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Naval Publishing the British Way

Commander James Goldrick, Royal Australian Navy

THE GATHERING OF seven Royal Navy and Marine officers at a house in Alverstoke on an October day in 1912 was to have momentous consequences for the Royal Navy. At that meeting, called by Captain (later Admiral Sir) Herbert Richmond and Commander (later Vice Admiral) K.G.B. Dewar, the form was mapped out of a Naval Society for the creation and circulation of a critical journal devoted to service topics.¹

The idea issued from a discussion between Richmond and Dewar some weeks before. The two had agreed that there was an utter lack of comprehension in the Royal Navy of "what Kempenfelt called the 'sublime' parts of our work—strategy, tactics, principles."² This stemmed from several causes. In a time of rapid technological change, the navy was understandably preoccupied with the mechanics of the developments in weapons, propulsion, and communications that were being achieved. No proper staff organisation existed in the Admiralty, which was already proving inadequate to manage material matters, let alone plan for the future.³ A war staff had been created only months before, but its structure did not reflect the true responsibilities of a naval staff for planning and co-ordination. It was, in short, "only an advisory body,"⁴ lacking, as Dewar later wrote, "intellectual capital."⁵

The problem was exacerbated because the Royal Navy was without a professional journal. The Royal United Services Institute, founded in the previous century, had enjoyed much more participation from within the army than from the navy. While the United States, Germany, Russia, and France all possessed active naval periodicals which were proving useful vehicles for reform, Britain had nothing comparable, and debate on naval issues was the preserve of journalists and others outside the Royal Navy.

This continuation of the traditions of the "silent service" seemed increasingly irrelevant to Richmond. His abiding concern was that no tradition of higher

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education existed in the Royal Navy and that, in consequence, there were both an anti-intellectual cast in the service at large and no encouragement to junior officers to reflect on questions not related to material. A Royal Naval Staff Course had been established at Portsmouth in 1912—most of the founders of the society were either on the staff or were students on course—but much hostility existed toward the concept elsewhere in the navy. Richmond believed that the staff system could only begin to work after a pattern of intellectual activity and creative thought had come into being. The Naval Society was the attempt to create such activity and thought. Richmond declared, “What I hope to develop is the mental habit of reasoning things out, getting at the bottom of things, evolving principles and spreading interest in the higher side of our work.”⁶

The mechanics were simple enough. The meeting agreed that all present should write articles on topics of special interest to themselves, that Richmond would write an introduction, and that the results would be combined into a journal which could be distributed to interested officers. Each would act as a recruiter for the society, and Richmond envisaged that the scheme could be self-supporting with 150 to 200 members.⁷ Dewar was the first to suggest that the journal should be issued quarterly, since debate could be sustained only in a forum which could be guaranteed to be both frequent and regular.⁸ The journal would provide “a vehicle for the expression of personal opinions on matters of naval interest . . . aiming to stimulate thought and discussion on such matters.”⁹

The society needed a senior officer to act as editor—and as sponsor to authority. Admiral Sir Reginald Custance, newly retired and with a bent for history, was Richmond’s first selection. Fortunately for the society, Custance made so many conditions for accepting the offer that the young officers turned elsewhere. Since Custance was himself a controversial figure, unpopular with large sections of the navy, especially those aligned with “Jacky” Fisher, he would have been little help with the Admiralty in achieving acceptance of the society’s aims.¹⁰ Dewar hit instead upon the idea of Admiral William Henderson, who had been in his career a leading educationalist, enthusiastic for reform. Henderson had also been involved in an abortive attempt to form a “Junior Naval Professional Association” in 1872. Motivated by the same aims as the Naval Society, this association had collapsed after only two years, principally because it confined its membership to the junior officer ranks.

Henderson was delighted to accept and proved to be an ideal choice. “One is never too old to learn,” he wrote¹¹ and he worked hard to encourage contributors at all levels. Dewar, managing most of the preparations in the absence of Richmond (who had taken his wife on a cruise to the West Indies for her health), was not expecting more than sixty officers to subscribe at the start, but Henderson pursued an energetic recruiting campaign. He quickly extended the eligibility for membership from the Royal Navy and Marines to

the new navies of Australia and Canada. By the time four issues had appeared, there would be some 519 members.¹²

The form of *The Naval Review* was established with its first issue in 1913. Richmond, Dewar, Plunkett and Harding all contributed articles of a quality which stands up well to the critical eye more than seventy-five years on. These articles, and the majority of work for the next thirty years, did not carry the names of the authors. Provided that the work in the *Review* remained "in good taste," Richmond was firm on the values of anonymity, not only for junior officers but for their seniors who could thereby publicise ideas or propose schemes without prejudice to any official policy which it would be their duty to uphold. This latter aspect of anonymity is not often mentioned, but it is important.¹³ Richmond emphasised, "anonymity is adopted with no view of concealing a writer's identity for reasons of shame . . . it is employed solely in order that there may be complete freedom of discussion."¹⁴ The difficulty would come in preserving that anonymity under official pressure.

