

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.

Catherine Beck

University College London and National Maritime Museum, Greenwich
catherine.beck.13@ucl.ac.uk

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

“able-bodied” paupers. Still, the question has long been to what extent poor law reforms advanced the notion of state responsibility in medical care. Kim Price’s book fits with the new historiographical consensus that sees parish medical services as one part of a very fragile mix of welfare sources utilized by poor persons in the Victorian period. Along with a number of medical and welfare historians, it argues that the perceived crisis in poor relief in the last decades of the century was in fact an outcome of systemic neglect manufactured by the increasingly ruthless application of New Poor Law principles. This conclusion is not without lessons for our own age of austerity.

This valuable book focuses on the role played by the poor law, administrators, and contracted doctors in producing ideal conditions for the widespread medical abandonment of paupers. The result was a rising wave of official charges of and investigations into individual cases of negligence. Price begins by sketching the somewhat narrow legal meaning of medical “negligence” as an issue of contract law created by the medical officer’s terms of employment. Paupers were not deemed to have a direct relationship with parish doctors, and negligence thus could only be a matter of breach of duty to employer (the parish). “Negligence” provides a unifying theme, but Price’s real focus is upon poor law medical officers and how their duties were made increasingly impossible by central and local pressures. The three chapters of part one establish background as to why charges of negligence against poor law doctors increased over the second half of the century. Much of this landscape will be familiar to historians of the poor law and state medicine, though Price puts significant flesh upon our skeletal understandings by effectively combing extant poor law records in the National Archives. Chapter 2 details the untenable terms of parish employment resulting from very tight competition among local practitioners, absurdly low remuneration, and stipulations for medicine to be provided out of inadequate salaries. Doctors actually underbid one another to become officials destined to be severely overworked and just as severely underpaid—a situation that helps explain the lackluster and ultimately futile attempts to organize an effectual Poor Law Medical Officers’ Association. An analysis of salaries data places these developments in context of a savage ideological attack on expenditure and an unshakable faith in free trade. In chapter 3 Price mines official inquiries into charges of neglect, mapping these against the shifting winds in poor law reform and establishing that medical negligence had always been a key register of controversy in debates over standards of care. Chapter 4 brings special attention to the Poor Law Inspectorate, showing that Inspectors’ slapdash form of damage control placed official blame for any instance of patient neglect exclusively with “scapegoated” doctors.

Part two of the book offers three substantive chapters in which Price lays out medical consequences of the so-called crusade against outdoor parish relief. In chapter 5 he presents this as a popular ideology of limited state intervention in matters addressing poverty, but he sidesteps the question of how popular the crusade actually was. Price maps charges of medical neglect and uses these as a “divining rod for identifying crusading unions” (120). The crusade took off in the 1870s–1880s and fed a rise in (paradoxically, more expensive) institutional care. It was mostly after this point that workhouses became *de facto* hospitals of first resort for many poor sick. As chapter 6 shows, this occurred in an environment that placed a premium on making workhouse conditions as near to repulsive as possible, and that is where Price engages with debates over whether the new investments in workhouse infirmaries (most notably in London) supported a decline in standards of care, including in pauper nursing. In a welcome departure from the mostly synoptic evidence of much of the book, this chapter provides an extended explication of the death of Edward Cooper in the Isle of Wight workhouse in 1877. This man essentially starved to death in custody, Price argues, not because of his severe disablement but because he had been “left to fend for himself” in the workhouse (147). The case epitomizes how institutional neglect was fostered under the poor law apparatus; nonetheless, all the while “the public were hoodwinked into blaming doctors for systemic faults” (148). In the final chapter Price seeks to explicitly evaluate the

culpability of parish medical officers for such failures and finds that they were caught in a catch-22 regarding their very limited contracts and their very heavy actual workloads.

One drawback of Price's organization is that the significance of medical negligence comes into view late in the book. Price has a powerful argument to make about how the poor law produced a system of organized neglect. The dispassionate parsing of "negligence" within contract and administrative law in early chapters sits incongruously with the urgent and appalling consequences of these arrangements presented in later chapters. Furthermore, Price clearly follows the lead of many academic historians in deliberately avoiding the narrative aroma of scandal and melodrama, even though this is how the Victorian public itself often framed the abuses of medicine and the poor law. The stereotype of the callous and inattentive parish medic was well established by the 1860s. While Price abundantly shows why the medical neglect trope was unfair and misplaced, he has little to say about the trope's public consumption or about how the scapegoating of doctors eventually gave way to other forms of criticism. (Price hints that the environment was significantly different by the 1890s, but this is not explored in any great detail.) Given the arcaneness of poor law administration, this book will appeal almost exclusively to specialists in welfare and medical history. *Medical Negligence in Victorian Britain* nonetheless is a noteworthy and meticulously sourced contribution to the social history of medicine and the Victorian poor law.

Matthew L. Newsom Kerr
 Santa Clara University
mnewsomkerr@scu.edu

KATHRYN RIX. *Parties, Agents and Electoral Culture in England, 1880–1910*. Studies in History. Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2016. Pp. 290. \$90.00 (cloth).
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Britain's political landscape was transformed by three reforms passed by Gladstone's second ministry between 1883 and 1885: the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act (1883), the Third Reform Act (1884), and the Redistribution Act (1885). In recent years, historians have moved away from interpreting these reforms as the dawn of "modern" politics—characterized by centralization and national campaigns—and instead see them as accelerating changes already underway. In *Parties, Agents and Electoral Culture in England*, her first book, Kathryn Rix adds a new dimension to post-1885 British politics by studying electoral agents, the "hidden workers" of the Liberal and Conservative parties who were a product of reform and shaped its consequences. Before the 1880s, agency work had largely been valuable supplementary income for solicitors. These solicitors, however, were gradually superseded by full-time agents who worked the constituencies year-round. This process was partial, uneven, and incomplete by 1910, the terminus of the book. But by this date, agents had become a firm fixture of British politics. Rix carefully untangles the professionalization of politics that agents represented from processes of nationalization and centralization, which, as Jon Lawrence and others have argued, belongs to the period after 1914. It was the local nature of politics that explains the agents' uneven spread, as both Liberal and Tory high command resisted imposing agents on the constituencies.

The rise of the agent is explained by the complex legal landscape created by the 1883 Corrupt Practices Act, the demands of politics in the age of the mass franchise, and the expansion of political competition to include all manner of local elections. Indicative of the agents' increasing workload was the expansion of the handbook of electioneering, *Rodgers on Elections*, from a single-volume, 799-page door-stopper in 1880, to 1,799 pages in two-volumes in