

The Nelson Dispatch

Journal of
The Nelson Society

Volume 14 Part 5 Winter 2022

The Nelson Society

Aims and Objectives

To advance public education in the appreciation of the life and achievements of Admiral Lord Nelson

President

The Honourable Peregrine Nelson Hood

Life Vice Presidents

Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey KCB CBE Dr John Sugden Raglan Tribe Dr J Keith Wood FRCP

Chairman

Graham Capel
Nyes Place, Rusper Road
Newdigate
Surrey RH5 5BX
T: 01293 871541, 07845 341781
E: treasurer.nelsonsociety@gmail.com

Vice Chairman

Chris Brett
203A Finchampstead Road
Wokingham
Berks RG40 3HS
T: 01184 370127, 07885 403874
E: chris.brett52@yahoo.co.uk

Honorary Editor *The Nelson Dispatch*

Martyn Downer
Puttocks End
Anstey
Hertfordshire SG9 0DG
T: 07565 641347
E: martyn.downer@btinternet.com

Treasurer

Graham Capel
(as above)
E: treasurer.nelsonsociety@gmail.com

Secretary

Sue Morris
46 Faraday Road
West Molesey
Surrey KT8 2TQ
T: 07753 615948
E: susan.morris0410@gmail.com

Executive Editor, *The Nelson Dispatch*

Sue Morris
E: susan.morris0410@gmail.com

Membership Secretary

Sue Morris
E: memsecretary@nelson-society.com

Web Editor

Alan Cross
5 Eyebright Close, Horton Heath
Hampshire SO50 7PQ
T: 02380 601572
E: webeditor@nelson-society.com

Committee Members

Jeanette Ryder
2 Comley Court, Bell Street
Romsey SO51 8AL
T: 01794 521121
E: jeanetteyardley4@yahoo.co.uk

Jon Ponting
5 Hillhead Gardens
Camelford
Cornwall PL32 9TD
T: 01840 211037
E: jon.ponting1970@btinternet.com

Sales Manager

David Curson
Laurel Trees, Laurel Close
West Coker, Yeovil
Somerset BA22 9EU
T: 01935 862746
E: sales@nelson-society.com

Paul Ganjou
Nelson House
78 New Cavendish Street
London W1G 9TD
T: 07981 787042
E: paul@ganjou.com

Alastair Robertson
Ashleigh House
Nenthead Road
Alston
Cumbria CA9 3SN
E: alastair.f.robertson@gmail.com

Ronnie Kane
32 Kingsferry Court
Renfrew PA4 8RB
Scotland
T: 0141 886 5180
E: roninspain2010@gmail.com

Marina Deestan-Jones
Fenton Cote, Betley Court
Main Road, Betley
Nantwich, Cheshire CW3 9BH
T: 07770 093878
E: info@eccentricharmony.com

Co-opted:

Ana Bullock
T: 01225 335317
E: ana.bullock@mac.com

Secretaries of Regional Groups, Honorary Chaplain and Historian

Portsmouth & South

Jeanette Ryder
(as above)

North America & Canada

Neil Olson
1105A Scarlet Oak Drive
Hudson, Ohio 44236 USA
T: 001-630-930-9940
E: nolson8@gmail.com

Historian

Lt Col Ray Aldis
Rosewood, Wylve Road
Hanging Langford
Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 4NW
T: 07484 639275
E: randl@rippy.co.uk

Scotland & North East

Ronnie Kane
(as above)

Honorary Chaplain

Revd Terry Colling

East Anglia

David Higgins
T: 01553 340034
E: phoenix.p20@outlook.com

The Nelson Society, founded 1981. Registered Charity No. 296 979

Website: www.nelson-society.com

Cover: *Portrait of Nelson, Palermo School, c1799*

The Nelson Dispatch

Volume 14 Part 5 Winter 2022

ARTICLES

THE BOY ON THE BURNING DECK (PART THREE)	
Henri Lachèze	287
THE STORY OF NELSON'S CHRISTENING MUG	
Dr Robin Agnew.....	296
NELSON AND MUSIC	
Dr John Easton Law.....	300
A selection of short items received from our members:	
Terry Colling: Close Examination of Nelson's Correspondence	304
Mark Barton: Nelson's Needles, a Question of Provenance.....	308
Peter Clayton: A Portrait of Nelson, Palermo School c 1799.....	309
Ray Aldis: Sea Rations in Nelson's Navy.....	311
Michael Shaw: The Trafalgar Fabergé Egg.....	313
John Maynard: Nelson and the Pharaohs.....	314
Ray Aldis: First with the News of Trafalgar.....	315

REPORTS

40TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCH, NORWICH 28 NOVEMBER 2021	
Sue Morris	265
BATTLE OF CAPE ST VINCENT LUNCHEON AND LECTURE, LONDON, 11 FEBRUARY 2022	
Chris Brett	270
WHITSTABLE MUSEUM: SEA FENCIBLES – NELSON AND THE EAST SWALE SQUADRON JULY-OCTOBER 1801	
Mark Harrison.....	272
MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS: EMMA'S SONGBOOKS, A CONCERT ON 11 DECEMBER 2021	
Sue Morris.....	278
THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM, LONDON: FIGHTING TALK - ONE BOY'S JOURNEY FROM ABANDONMENT TO TRAFALGAR	
Jeanette Ryder	285

REGULAR FEATURES

Editorial.....	258	From the Chairman.....	259
Membership Matters.....	260	Events and Notices.....	260
Reviews.....	317	Obituaries.....	318

© The Nelson Society 2022 and authors as named, all rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission of the publisher. All articles are the views and opinions of the author and do not necessarily represent those of The Nelson Society.

EDITORIAL

As auctioneer then antique dealer, I have worked with objects for my entire career; and both my books on Nelson—*Nelson's Purse* and *Nelson's Lost Jewel*—also used objects as vehicles to tell a bigger story. I have seen, and met, many obsessive collectors who are driven by a deep psychological need to acquire and own objects from the past, sometimes at a high personal and financial cost. Why do they – and I – do this?

Personally, I think objects fulfil a physical desire to time travel to the past and, by ownership, to capture it. Places can offer a visual equivalent. Regardless of any interest in Nelson, who cannot feel thrillingly transported to a different world when boarding *Victory* as a visitor, to see and experience an 18th century space of impeccable authenticity?