The *Review* was to be circulated, as a private journal, only to subscribers. It would not be available to the public. Dewar had taken legal advice that indicated that circulation for private use was "not publication." Thus, the *Review* would not be in breach of Article 14 of *King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions* which forbade "all persons belonging to the fleet to write for publication or cause to be published either directly or indirectly any matter or information relating to the naval service unless the permission of the Admiralty has first been obtained." The problem, as Dewar commented, was that "the Admiralty has a habit of twisting regulations to suit its own prejudices."¹⁵ In the event, the Admiralty's secretariat and legal advisers were to take a much more rigorous view.

With the first issue on its way, Henderson sought support in official quarters. One flag officer, Admiral Sir George Warrender, made a very generous offer of financial support, which touched the members of the society, but which they thought better to refuse for the sake of the *Review's* independence. Henderson pursued an active existence outside the service and possessed influential connections with several members of the Liberal government, as well as the editor of more than one major newspaper. "Busy William," as he was known by the navy, circulated copies of the first issue to the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, to Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and to other cabinet ministers, including the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of War. He wrote personally to the First Sea Lord, Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg, both to solicit his support and to gauge the reaction of the Admiralty.

Battenberg was enthusiastic and discussed with Churchill the means by which the purposes of the "admirable" *Review* could be forwarded with official support.¹⁶ Yet nothing concrete came from this and Dewar had a point when he noted that the First Sea Lord, however sympathetic, did not represent the

Admiralty as a whole. Henderson made recruiting headway in other quarters, including by 1915 Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty and no less than seventy-three other flag officers,¹⁷ but it is important to realise that a proportion of these were retired and that membership in the society did not imply outright support for the aims of its founders.

Furthermore, the society was as remarkable for those who were not members as for those who were. Many who were to make their names during the forthcoming war, including Admirals Browning, Pakenham, Oliver, De Chair, Bayly, Brock and Hood, were not included in the tally. Some of these men were amongst the most thoughtful and progressive of the Royal Navy's senior officers, even if others, such as Browning and Pakenham, were more old-fashioned.¹⁸ There seem to have been two reasons for this lack of enthusiasm for the Naval Society.

The first was that the older and more senior were suspicious of anything which appeared to encourage staff principles over the custom of individual command. Despite the kindly way that officers such as Pakenham had with their subordinates, they had no patience with their juniors telling them how to do what was viewed to be the business of admirals alone. By sponsoring the production of articles on subjects which had hitherto been the sole preserve of flag officers, *The Naval Review* was seen as encouraging indiscipline.

With the younger men, the motive may have been distaste for any organisation which involved the controversial Herbert Richmond. Brock and Hood were within two years of him in age, and there are few rivalries so acute as those between professional contemporaries. Furthermore, Richmond rarely made any efforts to conciliate his equals within the service, and there is little evidence that he enjoyed much popularity amongst them. Certainly Hood, who was known for his charitable approach to those who made professional errors, may have felt uncomfortable with the zealotry of Richmond.

Thus the Naval Society achieved penetration but not universal sympathy at senior levels, while it also failed to make adequate headway further down. Figures for membership amongst Grand Fleet commanding officers in 1916 are highly significant and demonstrate the problem. Some fifty percent of flag officers were members, but this was the case for less than twenty-five percent of the destroyer captains.¹⁹ That the more junior officers could be suspicious was reflected in the comment A.B. Cunningham (later Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Cunningham and First Sea Lord from 1943-1946) made to his term mate, H.G. Thursfield, when he labelled *The Naval Review* as "subversive." In 1914 Cunningham was a lieutenant-commander.²⁰ Drax noted in 1919 that "even now, members are often spoken of as 'the Bolsheviks'."²¹

The serious implication of this lack of committed support was that the *Review* would not have time to establish itself as an authoritative and respectable journal

before the inevitable restraints of war were imposed upon free discussion. When censorship was imposed, the *Review* had few to speak for it.

Henderson regarded the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 with equanimity and encouraged serving officers, junior and senior, to write in with their experiences. The last 1914 issue talked of the early engagements in the North Sea and the cruiser warfare further afield, and Henderson continued to crowd the 1915 issues with such first-hand accounts. But in May 1915, following the circulation of that month's journal, the Admiralty received a telegram from Sir John Jellicoe, commander-in-chief of the Grand Fleet, declaring that the *Review* "contained a lot of information which would be useful to the enemy."²²

