

# ★ QUARTERDECK ★

MARITIME LITERATURE & ART REVIEW



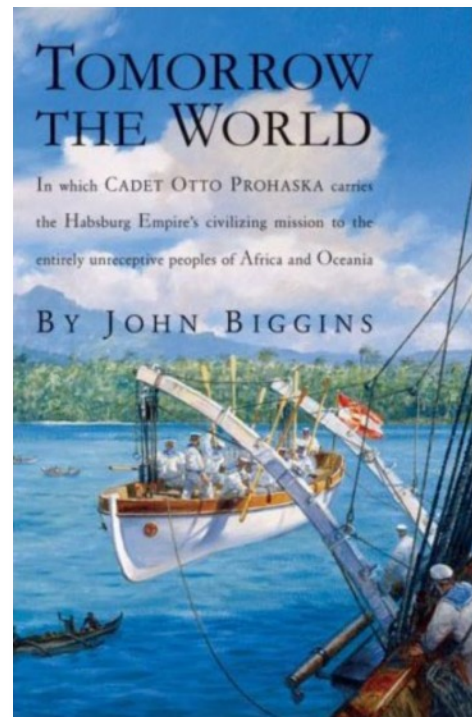
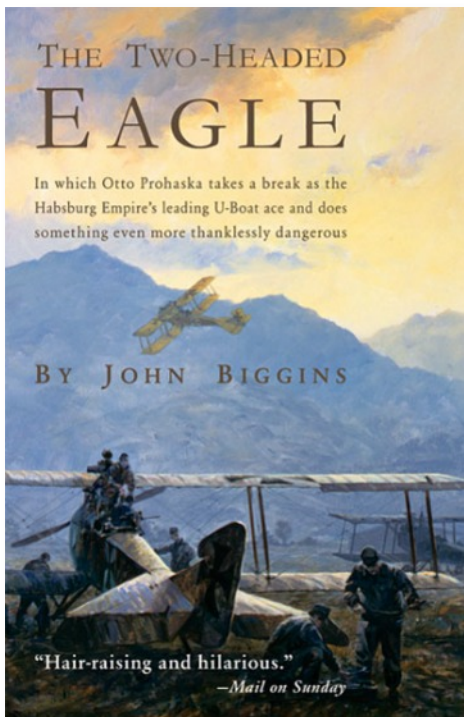
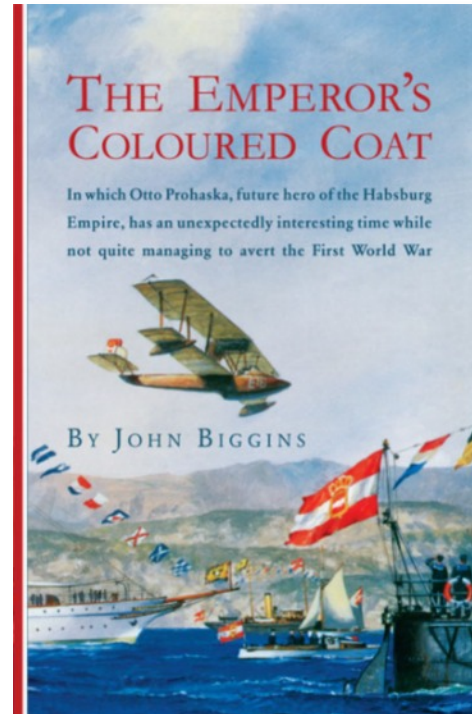
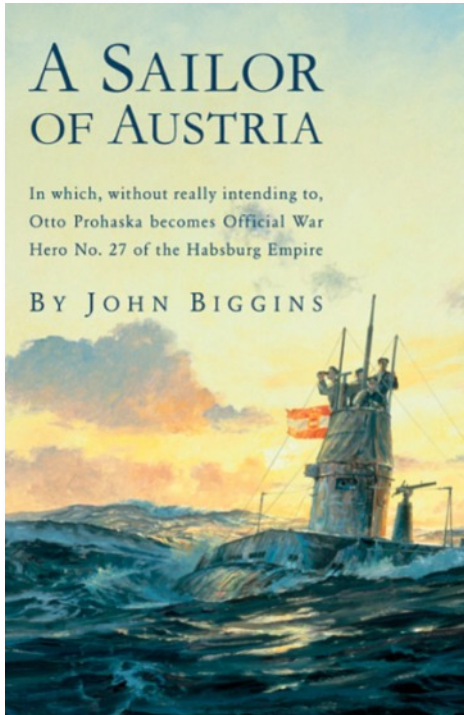
AUTUMN 2019

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# McBOOKS press

THE DESTINATION FOR NAUTICAL FICTION





PD-Art

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AUTUMN 2019

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MARITIME LITERATURE & ART  
REVIEW



## TALL SHIPS COMMUNICATIONS

*Quarterdeck* is published quarterly by  
Tall Ships Communications  
6952 Cypress Bay Drive  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
269-372-4673

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## McBooks Press

*Quarterdeck* is distributed  
by McBooks Press, an imprint of  
Globe Pequot  
246 Goose Lane, Suite 200  
Guilford, CT 06437

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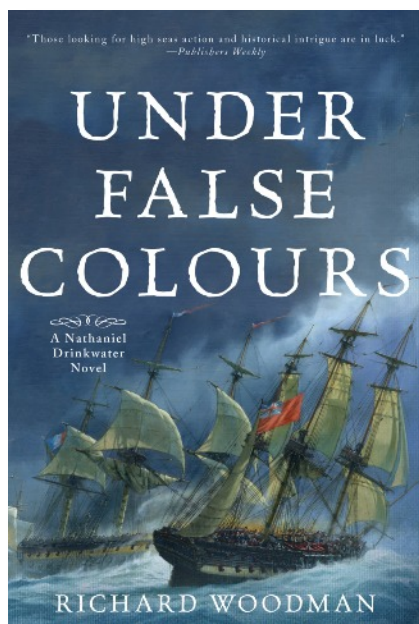
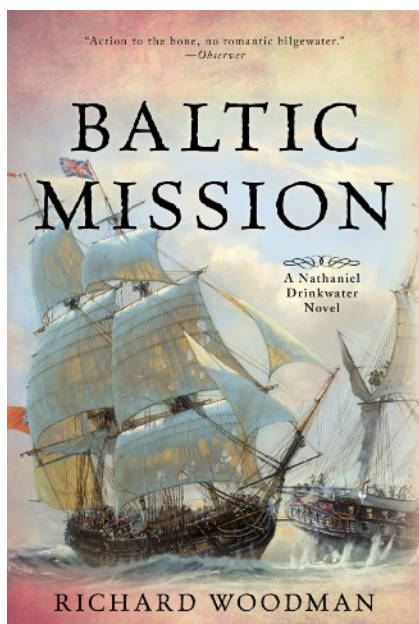
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### ON THE COVER:

Detail from "Trafalgar," an oil-on-canvas  
painting by English marine artist  
Geoffrey Huband, RSMA.  
© Geoffrey Huband.

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## RICHARD WOODMAN



Richard Woodman

Late this year, McBooks Press – an imprint of Globe Pequot Press – will begin reintroducing the Nathaniel Drinkwater series by Richard Woodman in print and eBook editions.

“A day or two after stepping into my new role,” said Tom McCarthy, “I learned we had Richard Woodman and his wonderful Nathaniel Drinkwater novels among the treasures I could tap into to call attention to our new venture into nautical fiction.

“‘Perfect,’ I thought, ‘and thank you very much. My job has just become eminently easier.’ There could be no

better author or no better way to announce that we have the richest list and the most illustrious writers of nautical fiction available. Hands down.

“We will be reintroducing the Drinkwater series in e-book and print editions, with new covers by noted English marine artist Geoffrey Huband, RSMA. Audio books are also under consideration as we roll out the entire fourteen-book canon.”

*Baltic Mission* and *Under False Colours* will be released in December (see page 25) as a prelude to the official re-launch of the series. *An Eye of the Fleet*, the first title in the series, will be published in spring 2020, along with Woodman’s standalone novel, *The Darkening Sea*.

## New Book Releases

2019

US (United States)  
UK (United Kingdom)  
TPB (Trade Paperback)  
PB (Paperback)  
HB (Hardback)  
EB (Ebook)  
NF (Nonfiction)

### OCTOBER

*To the Eastern Seas* (UKHB)  
by Julian Stockwin

*Patrick O’Brian – A Very Private Life*  
(UKHB)  
by Nicholas Tolstoy

*The Nugget* (USHB)  
by P. T. Deutermann

### NOVEMBER

*Overthrow* (USHB)  
by David Poyer

*Blood Will Out* (UKHB)  
by David Donachie

*The Devil in Paradise* (USHB)  
by James L. Haley

### DECEMBER

*Baltic Mission* (USTPB)  
by Richard Woodman

*Under False Colours* (USTPB)  
by Richard Woodman

*By George!*

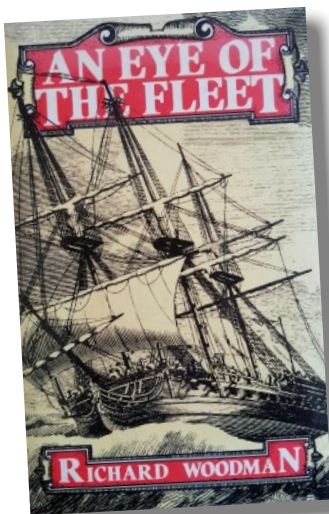


## RICHARD WOODMAN

*“The sea has been the mainspring of my life”*

*“Mr Drinkwater! The old master, his white hair streaming in the wind, addressed a lean youth of medium height with fine, almost feminine features and an unhealthily pallid complexion. The midshipman stepped forward, nervously eager.”*

In 1981, these words in *An Eye of the Fleet*, Richard Woodman’s debut novel, introduced young Nathaniel Drinkwater, a fledgling midshipman aboard His Britannic Majesty’s 36-gun frigate *Cyclops*.



The Drinkwater naval adventures – fourteen volumes published by the venerable London house John Murray over two decades – emanated from Woodman’s “intense interest in the American Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.”

Nearly 40 years after *An Eye of the Fleet* first appeared in English bookshops (left, first edition cover), the timeless series remains fresh

as a sea breeze. In December, McBooks Press will reintroduce the novels in handsome new editions (see Scuttlebutt on page 4).

“The sea has been the mainspring in my life,” Richard once told me. “I have been extraordinarily fortunate in pursuing a career that gave me several opportunities to explore different aspects of seagoing . . . which inform my work as an author.”

Richard wrote his first book, an American



Richard Woodman

Revolution history, while “ensconced as an officer in the Trinity House service, serving as First (Chief) Officer in the second THV *Patricia*.”

While waiting for London publishers to consider the manuscript, he created Nathaniel Drinkwater, placing him aboard a British frigate during the American War of Independence in 1779.

“The book was written at sea in my spare time, with much of it’s detail, dialogue and so forth being thought out as I paced up and down the bridge on watch” Richard recalled. “It was thus a rather piecemeal process, which had no proper structure and the writing took longer than it would have done, but I had a living to make and a mortgage to pay.”

John Murray VII, scion of the publishing house bearing his name, “very courteously rejected my history, but asked if I had written anything else. *Eye* was on his desk by return post.” ➤

# By George!

The next 13 titles in the series saw Drinkwater rise to command, while Richard tied his stories to “some small ‘hook’ of historical fact.” In 1805, Drinkwater is present at Trafalgar, but as a prisoner aboard the French 80-gun ship-of-the-line *Bucentaure*. And in 1811, he is caught up in the breach in frayed relations between Britain and America.

In April 1999, Richard and I arranged to meet for the first time in London. *Ebb Tide*, the final title in the Drinkwater series, had just been published, and I was anxious to learn what he planned to write next – a question that has been repeated many times since.

Amy and I were in England on a busman’s holiday to meet with authors and to visit maritime sites. Our daughter Jane, who was working in New York, had flown in to join us for a few days.

At the appointed time, we stood on the corner outside the famed Ritz Hotel on Piccadilly. On the crowded sidewalk under the hotel’s collonade, we immediately recognized Richard walking briskly toward us. The collonade appeared prominently in *Notting Hill*, the critically acclaimed romantic comedy starring Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts, which was released a month later.

Introductions aside, we headed for a local bistro to meet Richard’s wife Christine, a botanical artist, and their daughter Abigail, who was working in London. After lunch, the women left us with shopping on their minds.

Richard and I walked a short distance to 50 Albemarle Street, the eighteenth-century tall and narrow townhouse where John Murray, one of Britain’s most distinguished literary publishing houses, had done business since 1768.

Stepping inside, we were met by John Murray VII, a descendent of the founder, a Royal Marine officer bearing the same name. Among the firm’s published authors were Jane Austen, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Herman Melville, Queen Victoria, Washington Irving, Lord Byron, and Charles Darwin. This was indeed a hallowed setting.

During our visit, Murray showed us a room with a small fireplace, which had a history all its own. On 17 May 1824, John Murray III participated in a most infamous act in literary history. A month earlier, Byron had

died, leaving his memoirs with Murray. Believing that the chronicle, including scandalous particulars, would damage the poet’s reputation, the two-volume manuscript was burned in that very fireplace. Sadly, the details were lost to history.

Richard’s writing career has paralleled his maritime service with The Corporation of Trinity House, the official authority for lighthouses in England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar. It also maintains light vessels, buoys, and maritime radio-satellite communication systems, and provides expert navigators for ships trading in Northern European waters.