But perhaps the purest means of encountering the past is through sound. From all the millennia of human history, we can only listen to voices since the birth of sound recording some 150 years ago. That's countless millions of lost voices. In fact, hearing our ancestors (and Nelson) speak may give us the biggest surprise of all, as we are already familiar with much of their physical environment.

And there is music. Listening online, as I did, to a performance of songs from Emma and Nelson's library recently discovered at the Museum of London (explored by Sue Morris on page 278) was a thrilling and moving experience. We will never know the violent sound of battle which Nelson had to endure—and it is impossible to replicate—but we can join him after dinner in the drawing room at Merton to hear exactly what he heard, to feel what he felt (although he was known to occasionally nod off).

This really *is* time travelling, and to better understand Nelson's world, I would encourage you to find the recording of Emma's songs online and read Dr John Easton Law's fascinating survey of 'Nelson and Music' in this very musical edition of the 'Nelson Dispatch'.

Martyn Downer, February 2022

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

December-February is usually a quiet time in many organisations. Not so in The Nelson Society: this is the time when we are busy planning our next Trafalgar Weekend. This year we are committed to returning to Norfolk. Being a ‘Southerner’, I realised I knew very little of Norfolk. I discovered it was a very long drive from Surrey, and that Norwich in the east of the county is some distance from Burnham Thorpe, where Nelson was born and grew up, in the north-west of the county. The main town closest to Burnham Thorpe is King’s Lynn which dates back to Saxon times. It was mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086/7 as *Lenn Episcopi* and until 1537 was known as Bishop’s Lynn. It was, and still is a major seaport, and has more listed buildings than any other town in England. In Nelson’s time it must have had a main stage coach route from London, which is probably how Nelson would have travelled, followed by a local horse and coach service to get to Burnham Thorpe, another uncomfortable 2-3 hour ride on loosely surfaced country lanes. As you will read in this ‘Nelson Dispatch’, we are basing our 2022 Trafalgar Weekend in historic King’s Lynn and Burnham Thorpe. Real Nelson country! We have an extensive programme for your interest and enjoyment and some very special events.

In January we welcomed four new Committee members. Marina Deestan-Jones has already joined Chris Brett in helping to organise our St Vincent Lunch and Lecture at the Union Jack Club in London. David Curson has already taken over Sales from me. He has also taken on the organisation of another visit to the Digby home at Minterne House on 16 August. Jon Ponting, Alastair Robertson have also joined us and Ana Bullock is co-opted. They are all most welcome, and we will put them to good use in the continued organisation of our very active Nelson Society. In addition to the Committee, our Regional Secretaries are a vital part of our organisation, and we welcome David Higgins as our new East Anglia Secretary. We are also looking for a representative for London/South-East, to be the contact point for members in these areas, and organise occasional meetings and visits. Please do get in touch if you think you might be interested in taking this on, or would like to have a go at organising a local event.

This year The Nelson Society is ‘going abroad’ not once, but twice. In July, Brian Gibbs and Alastair Robertson are organising a members’ visit to Tenerife to join a local group celebrating the 225th anniversary of the Battle of Santa Cruz, where Nelson lost his right arm. We are also planning a members’ visit to Menorca in September. Menorca was British for over 70 years between 1708 and 1802 and has one of the first British Naval Hospitals abroad, built in 1711, which the Chairman has been helping to restore for the last 17 years. Nelson visited the island in October 1799 in HMS *Foudroyant*.

We are all looking forward to a ‘back to as near normal as possible’ 2022.

Graham Capel, February 2022

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

At this time of year the Membership Secretary is kept busy processing subscription payments. Thank you to everyone who paid promptly and correctly on 1st January. Your continuing support is vital, and very much appreciated. Unfortunately there are still a number of members who have not paid, and another group of members who have still not amended their Bank Standing Orders and have paid -yet again- at the 2019 rate!! The rules state that subscriptions are due on 1st January and membership will be deemed lapsed if not paid fully by the end of February, so if you are one of these people, this will sadly be your last copy of the 'Nelson Dispatch'. Please stay with us - we hope you will agree that membership is very good value, especially now that we have resumed our programme of events. We're looking forward to seeing more of you all in 2022.

Welcome to new members Franziska Norman, David & Christine Pullen, David & Caroline Burton, Keith Nelson, Stephen Berry, Tim Ridge, Hugh Shapter, Daniel Hood and Deborah Bogar.

Since the last issue we have sadly lost Sylvia Andrews, Eric Tushingham (Committee member 1998-2000 and co-author of 'Nelson's Flagship at Copenhagen – HMS *Elephant*'), Douglas Quade (member since 1996), and Edward Lamont (member since 2006). Obituaries of Tony Roper and Sylvia Andrews, appear later in this issue. **Sue Morris, Membership Secretary**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2022

For information please contact committee members/organisers as indicated, and check the website for updates.

Battle of Copenhagen Commemorative Event, Chichester: 3/4 April 2022. Further details below, and Booking Form **BY 4 MARCH** from Brian Gibbs.

225th Anniversary of the Battle of Santa Cruz de Tenerife: 20-27 July 2022. Visit to Tenerife to take part in the commemoration. Further details below – enquiries to Brian Gibbs.

Battle of the Nile Commemorative Luncheon, Buxton: 30 July 2022. See details below. Booking Form enclosed. More information from Jeanette Ryder.

Minterne House: 16 August 2022. See below for further details. Contact David Curson for more information and booking.

Menorca: 13-20 September 2022. Details below. Contact Graham Capel.

41st Annual General Meeting & Trafalgar Weekend, Norfolk: 21-23 Oct 2022. Details below. Booking Form with next 'Nelson Dispatch'.

Pickle Night & Remembrance weekend, Portsmouth: 12 Nov 2022. Details to follow in next 'Nelson Dispatch'. More information from Jeanette Ryder.

EVENT NOTICES 2022

BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN DINNER, CHICHESTER SUNDAY 3 APRIL 2022

The Nelson Society and The Murray Club are holding a joint Dinner to commemorate the Battle of Copenhagen, at 7.00pm on Sunday 3 April 2022 at the Chichester Park Hotel, Chichester, West Sussex. The speakers will be Richard Plowman, Chairman of The Murray Club, and the local Sculptor Vincent Gray MRSS. This event is to be held on the first anniversary of the unveiling in Chichester of Vincent Gray's life-sized sculpture of Admirals Murray and Nelson, which stands outside the Council House in North Street, only yards from Sir George Murray's former home, now the Harbour Hotel.