Jellicoe's complaint fastened upon an article written about the battles of Coronel and Falklands by an officer from one of the ships involved. At Coronel, a weak and heterogeneous British force was destroyed by Admiral Graf Spee's armoured and light cruisers. The British were avenged at the subsequent battle of the Falkland Islands, which saw the death of Graf Spee and the loss of most of his ships. The article described these events in some detail, but Jellicoe apparently objected most to the assertion, "That the [British] squadron felt themselves [before Coronel] no match for the enemy is borne out by remarks made by the officers to the residents of Port Stanley before they sailed."²³

The choice was a curious one, as the same statement had been made publicly in British newspapers. Jellicoe also complained about the details of ships' movements and war experience becoming known in such a way, but even this criticism lacks credibility. Richmond commented wryly on the subject of war experience, "To suppose that the [German] officers . . . have not learnt all these lessons about fire, smoke, fumes, etc. is to argue them fools, which we know they are not . . . it [is] far better to inform our own people than to keep them in the dark for fear of giving something to the enemy."²⁴ Richmond's remarks have a special irony. The cruiser *Kent* nearly blew up and sank at the Falkland Islands battle after a hit set fire to ready-use cordite. Had the implications of inadequately protected propellant and ammunition been impressed upon the Grand Fleet, at least one major unit would not have been lost at Jutland some eighteen months later.

Furious at Jellicoe's overreaction—and his failure as a member of the society to raise such matters directly with the editor—Henderson was forced to submit to the Admiralty's order that subsequent issues of the *Review* be censored. The Chief Naval Censor, Captain Sir Douglas Brownrigg, was helpful enough and the August and November 1915 issues were cleared after a number of excisions had been made (Henderson was to publish these after the war under the title "A Simple Lesson in Censorship.") The Admiralty, however, now decided that copies should not be sent to officers stationed abroad in case they were

intercepted by the enemy en route. Henderson protested, but by the end of July the Admiralty was insisting on the restriction.

Hard upon this setback came a letter from the secretary of the Admiralty, declaring that the board had now decided that the *Review* should be suspended for the duration of the war. Henderson immediately sought an explanation from the newly installed First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Henry Jackson, who sent him a vague but uncompromising reply. Despite the fact that Jackson was “a subscriber, reader and admirer” of the *Review*, he was “on public grounds not disposed to alter my decision.” *The Naval Review* would not appear again before the Armistice in 1918.²⁵

Jackson’s refusal to specify any particular article and “indiscreet” passages makes it difficult to determine what was the exact cause of the suppression. Given Jellicoe’s sally against the *Review* in May and his tendency to set his face against any comment from his juniors, as well as his influence with the Admiralty, there must be a suspicion that he had a part in the affair. If in 1915 the commander-in-chief of the Grand Fleet wanted circulation of the *Review* to be stopped, the Admiralty would do it for him. On the other hand, the impetus could have come from Sir W. Graham Greene, the secretary of the Admiralty, purely on the grounds that the *Review* represented an administrative inconvenience which could be done without.²⁶

Henderson summed up the situation when he wrote, “whatever it was and whoever was the moving spirit in the matter, I consider there was a want of openness and a fear of truth in the methods employed.”²⁷ Richmond was even more outspoken: “The whole episode is rich in the causes which have made our failures in the war. The lack of clear ideas, the dislike of even a hint of criticism, the confused notions as to what ‘security’ means, the idea of keeping your own people in the dark, the stifling of interest, the suppression of a movement tending to make officers think and discuss matters—all these are evident in the events connected with the suppression.”²⁸

With all the serving founders of the society deeply involved with the war, Henderson was forced to let the matter be for the time. Nevertheless, he insisted that the *Review* reappear as soon as the war ended and, with informal assurances from his political contacts to this effect, he finally rested, content.

In the meantime, Henderson collected material as the war progressed, with the idea that issues for the war years should be circulated in retrospect. He made good use of his service connections to solicit articles. One frequent and successful method was to ask for contributions from the serving sons of senior officers who were old friends of the editor. A notable example was Lieutenant Prince George of Battenberg, elder son of Prince Louis, who submitted an article on his work as turret officer in “A” turret in HMS *New Zealand* at the Battle of the Dogger Bank.²⁹

After the Armistice, Henderson hastened to circulate issues for 1916, 1917, and 1918, together with the new February 1919 number. It was the latter which triggered the most serious clash of all with the Admiralty. One article, entitled "Narrative from the *Indomitable*: The Chase of the *Goeben*," dealt with the events leading up to the escape of the German battle cruiser *Goeben* and light cruiser *Breslau* to Turkey in 1914, despite the presence of superior British forces. Any factual account which dealt with the incident could not fail to be scathing, whether incidentally or by design, of the authorities concerned. But guilt had never been admitted, either by the Admiralty or the commander-in-chief, Admiral Sir Archibald Berkeley Milne. It was unfortunate that the latter, now retired, was in the midst of a campaign of self-justification.