Trinity House was established in 1514 by a Royal Charter granted by Henry VIII. Thirty-one Elder Brethren, presided over by a Master, rule the Corporation. They are appointed from 300 Younger Brethren, who act as advisors. The Younger Brethren are appointed from lay people with maritime experience – naval officers, ships’ masters, harbormasters, pilots, yachtsmen, and anyone with useful experience.

During his maritime career, Richard commanded THV *Patricia III*, a 283-foot multi-functional tender. The vessel operated around the coast of England, Wales and the Channel Islands, aiding navigation maintenance, towing, wreck location and marking, among other activities. She also served as escort to Queen Elizabeth II’s Royal Yacht *Britannia*.

After retiring from the sea, Richard was appointed to the body of Young Brethren and currently sits on the court of Elder Brethren.

In the years after we began corresponding and periodically meeting in England, there was seldom a time when Richard had no answer to my queries. What are you writing now? What lies on the horizon?

During four decades as a published author, he has produced nearly three dozen novels, 20 volumes of maritime history and hosted *Sea Warriors – The Royal Navy in the Age of Sail*, the video presentation featuring, among others, Douglas Reeman, Julian Stockwin, Tom Pocock, and Colin White.

The Nathaniel Drinkwater novels have weathered the years, securing a prominent place in naval fiction’s long storied history. ■

– George Jepson





The entrance to Buckland Abbey

Photo by George D. Jepson

# Buckland Abbey

Quarterdeck visits Sir Francis Drake's home

BY GEORGE D. JEPSON

**D**EEP IN THE DEVON COUNTRYSIDE, nestled in a lush green valley – or coomb – lies a 13th century abbey once owned by Sir Francis Drake, England's fabled seafarer, who owed his great wealth to the plunder of Spanish treasure ships and a benevolent Queen Elizabeth I.

On an overcast autumn morning, we drove north from Plymouth along winding narrow lanes bordered by tall hedgerows, bound for Buckland Abbey near Yelverton, the great stone country estate where Drake lived for 15 years when he was not at sea. His path to Buckland began in the months after his return from a three-year circumnavigation of the world in on 26 September 1580.

Drake sailed into Plymouth Sound aboard his diminutive galleon, *Golden Hinde*. The ship's hold brimmed with Spanish silver and gold pillaged during the voyage.

As the vessel's anchor splashed into the waters off St Nicholas Island – known today as Drake's Island – he awaited word from his wife, Mary, about whether it was safe for him to step ashore. After being at sea for nearly three years, Drake was concerned that Elizabeth and ►



PD – Art

Sir Francis Drake at Buckland Abbey, circa 1590 or later, by Flemish artist Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger





© Tony Fernandes 2005 www.tonyfernandes.co.uk.



**ABOVE** British artist Tony Fernandes's oil-on-canvas rendering of *Golden Hinde*.

**LEFT** Queen Elizabeth I bestows a knighthood on Sir Francis Drake at Deptford in 1581

King Philip II of Spain, whose ships he had looted as a privateer under the English flag, might have cast aside their differences in his absence.

Drake's unease was soon assuaged with a summons from the queen to attend her in London, where he was received as a national hero. The following spring, he hosted Elizabeth aboard the *Golden Hinde* at Deptford, where she rewarded him with a knighthood.

The total value of the booty robbed from Spanish ships remains unknown, but a document written by Lord William Cecil Burghley, the chief advisor to Elizabeth during her long reign, estimated that approximately £264,000 was deposited in the Tower of London.

The queen, however, privately ordered Drake to collect £10,000 for himself and another £14,000 to be divided among his crew. Suddenly a wealthy man, he engaged his friend Christopher Harris of Plymouth to manage his fortune.

Harris, along with businessman John Hele, approached Sir Richard Grenville, an English naval commander, about purchasing his home, Buckland Abbey, on behalf of their client. The agreed price was £3,400 for the abbey, its contents and 500 acres of surrounding land.

At the time, Sir Francis was land-bound, living with his wife, Lady Mary, in Plymouth, where he became the city's mayor in 1581, immersing himself in local affairs and businesses. In addition to Buckland, he acquired additional properties in Plymouth, as well as estates in the countryside.

The couple moved to Buckland, while also maintaining a residence in Plymouth. Sadly, Lady Mary died in 1583. In his grief, Sir Francis embraced his roles as a city councilor and mayor, presiding over the port's defenses and seeing that a new supply of water from the River Meavy on Dartmoor be diverted to Plymouth via an aqueduct.

Alone, Drake found peace at Buckland where he made his country seat away from the tumult of privateering and the day-to-day discourse within the council. After Mary's death, he remarried, this time to the fair Elizabeth Sydenham, who had important and powerful friends.

Walking down a tree-lined path from the Buckland car park, the abbey's stone buildings and walled garden- ➤



ens, spread out before us, surrounded by the “green hills of England” and thick woodland. The morning air was still, with only singing birds and our footsteps disturbing the silence.

Absorbed with the serene setting, we imagined Sir Francis taking the air, lost in his thoughts three centuries after a wealthy and titled widow devoted her life to constructing a monastery in this resplendent valley.

The abbey was founded in 1278 for the Cistercian order’s “white monks,” who farmed the rich lands, managing livestock, orchards and fishponds. The enormous tithe barn stored the fruits of their labor.

In 1539, the abbey was dissolved and the monks pensioned off during the reign of Henry VIII, becoming the property of the Crown. In 1541, the monarch sold the property to Richard Grenville for £233 3s 4d, a loyal supporter whom he knighted. Grenville purchased Buckland for his son, Roger, a member of Henry’s Privy Chamber. In July 1545, Roger died aboard the *Mary Rose* during an action against a French invasion fleet.

Old Sir Richard regained the estate, but in 1550 he died, willing it to Roger’s son, also called Richard, who was just shy of his eighth birthday. So his grandmother, Dame Maude, assumed control over Buckland, but she died a few months after her husband.

Reaching the age of majority in 1563, Richard married, but desired a life of adventure, rather than overseeing a country estate. Turning Buckland’s affairs over to his agents, he sold land to fund his exploits. In Hungary, he fought the Turks with West Country volunteers. Then he embarked on a mission to suppress a rebellion in Ireland.

At the same time, Richard longed to explore and reap riches on the high seas like Drake and Sir John Hawk-

ins, who both profited from privateering under the Crown. In 1571, while a member of Parliament, he planned a voyage in his own ship, *The Castle of Comfort*, to seek Spanish gold and rich new lands for England. Queen Elizabeth, however, thwarted his ambitions, withdrawing his license as a legal freebooter.

In 1574, Richard returned to Buckland Abbey to create a family home. He put his own mark on the ➤

Photos by George D. Jepson.



**ABOVE** The Great Barn is a prominent focal point among all of the abbey’s buildings. The majestic interior features an arched cathedral ceiling.

**RIGHT** The abbey’s tower as seen from the Elizabethan Garden, one of several on the estate.







The land surrounding Buckland Abbey has changed little since the Cistercians seven centuries ago and is still worked today by local families

Photo by George D. Jepson

former monastery, building his Great Hall under the tower, a new “modern” kitchen with an immense open hearth. He also converted the church’s interior into living space, adding three floors, petitioning them into rooms.

During this period, Grenville also served as Sheriff of Cornwall and chief of the judiciary, pursuing and punishing Catholics who refused to accept the Church of England’s rule. In October 1577, he was knighted in recognition of his loyal service.

Approaching his fortieth year in 1580, Grenville put Buckland on the market and returned to the sea, perhaps motivated by Drake’s successful circumnavigation and new found wealth.

By the time that Sir Francis acquired the abbey, little change was necessary due to Grenville’s extensive alterations.

Visiting Buckland Abbey today is tantamount to traveling seven centuries through time. Grenville and Drake would recognize much of their former

home, but would also see additions from the Georgian period: bedrooms, a new chapel, and an elaborate grand staircase in the east wing. Drake’s coat of arms, which was granted by Queen Elizabeth I after his circumnavigation, remain above a fireplace on an upper floor.



Sir Richard Grenville  
the Younger

Moving through the rooms in the abbey, the historic periods from the Cistercians to the Georgians blend, giving an almost seamless appearance to the stone and wooden structure. Artifacts, including a replica of Drake’s Drum (see page 11), a legendary instrument carried aboard his ships, provide tangible ties to England’s naval hero.

Strolling the paths around the abbey, we enjoyed the walled Elizabethan Garden, Cider House Garden, and Herb Garden, each a lovely juxtaposition to the austere stone structures on the estate. Lavish landscaping complements the gardens, as well as the meadows and woodland encompassing the abbey. Although Sir Francis adapted well to his position ➤





Launch of English fireships against the Spanish Armada off Calais, France, on 7 August 1588 by an unknown Flemish artist (PD – Art).

*“It isn’t that life ashore is distasteful to me,  
but life at sea is better.”*

– Sir Francis Drake

as a country squire, there is little doubt that he preferred life at sea. So in 1585, heeding Queen Elizabeth I’s orders, he sailed for Spain with a fleet of 21 ships to thwart a possible Spanish invasion. The English initially attacked Vigo and then proceeded to raid Spanish interests in Europe and across the Atlantic.

Elizabeth again ordered him to sail against the Spanish in 1587, this time with a price on his head from Spain’s King Philip II. Raids on Cádiz and Corrunna delayed a Spanish invasion of England by a year. But in 1588, with Vice Admiral Drake second in command, the English Navy defeated the Armada.

Drake sailed on his final expedition in 1595 to the West Indies, a devastating mission where the Spanish rebuffed an English attack and sickness ravaged crewmen and officers alike. Sir Francis fell ill with dysentery and died aboard *The Defiance* on 21 January 1596 off Panama.

Buckland Abbey stands as a monument to his memory, along with his statue on the Hoe above Plymouth Harbour. ■

## *DRAKE’S DRUM*

On his voyages around the world Drake carried with him a snare drum emblazoned with his coat of arms. When he lay dying off the coast of Panama in 1596 he expressed the wish that the drum be taken back to Devon, promising that if anyone beat on it when England was in danger he would return and lead her to victory. It is believed that Drake has returned twice, reincarnated once as Admiral Robert Blake and then as Admiral Horatio Nelson.

The drum has been known to sound without the help of human hands when significant national events take place, and there are reports that it was heard at the beginning of the First World War.

Drake’s Drum now has pride of place at the Buckland Abbey Maritime Museum in Devon, England.

Excerpted with permission from *Stockwin’s Maritime Miscellany*  
by Julian Stockwin



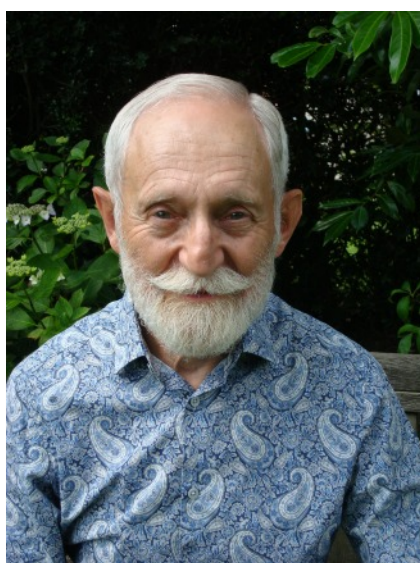
# JOHN DRAKE

*British novelist returns to Treasure Island*

**B**RITISH NOVELIST John Drake is a passionate dreamer, a blissful delight, creating stories in his mind, with many eventually appearing in print.

Drake's latest book is *The Traitor of Treasure Island* (see review on page —), his fourth featuring the characters from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

Over the years, Drake returned often to Stevenson's classic, leaving him with several questions, which he commenced to answer in three prequels to the original story: *Flint and Silver*,



John Drake

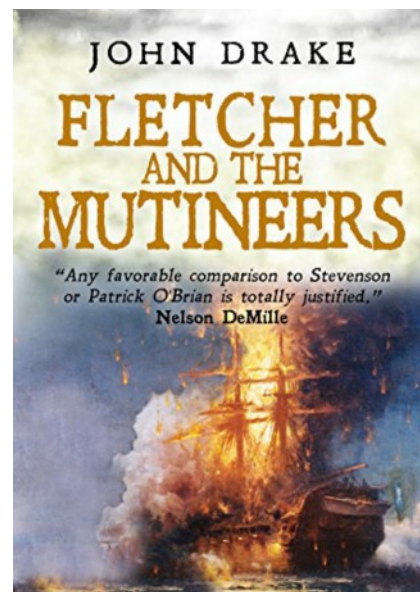
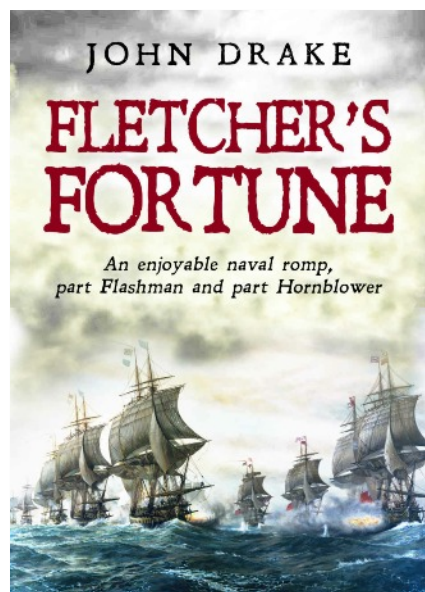
Photo courtesy of John Drake.

