



The
Richard Boultho
Newsletter

Issue XXIII



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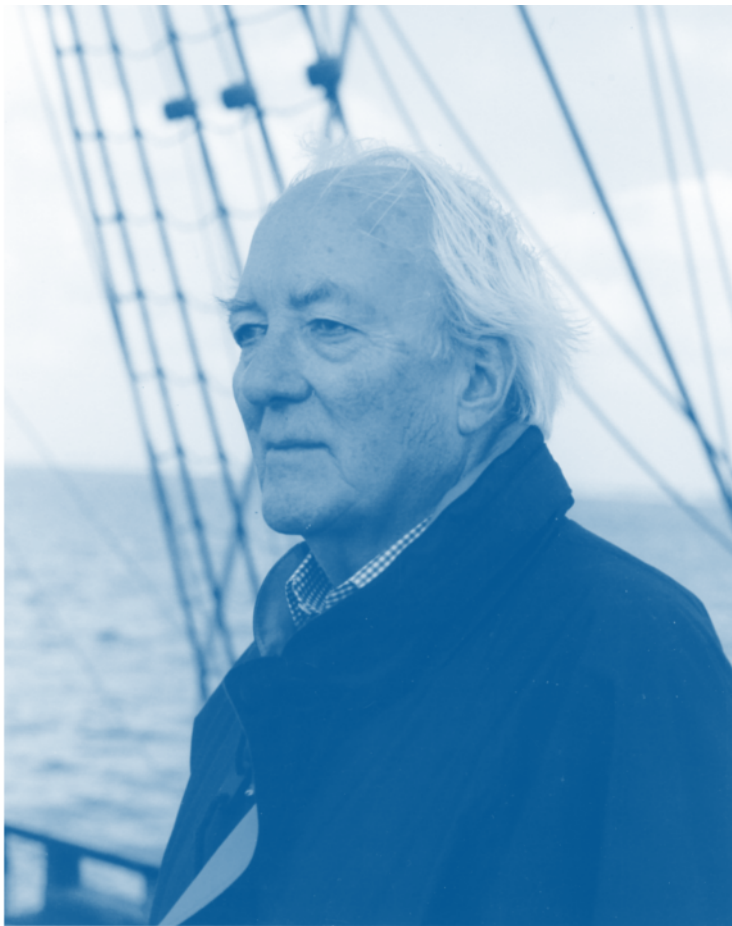
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Douglas Reeman / Alexander Kent
Photo by Kimberley Reeman

Part One

I Remember Nelson

From the letters I receive, some from people who have rarely seen the ocean except from a high-flying jet, I believe our unwavering fascination with all things maritime is the result of two factors: the mystique of those fine, brutal ships and the men who lived and died in them, and the knowledge that we will never see their like again; and also because they represented the last days of true independence and self-reliance. Everything carried or rigged in a ship of that period had to be repaired or replaced with whatever materials were readily to hand: masts and spars, boats, sails, even the food, water and basic supplies that were needed to sustain any fighting ship, large or small. Once out of sight of land, and particularly when sailing without company, a ship was only as strong as those who served her, and as strong as the man in command.

Tactics when fighting an enemy at sea changed little over time, and relied less on strategy than on the ability of one captain to exploit any weakness or lack of vigilance on the part of his adversary, which would permit him to lay his ship as close as possible to another for the first, and often decisive, broadside.

Only the marines were trained ashore in their barracks. For the rest, from captain to midshipman, from nimble-footed topman to some dazed and frightened landman dragged aboard by the press



Horatio Nelson

gang, it was all a question of leadership by example, with the trained and seasoned men ready, if need be, to put a rope into a novice's fingers, if only to avoid a break in the vital chain of command.

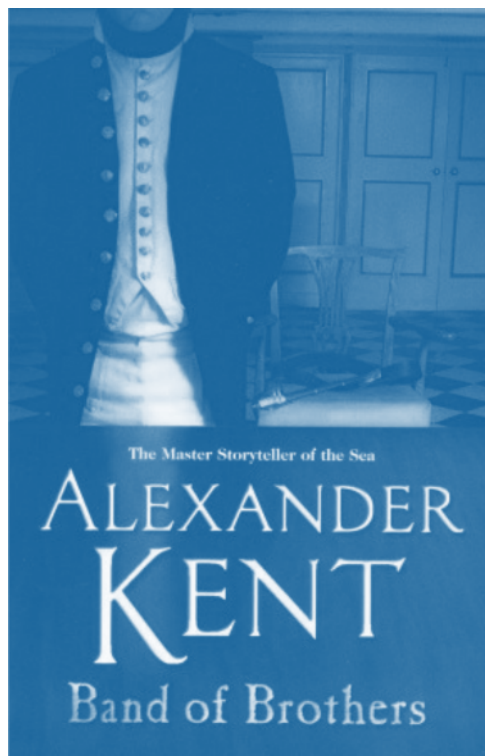
One man will always stand out as the personification of courage and the finest qualities

of leadership during this entire period of fighting sale. Horatio Nelson inspired all those he met, and many others who knew him only by reputation. So great was the influence of the little admiral, and his power over the imaginations of his commanders, that he won his greatest victory by inspiration alone, even after he had fallen, mortally wounded.