The Dinner will cost £35 per person, and a Booking Form can be obtained from Brian Gibbs at briangibbs@hotmail.co.uk or telephone 01246 203924. **Please note the official booking deadline for this event is 4th March so please call Brian as soon as possible! Places may still be available.**

On the morning of Monday 4 April, members can join an escorted walking tour of historic Chichester, following the Murray Trail to include a viewing of the Murray/Nelson statue. The walk will be preceded by complimentary coffee and biscuits at the Council Chamber in North Street, hosted by the Mayor.

Members wishing to stay overnight should book accommodation direct with the Chichester Park Hotel. Details from Brian Gibbs.

225th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE, VISIT TO TENERIFE: 20-27 JULY 2022

A trip has been organised to Tenerife, at the invitation of the 'Tertulia de Amigos del 25 de Julio 1797' (The Group of Friends of 25 July 1797), to join them in their celebrations on the 225th Anniversary of the Battle this year. Please see the previous 'Nelson Dispatch' for details, and for more information please contact Brian Gibbs, Tel 01246 203924.

BATTLE OF THE NILE COMMEMORATIVE LUNCHEON, BUXTON SATURDAY 30 JULY 2022

After a two year absence, due to Covid restrictions, The Nelson Society Nile Luncheon returns to our event calendar on Saturday, 30 July 2022 at the Palace Hotel, Buxton. This year's event starts with an informal gathering from 11 am in the Haddon Room for coffee/tea and chat, before we adjourn to the Chatsworth Dining Room at noon for a lecture from Graham Capel entitled 'Two Teenage Lieutenants on HMS *Vanguard* at The Battle of the Nile', followed by Luncheon. The cost of the above, including a three course lunch with wine/water at the table, tea/coffee and mints, will be £49.00 per person. Booking forms, cheques and

stamped-addressed envelopes should be completed and returned to Jeanette Ryder by 25 June. A booking form is enclosed with this 'Nelson Dispatch'.

We have also planned to hold a convivial hot buffet supper in the Chatsworth Room on the Saturday evening. Marina Deestan-Jones will be helping Jeanette with activities. The cost for the evening will be just £14 per person. In previous years it has been difficult to obtain restaurant meals on the Saturday night, in the middle of Buxton's busy tourist season. The proposed evening, therefore, will be an opportunity for all members and friends to mix.

For those who have not attended a Nile Luncheon in Buxton before, you may wish to book in for an extra night or two, as Buxton is a most beautiful town in the picturesque Peak District, and there is so much to see and do. Please make your own reservations if staying at the Palace Hotel and quote 'The Nelson Society Luncheon 30 July 2022' to obtain the special discounted rate of Doubles: £100 incl. breakfast. Singles: £75 incl. breakfast. Pay online or by card.

VISIT TO MINTERNE HOUSE & GARDENS, DORSET TUESDAY 16 AUGUST 2022

Home of Admiral Sir Henry Digby GCB, Captain of HMS *Africa* at Trafalgar



The Nelson Society has arranged a further visit to Minterne House in Dorset. Members last visited the House in June 2017 (see Nelson Dispatch Vol 12 Part 10, p 587) and enjoyed a fascinating day at the house and gardens. Lord Digby will talk to us on the history of the house and his ancestors. Minterne House has some fine maritime paintings and magnificent

gardens where descendants of Admiral Digby have nurtured a range of species of Himalayan Rhododendrons and Azaleas. The following schedule is arranged:

1045 Arrive, meet in car park west of road (A352)

1100 Meet at Minterne House for tour hosted by Lord Digby

1230 Refreshments (sandwiches, tea & coffee)

1300 Opportunity to view the gardens.

Tickets are £25.00 per person and will be limited to 50 persons.

If you are visiting the area, you may also wish to visit the Hardy Monument near Portesham (4 miles SWW of Dorchester). Accommodation can be found at the local towns of Dorchester, Sherbourne and Yeovil. Cerne Abbas is not far to the south (Cerne Giant). To the north at Yeovilton is the Fleet Air Arm Museum, also well worth a visit.

For further information and for a Booking Form, please contact David Curson: davidcurson007@outlook.com Tel 07870 547255/ 01935 862746.

Laurel Trees, Laurel Close, West Coker, Yeovil BA22 9EU.

VISIT TO MENORCA, 13-20 SEPTEMBER 2022

Nelson visited the island of Menorca for 6 days from 13-18 October 1799 in HMS *Foudroyant*. He went ashore three times, primarily to ask General Erskine, the deputy military commander in the Georgetown (now Es Castell) Barracks, for troops to relieve Malta. He also visited the British Dockyard in Port Mahon.

Chairman Graham Capel has been associated with Menorca for over 50 years and has an apartment overlooking the harbour and the remains of the 1711-built British Naval hospital, on the Isla del Rey in the harbour, which he has been helping to restore over the last 17 years. Minorca, as it was in Nelson's time, was a British possession for over 70 years between 1708 and 1802, and there is still a strong British influence there, visible in architectural styles such as Georgian bow windows ('boinder' in Minorcan dialect). 'Grevi' (gravy) is still being served, and if you need a screwdriver, ask for a 'turnscrew'!

A few members of our Committee are making an exploratory trip with Graham in June to check out the itinerary, (and the bars and restaurants!), ready for this Nelson Society visit in September.

We need to be based around Mahon and Es Castell, only 15 minutes from the airport. Most of our activities will start from the spectacular Port Mahon Hotel, located on the cliffs overlooking the 5 km long harbour and all of the bars and restaurants alongside the harbour and moored yachts. Other hotels include Hotel Almirante (Collingwood House), and in Es Castell the Agamemnon, Artiem Rey Carlos and the Hamilton, all within 15 minutes taxi ride of the Port Mahon Hotel.

If you are interested in coming in September, please email Graham Capel for a full itinerary. You will need to book flights, and possibly package flight and hotel deals with Easyjet, Jet 2 Holidays, British Airways holidays or check with your travel agent. It is only 2 hours from Gatwick.

