

to approach the subject, but actually it needs to be understood as a somewhat novel approach as too many studies on the history of food and drink are lacking such detailed information on the type of food or drink whose history is being studied.

Procuring several hundred thousand gallons of rum annually for a period of more than 200 years needs to be understood as a major logistical achievement and looking into the contractual details of this operation provides a unique insight into the development of international trade and its usances and customs. For this reason, the book is definitely a recommendation not only for lovers of rum or sailors thinking back to the days of the daily tot, but also for serious maritime and naval historians and historians of international trade.

The book is well illustrated and the reproductions of contracts or personal notes by the rum vatters aid in our understanding of the complexity of the whole operation. While the index at the end of the book is superb, unfortunately the bibliography is a one-pager mentioning just four books and several large internet libraries without providing any details of the actual materials that have been used. Fortunately, for the many quotes used throughout the book there are references at the end of each chapter.

Altogether this book is a most welcome historical study as well as a book that might be understood as an educated but also entertaining read. As such it can easily be recommended to anybody with an interest in maritime or naval history or simply anybody occasionally enjoying a glass of rum. In closing, "Cheers," enjoy the book either together with a glass of good navy rum or, if you prefer, a non-alcoholic alternative.

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Rayner, Jonathan. *Screening the Fleet: The Royal Navy on Television 1973–2023*

White Rose University Press, 2025

278 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index

ISBN 9781912482405 (softcover) £26.18; 9781912482412 (PDF)

free; 9781912482429 (e-book) free

Screening the Fleet: The Royal Navy on Television 1973–2023 by Jonathan Rayner is an intriguing review of not only contemporary depictions of the Royal Navy but also of an evolving televisual land, or sea, scape. From the individuals on screen, sometimes portraying themselves and other times depicting fictionalized personages, to the directors, producers, and the

audiences at home, Rayner gives credit to not only a variety of programs but also to the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the work required to produce them. His almost strictly UK-based analysis and a penchant for presenting works in dichotomy are hallmarks of the read, but neither to an extent that it should deter a potential reader. This reader read the e-book and as such, all page references that follow correspond to that version.

Rayner has produced a thought-provoking and enjoyable read that should appeal to those who enjoy reading about the exploits, real or fictionalized, of the Royal Navy or students of film studies with a focus on television. Or perhaps, like this reader, some combination of the two – an interest in visual depictions of the military for popular consumption. Rayner moderates his use of specialised terminology and employs a narrative structure where each chapter is based on specific series or program. The author has clearly spent significant time with not only the programs themselves but also supporting documentation drawn from both primary and secondary sources, again from the various fields that intersect to produce this work.

This reviewer noted that one pattern that emerged throughout her reading was the increasingly evident use of a past versus present dichotomy in the visual depiction of the Royal Navy in almost all the presented programs. To mention but two examples, Rayner highlights “a reaffirmation of history and tradition with a declaration of continuing, contemporary relevance” (19), and the juxtapositioning of a modern navy “on the basis of the Navy always being needed in the past” (41). This demonstrates that no matter the similarities and differences among the programs themselves, there is this thread of past versus present, or at least the contextualisation of the latter in the former, that is continually at work in the book.

A review like this cannot ignore the film-studies aspects of this book, nor should it. That said, this reader imagines that most readers of this journal are perhaps more interested in the content of the series featured in this work rather than the film-studies perspective on them. As such, it may suffice to note that a variety of narrative approaches are used to depict the Royal Navy for similar audiences throughout the period covered by this work. The focus of the programmes is split amongst the people, the operations, and the technical with an emphasis on the first two. Each focus lends itself to different narrative techniques within film. Some notable examples include: the “current-affairs documentary and the observational or ‘fly-on-the-wall’ documentary” (55), the “public relations exercise” (65), the “popular documentary” or “infotainment” (248), or “the hybrid factual entertainment format” (255).

Readers of this journal may be familiar with the Canadian Discovery Channel’s series *Mighty Ships*. Raynor uses it as a point of contrast with British

programming (256). Canadian readers may be interested to know that this and one other brief mention of our nation are the only two in the entire book. Most of the cultural references used throughout the text, including but not limited to names of television shows and actors, will not be familiar to Canadian or American readers as this book has been produced for the British reading, or perhaps television-watching, public.

The inclusion of female crew members, notably in *Making Waves* (200–201) and then in all other subsequent series is a recurrent thread that Rayner weaves throughout his evaluation of various programs. The way that different televised depictions of the Royal Navy include or stereotype women and the subsequent inclusion of gender-related topics such as “solidarity” (202) and “emotion” (223), not to mention “relationships” (the implication being of the elicit or forbidden persuasion; 222) provides an interesting subnarrative for this otherwise seemingly unrelated work. Although this reader does not agree that these topics are gendered as they apply to all, they only appear in this book after the introduction of female personnel at sea and are often discussed in relation to their presence or characterization.

Last but not least for a work focused on visual depictions of an ever evolving yet established and “sure” entity like the Royal Navy, it is incredibly text-heavy. This reader’s experience, especially as one less familiar with the ships, places and people in question, would have been greatly enhanced by additional imagery or perhaps by more varied imagery with less of a focus on wide-angle shots of vessels at sea.

This book is an intriguing study of depictions of the Royal Navy on television over the last half-century. One can only wonder what the next 50 years hold for both the Royal Navy and television as a medium of communication. As interested readers can in fact read the e-book for free, as of the time of writing, this reader encourages them to do so. In guise of conclusion, this reader also offers a recommendation – if she had to pick just one of the many programs profiled in this work to watch, she would choose *Submarine* (BBC, 1985).

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Riess, C. Warren. *Studying the Princess Carolina: Anatomy of the Ship That Held Up Wall Street*

Texas A&M University Press, 2023

464 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, glossary, index

ISBN 9781648431111 (hardcover) US\$ 35.00

Warren Riess’s work about the *Princess Carolina*, an early eighteenth-century