The author had remarked upon the fatal signal which had ordered the battle cruisers *Indomitable* and *Indefatigable* and the light cruiser *Dublin* to turn west and break off shadowing the *Goeben* as she moved east to Messina. He wrote: "One could not but think that the Commander-in-Chief must have had some orders from the Admiralty which clashed with the circumstances of the case or position of affairs on the night of 4th of August . . . it struck us at the time that someone must have forgotten the rule of going for your enemy's position."³⁰

There were in fact other references much more critical of the commander-in-chief than this, but Milne, who wanted the whole article suppressed, cunningly fastened upon this paragraph because the villain in the piece had been the Admiralty. In the spring of 1919 he made an official complaint.

The perspective from which the article had been written made it obvious that the author had been serving in the *Indomitable* in 1914. The Admiralty (correctly) suspected Rear-Admiral Francis Kennedy, who had been in command of the ship, but the board had no proof, and any of the battle cruiser's junior officers were quite as capable of writing such a piece.

The Admiralty wrote to Henderson in March 1919, taking "fearful exception"³¹ to the article. The secretary of the Admiralty demanded to know the name of the author, but Henderson, a very senior retired admiral, was not to be bullied. He politely returned his regret that "the name of the author . . . was conveyed to me in strict personal confidence, so that I am not at liberty to reveal it." Henderson also made the rejoinder to the Admiralty that there were other parties engaged in spilling secrets, with whom officialdom had not dealt. Lord Jellicoe, hitherto so intent on security, had published in 1919 *The Grand Fleet, Its Creation, Development and Work*, which, as Henderson wrote, included "criticisms of Admiralty and state policy of a most damaging kind . . . revealing countless defects in the Navy's equipment, all of a previously strictly confidential and secret nature."³²

Rebuffed, the Admiralty then wrote to Rear Admiral Kennedy, "to ask whether he could furnish information as to how secret signals came to be

disclosed.”³³ This put Kennedy in a dilemma; he had either to lie to the Admiralty or admit authorship and take the consequences.

Kennedy decided on the latter and received in due course an expression of Their Lordships’ severe displeasure—a formal administrative censure, inevitable in the circumstances. While Kennedy did not seriously expect further employment in a time of post-war retrenchment, there can be no doubt that the incident blasted any hope he had of a new posting.³⁴

The Admiralty then dealt with the *Review* by the issue of Admiralty Monthly Order 1663/19 which forbade any officer on the Active List from submitting an article without first having received Admiralty approval. Such a system of censorship could have only one effect and Richmond did not exaggerate when he wrote, “This kills the *Review*.”³⁵ While external contributions could continue unfettered, the fundamental aim of the Naval Society in stimulating original thought and debate within the service could not be realised under such constraints. Henderson proposed a compromise: he would submit all articles to the Admiralty in proof form for approval,³⁶ but the Admiralty’s reply was brutal. Their Lordships were “not prepared to revise their previous decision.”³⁷

Henderson even came under pressure from within the Board of Admiralty to resign, but he and the members and supporters of the Naval Society fought back on several fronts. They first sought political backing. Not only did Henderson have connections with the Lloyd-George government and the opposition, but so did Richmond, Drax, and Bellairs. The influence of Lord Haldane (former Secretary of State for War) and Lord Curzon (Leader of the House of Lords) would be critical. Curzon proved a particularly strong supporter, writing that he was “quite prepared to challenge the Admiralty in the matter, as far as myself is concerned . . . probably the [Parliamentary] Navy Committee will take the same view.”³⁸ He planned to push the affair into the open with a parliamentary question, but Henderson, on Drax’s advice, persuaded him to hold his hand. More usefully, Curzon put personal pressure on the First Lord, Walter Long, and the Parliamentary Secretary, Thomas Macnamara, to make the Admiralty see sense.

Henderson was willing to wait for these talks to free the *Review*, but he busied himself with preparations to publish the correspondence if the Admiralty remained intransigent. Richmond commented, “. . . they will find they have exposed themselves to such a charge of stupid bureaucratic action, and of secretiveness in matters of unimportance, that they will give way.”³⁹

In August 1919, Henderson wrote anew to the Admiralty, pointing out that the ban on serving contributors constituted “a sentence of execution” on *The Naval Review*. To do justice to the 1,125 members of the Naval Society he would be forced to publish a history of the dispute. The editor’s conclusion that “Their Lordships may regret having been the instruments of suppressing the first

sustained effort at encouraging the development of thought in the Navy" carried a wealth of implication.⁴⁰

The strength of the Naval Society's position was already all too clear in Whitehall. Not only had Curzon done his work with the politicians, but the time was ripe for a change of attitude amongst the uniformed elements in the Admiralty with the forthcoming appointment of Earl Beatty as First Sea Lord. His predecessor, Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, while a highly capable administrator who made good use of his staff, had little sympathy for *The Naval Review* or Herbert Richmond. The latter he had sent back to sea in 1919 after an unhappy spell at the Admiralty. On the other hand, several of the founders of the Naval Society had served on Beatty's staff during the war and could expect to rejoin him in Whitehall.