TRAFALGAR WEEKEND AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NORFOLK 21-23 OCTOBER 2022

Graham Capel

This year we are going to Norfolk - 'Nelson's County' as you will see on Norfolk road signs as a reminder that the county is proud of its Nelson heritage. We will



be based at the 4-star Dukes Head Hotel in King's Lynn.

2022 is going to be very special. We are not only having our usual Trafalgar Dinner, we are having two! As Trafalgar Day, 21 October falls on a Friday this year, we could hardly miss the opportunity of making it part of our Trafalgar Weekend, so our first Trafalgar Dinner will be held at the newly refurbished Lord Nelson Pub in Nelson's birthplace, Burnham Thorpe. We will have exclusive use of the pub restaurant. This will of course be a pub meal, rather than a grand banquet, but it will be in

Burnham Thorpe, which is very special for us.

The second Trafalgar Dinner will be on the Saturday in the Grand Ballroom of the 4-star Dukes Head Hotel in historic King's Lynn. This will be a formal affair as is our custom, and the guest speaker will be the well-known author, and now a Vice President of The Nelson Society, Dr John Sugden.

The AGM will be held in the Village Hall at Burnham Thorpe on Trafalgar Day, Friday 21 October 2022. This is not a 'first' – you may recall, or have read in Sue Morris's 'History of The Nelson Society', that in its early years the Society held several AGMs in the Burnham Thorpe Village Hall. It will be good to return.

On Sunday 23 October we will attend morning service at All Saints Church, Burnham Thorpe, the church where Nelson's father the Reverend Edmund Nelson was Vicar, and where Nelson would have worshipped, first as a youngster and later when he was 'on the beach' and living at the Rectory with Fanny from 1788 until 1793. We are hoping that our own Honorary Chaplain, Rev Terry Colling will be able to take the address.

So, that is an outline for our very special Trafalgar Weekend from 21 – 23 October 2022. **Booking forms will be issued with the Spring 'Nelson Dispatch' (May). I recommend that you book early at the Dukes Head Hotel in King's Lynn** as October/November is a busy time with coach parties visiting the well-known Norfolk Christmas Fairs. We have requested early check-in where possible. Hotel private car parking for 40 cars. 2 hours by train from London King's Cross. **Please book and pay for your own accommodation direct with hotel.** Double room rates from £69.00, pay on booking, non-refundable. Flexi rate (cancellable) on enquiry. Booking code for The Nelson Society: **GA000292**. Tel: 01553 774996 reception@dukesheadhotel.com.

PROGRAMME FOR THE 2022 TRAFALGAR WEEKEND

FRIDAY 21 October - Trafalgar Day

- 1400 Dukes Head Hotel, King's Lynn** official check in.
- 1430 Coach leaves hotel for Burnham Thorpe. Arrival 1530.
- 1530 Village Nelson Trail (one hour walking trail).
- 1700 **Burnham Thorpe Village Hall - AGM**
- 1800 Talk by Graham Capel on 'Nelson's first battle – Nicaragua 1780'.
- 1830 'Bubbly' reception and canapés.
- 1900 **The Lord Nelson Pub, Burnham Thorpe - First Trafalgar Dinner** including Talk by Ray Aldis 'Young Nelson', & Immortal Memory Toast.
- 2230 Coach returns to King's Lynn. Arrival 2300 approx.

SATURDAY 22 October

- 1000 Walk around historic King's Lynn with local historian Dr Paul Richards.
- 1200 Lunch at your leisure.
- 1430 'Nelson Roadshow' in the Nelson Room. 10 items discussed by experts
Martyn Downer, Peter Clayton and Graham Capel.
- 1600 Talk in the Nelson Room, by Norfolkman Charles Lewis, on 'Nelson and Norfolk'.

Second Trafalgar Dinner in the Dukes Head Hotel Grand Ballroom.

Evening dress and medals.

1800 New Members meet the Committee.

1830 Chairman's Reception for Members and Special Guests.

1930 Dinner, with Guest speaker Dr John Sugden.

2300 Evening concludes. Hotel Bar open.

SUNDAY 23 October

0930 Coach leaves hotel for Burnham Thorpe Church.

1030 **Service at All Saints Parish Church, Burnham Thorpe**

1130 Coach leaves to return to King's Lynn. 'Official' Weekend concludes.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Sunday lunch (limited number) at The Hoste Arms, Burnham Market. The Inn is named after Nelson's protégé, William Hoste who lived at nearby Godwick Hall where his father was Rector of Godwick and Tittleshall. William Hoste was famous for his Frigate victory in the Adriatic in 1811 at the Battle of Lissa where he hoisted the battle signal 'Remember Nelson'.

or Sunday lunch at The Lord Nelson, Burnham Thorpe (individual bookings).

Afternoon Visit to Holkham Hall, home of the Earl of Leicester (who also owns and redeveloped the 'Lord Nelson' at Burnham Thorpe). Nelson certainly visited to collect his 'half pay' from the Coke family administrators. Apparently, he joined shoots there but was not popular. They have a 'Nelson Wing'. Member Stephen Pask is a tour guide there and will be happy to show a Nelson Society party around (last admission is 1600).

EVENT REPORTS 2021/2022

THE NELSON SOCIETY 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION LUNCH, NORWICH 28 NOVEMBER 2021

Sue Morris

Forty years on from the inaugural meeting of The Nelson Society, on the same date and in the same venue, 32 members met at the Norfolk Club in central Norwich to mark this very special anniversary. Celebrating together, in order of membership number 'seniority' were: Keith Evans (member no 4), Ken Flemming, Jo Farmer, Michael Rye & Michael Lavender, Sue Morris, Bob & Heather Brister, Margaret Blandford-Baker, Paul & Chrissie Ganjou, Graham Capel, Jeanette Ryder, Ray & Liz Aldis, Chris & Beryl Brett, Martin Fisher, Peter & Rosie Gutteridge, David Glanville, Tony & Wendy Finnegan-Butler, Andrew & Evelyn Lindqvist, John Rushman & Linda Leong-Son, Jenny Newbold, Richard & Janet Cogman, and David & Sheila Higgins. Members reminisced over a welcome drink in the Club's elegant but cosy 18th century Library before moving into the Dining Room. There we were able to view a display of Society memorabilia and some of the original issues of the 'Nelson Dispatch', before