*Pieces of Eight* and *Skull and Bones*. *The Traitor of Treasure Island* reveals “what really happened” in the quest for the hidden fortune.

The author's initial venture into nautical fiction resulted in a five-title series featuring Jacob Fletcher, who is press-ganged into the Royal Navy in *Fletcher's Fortune*, which was described by the *Daily Mail* as “Broad comedy, high drama, plenty of action, a pinch of sex . . .”

Four Fletcher novels followed: *Fletcher's Glorious 1st of June*, *Fletcher and the Mutineers*, *Fletcher and the Great Raid*, and *Fletcher* ➤





and the Samurai.

Drake recently shared the story behind his journey to becoming a published author in this interview with *Quarterdeck*.

— George Jepson

### What brought about your decision to write full-time?

Until the year 2000 I worked for ICI Pharmaceuticals in the film and television department. Yes, a pharmaceutical company had a film unit making medical documentaries, and a TV unit broadcasting to its overseas branches.

Then ICI Pharms went through name changes, a merger, and closed our entire department. But I left with a lump sum that paid off my mortgage and a pension so generous that I could have sat comfortably idle all my life. So thank you ICI, because I love you dearly.

But I couldn't sit idle because of an oddity of mind. The oddity is my compulsive habit of making up stories in my head. I have always done it, I can't stop it and it is as much a part of me as the color of my eyes (they're gray, since you ask). Thus a fountain of characters, plot and events rises constantly in my head, and the writing down of it into books is a consuming passion; it is total

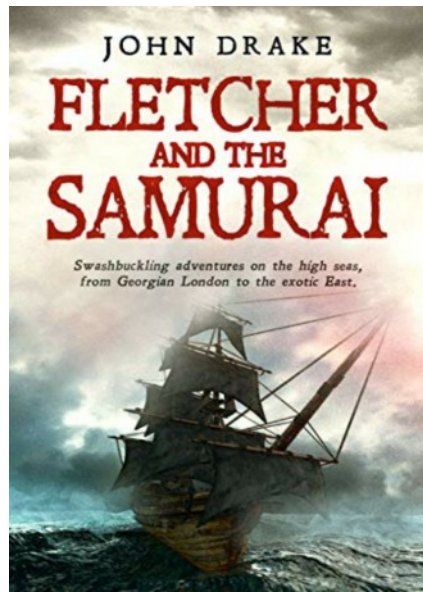
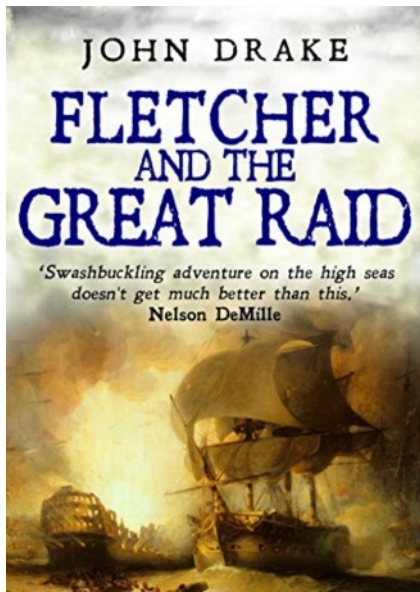
satisfaction; and second only to my family it is the love of my life. So, in the year 2000, I became a full-time writer.

### What had you written up until that point?

I had already written my first book, *Fletcher's Fortune*, an 18th century sails-and-cannon saga reporting the early life and entry into the navy of my hero, Jacob Fletcher. He is the only hero of seafaring fiction who didn't want to join the navy, who was press-ganged into it, and who strained mightily to get out of it.

I wrote that book at home, in the evenings using a stone-age computer, which was then the last word in high tech. It had a daisy-wheel printer, which clattered and chattered, and a screen displaying green letters on a green background. It had a memory that was one drop of water, compared with the Pacific Ocean memories of modern computers. But it was unimaginably better than writing by hand or typing, and I thought it was wonderful. So, I still love you too, my dear old Amstrad.

Incidentally, when writing in the evening when I was tired, I had to force myself to get started. I called this "climbing the wall," because I always found that once I was started – and was over the wall – the writing was easy. Sometimes the wall was high, sometimes low, ➤



What childhood stories and authors have remained with you over the years?

*Wind in the Willows* obviously, but also Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Forester's *Hornblower* books, Isaac Asimov's robot books, everything written by Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, and H. G. Wells, especially Wells's science fiction. Likewise, Jules Verne's sci-fi. Finally, and best of all, Edgar Rice Burroughs's Martian sagas, commencing with *A Princess of Mars*.

As a youngster, I busted my guts standing outside at night, looking up at the stars, and will-

but it was always there and had to be climbed.

Do you have a favorite fictional character?

Indeed, I do, and he is Toad – Toad as in frog – from Kenneth Graham's *Wind in the Willows*, which was written for children, but which suits me because the writing is so elegant, sophisticated and kind. It's set in an elysian, late-19th century England, and the main characters are animals: Mole, Water Rat, Badger, and, of course, Toad. They are animals, but they behave as decent Englishmen should, except for Toad, who has too much money, and is the boy within us all – the boy within me at least – and he is lovable because it isn't only girls that want to have fun.

Toad has mad, temporary crazes for such things as boats, Gypsy caravans, and cars, and he gets into trouble, and escapes from prison, and steals a railway train. Then finally – utter disaster – he loses his ancestral home, Toad Hall, to the wicked stoats and weasels who lurk in the Wild Wood, waiting their chance to fall upon the innocent. So, my favorite scene in all of fiction, is the final battle of Toad Hall, when Toad and his allies knock seven bells out of their enemies. Go on Toad! Give it 'em!

ing myself to be transported – like Burroughs's hero John Carter – to a Red Planet of sword-play, flying battleships, green monsters, and the loveliest women in the Universe. What a shame. I never made it. I never met Dejah Thoris, so Google her and you'll see what I missed. But I read those Martian sagas over and over again.

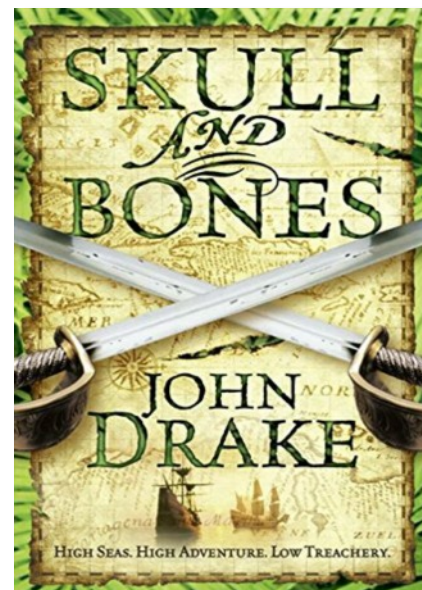
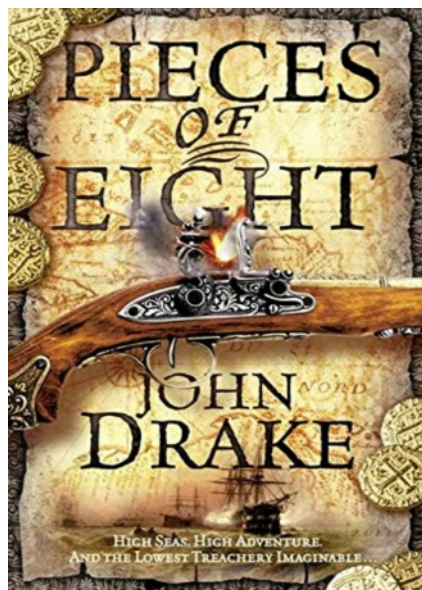
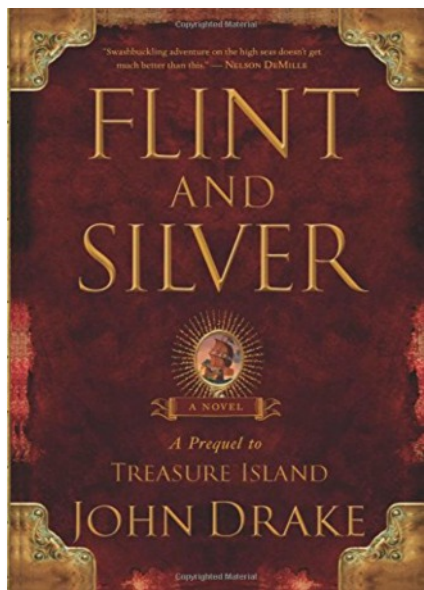
You have alternated between historical and maritime fiction? Do you find it difficult moving between different eras?

No, I don't find it difficult at all. The process involves filling my mind with information, and then processing that into characters, plots and events, to deliver what I hope is a decent tale. For me the storytelling process is the same whatever period or genre might be. It's like being able to juggle. If you can juggle you can juggle equally well with apples, oranges or Bowie knives, ➤ though you'd need to be careful with the latter.

Do you write the sort of story you would like to read or for a particular audience?

It's always the sort of story that I would like to read, and I know that this is arrogant and selfish, so I ➤





readily accept that since nobody asked me to write my books, I have no right to expect people to like them. Thus, all criticism of my work is valid, even that of someone on Amazon who summarised one of my books with the single word “Rubbish!” That’s show business, and all those who can’t stand it should get a proper job.

*The Traitor of Treasure Island* is your fourth about Robert Louis Stevenson’s characters. What inspired you to write these stories?

Firstly, Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* is a superb book. Everyone has heard of it, movies have been made of it, Long John Silver is as famous as Batman or Spiderman, and the book has never been out of print since 1882 when it was first published. I read it when young and have since read it many times more – taking detailed notes – in order to write my own novels.

But *Treasure Island* leaves some tremendous questions unanswered. First and biggest, why did the pirates bury their treasure? Please take careful note that there is no proven instance of pirates ever burying treasure. I repeat, they didn’t do it, not ever, because they had no hope of coming back for it as they lived short, brutal lives, and didn’t have a future. So they spent their loot on women and drink as soon as they got it, and then

went out and got some more, until one of the various navies caught them and hoisted them up to the yard-arm.

So, in the face of that grim truth, I wanted to invent a credible explanation of why Long John, and the villainous Captain Flint, buried their treasure. This explanation is buried in my book *Flint and Silver*. Interested persons should read the book, to dig it up. But that’s not all. How did Long John lose his leg? Who was the monstrous Captain Flint repeatedly mentioned in *Treasure Island*, but never seen? How did Long John get the parrot? And who was the black lady, hinted at as Silver’s wife? I thought there was enough material for several books in these and other questions, and I therefore did my best to answer them.

Your Jacob Fletcher naval adventures are billed as “part Flashman and part Hornblower.” How did you come to create this character?

I created Fletcher in response to C. S. Forester’s Hornblower, and in homage to George Macdonald Fraser’s Flashman. Thus, I loved the Hornblower books for their account of life in Nelson’s Navy, giving enough technical detail to create a glorious world, but never so much as to give a lecture. I loved the world, but not Hornblower himself; he was too much driven by ➤

## INTERVIEW

duty, tortured by guilt, and above all he never made me laugh. So when I read the Flashman books, which made me laugh and laugh, I knew that Flashman was the character for me.

I put the two together, aiming at “Flashman afloat,” except that, unlike Flashman, Jacob Fletcher is brave. Fletcher is a huge, strong man vastly talented as a navigator and a gunner, but he will never admit it, believing all his life that what he really wants is a career in trade, building a business, manufacturing goods, buying cheap and selling dear.

He believes this because he is talented at that too. He really could have created a vast enterprise of commerce if only he’d had the chance.

The key to Fletcher is that he is, by the evil machinations of others, press-ganged into the navy, and tries by every means to get out of it. In so doing he is like Flashman in that he cares nothing for the law, or telling lies, or deserting, or taking any other means whatsoever, if only they will get him free of the navy.

Finally, like Flashman, Fletcher is irresistible to the ladies, and so, without attempting to write “fifty shades of seafaring gray,” I have given Fletcher plenty of action with delectable women.

### What has been the greatest influence on your work as an author?

I am not sure that I can answer this, because I can’t point to any event, or any person, book or movie that influenced me above all others. If there is an answer, it



Photo courtesy of John Drake.

John Drake in his attic work space.

*“A new novel begins in my mind as a visual scene from a story . . . I then build a plot around the scene . . .”*

may be the personality oddity that I have already mentioned: the one that never stops inventing stories. That oddity is presumably genetic, and stems from some inherited sequence of molecules in my DNA. That’s my guess anyway.

### Where does your process begin when you start a new novel?

A new novel begins in my mind as a visual scene from a story. I have been doing this so long that the images in my mind are quite clear, something like the recollection of a TV program viewed last night. I then build a plot around the scene, working forward and back to explain how the scene happened and what happens next. This is a very absorbing process, and has two consequences. The first is good, because it means that it is very difficult for me ever to become bored. If I sit on a beach on holiday, I don’t need a book to read, because there is one forming in my mind. If my flight is delayed, or ►



*“ . . . I write fact-based historical novels, and my writing method is to begin with research. It takes me roughly a year to write a novel, always starting with about three months of research.”*

I am stuck in traffic, I am not bored for the same reason. The downside is the writers' peril of becoming detached from the world and withdrawing within the writer's head.

A further and small defect is that I have little use for, and no need of, music and often find it annoying when subjected to music, because it interferes with my thoughts. On those occasions I do my best to smile, and come out of my head and not be a miserable blighter. Otherwise who'd want my company?

