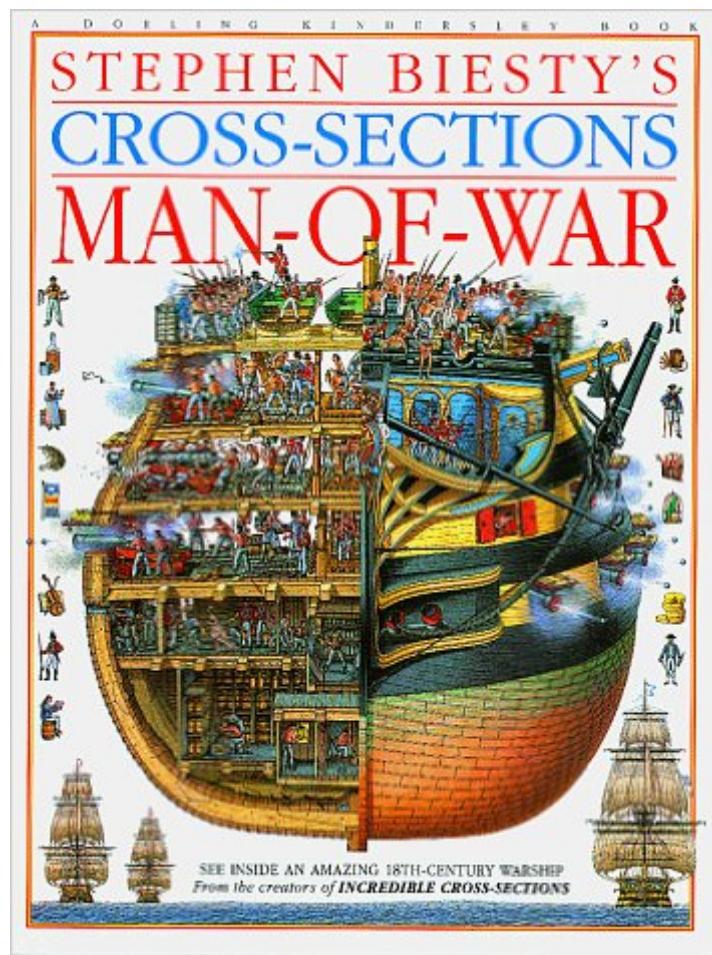


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Stephen Biesty's Cross-Sections: Man-Of-War



Synopsis

The author of *Incredible Cross-Sections* takes a detailed look inside an eighteenth-century warship, providing fascinating facts about the ship and the people aboard it. BOMC Main.

Book Information

Age Range: 9 and up

Lexile Measure: 980L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (49 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Although this is a "children's" book, it's wonderful for adults who love the books of Patrick O'Brian, C. S. Forester, Frederick Marryat, and other writers of the age of sail - but who don't know a thing about ships. I've read the entire Aubrey/Maturin series twice and dabbled in other naval fiction, but this book is the first (including some pricey reference books!) to *really* help me understand shipboard life, how the decks are laid out, where things are, how the pumps worked, and so on. Other books can explain the lingo and the rigging and so on in great (often too great for me) detail, but in my opinion this book is just as important a reference - even though it's aimed at kids. It doesn't just *tell* you how things were, it lets you *see* how they were.

you should definitely try to get this book. I am a landlubber, who has just discovered the pleasures of Hornblower and Aubrey/Maturin (via Austen's Persuasion). Along with a number of more serious naval non-fiction reference works, notably THE WOODEN WORLD by N.A.M. Rodger (ISBN 0393314693; ASIN 0393314693) I found a copy of this wonderful book first at my public library and then in a sale at my local store. This is an oversized book, thin but full of detailed information. A

man-of-war, one of the mainstays of the Georgian fleet during the wars of the 1700s and early 1800s, is "cut away" section by section and deck by deck to illustrate life on board as well as the structure of the ship. The first works better than the latter, although I got a very good idea of how the ship's anchor works as well as how the ship crew handled guns and gunpowder (as well as the dangers of a loose gun). I wished that the authors had provided a bird-eye view of the ship from the top of the masts, and showed sailors working the sails. Apart from this and other minor quibbles, I think I learned more from this book faster than I had expected. Yes, this is a children's book, but it is highly recommended by sites specializing in naval fiction of the Georgian and Regency era (think Napoleonic Wars, Revolutionary Wars, as well as sites devoted to O'Brian and Forester). Children will be delighted by various grosser aspects of life abroad (the very basic toilet and bathing facilities, the surgeon in action during battle, and of course the maggot-filled biscuits), not to mention trying to find a certain stowaway. Adults will revel in little details that explain things that have puzzled them. I started out not knowing port from starboard, and very little else. By the end of this book, while I cannot claim to be proficient, I certainly understand that a ship has three masts in several sections, that it has several decks, and that life at sea was more complicated than is sometimes depicted in fiction. You might also want to try "The Visual Dictionary of Ships and Sailing" (ISBN 1879431203; ASIN 1879431203) which apparently discusses different types of ships, the sails and ropes, and so forth. I have not seen this book yet, but it looks interesting.

Dorling Kindersley has in the past twenty years quickly established itself as an outstanding publisher of niche books--children's reference books, travel guides, atlases, and the such. What I find so remarkable about a number of their children's books is how enormously satisfying they are for adults as well, even adults who are fairly familiar with the subject matter. One of the better series of books in their impressive list are the Cross-Sections books by Stephen Biesty. As someone who is interested both in the history of ships and the Aubrey-Maturin novels by Patrick O'Brian, I find this one even more interesting than most. Two things stand out about this book: its remarkably detailed drawings and the enormous amount of information that gets stuffed into the book's relatively short length. This book provides a pictorial rendering of one of the great ships of the line of the Napoleonic navy, similar to H.M.S. Victory. Virtually nothing gets left out, and the book can actually serve as a surprisingly comprehensive introduction to the Royal British Navy during the time of Nelson and Napoleon. It is somewhat misleading in that the ship depicted was the exception and not the norm, the British navy possessing only a handful of ships this size. Apart from that the book has no serious flaws, except for the unaffordable one in a visual guide that it is sometimes hard to

locate information in its closely packed pages. I would also recommend another Dorling Kindersley book, also unfortunately out of print, THE VISUAL DICTIONARY OF SHIPS AND SAILING. It does a bit better job than this one of defining many nautical terms. Each represents a marvelous addition to personal library of books on the age of the sailing ship.

This book I came across watching Steve Priske on youtube. It's full color cut away sections of the HMS Victory showing the composition of the ship is well worth buying. It may have been for children, but the full color illustrations and explanations of the ship operation make it a book worth having on your shelf. Especially if purchased at a reasonable price.

Everything. He shows you EVERYTHING - from how the crew ate their meals, to what scurvy looked like, how they got tattoos, how they spent liberty, captain's quarters, sleeping conditions, the lavatories (if you could call them that!), some info on rigging, maggots in the biscuits, the origins of some nautical terms (like "Knots" and "Poop Deck"), battle and warfare, officer rankings and pay structure, burials at sea, surgery (amputations!), ship repairs, storage, bilges, galley, carpentry... endless! A MUST for any naval history buff. The only thing I would say is that it is not really for the squeamish, or the very young. Rated "PG" for sure - look it over before you give it to a young'un.

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