, the most interesting must be the one (written by the former head of the Maritime Museum, Göre Sundberg) based on the diary of a young steward's newly wed wife who was allowed to follow her husband on a return voyage to Australia aboard the four-mast barque *L'Avenir* in 1936-7. She acted as a mess-girl during the voyage and was thus able to observe the daily life of officers, passengers (there were three of them) and the crew at a close range.

Two maritime historians from the University of Hull, Hanna Hagmark and Michaela Barnard, analyse the importance of Hull as a destination for Åland's shipping in the late nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, they observe a contraction in this trade from the 1880s onwards, which is directly linked with the structural change experienced in all North European windjammer shipping: the decline of Baltic and North Sea trades and the increasing importance of longer ocean trades. In addition, there are two articles

concentrating on single ships: one (written by Eric Ruff) on the voyages of the barque *Southern Belle* before it was bought to Åland, and another (by Bertil Lindqvist) on the voyages of a small coastal sailer, the galeas *Salamander*, in 1870 and -71.

One article (by Rolf Fellman) describes life on a small North Alandian pilot station. As such small stations do not exist any more, it sheds interesting light on coastal shipping before the days of big tankers and bulk-carriers, on days when pilots went to meet ships on rowing and sailing boats. However, a specially interesting period in this case is World War II: both during the winter war as well as in 1941, and occasionally in 1942-4, most Finnish shipping was directed to Sweden north of Åland, and armed convoys were collected by Saggö station. There is also another dramatic article (by Göte Sundberg) describing how the lightship *Storbrotten* in 1922 was sunk by a floating mine.

The two remaining articles refer to more modern days. The one by Justus Harberg records the experiences of a first mate aboard Åland's first tanker during the mid-1950s. As the ship was already 23 years old its sailings were by no means trouble-free: in this case one break-down of the motor in the middle of the Atlantic, one grounding in the Dardanelles and one explosion illustrate this well enough. A very different trouble, a passenger killed in a cabin and the following police inquiries, is described by a the former master of a car-ferry, Yngve Hagerstrand.

Anyone interested in museum ships should also read a description of how the *Sigyn*, a three-masted wooden barque, which in May returned to its home port, the Maritime center in Turku (Åbo) was extensively repaired in Mariehamn in 1998-2001. Built in 1888, she probably is the oldest surviving ship of her type. As usual, all the articles written in Swedish are followed by short summaries.

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Philip L. Fradkin, *Wildest Alaska: Journeys of Great Peril in Lituya Bay*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. xx + 182 pp., maps, photographs, sources, index. US \$24.95, cloth; ISBN 0-520-22467-1.

Concerns for the environment and the relationships among living beings are an important part of contemporary consciousness that can lead to grossly inflated notions of our own importance in the cosmic scheme of things and a dangerously exaggerated belief in our ability to control the forces that drive the world in which we live. A good antidote for this mindset is a walk on the rim of a volcano, but reading *Wildest Alaska: Journeys of Great Peril in Lituya Bay* is probably a more practical alternative. Philip Fradkin's most recent book describes a place where nature's power is a constant threat to life, arrogance is punishable by death, and "place" itself calls into question fundamental assumptions.

Lituya Bay juts inland from the southeastern coast of Alaska, midway between Yakutat and Sitka. Although part of Glacier Bay National Park, Lituya Bay (Tlingit meaning "lake within the point") attracts few visitors. Philip Fradkin first learned of its existence at the end of a visit to the park in 1976. As he studied the bay and its history, he came to consider Lituya Bay the consummate example of the power of place. The eventual result was *Wildest Alaska*, a biography of this body of water based on science, history and personal experience, assembled over twenty-five years.

The power of Lituya, literally and figuratively, originates in the unique geology and geography of the bay and its environs, which generate the highest and most destructive waves on earth. In 1958, a wall of water 1740 feet high moved across the bay from the mountains to the sea, stripping large parts of the surrounding mountains of all trees and vegetation. With a striking description of the devastation Fradkin begins his journey through Lituya's past. Though the great wave is the starkest example of Lituya's lethal potential in the written record, scientific evidence suggests a geologically long-term pattern

of similar cataclysmic events that make Lituya Bay extraordinary.

Yet scientific data tell only part of the story. Fradkin's work moves to a narrative of the experiences of successive groups of humans who have encountered the bay. These "journeys of great peril," marked without exception by catastrophe, are not only history, but also morality plays and cautionary tales, chilling reminders of how insignificant we are, how fragile life really is.

The Tlingit have lived in southeastern Alaska for three millennia. When good weather and retreating glacial ice allowed, they harvested food from both the bay and surrounding forests, but only as temporary visitors. Ice-free for the past five hundred years, Lituya Bay looked to ships in the treacherous waters of the Gulf of Alaska like safe harbor. But Lituya was treacherous and claimed many lives – first indigenous Alaskans, then Europeans and Americans who wanted to explore or exploit this new world.