**Do you plot out your novels before beginning to write?**

I think I have answered that. I imagine a scene and build on it. But I don't draw up a detailed plan. I have occasionally worked from such a plan, when I persuaded an agent or publisher to accept my work based on a such a plan, since that is what agents and publishers ask for. On those occasions I found it unpleasantly restrictive to be locked into a fixed plot. I prefer to let my oddity drive the process.

**Please describe where you write?**

It's a desk in an attic room on the top floor of my house. I have a small bookcase for reference books and for the files in which I keep my notes. Otherwise, all I need is space to sit and type and to shuffle my papers. I type straight into a computer, and use a desktop rather than a laptop. The desktop has a screen that displays the whole of page, which once I found a mere convenience, but which has now become indispensable. Thus I find it astonishing that writers can work from a laptop that displays only a fraction of a page.

**Do you have a regular writing routine?**

Very much so. I treat writing as a job, and work nine to

five. In the summer I vary that routine, getting up as early as five, to allow a decent day's work in the morning and early afternoon, while leaving time for that other process known as "life." I do so because I take warning from John Lennon who proclaimed that "life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." After all, I do have a family to consider, so existence is not all about me and my writing.

**Do you ever experience writer's block?**

Never. Not ever. This is because I write fact-based historical novels, and my writing method is to begin with research. It takes me roughly a year to write a novel, always starting with about three months of research. I read relevant books, I research the internet, and I take notes. I stress that taking notes is vital if any information is to stay in my head, rather than be forgotten.

Having made notes, I then store them in ring-folders, and index them on a computer spread sheet, a mixture of low-tech and high-tech, which enables me to find the information in the notes. I suspect that the indexing process also helps fix information in my head. Meanwhile, I stress mightily that simply printing off information from the internet is totally worthless as a research method. You might as well put the print-outs straight in the bin. So I do indeed print out, but then I take notes of the print-out and index them as above.

So much for the process of stuffing raw materials into the sausage-grinding machine. I then turn the handle – which is to say that I write – and the sausage comes out of the other end as a book. It's prosaic, but it works and the problem is never writers' block, but "how I am going to cram all this stuff into each chapter."

**How do you name your characters?**

With difficulty! I find the naming of characters very hard. I used to take author surnames off the spines of ➤

## INTERVIEW

the research books in my bookcase, because the names were there, sitting in front of me. But I have long since used them all. So now I turn to the index sections of some of my bigger books and pick names from there. I suppose that an old-fashioned phone book would be a good idea, and I keep intending to get one so that I can pick names. So thanks for this prompt and I'll look for one online. If I remember.

Meanwhile, to make sure I don't use the same names twice or more, I keep a list on computer of all names used in each book or series of books, cross-referencing them by character-type, role and such matters as who were shipmates aboard particular ships. This is vital to avoid confusing readers. For instance, the list for my five Fletcher books, now contains over 630 names, and nobody can keep such numbers in memory alone.

### What are you presently working on?

I am attempting a young adult, parallel-universe book, roughly in the direction of Harry Potter or Discworld. This means working straight out of such creative talent as I might have, and I do hope that I have some.

### Are there other historic periods or subjects you would like to explore with your writing?

Dozens of them, topped by the American Revolution, the American Civil War, World War I, World War II, etc, etc.

### If you could host three historic figures at a dinner party in your home, whom would you invite? Why?

All three are from the 20th century, so here they come.

First choice: Noël Coward, the master of music, repartee and theatrical production. I would choose Noël for his conversation, his captivating playing of the pianoforte, and – to quote *Time* magazine – his personal style of “cheek and chic, pose and poise.” All that and his wonderful wit. In addition, I would like to ask him if it were true that during World War II he was sent on dangerous espionage missions for the British.

Second choice: actress Hedy Lamarr. Readers should instantly enter her name on Google images, because any photo of Hedy Lamarr will explain better than words,

the reason why she is invited to dinner. The best I can do is to state that she was one of the most spectacularly lovely women of all time, lovely but sinister. She was also extremely clever, and patented a transmission coding device that was used in the guidance system of torpedoes, so I think she would easily keep up with Noël Coward and might even persuade him to shift his orientation.

Third choice: Captain Edward Smith of the White Star Line and RMS *Titanic*. He would enjoy Noël's conversation and would be awestruck by Hedy Lamarr. But just before sending him back to his own time, I would have this brief conversation with him:

Myself: “Captain, you are a first-class seaman and navigator.”

Smith: “You are too kind, sir.”

Myself: “But please accept this advice from a landman.”

Smith: “Which is, sir?”

Myself: “You will shortly take the liner ‘Titanic’ on her maiden voyage.”

Smith: “How did you know that?”

Myself: “Never mind, but on April 14th at 11.15 precisely ...”

Smith: “Sir?”

Myself: “At 11:15 precisely, go hard a-port on the helm.”

Smith: “Why?”

Myself: “In the name of God, just do it!”

Who knows? He might.

### Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

Only my thanks for reading through all this. Thanks indeed, because writers want to be read. ■

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Visit John Drake on Twitter  
or at his publisher, Endeavour Media:  
<http://www.endeavourmedia.co.uk>.





Photo by Amy Jepson.

Kathy Stockwin

# Julian Stockwin's CATS

BY KATHY STOCKWIN

*Kathy and Julian Stockwin work closely as a creative team producing the Thomas Kydd tales. A former magazine editor-in-chief, Kathy brings an impressive range of skills to the table and in this fourth of a series of special features for 'Quarterdeck' she writes about the relationship Julian has with these much-loved creatures*



Julian Stockwin with Ming.

Photo by Kathy Stockwin.

ANY WRITERS have had a close association with cats – Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, Aldous Huxley, and Ernest Hemingway, to name just a few. Perhaps this is because they are often creative introverts, drawn to the independence of the cat. Dogs love most people, but you have to earn that from cats!

Julian Stockwin is definitely a cat man, wouldn't have married him else . . .

## OUR FELINE FAMILY

When we lived in Hong Kong we somehow acquired *five* cats – Jasper, Simba, Claude, Ra and Percy. Sadly, we could only bring the two Siamese, Ra and Claude, with us when we relocated to the United Kingdom, as the others were too old to undertake a journey halfway around the world. In those days cats had to go into quarantine for six months, a terrible fate for such intelligent creatures.

Julian came on ahead to the UK to get started on a software project for NATO, and I stayed on for a few months in Hong Kong until a replacement editor could be found. It was heart-breaking to think of them in the kennels, but Julian visited as often as he could and spent hours reassuring them that it was not forever. Fortunately, when they were released they adjusted quickly to English life and both lived well into old age.

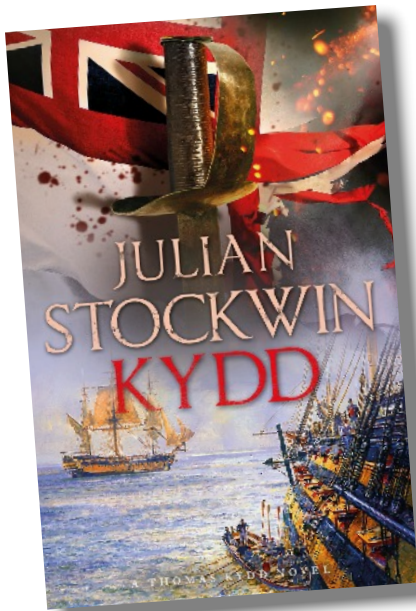
Then, after a period of time with no miaows in the house, we found ourselves with three more cats – Freddie, a Maine Coon, who just ➤

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

wandered in one day and never left, and Ling and Chi, two more Siamese. When those three passed on recently, once again we found ourselves bereft of feline company. Enter Ming and Mae, characterful brother and sister Siamese. They are now a little over six months old, with very distinctive personalities.

### CATS IN PRINT

Many readers have been moved by the passage below from Julian's first book, *Kydd*. The young wigmaker from Guildford finds himself press-ganged into the ship-of-the line *Duke William*, knowing nobody, desperately lonely, and railing at the turn of fate that had brought him to this:



*"Worn out by the trials and challenges of the day, some instinct drove him ever down to seek surcease in the deepest part of the ship. He found himself in the lowest deck of all, stumbling along a narrow dark passage past the foul smelling anchor cable, laid out in massive elongated coils.*

*Kydd felt desperately tired. A lump rose in his throat and raw emotion stung his eyes; utter despair clamped in. He staggered around a corner and just at that moment the lights of a cabin spilled out as a door opened. It was the boatswain, who looked at him in surprise.*

*'Got yourself lost then?' he said.*

*'Nowhere t' sleep,' mumbled Kydd, fighting waves of exhaustion. 'Jus' came on the ship today,' he said. He swayed, but did not care.*

*The boatswain looked at him narrowly. 'That's right – saw you at the fore capstan. Well, lad, don't worry – First Luff has a lot on his plate right now, sure he'll see you in the morning.'*

*He considered for a moment. 'Come with me.' He pulled at some keys on a lanyard and used them to open a door in the centre of the ship.*



Ling and Chi

*'We keeps sails in here. Get your swede down there 'til morning, but don't tell anyone!' He turned on his heel and thumped away up the ladder.*

*Kydd felt his way into the room. It stank richly of linseed oil, tar and sea-smelling canvas, but blessedly he could feel the big bolsters of sails that could serve as his bed, and he crumpled into their soft resistance.*

*He lay on his back, staring up into the darkness at the one or two lanthorns in the distance outside that still glowed a fitful yellow.*

*Cutting into his surging thoughts, his feral instincts jerked him into full alert. He knew for a certainty that he was not alone. His mind flooded with primitive fears; he sat up, straining to hear.*

*Without warning, a shape launched itself straight at him. He mouthed a scream; but with a low 'miaow' there was a large cat on his lap, circling contentedly. Kydd stroked the creature compulsively, again and again, the contrast between its warm furry trust and his recent experiences overwhelming.*

*The cat purred in ecstasy before stretching out comfortably and settling down. Kydd crushed the animal to him, and first one tear, then another fell on its fur . . ."*

When Julian wrote *Command*, he took special delight in having Kydd meet Matthew Flinders – and Trim, his cat – in the penal colony of New South Wales. Flinders was a Royal Navy officer, navigator and cartographer, who circumnavigated New Holland, which he called ➤



"Australia or Terra Australis."

"In Investigator's great cabin, smaller even than Kydd's quarters in Totnes Castle, every conceivable surface was set about with papers and charts. On one, a large black cat with white figuring looked balefully at Kydd before leaping straight at Flinders, who caught him neatly.

'This is the noble Trim,' Flinders said as he affectionately stroked the jet-black fur. 'The butler in Tristram Shandy of course. He's been aboard since the first, and must be accounted the most nearly travelled of all his tribe.'

Flinders found a chair for Kydd and sat at his desk with the cat curling fussily into his lap."



And who can forget little Sprits'l, a "volunteer" aboard HMS *Teazer* in Command:

"One thing was certain, however: a report to the admiral would need to be rendered. He [Kydd] had been putting it off as long as he could but there would be no time to spare after he had arrived. Kydd sighed and took a fresh sheet of paper – and at

the same time a dozen sharp needles clamped themselves on his stockinged leg. As he shot to his feet, banging his head on an overhead deck beam, his eyes flicked frantically down.

There was a terrified squeak and a pair of imploring black eyes from a scrap of fur looked up into his. Kydd opened his mouth to roar for Tysoe but stopped; he bent and picked up the warm little body, which lay trustfully in his cupped hands. 'Ye're nothing but a tiger, young Sprits'l,' he found himself cooing. A tiny pink tongue gave a tentative lick at one finger and Kydd's heart was lost to the little creature. It had been years before, but he had not forgotten the ship's cat of the old Duke William that had shared his first night in the Navy.

The kitten let go its hold and scampered across the deck then disappeared under a side table, its face reappearing to

look out mischievously. Kydd smiled: if this little creature could not only brave the unknown world but actually turn it into a place of fun and play, then who was he to complain at his lot? His depression began to lift and he turned back to his report.

Attard, midshipman of the watch, knocked timidly at the door. 'S-sorry to disturb, sir, but, er, have you –'

'Under the table yonder – an' I'll thank ye t' keep it forward,' Kydd growled, hiding a grin.

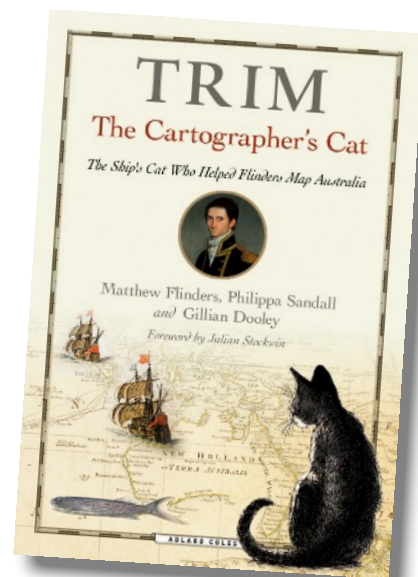
It was amazing how such a tiny life brought proportion to his own. Now he could turn his mind to a more constructive course. His independence was about to be checked – but then was not this at heart a falsity anyway? An admiral had seniors; even the great Nelson must take orders from above. Nelson – now there was his example: to do his duty to the utmost and then when the big chance came, seize it full-heartedly and without hesitation. And meanwhile he would try to be like little Sprits'l, taking joyously all that life had to offer of the moment . . ."

