

roles on board smuggling vessels, especially enslaved seafarers hired out by their owners. Having no choice in their employment, they served an important role in filling out smuggler crews. This information, however, should have been included in Chapter Four to obtain a more complete understanding of “Foreign Smugglers” and their crews. I was also disappointed by the lack of specific stories about individual seafaring smugglers. Yet two chapters later, there was the excellent story of John White or “Juan Blanco,” a captured Irish smuggler, who could have added a human face to foreign seafarers (206-207).

This organizational critique can be extended to other themes and chapters. For example, in Chapter Six, we learn the fascinating story of Governor García de la Torre, who developed a web of friendships and obligations among smugglers due to his leniency. By regularly pardoning smugglers or overlooking their activities, he garnered respect from many Venezuelans who enjoyed increased access to European goods, alcohol, and food. His activities prompted the creation of the Caracas Company and led to his removal from office and incarceration. De la Torre’s story would probably have fit better in Cromwell’s analysis of the Caracas Company in Chapter Three rather than a hundred pages later. As historians, we often have to make difficult organizational decisions with material, but like Cromwell’s, placement can disjoint the narrative flow, impede analysis of important topics like maritime workers and the development of the Caracas Company, and create unnecessary redundancies.

*The Smugglers’ World* is a well-researched, informed, and academically-inclined study. Despite the efforts of talented smugglers to remain hidden from the historical record, the au-

thor has admirably discovered their networks, both at sea and on land, and told their stories. Organizational issues aside, Cromwell’s argument for placing smugglers and smuggling at the centre of Venezuelan society is an important contribution to our understanding of colonial Venezuela and its place in the Atlantic world.

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Jim Crossley. *Churchill’s Admiral in Two World Wars: Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes of Zeebrugge and Dover, GCB KCVO CMG DSO*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen and Sword Maritime, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2020. 200 pp., plates, maps, index. UK £25; US \$49.95, hardback; ISBN 978-1-52674-839-3.

Author Jim Crossley has written a new book about one of the lesser-known twentieth-century Royal Navy admirals, Roger John Brownlow Keyes. Born in 1872, Keyes’ career spans the first half of the twentieth century, coinciding with a period of British naval supremacy. Crossley’s account paints an ambivalent picture of Keyes as an admiral who was popular and well-recognized for his noteworthy accomplishments, yet someone who failed to reach the pinnacle of the career envisioned for him and whose accomplishments appear more lacklustre in hindsight.

Keyes’ life and service reflect the challenges and activities typical of other naval officers who rose to the senior ranks of the Royal Navy in the years bracketed by the two World Wars. Despite Keyes’ many accomplishments, he never became First Sea Lord when he was eligible for that top position of naval command in the 1930s, though he was later made an Admiral of the Fleet

and awarded a peerage. His outspokenness and lack of political instincts irritated many who outranked him, as did his relentless opportunism.

The son of a well-connected officer in the British Indian army, Keyes always wanted to be a naval officer. As Crossley points out, the army in British India was larger than the total British home army and made a major contribution in the First World War. Keyes' father used his numerous connections—and money—to send his son to the “right” schools to provide him with the education he needed as an aspiring naval officer.

He did not, however, excel in his studies. The author speculates that Keyes' poor academic performance was not for want of intelligence, but because of a learning disability. Based on the letters that Keyes wrote to his mother, which were poorly written and rife with spelling errors, Crossley suspects that Keyes had dyslexia, a disability not at all understood in his time. Physically, Keyes was a small man, but Crossley does not credit his diminutive stature for his career shortcomings. In fact, the combination of having trouble reading and being smaller than other men may have spurred him to be more of a fighter than he might otherwise have been.

Keyes' first assignment in the Royal Navy took him to eastern Africa as a midshipman, where for three years he helped to suppress the Arab slave trade around Zanzibar. Respected for his personal bravery and well-liked by his fellow naval officers, Keyes was regarded as an officer with a bright future. After 1889, the Royal Navy entered a period of rapid expansion and reforms as it increasingly feared rival naval powers, especially France and Russia. Keyes received a major promotion when he was posted to the Royal Yacht HMY *Victoria and Albert*, but as Crossley notes,

Keyes did not admire Queen Victoria, impolitically terming her “an alarming old lady.” His outspoken personality did not serve him well in this post; he resented looking after the young royal princesses and, preferring his fighting role in the Royal Navy, found the social obligations boring. His service on the Royal Yacht did yield an unexpected boon—the friendship he formed with the future King George V, Queen Victoria's grandson—which helped him later in his career.

