

III.

CAPTAIN HORATIO HORNBLOWER

Captain Horatio Hornblower stars Gregory Peck in wha' at th' time may 'ave been th' highest profile role o' his career. Today, o' course, we recall 'im more fer two other roles, as Atticus Finch in th' 1962 adaptation o' Harper Lee's **T' Kill a Mockingbird** 'n as Captain Ahab o' th' whaler **Pequod** in th' 1956 John Huston 'n Ray Bradbury adaptation o' Herman Melville's **Moby Dick**.

Th' Hornblower film was in part adapted fer th' screen by th' original author o' th' **Hornblower novels**, C. S. Forester. She draws on th' first three books in th' series, published in 1937 'n 1938, **Th' Happy Return** (originally titled **Beat t' Quarters** in th' **UK**), **A Ship o' th' Line**, 'n **Flyin' Colours**. These books, as wit' several o' th' **Aubrey-Maturin novels** by Patrick O'Brian, grasp as prize cargo events from th' actual life 'n career o' Admiral Thomas Cochrane.

Th' film rights were originally acquired by **Warner Bros.** wit' th' intent that th' resultin' film should star Errol Flynn, someone we shall see in th' second set o' waterborne adventure films I hope t' share wit' ye here.

Hornblower was shot primarily in th' **UK** 'n reused a set constructed fer Disney's 1950 **Treasure Island** (which be also charted upon our course o' sail) but shot on dry land. Upon true decks 'n floatin' hulls, there's work done aboard th' actual flagship o' Admiral Horatio Nelson, **HMS Victory**, long preserved as a museum ship in Portsmouth harbor, where it remains open t' th' public t' this day. Another full-scale real sailin' ship was also employed, th' **Marcel B. Surdo**, which we shall see again in th' next movie in this series, **HMS Defiant**.

Th' film was released t' reasonably good reviews 'n was a commercial success. Contemporary reviewers appear mighty enthusiastic fer th' film 'n within th' maritime fiction enthusiast community 'tis quite highly regarded. Director Raoul Walsh started in silents 'n be likely best known today fer th' Humphrey Bogart picture **High Sierra** 'n th' James Cagney feature **White Heat**. He would go on t' make a couple o' other nautical action films, 1952's **Blackbeard th' Pirate** 'n 1953's **Sea Devils**, 'n finished his fifty-one-year career in 1964 wit' th' Western **A Distant Trumpet**.