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Poxed & Scurvied: The story of sickness and health at sea by

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of the financial stringencies and manning limitations affecting the French navy does much to explain its deficiencies and more to give grounds for commendation. Above all, it demonstrates the eternal verity that a fleet of high standard needs continual support from, and must represent, a well-developed industrial, social and political basis.

True to form, the book considers in detail the popular presentation of the battle, its effects and its personalities. It begins with contrasting descriptions of the monuments to captains James Montagu, John Hutt and John Harvey in Westminster Abbey, and to La Bataille Prairial (the French term for the event, using the Republican calendar) in the Panthéon in the Place de la République, Paris. Chapter 4 (‘The First War Artist’) describes the various early attempts to present naval warfare to the public, while the last three chapters describe the aftermath of the battle in both Britain and France. Again, the imagery is succinctly striking: ‘Howe now returned with his prizes and his holds full of enemy prisoners’ (p. 229) is a simple expression of naval reality. The political consequences were, as ever, both more complex and less predictable. In Britain, the royal welcome (by George III, at Portsmouth) forms a magnificent counterpart to the celebration of the success of the all-important grain convoy at Brest. The subsequent protracted and frequently unpleasant controversies in both countries need not detain us; sufficient to say that this was a battle which either side might view with satisfaction.

Enough of the specifics. Taken together, these well-written and attractive books are consistently innovative and informative, offering far more than their size and modest prices (£14.99 apiece in paperback) would suggest and making them equally attractive to the specialist, to the student and to the present-seeker. Above all, their consistent quality demonstrates the potential value of this descriptive and illustrative but essentially selective approach, which might profitably be applied to other periods. The Victorian navy perhaps?

In postscript, it gives great pleasure to congratulate the author on the well-deserved award of the Anderson Medal, in well-justified recognition of an impressive achievement of lasting value. These are books which many will frequently consult and re-read.

ROBERT J. C. MOWAT
DUNFERMLINE

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Poxed & Scurvied: The story of sickness and health at sea by Kevin Brown
Seaforth Publishing, Barnsley, 2011, £25 (hb) 246 pages with 18 black and white images, bibliography, index

Kevin Brown’s book is the latest, and most ambitious, example of the growing interest in maritime disease and medicine. Its purpose, as demonstrated in the sub-title – forget the ‘sexed up’ references to pox and scurvy – is to tell ‘the Story of Sickness and Health at Sea.’ Inevitably, the need to cover a period that ranges from the transportation of plague-carrying rats in the fourteenth century to the work of the SS Uganda as a hospital ship during the Falklands, presents a formidable challenge. How does one manage such an enormous historical panorama?

One of the techniques favoured by the author is to adopt a thematic rather than a strictly chronological approach in which each of the ten chapters comprises a more or less separate essay. Thus, ‘Deadly Cargoes’ deals with the transference of diseases like plague and syphilis into Europe, and smallpox and influenza out of it, in and after the Age of Exploration; ‘The Surgeon’s Mate’ with maritime health from the Tudor to and Jacobean periods; ‘Sick and Hurt’ with the institutionalization of care up to the seventeenth century; ‘Plague at Sea’ with the position of surgeons, the development of hospitals and major maritime diseases during the eighteenth; England’s Expectations’ with the situation during the Napoleonic Wars; ‘The Middle Passage’ with the slave trade; ‘Huddled Masses’ with convict and immigrant ships in the nineteenth century; ‘Sea Airs’ with the development of luxury passenger and cruise liners; and ‘Bright and Breezy’ and ‘Stormy Waters’ with medicine in the Royal Navy from Victorian to modern times.

Another is to adopt the style of the journalist
rather than the more mechanistic method of the historian. Thus, the narrative moves swiftly and deftly across the landscape, is illuminated by set piece events and dramatic quotations to provide the human dimension and is replete with anecdote and detail. As is to be expected from the Curator of the Alexander Fleming Museum at St Mary's Hospital, the underlying research is broad-ranging and, generally embraces the latest findings. One of the exceptions is the prominence still given to Gilbert Blane and the claim that he was responsible for the adoption of lemon juice by the navy in 1795 – supported by an unattributed quotation which purports to come from Blane but in fact was written by Dr Robert Blair, the Commissioner of Sick and Hurt who was actually responsible!

Although the book is comprehensive, one problem with the author's method is that the various chapters are tenuously linked and there are sometimes breaks in continuity. 'Plague at Sea', for example, ends its treatment of scurvy in the eighteenth century with the voyages of Captain Cook, while the next chapter, 'England's Expectations', jumps forward 30 years to a set piece description of the death of Nelson. The only acknowledgement of the important developments which took place in the interim is an almost off-hand reference to the fact that lemon juice had been introduced into the navy as a regular item of diet in 1795 – although this is probably the most significant single event in the conquest of the disease. True, with other themes it is possible to trace the sequence of events across chapters, but a weak index makes the task difficult.

By favouring the dramatic however the author has succeeded in making the subject accessible and in producing a series of fascinating and gripping accounts of maritime sickness and medicine that will appeal to the general reader and the specialist alike. Nevertheless, purists will feel that to generalize from the particular and to rely so heavily on contemporary quotations – sometimes from people with axes to grind – will occasionally distort as well as illuminate. Undue prominence, for example continues to be given to Roderick Random, and hanging the medical and hygienic practice of the Napoleonic War on what Nelson did obscures the fact that these methods were common and were being applied by other commanders like Howe, Hood, Gardner and St Vincent.

