The poems and stories in *Midwatch in Verse* make them accessible to those who wish to explore this "salty" but sometimes stirring quasi-rite. Johnson and Guinn's book is both an enjoyable and often moving read for maritime historians.

Louis Arthur Norton
West Simsbury, CT

Sarah Kerr, *The British Lighthouse Trail, a Regional Guide.* Dunbeath, Scotland, Whittles Publishing, www.whittlespublishing.com, 2019, xvi+302 pp., illustrations, maps, index, UK, GPP18.99, paper; ISBN 978-1-84995-449-2.

It seems appropriate that Sarah Kerr was raised on an island off the south coast of England and lives in the far north of Scotland since her book illustrates and details more than 600 lighthouses from the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, where the bulk – 294 – are located. The data enables readers to follow a coastal trail of navigational aids including in the Bristol Channel and Thames Estuary, and on remote islands like Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles, and the Hebrides.

This guide to "fixed structure[s] that w[ere] built to exhibit a light for the purpose of aiding maritime navigation and allow … access for at least one part of it" is not meant to describe approaches to lights from seaward (IX). The book tells us how to practically and wisely approach these engineering marvels from shore – and return in one piece. Kerr is a proven pharologist who spent months trekking coasts to remote lights, and photographing, documenting, and describing lighthouses. It is her wish to provide "a regional guide to lighthouses throughout the mainland and islands" meant to help readers "on your lighthouse trail as you travel to many of our nation's iconic, unique, and awe-inspiring maritime aids to navigation" (VII). She blends coverage of her chosen lights with hard data, vivid color photos and more than 25 maps. Many of the images show the vessels the lights are designed to protect in the near or far distance.

The book disclaims any use "to assist maritime navigation," and excludes unlit daymarks, light vessels, light towers without any access, those that have been de-capped or sealed off, and non-maritime lights. She covers traditional lights, covering position, location, establishment, notable designers, description, and characteristics, giving bespoke information on how to access sites safely and intelligently. Chart 1, Region 1, Shetland, covers no fewer than 49 lights from Muckle Flugga and its old sector in the far north and Fair Isle South, on a small islet south of Shetland. Who would have known there

exists such light diversity on such a relatively uninhabited set of islands, which boasts a lighthouse for each 500 inhabitants?

One visual anomaly which non-British residents may find novel is how comparatively few of the lights have the "typical" rounded tower look. Instead, many of the lights are in cubed and square structures which are metal-ribbed and appear rather squat and technical rather than soaring, spiraling, and romantic. The first four lights are surrounded by metal railings, don't appear more than two stories high, and are all square – and the next three are as well. They are modern and squat, more like guard towers and often with solar panels to underscore their unmanned nature; no corn-cob-pipe-smoking, bearded keepers wearing black with long-suffering spouse and free-ranging children on a quilt-sized garden hewn from rocky pools are in these images.

There is great contrast in the lights presented, often side-by-side, as in North Ronaldsay Old, which is surrounded by scaffolding and looks like a blender or auger, while Start Point and Noup Head are soaring white towers reaching into the heavens on breathtakingly stunning rocky outcrops. Some look like medieval castle turrets that could be from Robin Hood or Monty Python films, like Corpach or Gairlochy. Half of Monarch Isles and Gasker seem to have been drafted by the architect of His Majesty's Prisons, while Wick North Pier seems more insect-like, standing in a town setting with three quite rusted metal legs. Clythness is colored yellow, white, and red, and seems to fit more in the Algarve, just as some, like Lynmouth Foreland, seem Greek in their white paint nestled on rugged coasts.

With such hostile coasts, many UK ports are moles protected by massive sea walls, creating interesting lighthouse shapes, including Burghead North Pier, one of many lights that require a short walk to reach. The light looks more like a cenotaph with rusted chains around it or a cake of some sort, the top being the light. Near Naze could be the set of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, while on the following page Heysham South Pier appears to be R2D2 of *Star Wars* landed on a British phone booth.

Poetically named Plover Scar resembles the solo-style, spark plug lighthouse popular in the US. We learn that to reach it readers should park "just before the entrance to Cockerham Sands Caravan Park," then walk a mile "along the coastal path. At low tide it is possible to walk to the lighthouse with care." If getting stranded on the rock or in the trailer park doesn't appeal, we are told that Plover Scar "is also visible from a distance from the end of Slack Lane."

Kerr recognizes the range of her audience, recognizing "a 'visit' to a lighthouse is down to personal choice or capability. To one person it may be simply seeing the lighthouse from any distance or taking a picture of it, while another person may consider touching the building or getting inside to be a true

visit" (viii). Whether walking the chalk cliffs of the Needles to St. Catherine's Oratory, which looks like a space rocket, or reading about Nab Tower, where the base of the light which was shorn off by a cross-channel ferry, you are bound to find something attention-grabbing, informative, and motivating in here, whether you travel by car, bus, boat, or never leave your chair.

Eric Troels Wiberg
Boston, MA

Robert Kershaw. *Dünkirchen 1940. The German View of Dunkirk.* Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2024. 352 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. UK £10.99, US $16.00, CDN $22.00, paper; ISBN978-1-4728-5439-1.

Robert Kershaw presents a detailed account of the battles that ended at Dunkirk in June of 1940, largely from the German point of view. A decisive event during World War II, Dunkirk was, in many ways, a victory for the two antagonists. The book is a meticulous description of the German blitzkrieg of France and the Low Countries during the early phases of the war in Europe. This was the reconquest of the territory by the Germans 22 years after the Armistice that ended World War I. The well-equipped Germans successfully defeated the French and Belgians over a formidable quagmire of canals and easily flooded fields. The British, against overwhelming odds, managed to successfully withdraw much of its army across the English Channel to fight another day and ultimately prevail some five years later. Although a great deal has been said about this event, including a well-received motion picture, the author focuses on a series of leadership miscalculations that occurred in the German Army and Air Force during the weeks that preceded these historic actions.

     The most renowned episode concerned Hitler's controversial "halt order," which provided an evacuation window that ultimately saved many "Tommies," but also allowed the German marching infantry, their sometimes horse-drawn artillery, and their vital logistical support to close a gap behind the relatively fast-moving panzers. Also, during this time, the United States was reluctant to enter a European conflict. If the Germans managed to capture the British and Canadian forces, an invasion of the British Isles would likely have occurred and been successful. That outcome would have changed the world.

     Kershaw reveals that the halt order was a major flaw in the complicated Nazi system of command and control. The OKW (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* or Armed Forces High Command), OKH (*Oberkommando des Heeres* or Upper Command of the Army), and tactical commanders in the field