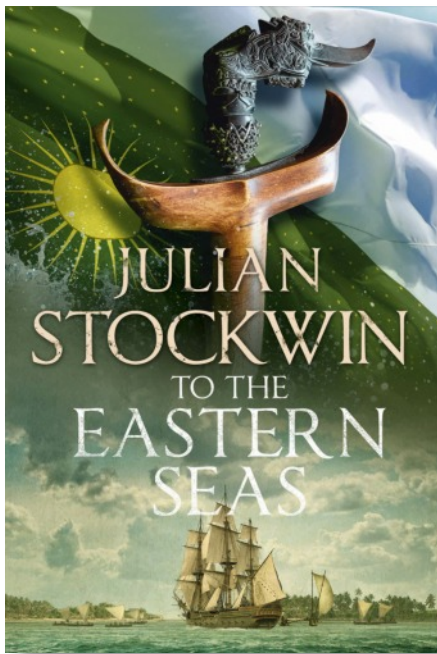
Sprits'l would later go on to enjoy a happy retirement on land with *Teazer's* old sailmaker Clegg.

#### SALUTE TO TRIM

Julian was recently invited to write the foreword to *Trim, the Cartographer's Cat*. This delightful little tome reproduces Flinders' own whimsical tribute to Trim, written while in captivity in the early 1800s, as well as providing informative background material on the man and his voyages. It concludes with Trim's own views in a fun and fanciful observation on his premature epitaph! The book is illustrated with delightful artwork.

Thanks to the publisher Adlard Coles, we have two copies up for grabs. For a chance to win one, email [kathy@julianstockwin.com](mailto:kathy@julianstockwin.com), with "Trim" in the subject line. Please include your full postal address. The deadline is October 31. *Trim, the Cartographer's Cat* is published October 17, in hardback and ebook. ■





## *To the Eastern Seas*

BY JULIAN STOCKWIN

Hodder & Stoughton, UK Hardback, £20.00 /

\$14.39, Kindle  
OCTOBER

Sequestered in his eighteenth century study, Julian Stockwin ruminates on Captain Sir Thomas Kydd's navy in the years after Trafalgar. Stimulated by a model of the brig sloop *Teazer*, naval prints and charts, lengths of line from an ancient man-of-war, and the faint scent of Stockholm tar, he chronicles his fictional hero's life.

The release of each succeeding volume in the Kydd sea adventures is eagerly awaited by faithful readers prepared to sign on for another lively voyage back to the early nineteenth century. Stockwin does not disappoint.

*To the Eastern Seas* is yet another inventive narrative from Captain Kydd's "biographer." Only just returned to Devon from his recent escape from financial ruin in *A Sea of Gold*, Kydd receives Admiralty orders to support Admiral Pellew in defending England's "most valuable trade route – that

to India and China" against marauding French men-of-war.

Weighing anchor at Spithead, HMS *Tyger* is bound for the Indian Ocean and points beyond – an expedition that may last years. Once again, the author's inventive pen illuminates a marked moment in British naval history through Kydd's eyes.

Ahead lies the exotic Indian subcontinent, "a land of fabulous treasures," where Pellew's small squadron is based at Madras, the region ruled by the Honourable East India Company.

Arriving in the Bay of Bengal, Kydd arranges for lodging ashore for the duration of the commission. Far from Devon and his wife Persephone, he meets a beguiling widow, a neighbor, whose attentions are a welcome social distraction – and a temptation.

At Admiralty House, Pellew makes plain to his newly arrived captain the challenges facing his squadron, while defending John Company's trading routes threatened by hostile parties.

"The enemy," he admonishes. "These you may accept are in their legions. The French, the native princes, privateers, pirates . . . And with a contemptible handful of sail-o'-the-line I'm expected to put a stop to any and all o' these adventures."

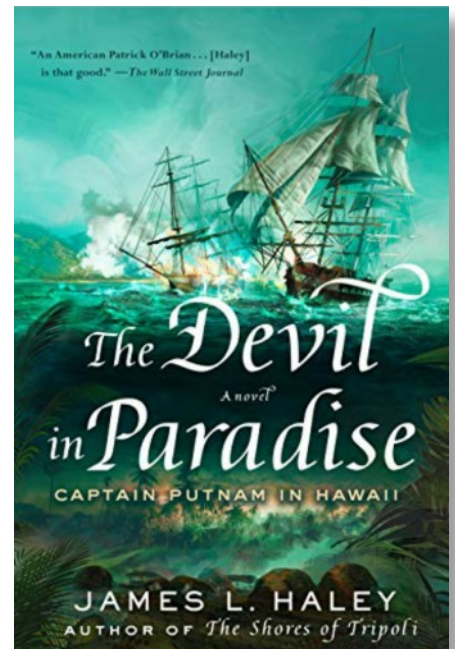
*Tyger's* immediate mission is "to put down an ocean-going privateer," Kydd tells his officers. But this will not be easy, as Pellew requires him to give up his first lieutenant and forty "skilled and capable seamen" to be spread among the fleet.

Hunting for the heavily armed *Vengeur* with no clear idea where to begin, with a new premier at his side and a reduced crew, Captain Kydd's troubles are only beginning.

There are more tempests on the horizon. Simmering internal unrest among Madras Army officers leads to mutiny against their superiors, while

*Tyger* is drawn into a gathering storm in the Dutch East Indies.

Stockwin's intimacy with the sea and England's "wooden walls," spliced with his splendid graphic narratives, create masterful naval fiction, painting brilliant true-to-life maritime scenes with words.



## *The Devil in Paradise*

BY JAMES L. HALEY

G. P. Putnam's Sons, US Hardback,  
\$27.00 / \$5.49, Kindle & NOOK  
AVAILABLE NOW

A brisk following breeze drives James L. Haley's naval fiction chronicling Captain Bliven Putnam's career in the American navy during the Age of Fighting Sail.

*The Devil in Paradise* is the third installment in the Bliven series. The young officer now commands the newly launched 26-gun sloop-of-war *Rappahanock*.

The War of 1812, which had won American sailor's "freedom from impressment" on the high seas, and the Second Barbary War are over. ➤



## BOOK REVIEWS

President James Monroe believes “a navy ever increasing, ever more present around the globe” is required in the years to come, as he looks beyond the country’s shores.

*Rappahanock*, a small piece in the navy’s expansion, is ordered to the Pacific by Commodore Isaac Hull, late of the *Constitution* and now in command of the Boston Navy Yard. “You will punish the pirates in the Malacca Strait and open the sea-lane for our ships,” he tells Putnam. “You will also show the flag in various native ports.”

Bliven and his wife, Clarity, contemplate a two-year separation until she determines to join missionaries bound for the Sandwich Islands, where *Rappahanock* will periodically call for mail and provisions at Honolulu, allowing them to be closer. As the Putnams sail separately for the Pacific – rounding Cape Horn – their respective stories evolve and eventually intertwine.

Clarity and the missionary party land first at Oahu, where two distinct cultures meet, challenging newcomers and natives alike. Kahumanu, the queen of the Hawaiian Islands, is a formidable figure. Along with her people, she is adapting to a new world with an influx of outsiders.

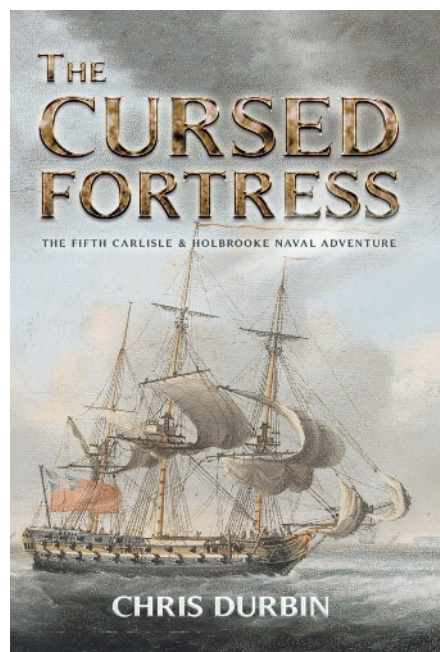
Arriving in Honolulu months after Clarity, Bliven and the Rappahanocks relish the tropical surroundings, while the ship is provisioned. Bliven and Clarity rekindle their relationship and adjust to a life-changing event before *Rappahanock* sails west.

Leaving the islands behind, Bliven’s command is bound for the South China Sea and Strait of Malacca Strait, to wipe out Boogis pirates preying on merchant shipping. At the same time, the ship is searching for an American trader seeking vengeance for his son’s death by pirates, while carrying a hatred for natives in general.

Halley spins a rousing naval yarn

laced with action against slavers, a new breed of pirate, and an enraged sea captain seeking vengeance. An intimate understanding of Hawaiian history recounted through well-drawn, three-dimensional characters enriches his narrative.

The Bliven Putnam novels bring a refreshing point of view to naval fiction, with a marked Yankee flavor.



### *The Cursed Fortress*

BY CHRIS DURBIN

Independent, US Paperback, \$13.66 /

\$6.20, Kindle

AVAILABLE NOW

British novelist Chris Durbin’s Carlisle & Holbrooke naval adventures are firmly established in naval fiction, blending historic events, realistic characters, and a mariner’s sense of ships and the sea in enticing storylines, which are set against the background of a period seldom written about.

Durbin’s lively narratives cast a bright light on The Seven Years’ War, a world conflict fought on land and the

sea between 1756 and 1763. By the conflict’s conclusion, the British Royal Navy dominated the Seven Seas and would for a century and more to come.

*The Cursed Fortress*, the fifth title in the series, finds Captain Edward Carlisle fully recovered from injuries suffered in action against Dutch pirates and again in command of His Majesty’s frigate *Medina*.

Under new orders, *Medina* is bound for the French stronghold at Louisbourg, Île-Royale, part of present-day Nova Scotia, to reinforce the British blockading squadron laying siege.

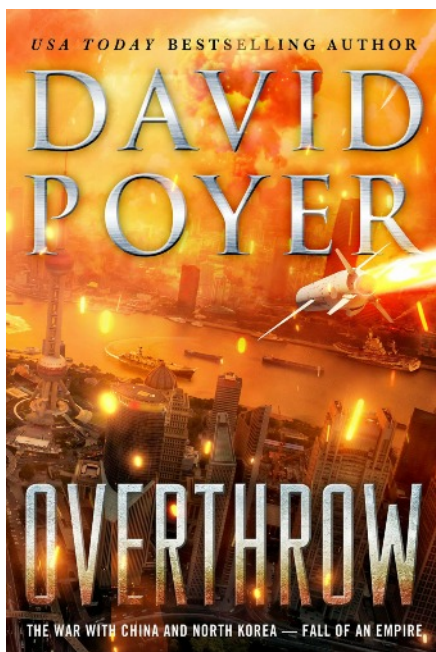
Leaving Jamaica in early 1758, with Carlisle wife Chiara aboard, *Medina* escorts a merchant convoy to Hampton, Virginia. Carlisle’s family seat lies nearby in Williamsburg, but a reunion with his father and brother is anything but cordial.

After a brief layover, Chiara remains in Williamsburg, as the ship and convoy carry on to Boston and then to Louisbourg, where the siege is critical to ending the French colonial era in Atlantic Canada.

Along *Medina*’s course up the American coast, she spars with a French man-of-war, encounters a veiled enemy in Boston, and struggles with “head winds, dead calms and a persistent heavy swell from the southeast” on the final leg to Louisbourg.

Durbin’s scrupulous research and years of service in the Royal Navy combine to bring events vividly to life. It is not a stretch to sense incoming fire from French batteries, the earsplitting thunder of *Medina*’s broadsides, or watches in biting cold fog off a rugged enemy coast.

*The Cursed Fortress* is another splendid and bracing episode in the saga, with the promise of more to come, as the Seven Years’ War at sea unwinds and unrest sets in motion a breach between Britannia and her colonies. ➤



## Overthrow

BY DAVID POYER

G. P. Putnam's Sons, US Hardback,  
\$28.99 / \$14.99, Kindle & NOOK  
DECEMBER

David Poyer's brilliant modern-day naval thrillers featuring Admiral Dan Lenson foreshadow the unthinkable should irrational world leaders ever unleash their massive militaries, setting the globe on fire.

In *Overthrow*, the United States, China and North Korea remain locked in a death struggle that is entering its fourth year. There are no clear winners as casualties increase, economies falter, and assets erode.

Twenty-first-century war, it turns out, is no different than war through the ages — just more deadly and harmful to planet Earth. Earlier in the conflict, a Chinese nuclear-tipped weapon struck a carrier battle group, instantly killing ten thousand American service men and women, while a thermonuclear attack nearly destroyed Honolulu.

After surviving a helicopter crash and a raid on the enemy's south coast,

Admiral Lenson now commands Task Force 91 in the South China Sea. The assault force is primed for an amphibious landing on China's Hainan Island to establish a base for future operations.

Aboard the USS *Savo Island*, the first in a new class of cruiser, Captain Cheryl Staurulakis oversees sea trials off Oahu. The previous *Savo Island*, once Lenson's command and then hers, had been scuttled after the nuclear attack on Hawaii.

In Washington, Lenson's wife Blair Titus serves as under secretary of defense, caught up in the give-and-take within the government, which is at odds over how to end the war. All the while, she knows little of her husband's fate in the war zone.

