



The Admiral Benbow: Vol. 2: The Life and Times of a Naval Legend (Hearts of Oak Trilogy)

Sam Willis

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Admiral John Benbow was an English naval hero, a fighting sailor of ruthless methods but indomitable courage. Benbow was a man to be reckoned with. In 1702, however, when Benbow engaged a French squadron off the Spanish main, other ships in his squadron failed to support him. His leg shattered by a cannon-ball, Benbow fought on - but to no avail: the French escaped and the stricken Benbow succumbed to his wounds. When the story of his 'Last Fight' reached England, there was an outcry. Two of the captains who had abandoned him were court-martialled and shot; 'Brave Benbow' was elevated from national hero to national legend, his valour immortalized in broadsheet and folksong: ships were named after him; Tennyson later feted him in verse; in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, the tavern where Jim Hawkins and his mother live is called 'The Admiral Benbow'. For the very first time, Sam Willis tells the extraordinary story of Admiral Benbow through an age of dramatic change, from his birth under Cromwell's Commonwealth; to service under the restored Stuart monarchy; to the Glorious Revolution of 1688; to the French wars of Louis XIV; and finally to the bitter betrayal of 1702. The Admiral Benbow covers all aspects of seventeenth century naval life in richly vivid detail, from strategy and tactics to health and discipline. But Benbow also worked in the Royal Dockyards, lived in Samuel Evelyn's House, knew Peter the Great, helped to found the first naval hospital, and helped to build the first offshore lighthouse. The second volume in the Hearts of Oak trilogy, from one of Britain's most exciting young historians, *The Admiral Benbow* is a gripping and detailed account of the making of a naval legend.

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