sitting for a 3-course lunch, accompanied by wine specially labelled for the occasion. Apologies and greetings were received from David Hilton, John Shotter (sadly both unable to attend on the day due to the inclement November weather), Graham Barker (member no 9), Thomas Hardy, David Butcher, Louis Hodgkin, Michael Lord, Jan West & Judy Cant (daughters of the late Derek & Mary Hayes), Peregrine Hood, Raglan Tribe, Clinton & Kay Lee, Kate Keen (daughter of the late Jean & Frank Pond), Alan & Pam Saunders, John & Linda Webster, Nola Wright, Rainer Lemp, Henry Upton and David Muriss. Vice Chairman Chris Brett read out messages from Michael Nash and Josephine Newman (Founder Members). Michael's address describing the formation of the Society is reproduced in full after this report. Michael kindly donated three limited edition copies of his book 'Southey's Nelson –Bibliography of the 1813-1857 English Editions of Robert Southey's *Life of Nelson*' for a prize draw, and these were very well received. All guests were presented with a copy of Sue Morris's 'The Nelson Society: 40 Years' - officially published on 28 November 2021 - and each copy was dated and specially labelled for the occasion. Chairman Graham Capel addressed the guests and invited Keith Evans – the most 'senior' member present and the only person present who had also been at the inaugural meeting in 1981 – to speak and propose a toast to 'The Nelson Society'. All in all it was a lovely and fitting occasion which inspired great pride in the many achievements of the Society and also reflected the fun and enjoyment members have had over 40 years. We all anticipate success for the Society for another 40 years at least! Thank you to Chris Brett for organising this very enjoyable and appropriate event, and to the Norfolk Club staff for helping to make the event so special.

MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER MEMBER MICHAEL NASH FOR THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NELSON SOCIETY

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen

It was with enormous regret that I had to decline the very kind invitation from our Chairman and Committee to join you in celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the formation of The Nelson Society in the splendid surroundings of the Norfolk Club. However in my absentia I have been permitted to say a few words and I thought it might be an appropriate occasion to describe the events that led up to the inaugural meeting in 1981, as it occurred to me that this has never been written down before.

The idea of forming a society to honour Lord Nelson and to draw together like-minded folk who shared this absorbing interest, gradually formulated in my mind over the winter of 1978-79. The idea was not a new one, however, although I was not aware of this at the time. Unfortunately, I did not have the pleasure of meeting the celebrated naval historian and biographer, Oliver Warner, but I did get to know his widow, Elizabeth, around about 1984, together with their son Charles and daughter Olivia.

The Nelson Society 40th Anniversary Celebration at the Norfolk Club



Ken Flemming, Jo Farmer and Keith Evans

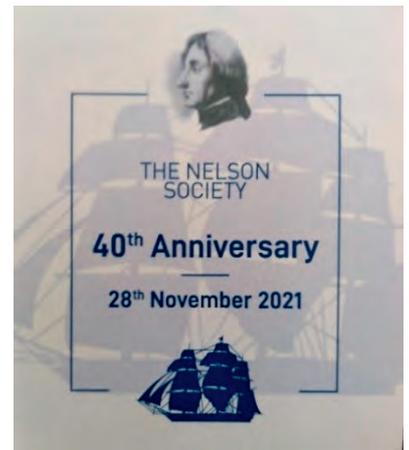


Bob Brister and Chris Brett



Display of Nelson Society memorabilia

Commemorative label for wine and books



Sue Morris with new publication 'The Nelson Society: 40 Years'



Nearest camera left – Liz and Ray Aldis; nearest camera right- Janet and Richard Cogman

My family and I stayed regularly in their beautiful home, Old Manor Cottage, in Haslemere, Surrey during the 1980s. Elizabeth told me one day that her husband had the notion of forming a Nelson Society way back in 1967, but this concept never got off the ground.

My own plans looked just as likely to wither on the vine as I knew no-one who shared my passion for our naval hero. And then fate stepped in and opened doors. In 1980, when I was building up my Nelson library, I read about a gentleman in Norfolk who had recently had the good fortune to buy at auction not one, but two collections of books on Nelson; books that had originally been owned by two Nelsonian authors: Oliver Warner, who had passed away in 1976; and Charles Britton who had died in Birmingham in 1947 – his books lying unwanted in a garage for over 30 years. The Norfolk gentleman was the late Ron Fiske. We corresponded and he invited me to his home in North Walsham. Over lunch I told Ron of my ambition to establish a Nelson Society, and this was met with much enthusiasm. He had heard of, but never met, a businessman in Norwich who also had an interest in the life of Lord Nelson, and Ron was able to furnish me with his name and address. When I returned home to the Wirral, I wrote to the gentleman who, like Nelson himself, had been a pupil at Paston Grammar School. He had been thinking for some time of making an inventory of the relics and Nelsoniana kept at the school and wondered whether I would assist in this formidable task and put our combined knowledge to some use. And so, I came to make the acquaintance of Ben Burgess and we hit it off straight away – complete soulmates – and he too warmly welcomed the idea of forming a society in Nelson’s honour.

It also happened, around the same time, I received a letter from a gentleman in Liverpool who shared an interest in Nelson and had somehow got to hear of me. His name was Jim Saunders and I invited him to my Liverpool office for a coffee one morning. He in turn introduced me to a friend of his who shared the same interest, Keith Evans, and they too were enthused with the idea of a society. By this time I had arranged with Ron and Ben to organise a meeting to be held in Norwich, and Ben being a member of the Norfolk Club suggested this venue. Then, amazingly, an article appeared in a national newspaper from a Miss Josephine Newman, living in Brighton, enquiring whether anyone was interested in forming a society in Nelson’s name. I got in touch with Josephine, explained our advanced plans, and arranged to meet her in London to exchange notes. We met in Trafalgar Square – where else? - and I took her to lunch and invited her to join forces with us in Norwich.

So the stage was set, and with Jim and Keith on board, I drove overnight on the long journey from Hoylake to Norwich where I had arranged to meet Ben and Ron in Ben’s office at 43 King Street at 10.30am. After a welcome cup of coffee, we strolled over to the club on the morning of Saturday 28th November 1981. Advertisements had been placed in various newspapers and we were delighted to find that in total there were thirty-two of us present, with apologies for absence from a further sixteen, so it was apparent from the outset that there was sufficient appeal for such a group.