Moving across Taiwan, Marine Sergeant Hector Ramos, physically and emotionally beaten, struggles to survive in the aftermath of battle. A machine gun chatters, a bullet whines past, and a fellow Marine drops. This is far from over.

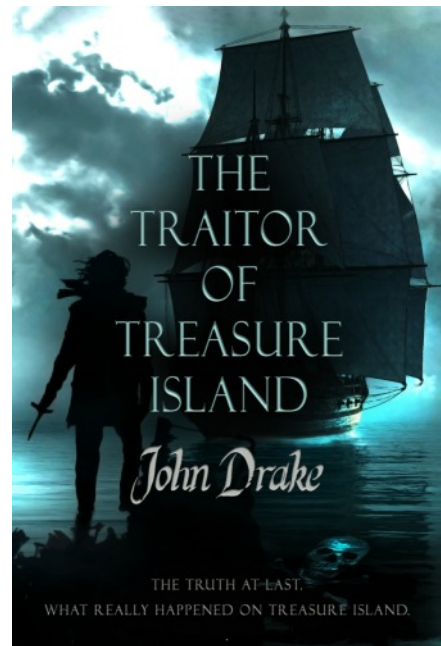
On the campus of a Seattle-based biotech company, Dr. Nan Lenson, Dan's daughter, is thrilled with the results of a new vaccine that just might stem the tide against an influenza sweeping through Asia and Africa.

Hunkered down in the mountains of western China, Navy Master Chief Theodore Oberg, leads a disparate band of insurgents, none of whom he trusts. Ducking drones and helicopter attacks, they play their roles in the war against Chinese forces.

Poyer's narrative moves along at a scintillating pace, breathless at times, as events race toward an end that no one desires — nuclear holocaust. His familiarity with modern weaponry augments scenarios that could lead to the annihilation of mankind. His characterizations are particularly poignant, revealing humans responding to ex-

treme stress in extraordinary circumstances.

The Lenson novels are an uncommon *tour de force* in naval fiction, written by a master of the genre.



## The Traitor of Treasure Island

BY JOHN DRAKE

Endeavour, UK Paperback, \$9.81 /  
\$3.99, Kindle  
AVAILABLE NOW

*Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson has been a literary destination for readers of all ages since it was first published in England in 1881 in *Young Folks* magazine under the title "The Sea Cook."

British novelist John Drake first read the book as a boy and has returned to it several times over his lifetime. *The Traitor of Treasure Island* is a sharp witted retelling of Stevenson's tale, with Drake's solitary take on the original characters and story.

Long John Silver is treated more sympathetically, while Jim Hawkins is portrayed as a mistrusted ne'er-do- ➤



## BOOK REVIEWS

well, rather than the devoted confederate to Dr Livesey, Squire Trelawney, and Captain Smollett. Captain Flint, who is only referenced in Stevenson's narrative, appears in the flesh in this telling, a sworn enemy of Silver.

In his introduction, Drake says that he was inspired to write the book by a letter dated 18 March 1790, which was "sent by the captain of an outbound convict ship, to his wife," referencing "The boy Jim Hawkins of Treasure Island . . . grown to become the notorious Sir James 'Slippery Jim' Hawkins, perpetual member of parliament for Trelawney West . . ."

The letter was among a sheaf of papers in an ancient sea chest shipped to Drake's door by an antique dealer familiar with his interest in the events surrounding Treasure Island. The papers were collected by Dr David Livesey, including his journal from the expedition in the 1700's.

Based on Livesey's chronicle, the "true" saga unwinds, with Flint aboard *Revenge* and Silver aboard *Hispaniola*, bound for the island and hidden treasure. Hawkins, Livesey, Trelawney, Smollett and their loyal seamen are caught between the pirate companies.

New revelations in Drake's book include Hawkins' secretive family history, Silver's mysterious wife, Selena, and, of course, what really happened on the tropical isle.

The author's detailed research into piracy, seamanship, and social norms in the seventeenth century, and his familiarity with English language in the period result in a delightful swashbuckling sea adventure.

*The Traitor of Treasure Island* will appeal to those who have read Stevenson's classic or those who are simply smitten with spirited maritime fiction under sail. ■

*Reviews by George Jepson*

# ONLINE BOOK SOURCES



McBooks Press  
[www.mcbooks.com](http://www.mcbooks.com)

Rowman & Littlefield  
[www.rowman.com](http://www.rowman.com)

Lyons Press  
[www.lyonspress.com](http://www.lyonspress.com)

Sheridan House  
[www.sheridanhouse.org](http://www.sheridanhouse.org)

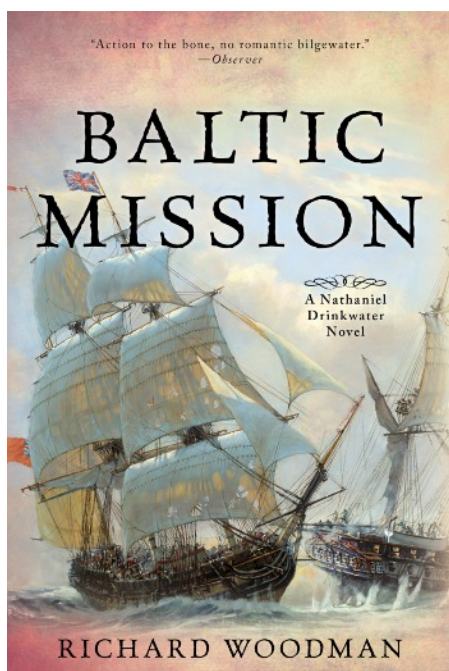
Amazon  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

Barnes & Noble  
[www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

The Book Depository  
[www.bookdepository.com](http://www.bookdepository.com)

## Baltic Mission

BY RICHARD WOODMAN

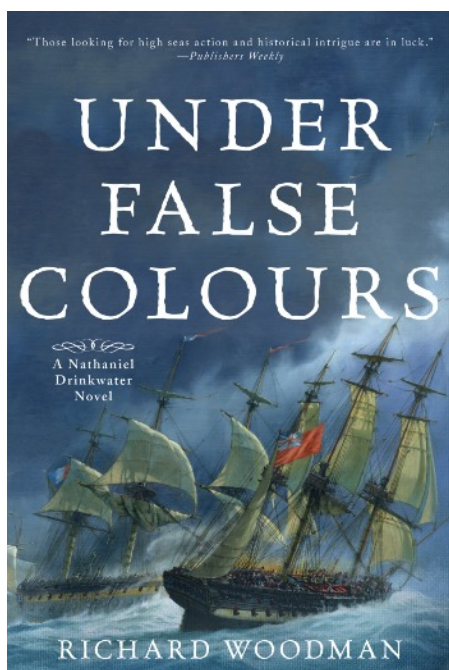


(McBooks Press, \$14.95, US Trade Paperback / \$13.99, Kindle & NOOK) In the seventh tale of the highly acclaimed Nathaniel Drinkwater series, HMS *Antigone*, is ordered to the Baltic Sea in the spring of 1807, as Napoleon's grip has begun to reach across Europe to the borders of Holy Russia. As country after country falls under the weight of French domination, Captain Nathaniel Drinkwater is faced with the challenges brought about by military disaster and diplomatic intrigue. On board *Antigone*, Drinkwater is threatened by the seething discontent of his crew and the instability of his drunken first lieutenant. Drinkwater's task is to cooperate with his country's allies and intelligence agents. When a coded message is intercepted, his mission suddenly becomes one of extreme personal danger. As the fate of Europe is being decided, Drinkwater must carry out his mission in the face of his old enemy. This final confrontation brings him to the brink of death.

DECEMBER

## Under False Colors

BY RICHARD WOODMAN



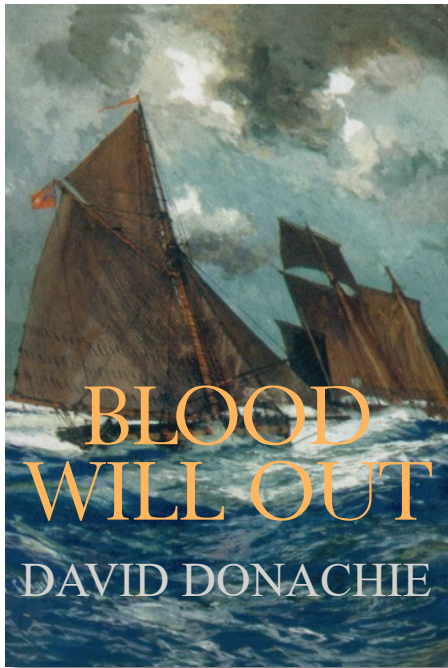
(McBooks Press, \$18.95, US Trade Paperback / \$13.99, Kindle & NOOK) In 1809, working undercover for the Admiralty's Secret Department, Captain Nathaniel Drinkwater goes ashore and mingles with the dregs of London's dockland. Disguised as a Merchant Marine shipmaster of low character, he encounters a known French agent in a brothel and advertises his plans to carry military cargo to Russia. Intended to drive a wedge between Napoleon and his new ally, Czar Alexander, Drinkwater's mission is disrupted by tempestuous weather and a lost escort – a gun brig commanded by his friend and protege. Reaching the British-occupied island of Helgoland, Drinkwater takes great personal risk by resolving on a bold course of action that is not endorsed by the Admiralty.

DECEMBER



## *Blood Will Out*

BY DAVID DONACHIE



(Allison & Busby, \$25.00, UK Hardback / \$16.49, Kindle / \$10.99, NOOK)

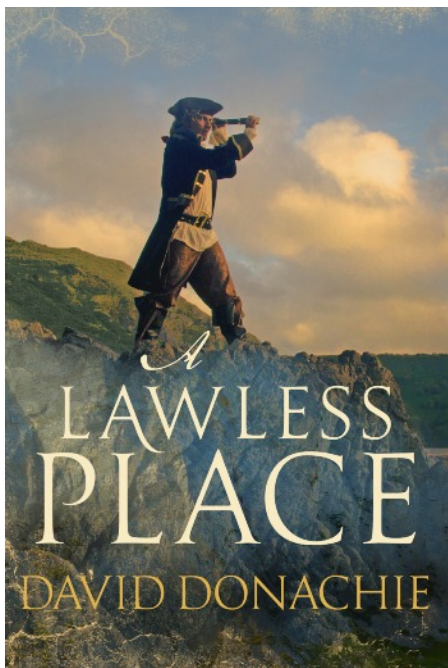
1787. Captain Edward Brazier is wounded and in desperate need of medical attention, but those from whom he could seek help have no idea where he is – although neither do his enemies. With his beloved Betsey currently imprisoned by her brother Henry, who is considering committing her to an asylum to take her off his hands, time is running out for Brazier to rescue her and end the tyranny of the local smuggling ring of Deal once and for all. This is the third title in Donachie's Contraband Trilogy.

**NOVEMBER**

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## *A Lawless Place*

BY DAVID DONACHIE



(Allison & Busby, \$12.95, UK Trade Paperback / \$9.99, Kindle / \$10.99, NOOK)

1787. Edward Brazier is enlisted by Prime Minister William Pitt to assist his investigation into smuggling activity in Deal. However, with his love Betsey now locked into a loveless marriage with Tom Spafford, a useless drunk, and living as a prisoner, Brazier is distracted from his mission. Having foiled Spafford's plan to steal Betsy away to her family-owned plantation in the West Indies, Brazier finds himself taken captive. Only his ingenuity will help engineer his escape and his cunning use of subterfuge will then allow him to infiltrate the smuggling gangs of Deal in a determined bid to unmask those in control. But with suspicion raised around him and his enemies banding together, can Brazier survive long enough to bring those responsible to justice? This is the second title in Donachie's Contraband Trilogy.

**AVAILABLE NOW**

## The Nugget

BY P. T. Deutermann

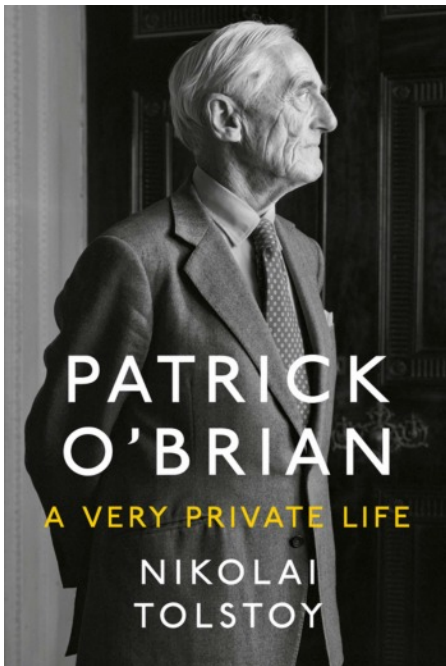


(St. Martin's Press, \$27.99, US Hardback / \$14.99, Kindle & NOOK) Lieutenant Bobby Steele, USN, is a fresh-faced and eager naval aviator: a “Nugget,” who needs to learn the ropes and complex procedures of taking off and returning safely to his aircraft carrier. A blurry night of drinking lands him in an unfamiliar bed aboard the USS *Oklahoma*; later that day, the Japanese destroy Pearl Harbor. After cheating death and losing his friend in this act of war, the formerly naive Steele vows to avenge the attack. Flying sea battle after battle, Steele survives the most dangerous air combat in World War II, including Midway, is shot down twice, rescued twice, and eventually leads a daring mission to free prisoners from a secluded Japanese POW camp. Packed with authentic military action on land and at sea in the Pacific Theatre, featuring a memorable protagonist based on a true-life hero.