The vast majority of Lituya's victims drowned in the bay's perilous entrance. Some scholars believe the 14 Russians from the Bering-Chirikov expedition who went ashore in July, 1741 and never returned were lost in Lituya Bay. Tlingit oral tradition records the loss of as many as eight large canoes just before the French arrived in 1786, the largest mass drowning in Tlingit history. Laperouse's expedition, so carefully planned to protect the lives of those who participated, had suffered no casualties until twenty-one men drowned on July 13, 1786 in Lituya's suddenly angry water. Sadly, the Americans who arrived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and especially after 1867, fared only slightly better; it seems they learned little from the mistakes of their predecessors.

That, however, is not the end of the story. In the final section of *Wildest Alaska*, Fradkin recounts his own journey to Lituya Bay. He ponders the concept of "place" and considers both his fascination with this harsh and unforgiving place, his personal experience of Lituya Bay and the changes that experience

compelled. How can a place alter perceptions or force confrontation with the unanswerable questions of human experience?

Fradkin has provided many notes; unfortunately the information is not referenced to specific sources and that proved far more frustrating than I would ever have imagined. Problems with notes notwithstanding, *Wildest Alaska* is interesting and thought-provoking.

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Bob Reece, *The Origins of Irish Convict Transportation to New South Wales*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave (distributed by Macmillan Distribution Ltd.), 2001. xx + 373 pp., maps, illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. £50.00, cloth; ISBN 0-333-58458-9.

In spite of its title, this is a book that is as much about the history of Irish on the east coast of North America as it is about the Irish in New South Wales - and a fascinating history it is.

Bob Reece has produced this book to provide new light on three key themes - the debate about the motivations for European colonisation of Australia, Irish crime and punishment in the late eighteenth century and the dispersal of Irish citizens.

The debate about colonisation of Australia has centred on whether it was purely as a penal settlement or whether it was for strategic commercial, political and military reasons. This was the basis of the research design of the Graeme Henderon's archaeological excavation of the First Fleet ship HMS *Sirius* at Norfolk Island. Reece's book does not look in any detail at these strategic aspects of the debate though he does refer to them, and the book is clearly not about the pressures on the English gaols specifically. What he does do is to draw on a wealth of source material to provide fascinating insights on the pressures within the Irish setting. It would be fair to say that he adds weight to view that there is an obvious answer to the British decision to send the First Fleet to Botany Bay - that there were a variety of factors

involved. The high cost of transporting prisoners to the other side of the world, as covered in some detail in this book, could probably not be justified on the single issue of relieving pressure of gaol populations. It could be justified though when combined with a need for strategic military and commercial outposts. As Reece points out, only the English could afford such an objective. It was certainly not an option that a country of Ireland's resources and trade commodities could have entered into alone.

Without doubt the most intriguing aspects of this book are the many anecdotes about crime and punishment in Ireland in the late eighteenth century. Accounts of the desperate sufferings of convicted criminals are at times quite harrowing. Their plight is followed from the grossly inadequate prisons such as Newgate, Kilmainham, Black-dog and Marshalseas, into the dark, airless holds of the transport ships, into the mercy of opportunistic ship's captains who had no mercy and who illegally sold them as indentured labour or deposited them on bleak, uninhabited foreign shores. The book illustrates the ineffectiveness of excessive punishment, for often minor offences, in curbing crime. There would appear to be useful material here for debates on the wisdom of the current cycle of seemingly ever increasing penalties.

By virtue of following the Irish experience in convict transportation to North America, Africa and Australia, Reece achieves his third objective of shedding new light of the dispersal of the Irish around the globe. He uses convict transportation to make note of free migration and the role that the Irish played in opposing the English in various conflicts such as the American Revolution and the battle for St John, lost to the French in 1714.

Reece brings a very human level into this account. He manages to provide a similar level of attention to the personalities not only of some of the convicts but also of various individuals in authority. Public figures whose names subsequently appear in Australian history are brought into context rather than just the name

of a geographical feature such as the Nepean River.

If there are weaknesses in this publication it is that in spite of all the intrinsically interesting material that it contains and the logical organisation of the books structure, there is an unfortunate awkwardness to its presentation. While it should certainly not be a journalistic style presentation, it feels just a little stilted. There are just a little too many specific events and examples. It would have benefited from some additional judicious editing. This may also have removed some periodic typographical and other editorial errors. Spelling errors like 'norma'l' [189] occur on a few occasions and the use of a quotation from the *Freeman's Journal* [99] is repeated verbatim in much the same context at the end of the same section [101]. References to supposed 'cannibalism' in the Sydney region are also worthy of greater qualification than is given [249, 251]. It is presented here as a given and with no question as to the validity of the claim.

However, this is a most valuable and welcome addition to published information on the

background to colonial Australia, on the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 and on the introduction of Irish immigrants in 1791. It deserves a place in the library of anyone with an interest in Irish history, Australian history or North American history.

No doubt unintentionally, it also provides some intriguing comparisons with modern 'boat people'. The attempts of ship's captains to find an uninhabited stretch of coast on which to deposit an ill-used, ill-supplied, human cargo, along with false promises, directions and assurances is surprisingly similar to many recent news items.

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