At that stage Josephine and I were the only two founding members. Before the meeting began, Ron asked me whether, in deference to his age, Josephine and I would be willing to make Ben a Founder member too? We were both happy to accept the suggestion, and so the three of us posed for the photographer from the Eastern Daily Press who had been asked along to record the auspicious occasion. I invited Ron to

chair the meeting which began at 11.30am precisely, and as positions were discussed and agreed upon, that role was confirmed, and I took on the responsibility as editor of a quarterly journal we decided to call The Nelson Dispatch. I had written to The Right Honourable Earl Nelson and he had consented to be our first President. Sadly, like so many stalwarts of those early days, Peter is no longer with us. Annual subscription was set at £5 with £2 for junior members. Jim Saunders was appointed Publicity Officer, Keith Evans Vice-Chairman, Ben Burgess Treasurer, Josephine Newman Secretary, and her friend the late Richard Barttelot, Assistant Secretary. The first committee meeting was set for 9th January 1982 and was held at Rickmansworth, our comfortable home for a good number of years to follow.

A word should be said about those present that day. They included no less than three descendants of Nelson's family: Mrs Berney, Mr Goulty and Mr Risebrook. Also present were Colonel Ken Marshall, a former Headmaster of the Paston School; Derek and Mary Hayes who both served this Society so faithfully for many, many years; Graham Barker of Wells-next-the-Sea; Jean Pond who sadly passed away in April this year at the age of 94. Jean would have relished being here with you today; the late Jill Ford who knew more about the Hoste family than anyone living or dead; Les Winter, landlord of the Lord Nelson pub in Burnham Thorpe, a real old character. In addition, those who sent in apologies for absence included Earl Nelson, Lord Walpole, the Rev Cecil Isaacson – Rector of Nelson's church in Burnham Thorpe; and the late Tom Pocock, one of Nelson's most distinguished biographers.

It is fitting that we remind ourselves of the aims and objects of the society that were laid down forty years ago in this club: 'To promote interest in, and appreciation of, the outstanding qualities of leadership and patriotism shown by Admiral Lord Nelson, and to bring together fellow enthusiasts'. The view was also expressed that day that the Society should be concerned with the continuing relevance of the professional life and example of Lord Nelson, and to encourage original research into his life and times. I think all here present will agree that committees and members past and present – despite some inevitable bumps in the road – have lived up to those goals and ambitions and have proven themselves worthy of the trust and responsibilities set in motion on that memorable day forty years ago.

I will close this address by wishing everyone a splendid celebratory luncheon and by recalling a saying that our late friend, Colin White, was fond of expressing when he was unable to attend a function. "I am sorry I cannot be with you", he would say, "but if you see a fly on the wall, that will be me." I echo Colin's words and would beg you not to swat the fly on this occasion!

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for listening to me. I trust you will be raising a glass to 'The Immortal Memory'. I will join you from afar. Let us spare a thought for those who have crossed the Bar, especially those we have lost from the original thirty-two present in this club forty years to the day. May the Nelson Society survive to see another forty years. Perhaps this might be a good time to hand in my 'apology for absence' for 2061, as I rather think I shall be otherwise engaged that day!!

Michael Nash

Founder and Life Member of The Nelson Society

Hoylelake, 19 September 2021

BATTLE OF CAPE ST VINCENT LUNCHEON AND LECTURE, UNION JACK CLUB, LONDON, FRIDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2022



The 2022 Battle of Cape St Vincent commemorative Lecture and Luncheon was held on Friday 11 February at The Union Jack Club, London SE1 8UJ. Over a glass of wine and buffet lunch, 44 members and guests enjoyed the opportunity to relax, mix and catch up. We then settled back to listen to the Lecture ‘The Nelson Conspiracy’, given by Nelson Society Vice Chairman, Chris Brett. Chris explained that the most recent research about the West Indian plantation owners’ attempt to embroil Nelson in their efforts to subvert the abolition of the slave trade legislation, had led to some surprising new discoveries, which he would now reveal.

Chris went on to give the background. In June 1805, whilst on HMS *Victory* pursuing the French fleet across the Atlantic trying to bring it to battle, Nelson wrote to Simon Taylor, a wealthy plantation and slave owner on Jamaica. In that letter Nelson offers his support to the colonists’ cause in opposing abolition of the slave trade. However, detailed analysis of that letter suggests that the support offered was carefully qualified, and the views expressed were intended for the recipient’s eyes only, and not for public broadcast. Then in 2020 Martyn Downer came across a purported copy of the letter and, although this was not in Nelson’s handwriting, this copy opened the door on the world of the planters and their attempts to embroil Nelson and his posthumous reputation in the slave trade debates. This letter was demonstrated to be a forgery, a heavily doctored version of Nelson’s original tract.

A detailed examination of the changes led to an astounding discovery: that Prince William Henry, a friend of Nelson’s and the future King William IV, was the person most likely to have been feeding information in the form of Nelson’s correspondence to the planters, to help them in their cause. Prince William Henry was well known for his support of slavery based, he said, on his years of experience in the Caribbean in the Navy (he was hardly likely to have been confronted with the hardships of slavery), and to the extent that there was concern that he would not approve the King’s speech containing the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1834!