OCTOBER

## Patrick O'Brian – A Very Private Life

BY NIKOLAI TOLSTOY



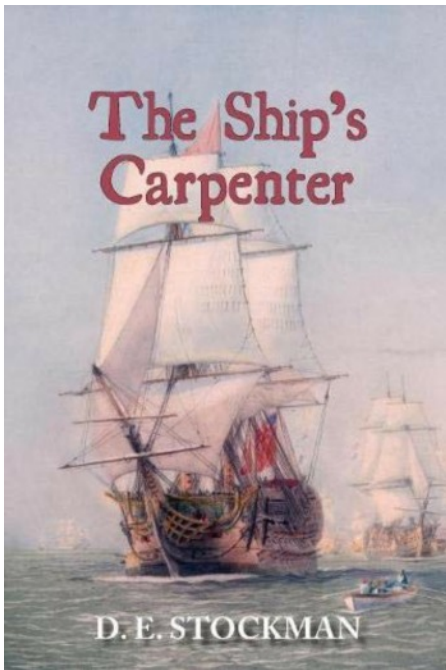
(William Collins, £25.00, UK Hardback / \$18.24, Digital Download) English novelist Patrick O'Brian's Aubrey-Maturin sea novels secured his place in literary history. Far less is known about O'Brian's personal life, largely because he preferred to keep it that way. In *A Very Private Life*, O'Brian's stepson Nikolai Tolstoy draws upon his stepfather's archives and papers to faithfully capture a life dedicated to the written word. This biography covers the latter part of O'Brian's life, from the moment of his arrival at Collioure in the south of France in 1949, where he wrote all his major works, to his death in 2000. Tolstoy maps his step-father's literary career, from its poverty-stricken beginnings to the remarkable success O'Brian enjoyed later in life. He relates how through a cruel irony of fate, just as his O'Brian's literary career attained greater acclaim, his pleasure in this achievement began to diminish. This truthful, warm and insightful biography is a testimony to Tolstoy's respect and admiration for his stepfather, one of Britain's most loved literary figures.

OCTOBER



## *The Ship's Carpenter*

BY D. E. STOCKMAN



(*Fireship Press*, \$19.99, US Trade Paperback / \$8.99, Kindle & NOOK)

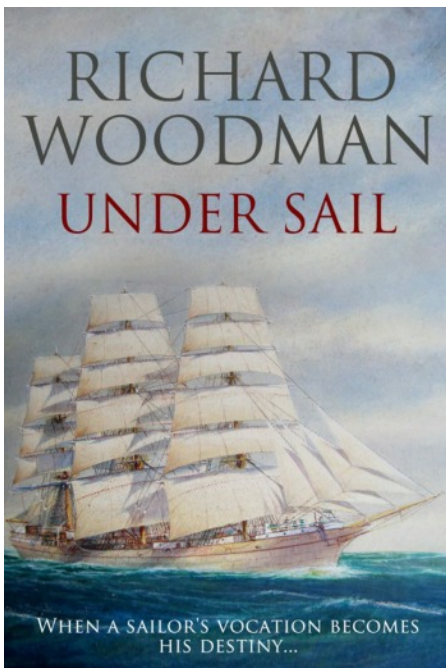
Caught between Great Britain and France in the mid 1700's, Abraham struggles to pursue his passion for shipbuilding. Kings and captains interrupt his quest for a peaceful life as he encounters and overcomes barriers in two opposed and stratified cultures. From the streets of old London to the Citadel of Louisbourg and lands between, seafaring battle action and love's complexities entwine to create a dramatic story centered on the carpenter and his love, Yvette. *La Renommée*, the fastest frigate on the seas, links a host of historical characters, with warriors, nobles, shopkeepers, and lovers crossing paths in her wake.

**AVAILABLE NOW**

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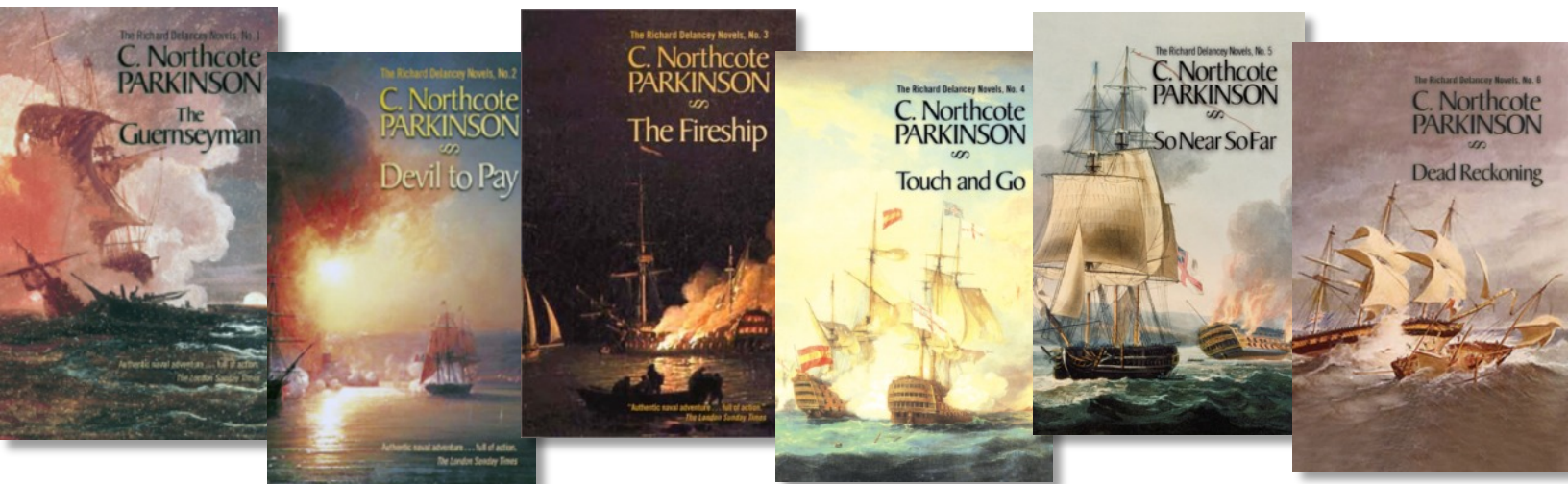
## *Under Sail*

BY RICHARD WOODMAN



(*Endeavour Media*, \$3.99, Kindle) Fresh from the momentous experiences of his maiden voyage, merchant seaman James Dunbar is back in his native Suffolk. Struggling to recapture the intensity of that Mexican adventure, when he discovered his own distinctive artistic spirit, he seeks inspiration in Julia Ravenham, an enigmatic, beautiful aesthete eager to nurture his young talent. He falls in love, but the emotional and artistic approval of bohemian London cannot quell the call of the sea. It is his vocation, but also his destiny. In securing a berth aboard *Fort Mackinac*, a sailing ship bound for Australia, Dunbar strives to build the character essential for a successful career. Even after four years of hunger, humiliation, danger and remorseless physical labor wreaking havoc upon his mental state – but seeing his paintings of crew life acclaimed – Dunbar's sense of purpose remains undimmed. Yet with the outbreak of naval operations in the First World War, his artistic past returns in haunting fashion, provoking a desperate confrontation amid the wilds of the South Atlantic Ocean.

**AVAILABLE NOW**



## *The Richard Delancey Novels*

BY C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON

### 1 – THE GUERNSEYMAN

(McBooks Press, \$18.95, US Trade Paperback / **\$9.99**, Kindle / **\$9.49**, NOOK) 1780 . . . Richard Delancey, ranked a midshipman, sails for New York, but the American Revolution and hostilities between England and France send him back across the sea.

### 2 – DEVIL TO PAY

(McBooks Press, \$19.95, US Trade Paperback / **\$9.99**, Kindle / **\$9.49**, NOOK) Delancey lands a secret mission that goes awry, but his success thwarting the high-stakes smugglers lands him in command of a private man-of-war.

### 3 – THE FIRESHIP

(McBooks Press, \$17.95, US Trade Paperback / **\$9.99**, Kindle / **\$9.49**, NOOK) Passed over for promotion after Camperdown, Delancey is mollified by command of the antiquated fireship *Spitfire*.

### 4 – TOUCH AND GO

(McBooks Press, \$19.95, US Trade Paperback / **\$9.99**, Kindle / **\$9.49**, NOOK) With his Royal Navy commission in hand, Richard Delancey is posted to Gibraltar to command the sloop *Merlin* for convoy protection in the Mediterranean.

### 5 – SO NEAR SO FAR

(McBooks Press, \$19.95, US Trade Paperback / **\$9.99**, Kindle / **\$9.49**, NOOK) Disturbing rumors circulate about Napoleon's new weapons of war: steam-driven vessels, new explosive devices, and a secret weapon which can travel underwater. Delancey's wildly unorthodox tactics defeat them all.

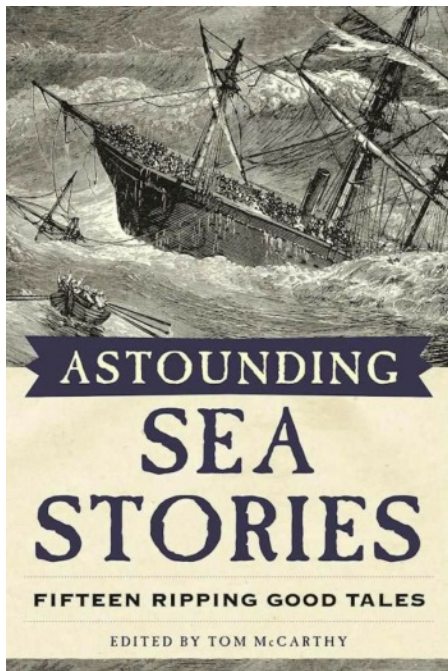
### 6 – DEAD RECKONING

(McBooks Press, \$21.95, US Trade Paperback / **\$9.99**, Kindle / **\$9.49**, NOOK) The exciting conclusion to the Delancey series finds Captain Richard Delancey heading for the East Indies and a rendezvous with "Fabius" – the sadistic enemy agent who has eluded him for years.



## *Astounding Sea Stories*

EDITED BY TOM McCARTHY

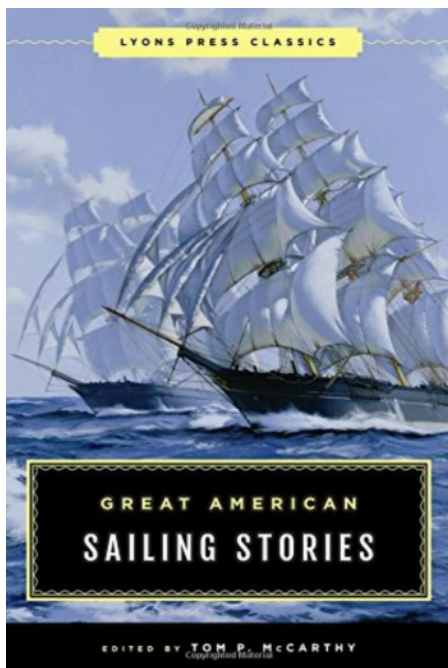


(Seahorse Publishing, \$14.99, US Trade Paperback / \$9.68, Kindle / \$10.49, NOOK) “1789 April: Just before sun-rising, Mr. Christian, with the master at arms, gunner’s mate, and Thomas Burket, seaman, came into my cabin while I was asleep, and seizing me, tied my hands with a cord behind my back and threatened me with instant death if I spoke or made the least noise.” So began William Bligh’s explanation of the infamous mutiny aboard the *Bounty*. His account of his capture and his phenomenal navigation of a small boat filled with men desperate to survive is one of the greatest sailing stories ever told. Included are stories from Jack London, Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Here also are marquee names like Melville and Richard Henry Dana, the official report of the sinking of the *Titanic*, a first-person account of the wreck of the *Medusa*, and a story by an unknown captain written after his ship was sunk by a whale. This eclectic collection will not disappoint armchair seafarers.

**AVAILABLE NOW**

## *Great American Sailing Stories*

EDITED BY TOM McCARTHY

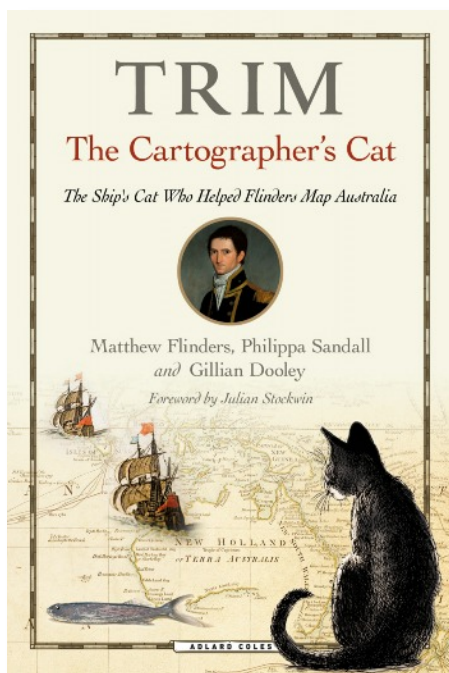


(Lyons Press Classics, \$16.00, US Trade Paperback / \$11.959, Kindle / \$10.49, NOOK) Few people would want to test their mettle in an ice-encrusted boat with an Arctic explorer, sail the Straits of Magellan with Joshua Slocum, or watch with Owen Chase as an angry whale sends his ship to the bottom, thousands of miles from the nearest land. But it's quite another thing to read these true accounts while settled into a favorite chair. Slocum and Chase persevered in the face of travails that would have given Job pause. Their stoic accounts are stronger and more dramatic for their total lack of affection, their frankness, and their lack of ego. Their gripping stories are custom-made for the imaginative reader who seeks adventure in a more controlled environment, safe and warm, and well fed, civilized readers with their armchairs anchored firmly to the living room floor. Rich in drama and history, here are stories that will entertain, inform, and inspire, enduring stories that have attracted generations of readers.

