

# Figureheads of the Royal Navy

David Pulvertaft

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The first figureheads that were carved to represent the names of British warships appeared during the reign of Henry VIII; the last ones were carved in the early years of the twentieth century. During the intervening 350 years it is estimated that some 5,000 ships of the Royal Navy carried a figurehead of some description. This book follows the development of these diverse carvings, examining how the figurehead carvers interpreted the names and the symbolism incorporated in their designs. Evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources: contemporary ship models, ship plans, designs submitted for approval of the Navy Board and, of course, from those figureheads that still survive today.

Lavishly illustrated with much previously unpublished material, the book explores the wide range of subjects that were represented on the bows of Their Majesties' Ships and recounts many of the stories that were told about them.

The narrative is complemented by a directory that provides a brief description of each surviving figurehead, each carver's design drawing with its source and reference number, as well as those ship plans and contemporary models that show the figurehead's detail. This combination makes the book useful to a wide range of historians, researchers and anyone with an interest in Britain's maritime past.

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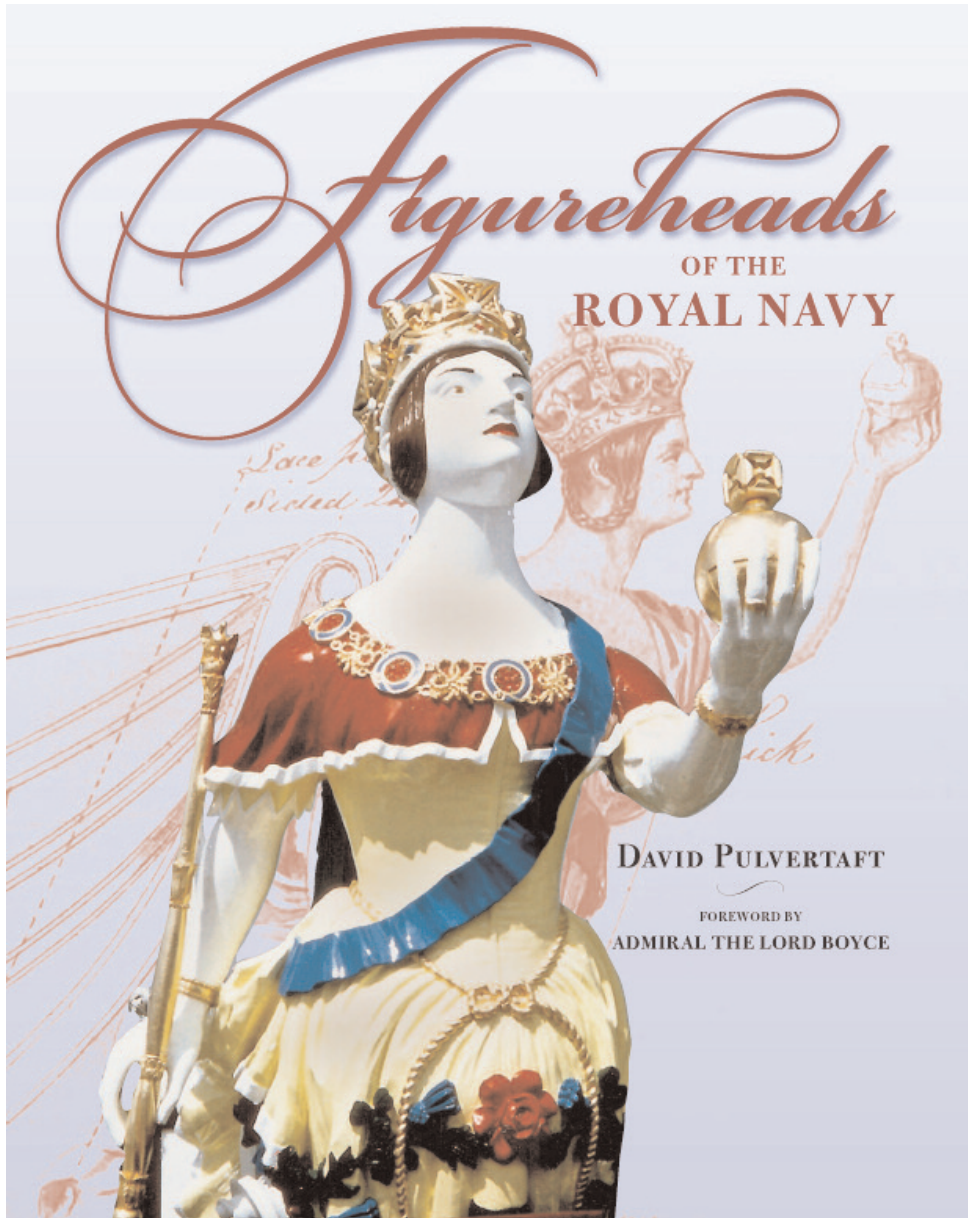
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