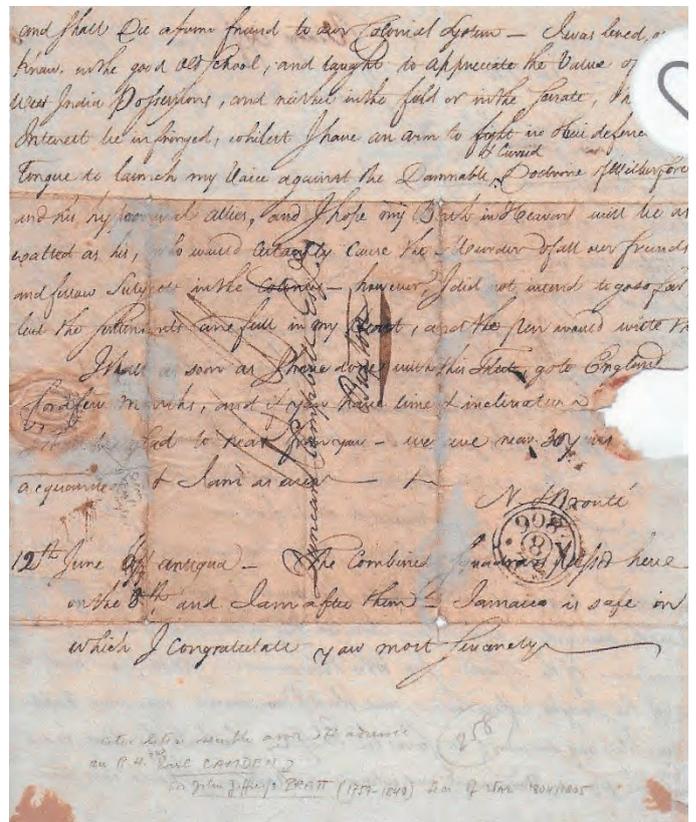
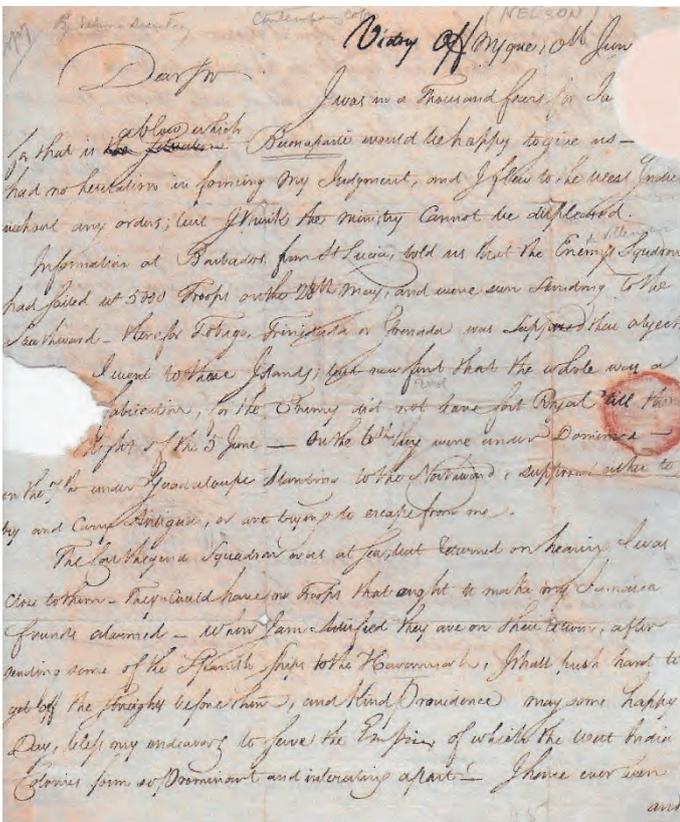
A further significant discovery came in the form of a second forged version of Nelson’s letter. This was sent to a Duncan Campbell in Buxton whose role in the anti-abolition campaign is still to be clarified. The conclusions were clear, however. The plantation owners were mounting a strong, wide-reaching and

sophisticated campaign which involved Nelson from beyond the grave and for many years thereafter.

This version of the forged letter is also intriguing in that later pencil notes on it suggest that it was sent to Sir John Jeffreys Pratt, Secretary for War in Pitt's government and later President of the Council. This suggests that the Nelson conspiracy was far reaching.

Another recent discovery relates to a letter from Nelson to Nicholas Vansittart, the Secretary to the Treasury and, later, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In a letter to Lt Layman, who had made proposals to replace slave labour in the West Indies with paid labour, Vansittart confirmed that he (Layman) and his ideas had been introduced to him through a letter from Lord Nelson. The terminology of the letter confirms that Nelson was cognisant of the proposals and supported them as, otherwise, he would not have put forward a junior officer to senior members of the government, especially on so sensitive and serious an issue. The Nelson letter referred to by Vansittart suggests that Nelson's purported support for the anti-abolitionists (in his letter to Simon Taylor) could only have been a qualified and expedient support due to the probable consequences of abolition at that moment in time on the war with France.

Following Chris's lecture and a lively discussion with members of the audience, the 2022 St Vincent event concluded. Thanks are due to Marina Deestan-Jones and Chris Brett for organising this very enjoyable event.



Duncan Campbell's letter

**WHITSTABLE MUSEUM
SEA FENCIBLES – NELSON AND THE EAST SWALE SQUADRON
JULY-OCTOBER 1801**

Mark Harrison



Nelson and The East Swale Squadron – Copyright Ellie Beer and Mark Harrison FSA

Mark Harrison FSA is a historian and archaeologist who specialises in the history and archaeology of Whitstable, in Kent, and the surrounding villages. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and a Fellow of Cranfield University and the University of Kent. Mark works for Historic England as the Head of Heritage Crime Strategy. He is Director of Timescapes Kent. In September 2021 he mounted an exhibition at Whitstable Museum on the north Kent coast. He has kindly sent us this short summary of how his research developed from a schoolboy memory into a full-scale exhibition. He is currently preparing a full academic paper and small book on the subject.

In the 1970's I was privileged to secure a summer job in one of Whitstable's oldest and most reputable boatbuilders, Anderson Rigden & Perkins. The company had a distinguished history of building and restoring vessels of all shapes and sizes, including patrol vessels for the Royal Navy during the Second World War. As a teenager, everyone in the yard seemed old to me, however,

some of the most experienced shipwrights, riggers and engineers were in their seventies. They were highly skilled tradesmen and highly skilled story tellers. A regular lunchtime tale was that their ancestors, namely their five times great grandfathers, had not only fought with, but had actually met Admiral Nelson. These accounts were most often met with derision and ridicule, and my initial thoughts were that the memories related to Nelson at the Nile, Copenhagen or Trafalgar. Little did I or my fellow workmates realise that the truth lay a lot closer to home.