**AVAILABLE NOW**

## Trim – The Cartographer’s Cat

BY MATTHEW FLINDERS, PHILIPPA SANDALL AND GILLIAN DOOLEY



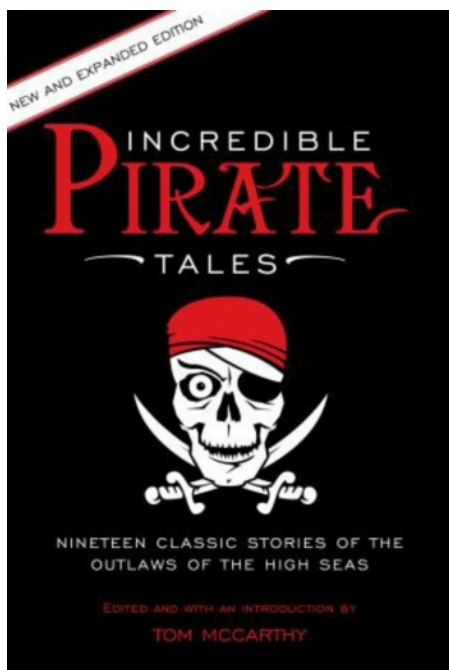
(Adlard Coles, \$18.00, US Hardback / \$12.60, Kindle / \$11.49, NOOK)

Trim was the ship’s cat who accompanied Matthew Flinders on his voyages to circumnavigate and map the coastline of Australia from 1801 to 1803. This is a charming ode to the much-loved pet, which will warm the heart of any cat lover. The first part of the book reproduces Flinders’ own whimsical tribute to Trim, written while in captivity in the early 1800s, with added “friendly footnotes” to provide some background to Flinders’ numerous literary allusions and nautical terms. Next the book discusses where Flinders was when he wrote his tribute and why, and what his letters and journals from that time tell us about his “sporting, affectionate and useful companion.” Finally, we learn what Trim’s views on all of this might have been, in a fun and fanciful observation on his premature epitaph. Accompanying this jam-packed text are beautiful maps, historical photographs, quirky original illustrations by Ad Long and excerpts from Flinders’ original script, showing his beautiful handwriting.

DECEMBER

## Incredible Pirate Tales

EDITED BY TOM MCCARTHY

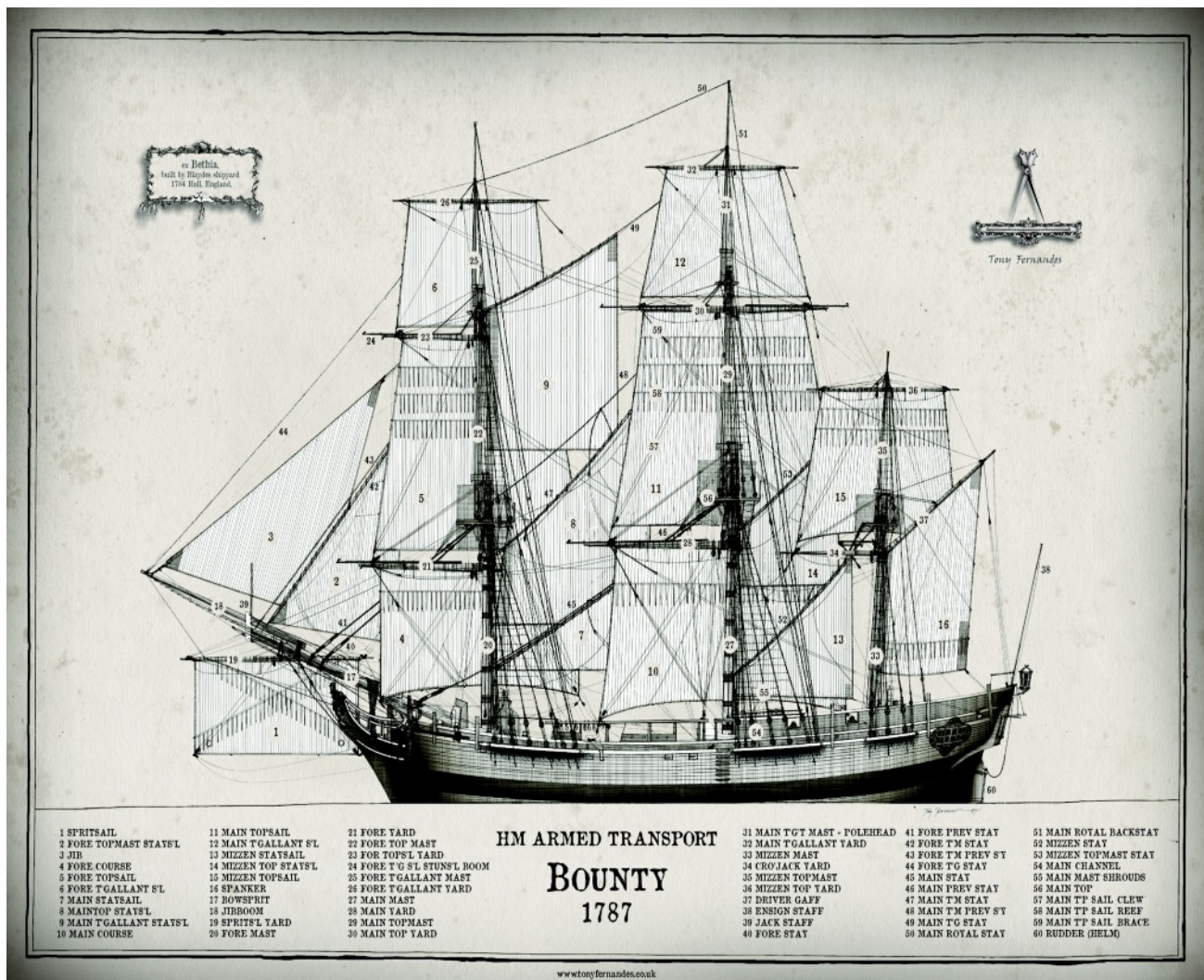


(Globe Pequot / Lyons Press, \$14.95, US Trade Paperback / \$13.99, Kindle / \$11.48, NOOK) From Long John Silver to Captain Hook, from Blackbeard to Captain Kidd, pirates have made off with our imaginations for centuries with their charisma and adventurous living. Truth be told, these capricious cutthroats are not only figures of horror, but also of vicarious delight. *Incredible Pirate Tales* captures the most extraordinary stories of actual and fictional characters who took up the “black flag” and a life on the high seas. In these pages meet L’Olonnois the Cruel, the most notorious and wicked pirate of his day, whose ardent cravings for plunder sailed him down a path of treachery and brutality. Witness the rise of a pirate named Peter, who successfully manages his career and settles in France, where he retires as a gentleman. Learn about the exploits, arrests, and executions of infamous sea wolves such as Jean Lafitte, Captain Charles Vane, and the Joassammee Pirates of the Persian Gulf.

AVAILABLE NOW



# TONY FERNANDES



Images © Tony Fernandes.

**B** RITISH ARTIST TONY FERNANDES began drawing and painting at an early age. Reading *Treasure Island* at age eight “blew the lid off my world and opened up a whole new horizon” he said. “Such powerful words and scenes were created in my mind . . . my portfolio grew to encompass ships, maps and lighthouses.”

Honing his talent through the 1970’s and 1980’s, he first came to international notice when the British Government presented his works as part of its official gift to the Australian Government during



Tony Fernandes

Photo courtesy of Tony Fernandes.

the Bicentennial Celebrations in 1988.

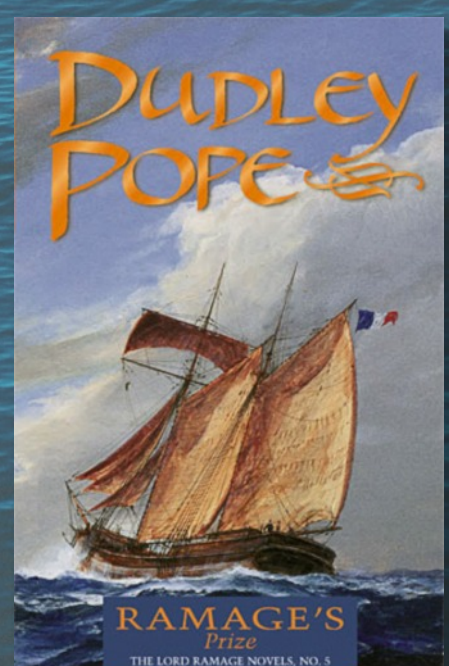
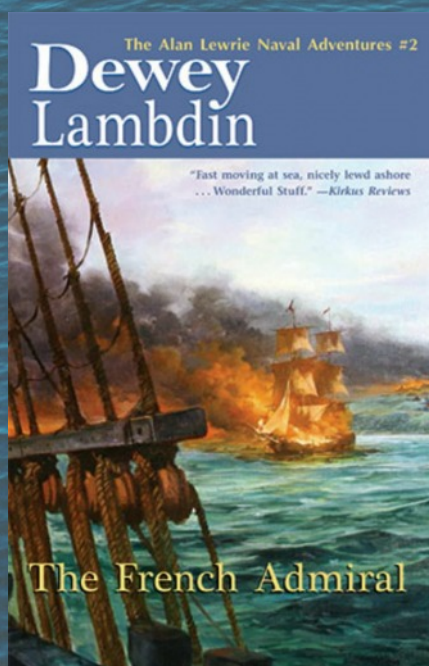
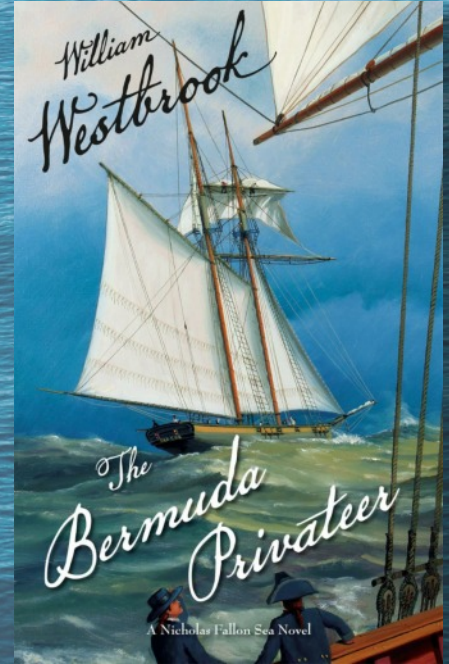
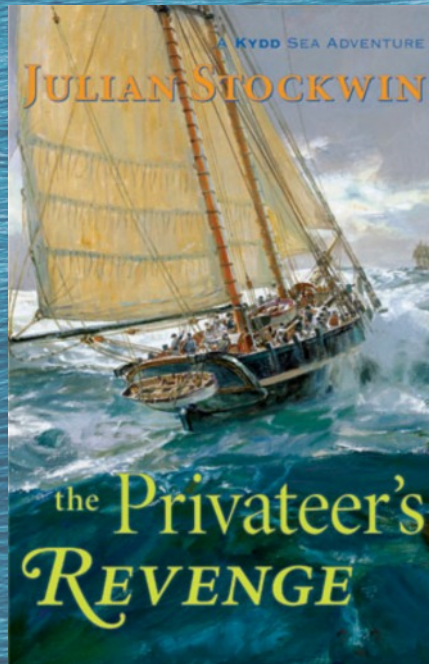
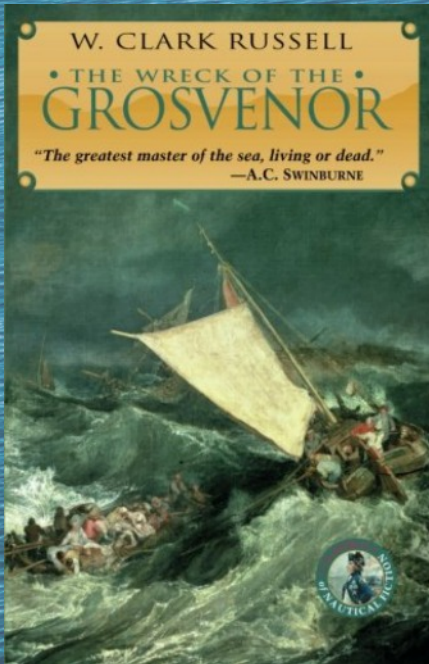
A painting will take anything up to 1000 hours, not counting research, often in the National Archives at Kew or the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. Fernandes starts with a nib-and-ink sketch 4’ x 3’ followed by a 6’ x 5’ oil-on-canvas painting.

This recent rendering of His Majesty’s Armed Transport *Bounty* is but one representative of Fernandes’ exquisite art. To view his complete catalog, visit: [www.tonyfernandesdesign.com](http://www.tonyfernandesdesign.com).



# McBOOKS press

THE DESTINATION FOR NAUTICAL FICTION



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