Some chapters would also have benefitted from a more deliberate emphasis on the wider medical and physical context. True, this is less important in the earlier period, when the scientific background was weak and can be adequately covered by brief references to Hippocrates and the four humours, and in modern times, when knowledge of is principles can be taken for granted; but it is important to an understanding of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, it is ironic in view of the book's title that scurvy is the topic that suffers most from this lack of context. As a result, the reader is left with the impression that the field was dominated by the often bizarre remedies traditionally used by seamen and that doctors had no ideas as to the nature of the disease. In fact, the medical establishment had a cogent theory as to what caused scurvy and how it could be cured. Internal putrefaction, treated by drinking elixir of vitriol, was the dominant idea until the 1760s when it was succeeded by MacBride's 'fixed air' variant, cured by drinking huge quantities of fermenting malt and wort. Thus, Captain Cook did not choose to favour malt and wort and ignore lemons as is implied: he did so because he had been ordered to test the MacBride theory against the alternatives. Unfortunately, the medical establishment had got it wrong, and scurvy was only overcome when the navy defied current remedies in favour of the demonstrable benefits of lemon juice.

Likewise, while Brown's book is strong on atmosphere, the very scope of its coverage means that there are inevitable mistakes in detail. Continuous service for ratings was not, for example, introduced in 1823; administrative control of Haslar was not transferred to a naval officer in 1783; and the 132 slaves of the Zong were not thrown overboard because they were sick and Captain Collinwood wanted to protect the rest from infection.

Details like this may worry the specialist, but they are unlikely to be important to the general reader. The author's knowledge of the subject is wide ranging and the way he has woven an enormous amount of material into a readable and informative narrative is impressive. In spite of very minor blemishes, this book is well
worth reading, value for money and a worthy and long overdue supplement to Keevil, Lloyd and Coulter's 50-year-old, and increasingly dated, Medicine and the Navy.

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Naval Leadership and Management 1650–1950
by Helen Doe and Richard Harding (eds)
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2012, £60 (hb)
xiv + 206 pages, with 3 tables, bibliography, index
ISBN 978-1-84383-695-7

This volume has a double function. First of all it is a Festschrift to the distinguished career as teacher and writer of Michael Duffy, who retired in 2009 (as far, that is, as an historian ever can). But it strives to escape the accusation commonly levelled, often with justice, at such collections, that they are suffused with red light from the acceleration of the contributors away from any supposed common centre. Hence the decision to make this volume also a study of the interconnected roles of leadership and management in the Royal Navy during the years in question. The chance was taken of a conference in September 2009, marking Duffy's retirement, to begin to concentrate minds, and this volume is the further distillation.

The two introductory chapters, one by Roger Knight, the second by Richard Harding, present the two sides of the book. Knight offers us an engaging survey of Duffy's career, including a valuable bibliography. It is free from the usual dull pieties, and offers some refreshingly sharp comments on a couple of former colleagues. Harding shows the relevance of the themes of leadership and management to Duffy's work, and also their importance. The Second World War, he suggests, has perhaps been rather over-exploited for source material, and – once 'hero-studies' (in particular with regard to Nelson) are discounted – the earlier period offers much relevant raw material that has been previously ignored. He argues historians can subject ideas of the two themes to 'crucial, in-depth empirical testing . . . in real contexts' (p. 25).

Ten papers follow, divided into four groups: 'Leadership – place of the hero', 'Leadership and organisational frictions', 'Management capability and the exercise of naval power' and 'Evolution of management training 1800–1950' (though really goes only to 1939). One cannot discuss all the papers, but should at least note certain organizational continuities going right though the whole period: what struck this reviewer in particular are 'the complex network within which the leader operated' (Harding, p. 43); the essential nature of 'adequate and guaranteed logistics, a firm administrative structure and clear lines of command' (Cole, p. 61); and the importance of delegation, economy, teamwork and experience, (Morriss, pp. 102f, 104). Here one notices a certain similarity; problems are regarded as things to be tackled successfully. That of course reflects a long-standing and admirable tradition in the Royal Navy. In short, we have what might be regarded as a very naval collection.

However, there are hints of less remediable friction. One paper, for instance, suggests how beneficial reforms could compromise initiative (Walton, p. 155). And both the Harding introduction and his later paper on the 17428 at least touch on how leadership can fail to cope with circumstances. Here it is interesting to compare with another volume from 2012 that goes even further, Christopher Grey's Decoding Organization (Cambridge), a study of Bletchley Park, which was at least partially naval in personnel and structure. They show some overlap in approach; notably, Grey writes of 'the possibility of grasping organization as both entity and process by virtue of historical distance' (p. 18). But one also finds Grey – an organizational theorist – referring to what he sees as the narrowness that comes from excessive burrowing in the papers, or 'Archivism' (p. 247), and would probably not be echoed by all the contributors to the Festschrift (and certainly not by this reviewer). More acceptably, he emphasizes that modern organizations – above all large ones – are not just complex, but have a characteristic messiness. It is thus likely he would find the Festschrift somewhat too positivist. Grey argues that organizational studies tidy up reality too much, and would doubtless say the