



British Sea Power: How Britain Became Sovereign of the Seas

David Howarth

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From the transatlantic adventures attributed to Ireland's St. Brendan in the fifth century to Britain's unparalleled supremacy on the seas in the twentieth, this engaging illustrated history traces the evolution of the naval fleets, admiralty, and merchantmen that for centuries defined the world's greatest seafaring nation. Focusing on key voyages undertaken by the British in the course of fifteen hundred years, maritime historian David Howarth revisits the great successes and disasters that marked Britain's progress through the early days of piracy, the era of Elizabethan exploration, the age of mercantile expansion, and the eighteenth-century rivalry with Holland, France and Spain. He recounts the sea battles of the Napoleonic Wars that made Horatio Nelson a national hero and won Britain its unchallenged authority at sea, so that Britannia indeed ruled the waves—until the dark days of WWI and WWII. The early twentieth century saw that the British naval force was far greater than any other, and more than half the world's merchant ships were built and owned in Britain. That moment would pass, but it is masterfully recaptured and reconstructed in this history of a nation that for a century brought Pax Britannica to the world's seas. Maps are included.

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