The Admiralty duly accepted Henderson's original compromise proposals and AMO 3937/19 was issued which placed the responsibility for securing Admiralty clearance with the editor and not prospective authors.⁴¹ Because of the impending change of command and the more liberal attitude which Beatty could be expected to take, Henderson was reasonably content to see how the arrangement worked in practice. He held out an olive branch with the declaration of his belief "that the real value of the '*Review*' can best be secured by a cordial understanding and co-operation with the Admiralty as there was during the early period of its existence."⁴²

The relationship did prove to be generally cordial, but articles were censored or even suppressed over the next few years and there was a definite perception amongst junior officers that the *Review* was not a thing to become involved with. In Barry Hunt's words: "This . . . unrecognised fact had a profound influence on *The Naval Review* as a vehicle for reform during these critical years of adjustment from war to peace."⁴³ Although there were many articles in the 1920s on the Great War, they were far more often reminiscence than historical analyses. Matters such as maritime air operations and the future of the submarine were certainly discussed (and indeed received more coverage than battleships) but these soon gave way to a preoccupation with officer entry and training. Active participation by junior officers steadily declined, much to Henderson and his successor's distress. "The position tended to perpetuate itself—the younger grew less enthusiastic as they saw more and more articles from the older, so that the latter had to be relied on even more and it became harder and harder for the Editor to keep a balance between the age groups."⁴⁴

Henderson tried in 1921 and again in 1925 to remove the constraints. On the first occasion the Admiralty demurred, despite the desire of the Board not "to impose vexatious restrictions."⁴⁵ Henderson's second attempt was more successful. He made two points in his submission of December 1925. First, the *Review's* subjection to censorship was giving it a quasi-official status in the eyes of external observers—an irony which had probably escaped the Admiralty. In

consequence, articles which might be “quite innocuous” could not appear, lest they be construed as official policy.

Secondly, Henderson returned to the subject of the *Review’s* status as a publication. He did not believe that the journal contravened *Regulations and Instructions* because its limited circulation meant that it should not be considered to be a “publication.”⁴⁶

The Admiralty thought long and hard. Henderson’s analysis of the status of the *Review* aroused intense opposition from the Secretary of the Admiralty. Sir Oswyn Murray, who had relieved Sir W. Graham Greene, seems to have taken a much less sympathetic line than the uniformed members of the board. The Secretary’s view, supported by advice from the Solicitor-General, was that the distinction between publication and private circulation was dubious. There was no way in which the circulation could be controlled after issue, and, in such circumstances, no means by which the Admiralty could recall an article after damage had been done.⁴⁷

Sir Oswyn Murray found some support from Vice Admiral F.C. Field, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff and no friend of Richmond, but the intervention of Earl Beatty as First Sea Lord proved decisive. Beatty, perhaps primed by Roger Bellairs, one of the *Review’s* founders and his naval assistant from 1919 until 1925, asked two rhetorical questions: “Is the *Review* of value to the Service?” and “Does censorship adversely affect the *Review*?” Beatty strongly believed that the answer to both questions could only be “Yes.” The restrictions would go.⁴⁸ Henderson, supported by the members of the managing committee of the society, was given authority to clear articles for incorporation in the journal.

Beatty answered a proposal that a member of the Directorate of Naval Intelligence should sit as an official representative on the editorial committee with the declaration, “I am satisfied to leave the matter in the hands of Admiral Henderson, whose discretion in such matters is not less than that of an officer in the N.I.D.”⁴⁹ Beatty was quite right. Any subordinate officer assigned to such a task would have had a difficult time monitoring the progress of editing without losing the support of his superiors through either excess of zeal (which would have brought immediate protests from Henderson to the board) or undue liberality (which would have infuriated the *Review’s* critics).

Both Field and Murray were moved to complain about Henderson’s interpretation of the situation and his freedom of action which he expressed in the succeeding issue of the *Review* (May 1926), but the Admiralty only sent the editor a gently chiding letter. Since Henderson, at the age of seventy-eight, had been created a Knight Commander of the British Empire on the Admiralty List only the year before, it is clear that he must have been viewed with considerable respect, at least by Beatty, and that he continued to enjoy political support (including Haldane, Lord Chancellor in the 1924 Labour government). Such an

award in peacetime to an officer sixteen years retired was and remains almost without precedent.⁵⁰

And it was significant that the Admiralty declared that the arrangements with the *Review* were to stand until there was a change of editor.⁵¹ It was this statement that made it inevitable that any successor should also be a retired flag officer who would not be frightened by the Admiralty.

