

liberalism, is quoted on the cover describing the book as “fair, balanced, lucid and rigorous.” She would say that, wouldn’t she?

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HEATHER NOEL-SMITH and LORNA M. CAMPBELL. *Hornblower’s Historical Shipmates: The Young Gentlemen of Pellew’s Indefatigable*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016. Pp. 260. \$34.95 (cloth).
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Tension surrounds the place of biography in eighteenth-century naval history. Famous admirals hold the interest of the public and historians alike, not least because of the survival of material detailing their lives such as correspondence and near-contemporary biographical accounts. For many studies, the central figure of the admiral acts as the linchpin for wider debates about the navy and society, but there is also a danger in concentrating on the experiences of a single officer whose success is largely unrepresentative of the majority’s experience in the wider context of the navy. Many officers in the late eighteenth century never made it above the rank of lieutenant, and very few had such celebrated careers and legacies as, say, Horatio Nelson.

Heather Noel-Smith and Lorna M. Campbell’s co-written *Hornblower’s Historical Shipmates* takes an interesting approach to this problem. Beyond the initial framing device of considering the factual roots of C. S. Forester’s eponymous hero Horatio Hornblower, the book is essentially a collective biography of the “young gentlemen” who served aboard Sir Edward Pellew’s frigate *Indefatigable* during a celebrated action against a French ship of the line, *Les Droits de L’Homme*, in January 1797. Using the ship and a single action as the parameters of the study allows Noel-Smith and Campbell to consider in detail the lives not just of aspiring commissioned officers but also of the warrant officers who moved readily between the navy and the merchant service, whose experiences are all too often neglected in grander narratives of fleets and admirals.

Noel-Smith and Campbell alternate between narrating the carefully reconstructed biographies of these lesser-known men and drawing wider conclusions about the role of friendship in Pellew’s character and career. These competing ambitions are clear in the work’s structure, as the ten chapters cover a mixture of explanatory and thematic topics while also detailing the lives of the seventeen case studies, grouped roughly under thematic headings such as “The Nature of Patronage” (chapter 5) and “Diversity and Responsibility” (chapter 7). The first four chapters are largely introductory. Chapters 1 and 4 respectively introduce the histories of Pellew and the action with *Les Droits de L’Homme*. Chapter 2 introduces *Indefatigable*, both as a ship and as the social context in which the midshipmen, mates, and volunteers served, with a generous helping of allusions to Hornblower throughout that could potentially anchor an unfamiliar reader in the material but are at best entertaining asides and at worst extremely jarring. Similarly, chapter 3, “The Fortunate Few,” introduces the case studies themselves and pays particular attention to the difficulties faced in piecing together biographies from disparate and often contradictory parish and service records as well as correspondence and newspaper reports. The discussion of difficulties in archival research of this kind is certainly one of the major strengths of Noel-Smith and Campbell’s work and continues in a similar vein throughout the following chapters.

Chapters 5 to 8 in turn touch on the themes which characterized each man's career, beginning with patronage in chapter 5, paternalism in chapter 6, expertise and social status in chapter 7, and finally regionalism and affectionate friendship in chapter 8. The critical analysis is at points light enough that another structural grouping, such as by social status, would have worked just as well, but the themes provide an effective vehicle by which to deliver the impressive biographical research. This is most obviously the case in chapter 7, which gathers together the biographies of five of *Indefatigable's* warrant officers and provides an extremely useful illustration of the varied and nonlinear careers of gunners, master's mates, and midshipmen who served alongside the "young gentlemen" who aspired to commissions. In chapter 5 Noel-Smith and Campbell present their strongest thematic analysis, with sound and interestingly varied illustration of patronage as experienced by a volunteer boy, a master's mate, and a midshipman from a range of social backgrounds: George Cadogan, son of an earl; Jeremiah Coghlan, a merchant seaman; and William Kempthorne, son of packet-ship captain (79). In chapter 6 they take a similar approach in exploring Pellew's influence as a paternal figure in the lives of Nicholas Pateshall, Henry Hart, and Thomas Groube, and in chapter 8 Noel-Smith and Campbell group the final five case studies together through their connection to Pellew in Falmouth or the friendship of their families. There is a considerable amount of thematic overlap with chapter 5, but overall it is a useful way to consider these collective biographies.

The final two chapters draw the biographies together and emphasize the utility of the correspondence of midshipmen and others in the naval history of engagements such as with *Les Droits de L'Homme*. Chapter 9, "Faithful and Attached Companions," focuses particularly on the interconnection of the "young gentlemen" of *Indefatigable*, and the chapter reveals the interesting potential for a focused study on the network connections of men and their families, particularly their female relations, connected through their mutual service aboard one ship rather than centered on an individual captain as the central node.

As a whole, *Hornblower's Historical Shipmates* is an impressive piece of biographical research with an admirable motivation to consider the experiences of men from a variety of social backgrounds. It complements Stephen Taylor's biography of Pellew, *Commander: The Life and Exploits of Britain's Greatest Frigate Captain* (2012), and recent work in the social history of the navy such as by Evan Wilson and Ellen Gill. The use of C. S. Forester's historical fiction and the television adaptations of *Hornblower* to frame the study could perhaps have been engaging and would be interesting in a focused study on the development of literary naval archetypes and their effect on historiography, but overall, I feel that they detract from the core aim of the book. This work's strength lies in Noel-Smith and Campbell's detailed research and would be ideal for a lay reader interested in the social history of the Royal Navy and British society.

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KIM PRICE. *Medical Negligence in Victorian Britain: The Crisis of Care under the English Poor Law, c.1834–1900*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Pp. 235. \$79.80 (cloth).
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Historians generally now recognize the futility of searching for the "origins" or "foundations" of the welfare state in the Victorian-era poor law. Parish medical relief after 1834 (apart from being locally fragmented beneath a veneer of a nationally coherent system) was in almost all places a practical shambles and consistently more irregular and chaotic than provisions for