On this, the two hundred anniversary of Nelson's last great battle, we are sometimes in danger of being overwhelmed by the sheer weight of publicity, and its more commercial aspects, and may lose sight, perhaps, of the man's true strength. Even at the height of his fame, Nelson never forgot the hopes and needs of the ordinary Jack. He made a point of remembering a seaman's name whenever possible. It is often all he can call his own in the navy. When wounded himself, he was known to stand fast and refuse treatment, allowing a badly injured sailor to take his place waiting to see the surgeon. He led by example. He died with duty uppermost in his mind.

One of the last sea fights under sail was the battle of Lissa in 1811. The hero and victor of that battle was Captain William Hoste. It is worth noting that Hoste originally went to sea at the age of twelve, to serve under Nelson in his old *Agamemnon*. Like several youngsters on board, all from Nelson's home county of Norfolk, Hoste was quick to learn, and to benefit from that experience.

When he sailed into battle at Lissa against daunting odds, Hoste flew one significant signal, 'Remember Nelson'. It was enough. For his men, and so, too, for us.



Part Two

Band of Brothers

In this, the long-awaited conclusion of Alexander Kent's Midshipman Trilogy, the new year of 1774 seems to offer Richard Bolitho and his friend Martyn Dancer the culmination of a dream. Both have been recommended for promotion, although they have not yet gained the coveted lieutenant's commission.

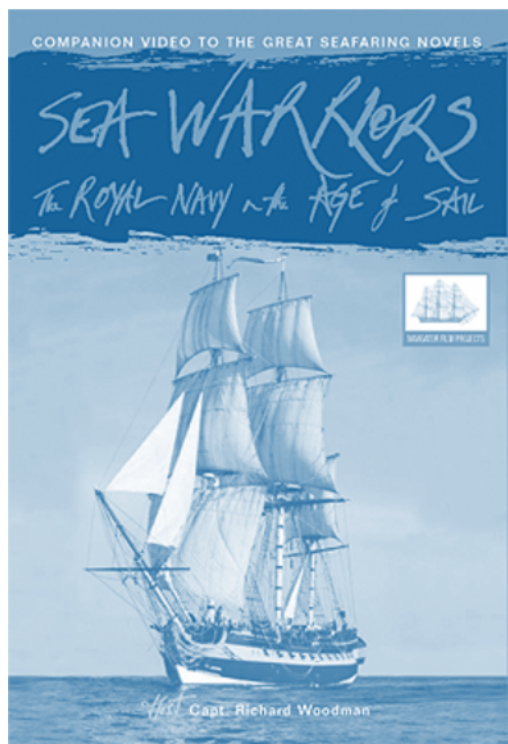
But a routine passage from Plymouth to Guernsey in an untried schooner becomes, for Bolitho, a passage from midshipman to King's officer, tempering the promise of the future with the bitter price of maturity.

Of *Band of Brothers* Alexander Kent says, 'It was always my intention to write the third and final installment in the midshipman series, but over the years there were various interruptions and delays. I was forced to change publishers in mid-course due to takeovers in the industry, and gradually Bolitho and I moved further and further away from that period in his history. But the idea never left me, and finally, after thousands of requests from readers to revisit Bolitho's early career and answer certain questions about what happened, the time seemed right. And so I returned to the years of uneasy peace preceding the American War of Independence, with Bolitho allowing me once more to view the world through his youthful eyes and accompany him on the final stage of his journey from midshipman's berth to commissioned officer.'

Part Three

Douglas Reeman in New Tall Ships Documentary by Chip Richie

A new film documentary, *Sea Warriors – the Royal Navy in the Age of Sail*, by Richie Productions, features interviews with Douglas Reeman. The video is an excellent counterpart to



the great seafaring novels of Alexander Kent, C. S. Forester, Patrick O'Brian and others. It gives a factual account of what life was like in Nelson's navy, making it instantly relatable to the novels we all love to read. The re-enactments aboard HMS *Trincomalee* and the *Endeavour*, along with the original art and graphics used in the film, make it a must-see.

'What I have seen to date is quite fascinating,' states Douglas Reeman, 'Chip's passion for his subject and his craft is obvious. I especially

appreciated the scenes near Falmouth, which of course was Richard Bolitho's home.'