In 1928 the Naval Society was wound up, and *The Naval Review* assumed an independent existence. Although there had been some proposals for meetings and debates in the very early days, these had come to nothing, and the society had no existence outside the *Review*. The new arrangements recognised this fact and simplified both finance and administration. Henderson died, active to the end, in 1931. Richmond retired in the same year, but his appointment to a chair of history in Cambridge meant that he would have little time available to act as editor. In any case, he was probably too controversial a figure for the task.

The trustees of the *Review* approached Admiral Sir Richard Webb who agreed to take the job after some consideration. In the process, he consulted with other senior officers, including Lord Jellicoe. The latter "warned him of the objection which I knew that several senior officers took to the *Review*, as a channel which led to young officers airing views which were detrimental to discipline and bad for the spirit and morale of the service." Jellicoe's strictures, he hoped, "will have some effect in getting [Webb] to put it on sounder lines in the future."⁵²

Webb must have been thought "sound" by the Admiralty as well, because the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Frederick Field, agreed on Webb's application to continue the arrangements of editorial control which had applied to Henderson. Field's acquiescence, despite his earlier attitude as Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, indicates also that the *Review* was becoming more generally accepted. By this stage, of course, it had influential supporters within the Royal Navy. One of the trustees was Vice Admiral W.W. Fisher, a leading figure in the service of the 1930s, who would have become First Sea Lord in 1938 but for his premature death.

Since 1931 the *Review* has continued to flourish, with 2,414 members in March 1990. Its status as a journal of innovation and debate has fluctuated according to the preoccupations of the Royal Navy, but on few occasions has its existence been threatened. Where there has been a danger, it has resulted from a breach of the condition that members "undertake that they will take proper care of their copies, that they will not allow them . . . to be communicated to any persons not eligible for membership or to the Press; and that they will take every precaution against their being available or used for any political or propagandist purpose."⁵³

The most notable of these incidents occurred during the Spanish Civil War when the left-wing *New Statesman and Nation* made a critical reference to a recent article on the war that was published in *The Naval Review*. Richmond was quick

to see trouble ahead, but H.G. Thursfield, now retired and naval correspondent for *The Times*, as well as editor of *Brassey's Annual*, counselled restraint. The Admiralty (the members of which were unlikely to be avid readers of the *New Statesman*) did not react. Thursfield waited some weeks until writing to the editor of the *New Statesman*, Kingsley Martin, to explain the situation and to ask that no more overt references be made to the *Review*.⁵⁴

The journal suffered few problems during the Second World War, largely because of sustained help from within the Admiralty. A match against the membership lists suggests that at least half the members of the board, between 1939 and 1945, were members.⁵⁵ The Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral John Godfrey, was instrumental in increasing an allocation of paper for printing, and censorship was minimal. The *Review* continued as a journal of record rather than analysing the events of the war, but its pages also contained many attempts to look to the future and it enjoyed an increased membership, particularly amongst Reserve officers.

To detail the few incidents in the years since 1945 which have seen the *Review* at risk would be outside the scope of this article, but several points should be noted. In general, the *Review* has enjoyed considerable support from senior officers, who have on at least one recent occasion defended it against political anger. The journal could not survive without such sympathisers. A second point is that the Admiralty (now the Ministry of Defence [Navy]) has at no time accepted the contention that the *Review*, because it is privately circulated, is not a "publication." The *modus vivendi* which has now been in place for sixty-five years is thus a remarkable example of compromise on both sides.

With few exceptions, discretion in relation to *The Naval Review* has been exercised in the decades since by journalists and others in the public arena who have access to the journal. While the *Review* membership remains formally confined to officers and officers under training of the Royal Navy and associated British and Commonwealth services, the editor has wide latitude to "admit other persons in touch with and interested in the Royal Navy." This power has been exercised to include historians and some journalists. The confidence has not been abused, perhaps because the *Review* provides such a valuable window on the Royal Navy. Since the *Review*, inevitably, has become essential source material for historical research, the regulations were recently modified to end any restrictions on circulation or quotation after ten years have elapsed from initial issue. This removed restraints which meant that the monumental works of Arthur Marder (a long-time member) did not cite the *Review* directly, despite making "good use of the pertinent articles."⁵⁶

In Donald Schurman's words, the *Review* ". . . is not . . . an easy periodical to discuss intelligently, since much of the strength of its message has depended on the personality and abilities of its contributors."⁵⁷ *The Naval Review* is a peculiarly British solution to the problem of free expression in a disciplined

organisation. The key to its success has been maintenance of the compromise described above and this has worked because, despite some setbacks, the *Review* has always sustained a membership of sufficient size to act as a "critical mass." While it is difficult to ascribe specific reforms within the Royal Navy over the last seventy-five years directly to the activities of the *Review*, there can be no doubt that many, particularly in personnel, were foreshadowed within its pages. Abolition of the thirteen and sixteen-year-old entries to the Naval College at Dartmouth, common officer training, recruitment of a wider social range of officers, a better welfare system for the lower deck, and improved conditions of service and pay were all advocated and hotly debated. Captain Stephen Roskill and Rear Admiral Richard Hill are only two of the Royal Navy's intellectuals who made their start in *The Naval Review*.

