

with European history or as an addition to a private study collection devoted to the same subject.

Ingo Heidbrink
Norfolk, Virginia

Bernard Edwards. *Royal Navy Versus the Slave Traders: Enforcing Abolition at Sea 1808-1898*. Pen and Sword Maritime, www.penandswordbooks.com, 2021. x+197 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. £14.99, US \$29.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-39901-350-5.

Bernard Edwards provides an overview of the British efforts to suppress the slave trade after the British parliament outlawed it in 1807. He tells the story from the perspective of the British seamen, marines and officers engaged in the fight. To underline this vantage point, the eight chapters bearing directly on patrolling, chasing, and fighting the slavers begin with a quote from a memorial tablet to one or more of the men who lost their life stamping out the African slave trade. This is the paperback edition of a book originally published in 2007.

Edwards gives the reader a tour d'horizon of slave trading from the Greeks through British, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and French involvement. Light on details, it does illustrate the long practice of various groups of people enslaving others, after capture in battle, or in raids on settlements, to provide labourers for large-scale projects, or workers for mines or plantations. After a synopsis of the British movement to end the slave trade, Edwards describes the first attempts to stop the slave traders. The British effort stretched along the West African coast from Cape Bianco (in present-day Mauritania) to the region around the Calabar River, (the border region of present-day Niger and Cameroon) where most of the seaborne portion of the trade originated. The first African Squadron, sent out in 1808, consisted of two vessels, a frigate, and a sloop. Given the scale of the task, this was a mere token force, but Britain's Napoleonic War commitments would not allow any more resources. By 1819, that force had been increased to six ships under Sir George Collier, a step in the right direction, but still woefully short of what was required. In 1820, the United States sent one ship to assist the British, the former British frigate *Cyane*, captured in the War of 1812. This was an interesting choice to send, as Collier had failed to retake the *Cyane* when it was in the company of its captor, US frigate *Constitution*, in March 1815. Another frigate, a brig and two schooners were later sent across to assist. Within a year, the entire United

States force had been withdrawn, and none would return for more than twenty years. By 1851, the British government had increased its naval presence off the West Coast of Africa to 24 ships. This was a force that could command and eventually stop the slave trade from this area of the continent. The east side of the continent proved a bit more stubborn, lasting into the 1890s before the sea-going slave trade was ended.

Chapters 7 through 14 narrate the 91-year fight. Of all aspects of the story covered in the book, this is where most of the detail exists. Despite that, this lengthy and complex struggle is reduced to a synopsis of particular engagements across the time period. These chapters paint a picture of the gradual build-up of ships to patrol the lengthy coastline, to capture the slavers, and free their human cargo. Edwards uses the experience of the person(s) involved to lead the way into the narrative for each chapter. This allows him to give the reader the sense of boredom faced by the sailors as they cruised endlessly back and forth searching for a target, the quick turn to exhilaration as chase was given, to fear and the rush of adrenaline in the fight. Finally, he describes the problems of the prize courts dealing with the captured ships and slaves as ships were returned to owners and people remained in bondage. As time went on, more ships were condemned and more captives released from their enslavement. The author covers victories and defeats for the British men and officers on the African coast. Lives claimed by disease and climate are repeatedly noted; as usual, more men died of disease and accident than in battle.

The book leaves the reader with much to reflect on. The description of the enslavement of African men, women, and children, sometimes by their own rulers, to sell to the Europeans and the Arabs who traded in slaves is quite disturbing. The horrific conditions aboard the slave ships and the brutality visited on those enslaved is palpable and lingers after one puts the book down. Of note is the hypocrisy of the governments (Spanish and Portuguese, for example) who claimed to have ended their slave trade but simply allowed it to continue for years, and the British who fought the slave trade, but kept tens of thousands enslaved until 1833, and who took too long to provide the necessary resources to fight the trade. Edwards' writing style is straightforward, simple, and pulls no punches.

The maps of the African coast are extremely helpful in placing the action, though the print is very small and hard to read. The illustrations are of people and ships related to the story, and of slavery. There is a short bibliography and the archives used are listed, but with no details as to what was used from them. As is usual for *Pen and Sword*, there are no footnotes or endnotes, a disappointment for the more academically-inclined reader.

This book provides a good overview of the British efforts to stop the African slave trade, primarily on the west coast, but also with some detail

along the east coast. A fuller, detailed and contextualized account awaits to be written. Edwards tells the story of one of the many conflicts the British navy was involved in during the nineteenth century. As such, it will be of interest to those examining British foreign policy in early Colonial Africa, the Victorian British navy and the slave trade.

Thomas Malcomson
Toronto, Ontario

David Ellery. *RMS Queen Mary. 101 Questions and Answers About the Great Transatlantic Liner*. London, UK: Adlard Coles, www.bloomsburypublishing.com, 2021. 128 pp., illustrations, bibliography. US \$28.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4729-9311-3. (E-book available.)

Many *Northern Mariner* readers have some ideas about RMS *Queen Mary* but more questions. This, small, quick read has questions of its own, 101 in fact. It begins with a short history and a timeline running from the idea of two superliners in 1926, through construction interrupted by the Great Depression, *Queen Mary's* maiden voyage in 1936, service as a troop carrier during the Second World War, return to the North Atlantic route, retirement, repurposing as a hotel/community focal point in Long Beach, California, to its current, uncertain state.

The questions are categorized by ten topics: Facts, Building and Launch, Design and Technology, Crew and Passengers, Life Aboard, War Years, End of an Era, New Beginning, and Heavy Weather. The questions and answers are concise, averaging three to four per two-page face without pictures. Those photos, both black and white and colour, add visual images to the text. They cover the vessel from stem to stern, from construction at Clydebank to berth at Long Beach, depicting rigging and propellers, shops, dining and play rooms, kitchens and lounges, captains, kings (think Duke of Windsor) and stars (like Bob Hope). Even those vintage advertisements still seize the imagination. Finally, seven diagrams illustrate the deck layout. The bibliography offers a guide for those thirsting for more.

Author Ellery has packed a lot into 128, undersized pages. I knew the name and had some vague conceptions about *Queen Mary*, but I gained a much broader understanding from these pages. I now realize just how unique this massive ocean liner, not cruise ship, truly was with its art deco style and three, segregated classes, and the wide variety of roles it played. The Great Depression extended this ship's gestation by 27 months. At the ocean liner's debut, *Queen Mary* was the monarch of the seas. In its youth, a war-time makeover transformed the ship into a maritime Boudicca, as it transported