The documentary film is hosted by author/historian Richard Woodman (Nathaniel Drinkwater novels) and was shot on location throughout the United Kingdom, as well as on board HM Bark *Endeavour*. There are interviews with Colin White aboard HMS *Victory* in Portsmouth, with Robert Gardiner in the mold loft in Chatham, and others. In addition, author Julian Stockwin (Thomas Kydd novels) discusses the life of the common seaman.

The film is available now. For more information visit Richie Productions' at www.seawarriors.com.

Part Four

The Bolitho Collection

Alexander Kent takes pleasure in presenting this exquisite bone china figurine portraying Captain Richard Bolitho, the hero of his best-selling novels about the men and ships of Britain's eighteenth and nineteenth century navy. Bolitho wears the uniform of a post-captain, as he would have appeared while commanding HMS *Hyperion*, one of the most popular ships in the series.

Each figurine is one of a numbered edition, ten inches (twenty-five and a half centimetres) high including the base, hand-crafted and authentic in every detail – a remarkable recreation not only of a stirring period, but of an individual. A limited number of figurines are still available at £100.00 including VAT, postage, packing and insurance.



The Richard Bolitho Figurine

The figurine may be ordered from the Douglas Reeman website: www.douglasreeman.com.

Limited edition, fine art prints of Geoffrey Huband's paintings for the covers of *To Glory We Steer*, *The Inshore Squadron*, *Sloop of War*, *Form Line of Battle*, *Passage to Mutiny* and *Midshipman Bolitho*, numbered and signed by the artist, are also available from the Reeman website.

Part Five

Richard Bolitho: A Life

		1795	promoted Flag Captain <i>Euryalus</i> (100). Involved in the Great Mutiny. Mediterranean. Promoted Commodore (<i>The Flag Captain</i>)
1756	born Falmouth, son of James Bolitho	1792	Captain <i>The Nore</i> . Recruiting ('With All Despatch')
1768	entered the King's service as a midshipman in <i>Manxman</i> (80)	1793	Captain <i>Hyperion</i> (74). Mediterranean. Bay of Biscay. West Indies. (<i>Form Line of Battle</i> and <i>Enemy in Sight!</i>)
1772	Midshipman <i>Gorgon</i> (74) (<i>Richard Bolitho – Midshipman</i> and <i>Midshipman Bolitho and the Avenger</i>)	1795	promoted Flag Captain <i>Euryalus</i> (100). Involved in the Great Mutiny. Mediterranean. Promoted Commodore (<i>The Flag Captain</i>)
1774	promoted Lieutenant <i>Destiny</i> (28) Rio and the Caribbean (<i>Stand into Danger</i>)	1798	Battle of the Nile (<i>Signal – Close Action!</i>)
1775-77	Lieutenant <i>Trojan</i> (80) during the American Revolution. Later appointed prizemaster (<i>In Gallant Company</i>)	1800	promoted Rear-Admiral. Baltic. (<i>The Inshore Squadron</i>)
1778	promoted Commander <i>Sparrow</i> (18) Battle of the Chesapeake (<i>Sloop of War</i>)	1801	Biscay. Prisoner of war. (<i>A Tradition of Victory</i>)
1780	birth of Adam, illegitimate son of Hugh Bolitho and Kerenza Pascoe	1802	promoted Vice-Admiral. West Indies. (<i>Success to the Brave</i>)
1782	promoted Captain <i>Phalarope</i> (32). West Indies. Battle of Saintes (<i>To Glory We Steer</i>)	1803	Mediterranean. (<i>Colours Aloft!</i>)
1784	Captain <i>Undine</i> (32). India and East Indies (<i>Command a Kings Ship</i>)	1805	Battle of Trafalgar. (<i>Honour This Day</i>)
1787	Captain <i>Tempest</i> (36). Great South Sea. Tahiti. Suffered serious fever.	1806-07	Good Hope and second Battle of Copenhagen. (<i>The Only Victor</i>)
1792	Captain <i>The Nore</i> . Recruiting ('With All Despatch')	1808	shipwrecked off Africa. (<i>Beyond the Reef</i>)
1793	Captain <i>Hyperion</i> (74). Mediterranean. Bay of Biscay. West Indies. (<i>Form Line of Battle</i> and <i>Enemy in Sight!</i>)	1809-10	Mauritius campaign. (<i>The Darkening Sea</i>)
		1812	promoted Admiral. Second American war. (<i>For My Country's Freedom</i>)
		1814	defense of Canada. Second American war. (<i>Cross of St. George</i>)
		1815	killed in action. (<i>Sword of Honour</i>)