But the British solution is not for others. The flowering of the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* over the last two decades has shown what can be done in an open environment. In Australia, the formation of the Australian Naval Institute in 1975 saw the new organisation adopt the American model, with a publicly circulated quarterly magazine. In only one aspect, by allowing pen names, does the ANI *Journal* follow the *Review*, and this is itself the subject of continuing debate. The common factor is that all these periodicals flourish only with the active participation of serving personnel. That participation continues when censorship does not exist and when free expression within the confines of good taste and *real* national security interests suffers no persecution.

Notes

1. The seven officers also included Commander Reginald Plunkett (later Admiral Sir Reginald Plunkett-Erle-Drax) (described later in this article as "Drax"), Lieutenant (later Rear Admiral) H.G. Thursfield, Lieutenant (later Rear Admiral) R.M. Bellairs, Lieutenant (later Captain Sir Thomas) Fisher and Captain (later Colonel) E.W. Harding, Royal Marine Artillery

Richmond was to become one of the foremost naval historians and maritime strategists of this century, holding the Vere Harmsworth Chair of Imperial and Naval History in Cambridge from 1934-36. He was Master of Downing College in the same university until his death. Richmond also exerted a profound influence on higher defence education and was a guiding spirit in the establishment of the Imperial Defence College (IDC), now the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS). Having served as Commander-in-Chief East Indies from 1923-25, Richmond was first Commandant of the IDC from 1926-28. Amongst Richmond's major works were *The Navy in the War of 1739-48* (Cambridge, 1920) and *Statesmen and Sea Power* (Oxford, 1946).

K.G.B. Dewar (1879-1964), a brilliant gunnery specialist and staff officer, had a more chequered career than Richmond. Deeply involved in the 1917-18 controversies between the Admiralty and the Lloyd-George government, particularly over anti-U-boat policy and the introduction of convoy, he was looked upon as a disruptive influence by many of his seniors. Dewar finally came to grief when captain of the battleship *Royal Oak* in the Mediterranean in 1928. A dispute between the ship's executive officer and Dewar on one side and the squadron's admiral on the other resulted in Dewar's supersession and court-martial. He was retired on promotion to flag rank and later produced a lengthy apologia in *The Navy from Within* (London, 1939). Dewar caused much comment within the Royal Navy by unsuccessfully standing for the 1931 parliamentary election as Labour candidate for Portsmouth North.

2. Arthur J. Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral: The Life and Papers of Sir Herbert Richmond*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), p. 89. Richmond diary entry of 27 October 1912.

3. For a new insight into the Admiralty's difficulties, see: Jon Tetsuro Sumida "British Naval Logistics 1914-1918." Paper delivered to the University of Illinois history conference October 1990.
4. Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era 1904-1919: Vol. I, The Road to War 1904-1914* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 265.
5. Dewar, *The Navy From Within* (London: Gollancz, 1939), p. 154.
6. Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 89. Richmond Diary entry of 27 October 1912.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Barry D. Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond 1871-1946* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1982), p. 33.
9. Herbert Richmond (writing anonymously) "Introductory," *The Naval Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, February 1913.
10. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*, Vol. I, p. 91.
11. Agag [pseud.], "A Note on the First Fifty Years of the Naval Review," *The Naval Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1, January 1963, p. 11.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
13. The authorship of articles in the first years of the *Review* remained the private knowledge of the editor and his successors. Rear Admiral J.R. Hill, the present incumbent, holds a record with other material on the early days of the Naval Society. (Hereafter designated *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*. It is a tribute to the continuity of the *Review* that these papers are still kept in the tin box which once held Admiral Henderson's full-dress cocked hat.) Henderson did, however, write the authors' names into his personal copies of the *Review* which are now in the possession of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies in Whitehall, London and they can be consulted there.
14. Richmond "Introductory."
15. Dewar, p. 156.
16. Hunt, p. 35.
17. Statistics assembled by Commander Michael Craig-Waller DSC, RN, for the seventy-fifth anniversary of *The Naval Review*, copies of which are in the keeping of the author.
18. Admiral Sir Montague Browning (1863-1947), who served as Commander-in-Chief North America and West Indies Station in the second half of the Great War and was appointed Second Sea Lord in 1919. Admiral Sir William Pakenham (1861-1933) commanded the Second Battle Cruiser Squadron from 1915 to 1916 and succeeded Beatty in command of the Battle Cruiser Force in 1916. Urbane and the model of gentlemanly behaviour, Pakenham was one of the Royal Navy's characters who is described in Geoffrey Lewis' *Fabulous Admirals and Some Naval Fragments* (London, 1957).
- Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Oliver (1865-1966), a brilliant navigator, served as Chief of the War Staff from 1914 to 1917 and as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff until early 1918 when he took command of the First Battle Cruiser Squadron. An arch centraliser, he even wrote out signals and maintained situation charts by himself.
- Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair (1864-1958) commanded the blockading forces on the Northern Patrol from 1914 until 1917.
- Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly (1857-1938) served as Commander-in-Chief Channel Fleet in 1914 and from 1914 as Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches. In this latter role, based in Ireland, many U.S. Navy ships served under his command in 1917-18.
- Admiral of the Fleet Sir Osmond Brock (1869-1947) was Beatty's chief of staff from 1915 to 1919 and later served as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (under Beatty as First Sea Lord) and Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Fleet.
- Rear Admiral Sir Horace Hood (1870-1916), who was to be killed in the *Invincible* at Jutland, was the youngest flag officer after Beatty and had a similar record of bravery and accelerated promotions. More thoughtful and less ebullient than Beatty, he was an admirable complement to him and would very probably have succeeded Earl Beatty as First Sea Lord in 1927 had he lived.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Captain A.B. Sainsbury, (trustee of *The Naval Review*) letter to the author dated 17 June 1987.
21. Drax letter to Henderson dated 11 March 1919. *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*.
22. Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 156. Richmond Diary entry of 12 May 1915.
23. Anonymous, "Coronel and Falklands," *The Naval Review* Vol. 3, No. 2, May 1915.
24. Arthur J. Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 157. Richmond Diary entry of 12 May 1915.
25. Agag "A Note on the First Fifty Years of the Naval Review," p. 13.
26. Hunt, p. 37.
27. Agag, "A Note on the First Fifty Years of the Naval Review," p. 13.
28. Hunt, p. 38. Richmond letter to Henderson, 29 September 1915.

