This new book by Ian Friel is a follow-on from his earlier *Britain and the Ocean Road*, which through eight chapters loosely based around shipwrecks explored Britain's maritime history up to 1825. This new volume continues the same thread up to the modern day. Readers familiar with *Britain and the Ocean Road* will instantly recognise a similar format in this new book. It is a slim volume which can be comfortably read in an afternoon, but as with its predecessor, it is time well spent. The book is illustrated with maps, diagrams and photographs.

The contains seven main chapters which build a timeline following the development of British maritime history through the industrial age. Chapter One tells the tale of the disappearance of the liner SS *City of Glasgow* in 1854. The author weaves the development of steamships into the history of transatlantic migration and the familial consequences of shipping disasters. The undocumented disappearance of ships at sea with all hands was an all-too-common feature of shipping losses and this case is an excellent and tragic example.

The next chapter continues with his theme, looking at the loss of a sail collier in the North Sea. Again, the personal side of tragedies of this type is very well drawn from the archival record. One continuous thread throughout the book is the legal framework which developed around shipping operations and safety at sea.

Warship losses form a major portion of this book as well and Chapter Three visits the famous loss of the battleship HMS *Victoria* off the coast of modern Lebanon in 1893. This incident will doubtlessly be known to many readers. Yet the author brings the tale alive in new ways by looking at personal aspects behind the tragedy. A stoker who survived, inspired by a childhood visit to a tent-show where one of the survivors of the Battle of Rorke's Drift (William Jones VC) related his experiences, went on to do the same with his experience of the loss of this great battleship. His talks on a travelling myriorama and their consequences add a level of fascinating, personal detail which is characteristic of this series of books, which their focus on social history.

Chapter Four describes the loss of a merchant ship and its U-boat nemesis in 1917 in incidents, common to so many thousands of others during World War One. The chapter describes the technical advances in submarines and shipping and gives an overview of the social conditions faced by the crews of the British Marchant Marine during this period. The author describes the travails of the survivors in chapter which gives a good snapshot the awful circumstances of the first attack on shipping. Again, the common humanity so often present at moments of loss and terror at sea is very described in in the following chapter on the famous incident of the loss of the two British cruisers HMS *Dorsetshire* and *Cornwall* in 1942. The author suggests that this incident showed the Royal Navy at its best. It would be difficult not to agree.

In now familiar style, the final two chapters look at more contemporary shipping losses, the SS *Torrey Canyon* in 1967 and the *Napoli* in 2007. Themes explored include the global reliance on international trade, advances in navigation, pollution, its legal ramifications and containerisation. The author rounds up this brief history of the British shipping experience in the industrial age with a warning that we are tied to the sea. It is the cornerstone of our wealth, but we are also vulnerable to its changes and to who controls it. The changing global environment is a dangerous threat, requiring international

cooperation, the type of which will only occur with the full recognition of the role of the sea in all our lives. Prescient words indeed. The book is recommended to members. It would also make an excellent textbook for new students of maritime history.

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