Following his early assignments and before the First World War, Keyes' global postings included Brazil, where he first encountered anti-British feeling; the German naval officers he met there did not hide their deep resentment of the British Empire and its widespread influence. After Brazil, Keyes served in China during the Boxer Rebellion, where he bravely fought alongside future admirals John Jellicoe, Christopher Craddock, and David Beatty. Although Keyes came into contact with Sir John Fisher and Lord Charles Beresford during his career, he avoided being caught up in their ongoing internal naval feud, despite the resulting pressure on him and his fellow officers to take sides. In fact, Keyes never earned the esteem of Admiral Fisher, who was volatile, opinionated, and headstrong.

With the advent of the First World War, Keyes assumed a senior command in the Dardanelles–Gallipoli campaign, where he came in close contact with First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. His friendship with Churchill was to last a lifetime, though it had periodic peaks and valleys, some of which Crossley describes. Among the lows: Keyes had little use for campaign planning (the opposite of Churchill). For example, Keyes had strongly opposed the withdrawal of British forces from Gallipoli and wished for a “Ger-

man Trafalgar” that would end German naval ambitions for all time. His preference was to “shoot from the hip,” which led to ongoing policy clashes with his senior commanders and the Lords of the Admiralty, and made Churchill’s job more difficult.

In April 1917, Keyes was promoted to Rear Admiral and took on the ill-equipped Dover Patrol, a separate Royal Navy command based at Dover and charged with protecting the English Channel and preventing German naval vessels from entering the Atlantic Ocean. To quash the German U-boat threats in the English Channel, Keyes planned and led raids on the German submarine pens in the Belgian ports of Zeebrugge and Ostend. Though the raids were a big morale boost to the British public, and Keyes was highly decorated for his services, Crossley views the raids as ultimately unsuccessful, since German submarines continued to sink British ships.

Elected to Parliament in 1934, Keyes joined Churchill as an anti-appeaser and an ultimate critic of Neville Chamberlain’s policies. Both men hated appeasement, believing it would lead to disaster. As Crossley notes, Keyes’ parliamentary career was not successful, due to his poor public speaking and his failure to acquire the necessary political skills, which may have been related to his learning disability and its impact on his ability to write well and deliver speeches. Yet despite his unimpressive oratory skills, at one point in 1940, Keyes appeared in the House of Commons in his full Admiral’s dress uniform to attack Chamberlain’s response following Germany’s invasion of Norway. At the end of the speech, he shouted, in unison with others, “In God’s name, go!”

With the advent of the Second World War, Churchill and others considered

Keyes too old for senior naval commands (he was nearly 70), a view Keyes did not share. Instead, he became liaison to Leopold III, the King of the Belgians, who, much to British official displeasure, refused to go into exile and was later viewed as having cooperated with the German occupiers. Despite being tarnished by his association with Belgium’s king, Keyes was elevated to the peerage as Baron Keyes in 1943.

Crossley’s rather short book adds a missing element to Royal Navy literature, but it is not especially well-written or well-constructed. Written in a relaxed, non-academic style, and very much for the general reader, the book lacks notes, and the bibliography is dated. Churchill’s name in the book’s title does not reflect the book’s coverage; he is very much a side figure. The author, whose own father was a midshipman on the battleship *HMS Resolution* in 1916, can be frustratingly contradictory about Keyes. While claiming that the admiral never lived up to his potential because of his personality flaws and his confrontations with other senior commanders, Crossley also describes Keyes as well-liked and brave, making it difficult to ascertain Keyes’ rightful place in history. The author’s vacillation between praise and opprobrium for Keyes throughout the book makes his conclusion a surprise: “... his character and daring made him stand out as a beacon among naval officers of his time and as an example to future generations.” Surely this is not the last word on Keyes.

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John Darwin. *Unlocking the World: Port Cities and Globalization in the Age of Steam, 1830-1930*. London, UK: Allen Lane, [www.penguin.co.uk](http://www.penguin.co.uk), 2020. 496 pp., maps, illustrations, bibliog-