29. Anonymous (Lieutenant HSH Prince George of Battenberg—later second Marquess of Milford Haven), "The Engagement of the Dogger Bank," *The Naval Review*, Vol. 5, 1917, p. 152.
30. Anonymous (Rear-Admiral F.W. Kennedy), "Narrative from the *Indomitable*: The Chase of the *Goeben*" *The Naval Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, February 1919. See also Dewar, p. 263.
31. Agag, "A Note on the First Fifty Years of *The Naval Review*," p. 14.
32. Henderson letter to the Secretary of Admiralty dated 12 March 1919, *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*.
33. Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 342. Diary entry of 18 May 1919.
34. Interview with the late Captain F.H. Kennedy, RN (son of Admiral Kennedy), 27 December 1979.
35. Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 342. Dairy entry of 18 May 1919.
36. Henderson letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty dated 17 May 1919. *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*.
37. Secretary of the Admiralty letter to Henderson, NL 17859, of 9 August 1919. *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*.
38. Curzon letter to Henderson dated 14 May 1919. *The Naval Review Editor's Papers*.
39. Hunt, p. 101. Richmond letter to Henderson dated 26 August 1919.
40. Henderson letter to Secretary of the Admiralty dated 20 August 1919. *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*.
41. Secretary of the Admiralty letter to Henderson, NL 26101, dated 20 August 1919. *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*.
42. Henderson letter to Secretary of the Admiralty dated 25 August 1919. *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*.
43. Hunt, p. 102.
44. Agag, "A Note on the First Fifty Years of *The Naval Review*," p. 15.
45. Hunt, p. 103, footnote 66 (citing ADM 167/74).
46. *Ibid.*, p. 103. See also Captain Maxwell Anderson KC letter to Henderson dated 7 March 1919 which gave a favourable legal opinion on the status of the *Review* as a "publication." *The Naval Review: Editor's Papers*.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*, p. 104 (citing ADM 167/73).
49. *Ibid.*
50. This KBE was on the Admiralty List, not the Civil List or that of any other government department.
51. Hunt, p. 104.
52. Jellicoe to Admiral Sir Frederick Dreyer letters dated 24 January 1931 and 4 April 1931. *Dreyer Papers DRYR 3/2*. (Churchill College Archives). These dates, by the way, indicate that Henderson, had he lived, would probably have given up the editorship in 1931 in any case.
53. *Regulations of The Naval Review*, Article 3.
54. Hunt, p. 104, footnote 71.
55. Interpolated by the author from pre and post-war *Naval Review* membership lists. Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound (First Sea Lord 1939-43) was a prominent and long-standing member.
56. Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow. Vol. V, 1918-1919: Victory and Aftermath* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), p. xi.
57. Donald M. Schurman *The Education of a Navy: The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought, 1867-1914* (London: Cassell, 1965), p. 128.



The mature, the ponderate mind does not embark itself upon a man-of-war—is not to be found wandering about the face of the ocean in quest of violence.

Patrick O'Brian
Master and Commander
Norton, 1970