

NAVY RECORDS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Letters from members continue to express interest in the Society's publications and newsletters. Since our last issue the much heralded web-site, <http://www.navyrecordsociety.com>. has come into use. It carries all information about the Society, a copy of the newsletter and other matters, and can be quickly updated.

As usual, we notice a number of new volumes which we expect to be of interest to members, and try to give special mention to those written or edited by members. As usual, also, we have notes on some of our previous volumes, a series which is obviously very popular with members. Scholars willing to write review articles (of about 1000 words) of this nature, (i.e. about previous volumes, especially 'series',) should contact the editors.

The Society's latest volumes are Nicholas Lambert's *The Submarine Service, 1900 -1918'* (issued), Roger Morris's *The Channel Fleet and the blockade of Brest, 1793 -1801'* (mid-2001) and Andrew Lambert's *Letters and Papers of Sir John Knox Laughton* (early 2002.)

Recent Books

BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Among recent publications are:

- (ed.) P. le Fevre and R. Harding: *Precursors of Nelson* (Chatham Publishing: £25)
Biographical essays on sixteen British Admirals of the Eighteenth Century by well-known naval historians, many of them members of the Society.
- Arnold Hague: *The Allied Convoy Systems 1939-1945* (Chatham Publishing: £25)
A major work of reference detailing every North Atlantic convoy, and index of ships lost.
- (ed.) P. Hore: *Seapower Ashore* (Chatham Publishing: £25)
A series of essays on the contribution made by the Naval Brigades and other naval forces in land campaigns.
- K. Yates: *Flawed Victory; Jutland 1916* (Chatham Publishing: £20)
A new 'overview' of the battle and the controversy over both the battle and its outcome.
- R. Clarkson: *Gold Leaf* (Buckland Publications Ltd. : £8.50.)
Cmdr. Clarkson records his period (1959-62) aboard the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, a period which included a world tour, the Queen's visit to Canada, and the special cruises for Princess Margaret and the Princess Royal. His personal recollections cover a variety of private and public occasions, (many of them verging on tragi-comedy, like the post dance adventure in Malta), but he also makes interesting comment on the use of royal yachts from the first *Victoria and Albert* to the 'end of the line' in 1997.
- P. McDougall: *Chatham Past* (Phillimore)

A general history of the town, but with much emphasis on the Royal Navy's influence on Chatham's development.

- P. McDougall: *The Chatham Dockyard Story* (Baggin's, Rochester: £25)
A new and expanded version of a book first published in 1981 .
- P. Elphick: *LIBERTY : The ships that won the War* (Chatham Publishing: £25)
An account of the building of the large US merchant ships which were produced in unprecedented numbers at an equally unprecedented rate!
- P. Goodwin *Countdown to Victory: 101 Questions & Answers about HMS Victory* (Manuscript Press £7.95 ISBN: 1-903702-00-3).
- B. Head ed. *Forgotten Flotilla – British submariners in Russia 1914-1919 by Vice Admiral L H Ashmore.* (Manuscript Press ISBN: 1-903702-01-1). Manuscript Press, founded in 2000, aims to bring original manuscripts from the Royal Naval Museum, Royal Marines Museum and Royal Navy Submarines Museum to an expanding maritime history readership. Contact the Press at 44 Lindley Avenue, Southsea, PO4 9NU: Telephone & Fax 02392 863799 ave@manuscriptpress.com offer two new titles:

Forthcoming Books

The official history of the Royal Canadian Navy, in the Second World War by W. A .B. Douglas and R. Sarty is in the final stages of completion. It should be published (in two volumes), during next year, and details will be noted here. There are also plans to have volumes on both the early years (1867 -1934) of the RCN and on the period since 1945..

OTHER NEW BOOKS:

From Chatham Publishing:

- S.E.Maffeo. *Most secret and confidential: Intelligence in the Age of Nelson.* (£20) .
- J.M.Scalia. *Germany's Last Mission to Japan. (Voyage of U-234 in March 1945)* (£20).
- J.Roberts. *British Warships of the Second World War.* (£30).
- (ed.) D.Harrodd. *War, Ice and Piracy; the Journals and letters of Samuel Gurney Cresswell.* (£20).
- J. Beeler. *Birth of the Battleship: Capital Ship Design 1870 –1881.* (£35)
- G.D.Habesch. *The Army's Navy.* (£25)
- H.Plevy. *Battleship Sailors. (H.M.S. Warspite through the eyes of her crew)* (£19.95)

From Cassell.

- R. Hill. *Lewin of Greenwich: the authorised biography.* (£25)

Special Mention.

- A new edition of Lord Cochrane's *Autobiography of a Seaman*, (Introduction by R. Woodman), has been published, by Chatham. This is, of course, one of the best known autobiographical accounts of any 19th. Century naval officer, eccentric, egotistical and courageous activities in European and S.American waters. (Paperback £12.)
- Another new edition, (to coincide with the bi-centenary of the battle of Copenhagen) is Dudley Pope's *The Great Gamble: Nelson at Copenhagen.* (also Chatham Publishing £25.)

Two books about the major authors of naval fiction:

- D.King. *Patrick O'Brian : A Life Revealed.* (Headline, £9.99)
- T. Pocock. *Captain Marryat : Seaman, Writer and Adventurer.* (Chatham Publishing, £19.95)

Conference.

A special conference on the growth of naval dockyard towns to be held at Portsmouth College on October 13th 2001 .Details from Dr. McDougall at the College.

Past Volumes

The Jellicoe Papers ed. by A. Temple Patterson NRS vols. 108 & 11 (1966 & 1968)

This substantial selection of Admiral Jellicoe's professional and private papers extends from 1893 to 1935. Its publication was directly followed in 1969, by Professor Patterson's succinct biography of the admiral. Since then, a resurgence of interest in the Battle of Jutland and in pre-war naval provision has resulted from the publication (in 1989 and 1993) of Professor Ranft's *The Beatty Papers* (NRS vols. 128 & 132) and from the publication in 1984 of Professor Sumida's edition of *The Pollen Papers* (NRS vol. 124), followed in 1989 by his book *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*. Sumida reopened the question of British gunnery at, and before, Jutland. Since then Paul Halpern, in his *Naval History of World War I*. (1994), has provided a comprehensive account and assessment of all the participants. For any further reconsideration of this complex period, *The Jellicoe Papers*, together with *The Beatty Papers*, will remain a primary source.

The first volume merely touches, in an introduction, on Jellicoe's time as DNO, but there are documents for his time as Controller and a few for the years 1910 to 1914. Then, in Part II, nearly a hundred fascinating pages track his initial twelve months, from August 1914, as C-in-C of the Grand Fleet. His abiding sensitivity to the pervasive danger from mines and submarines is soon communicated to Battenburg: 'Scapa is the only base we have which is almost safe against submarines.' There are nine pages of extracts from Grand Fleet Battle Orders foreshadowing aspects of the battle which would eventually come: 'I shall probably deploy at a range of about 16,000 yards'; and 'I attach the greatest importance to making use of our heavier guns in the early stages at long range.' Then Churchillian ideas about attacking Heligoland are duly rebutted and Jellicoe's plans for ensuring the distant blockade of Germany, while avoiding mines and submarines, come to the fore. Put simply, 'My object therefore will be to fight the fleet action in the Northern portion of the North Sea.' Speed, he believes, is the best safeguard against submarines. Minesweeping and minelaying are recurrent subjects. In November Jellicoe vehemently protests against Fisher's detachment of a third battle cruiser to deal with von Spee. He sends a detailed comparison of the opposing battlefleets to the Admiralty. Then the old subject of a German invasion of Britain suddenly re-surfaces and Jellicoe reiterates all the reasons, well-known to him, why provision against this remote possibility is already sufficient. Elsewhere, Fisher urges, 'it is NOT numbers, it is SOLELY gunnery efficiency', that will win the big battle. While arranging additional gunnery practice (at the usual rather invariable ranges), Jellicoe comments (19 Nov) that 'German gunnery has been markedly excellent'. By January 1915 Fisher reacting to menace of Churchill and the Dardanelles, wholeheartedly identifies with Jellicoe's insistence on all sorts of reinforcements in the North Sea.

In Part III, a further hundred pages cover the period February 1915 to February 1916. The Dogger Bank action is analysed, especially the gunnery. The question of the North Sea bases is debated. Elsewhere Fisher complains of Jellicoe's 'lugubrious forecasts'. However, on 17 May, Crease writes that Fisher has resigned, having tired of always 'watching the First Lord instead of the Germans'. Jellicoe urges the Admiralty to provide for more minesweeping and for further offensive mining. He also suggests air spotting by seaplanes. Jellicoe and Beatty agree in deploring the 'battle practice' results of *Tiger* and *Lion*. More such practice is the only remedy envisaged. In January 1916 Jellicoe writes generally to Balfour about tactics and strategy. He rules out sending the fleet to the

Baltic but endorses submarine operations there. The volume concludes in Part IV with the long-awaited event of 'Jutland and its Preliminaries and its Aftermath' (pp.211-308) . Here, a great deal - if not quite all - is revealed. There are four excellent diagrams. (See also *The Beatty Papers*.)

Volume II runs to 497 pages. Part I (109pp.) covers 'The Grand Fleet After Jutland' up to December 1916. Jellicoe's largely successful attempts to rectify perceived shortcomings constitute the main theme. He presses for the fleet to be supplied with improved armour-piercing shell (something not actually achieved until April 1918). There is interesting material on the loss of the *Hampshire*, together with Lord Kitchener, in 1916.

Part II (152pp.) , features Jellicoe as First Sea Lord. The U-boat crisis of 1917 is the central theme. (*The Beatty Papers* provide much further comment.) Duff's minute of 26 April shows that trial convoys were certainly being prepared before Lloyd George's visit to the Admiralty on the 30th. Unsurprisingly, Jellicoe's concern about numbers of available escorts persists. Then follows material on his dismissal in December .

In Part III, there are 133 pages on Jellicoe's 'Empire Mission' (December 1917 to February 1920), comprising his advice to India and the Dominions on the development of their navies. Then come, finally, 170 pages on 'The Jutland Controversy' and Harper's Narrative. (Here again, as so often, *The Beatty Papers* provide much important complementary matter.) In 1921 Jellicoe makes a single enigmatic reference to Pollen: 'It fell to me to turn down his inventions on more than one occasion.' However, against a turbulent background of relative economic decline and adjustment to new techniques and processes, Britannia had - thanks to Jellicoe among others - punched well above her weight.

Ruddock Mackay