In the midst of the pandemic I was undertaking research into the threat of amphibious landings in the Thames Estuary by German naval forces during the First World War. During my trawl of the archives, I secured several references relating to the appointment of Viscount Lord Nelson to coordinate naval forces to counter an anticipated incursion by French Revolutionary forces in the summer of 1801. The *Kentish Gazette* dated Friday 31 July 1801 states:

‘The command to which Lord Nelson has been appointed is not that of the North Sea Fleet, but it is understood that he is to direct the operations of a flotilla of gun boats and other vessels for the protection of the coasts. His station will be principally to the westward of the Nore. He will have an Admiral under him. His Lordship, it is said, is to hoist his flag on board the Amazon frigate. Every person must rejoice to see Lord Nelson, whose courage, enterprize, and vigilance are so pre-eminent, employed in such service. At this moment this species of naval force may be of the utmost utility, and its full effect will be obtained under his direction. Lord Nelson has taken the command in the Channel with distinct and unlimited powers never yet entrusted to any commander of his rank, nor we believe to any but the Lord High Admiral of Great Britain. They cannot be lodged in abler or safer hands than in the keeping of this proud boast and bulwark of our country!’

From this initial starting point I was able to work with my team of dedicated and enthusiastic researchers from Timescapes Kent, Whitstable Community Museum and Royal Museums Greenwich in an effort to identify additional information and documentation that would further enhance the assertion made by my former workmates. The task was hindered by the restrictions imposed as part of the emergency health regulations, and I would like to take this opportunity to offer my personal thanks and gratitude to all colleagues who assisted in this undertaking.

The *Porcupine Newspaper* dated 4 August 1801 published the following account:

‘Canterbury - the more the subject of invasion is talked of in this part of the country, the more it has roused that bold spirit of independence and loyalty which has ever characterised the men of Kent; whose boast it is that they have never been conquered. Confident in their own strength, they laugh at the idea of the enemy attempting to land on their shores. Great quantities of ammunition have been lately brought hither from Woolwich: a part of the military quartered here has been sent off to different places along the coast; and every body feels that this

district is now in the best state of defence. The *Redoubt* man of war, Captain Shepperd, together with two gun-brigs, is still lying at Shellness Point, the most desert part of the isle of Sheppey, for the purpose of guarding the entrance to Feversham; and in Whitstable Bay there are a gun-brig, a gun-boat and a revenue cutter. Almost all the oyster dredgers of Feversham and Whitstable are enrolled as sea-fencibles. Many persons here conceive that it would be a matter of great importance and benefit, in case of an invasion, if these dredgers were authorised and directed by Government to carry a six-pounder, or one or two smaller guns in each of their oyster-boats (which are as large as Gravesend boats), and to be in readiness to attack any troops that should endeavour to land. As pilots, they have a perfect knowledge of every part of the Kentish and Sussex coasts, and even of the coasts of France, from the trade they have sometimes carried on there as smugglers; and as seamen they are as skilful, full as alert, as vigorous, and as brave as any in the world. A liberal compensation might be made to them for the loss of their time while acting in the service of Government. One or two hundred vessels might by this means be converted to the most salutary purpose, the defence and salvation of their country. The oyster dredgers at Whitstable, are enrolled and promise much success in throwing shells, in case of invasion.'

A key document in the form of a letter prepared by Captain Shepperd was located in the archives at Greenwich (CRK/14/105). The letter dated 23 July, 1801 was addressed to Vice Admiral Alexander Graeme, Commander in Chief of The Nore. The letter reads:

'From HMS Redoubt off Shellness Point East Swale, 23rd July 1801

Sir,

I had the Honour to receive your Letter of the 21st inst. conveying to me, the opinion of the Comms of the Admiralty respecting the preparations of the Enemy & informing me of the Measures which have been adopted to frustrate their designs. In obedience to your directions, I shall cause the greatest vigilance to be observed on board the vessels, stationed here have my best endeavours to place the Force entrusted to my care, in such situations as appear to me most likely to ensure a successful defence: But as you have been pleased to allow me to lay before you the observations I have made on these parts.

I beg to draw your attention to all the Bays between Margate & this place, but to Whitstable & Hern Bay in particular, where should the Enemy pass the North Foreland, and not attempt to land in Marsh & Westgate Bay it appears to me they might effect (*sic*) their purpose with little difficulty, as the shoalness of the water and intricacies of the Channels, by preventing the operation of our ships of Force, would form the best security of the small flat bottomed vessels of the Enemy.

With the greatest deference I beg to observe, that in opinion (*sic*) a line of gun vessels is essentially necessary to protect those Places, they might lie take the ground, at least at Whitstable Flats, and I believe in Hern Bay also without any risk. The Gore is another place where, if I am not mistaken, a ship of force

might be advantageously stationed. And whereas should the Enemy make an attempt upon any of the Places before mentioned it might be necessary for the Redoubt, & Gun Brigs to quit this anchorage & take some other position that Circumstances might point out as best suited to annoy them; I request I may be allowed to bear a Pilot, to order one to be secured on board each of the said Gun Vessels under my protection.

J.K. SHEPARD

PS. About two hundred stout able men, some of whom are Sea Fencibles might be collected in and about Whitstable to man the Gun Vessels, should it be thought necessary to station any there Mr Stephen Salisbury is a leading man amongst them, would be best able to bring them forward upon an emergency.' [*Captain Stephen Salisbury owned a Hoy and large areas of land in the local area*].

Following his appointment on 24 July Nelson made his way by horse chaise from London to Sheerness Dockyards situated on the Isle of Sheppey. Nelson was accompanied by his *aide de camp* Captain Edward Parker. In a letter to the Admiralty dated 30 July 1801, Nelson sets out the tasks and actions of the days since taking command:

‘As I had arranged everything possible for me to do at Sheerness, I thought it best to set off for the Downs by the way of Feversham, as I wished to see Captain Becher on the subject of the Sea-Fencibles. [*Captain Alexander Becher commanded the Sea Fencibles for Whitstable and Faversham*].

I had previously sent Captain Shepard to desire that a Mr. Salisbury would meet me; as he was a person of respectability, rich, (got it by the fair trade,) and of great influence amongst the Seafaring men on that part of the Coast, particularly about Whitstable. I made him sensible of the necessity of our Ships, which were to be stationed off the Sand-heads, being manned. He thought if the Admiralty, through me, gave the men assurances that they should be returned to their homes, when the danger of the Invasion was passed, that the Sea-folk would go; but that they were always afraid of some trick: this service, my dear Lord, above all others, would be terrible for me to get up and harangue like a Recruiting Serjeant! I do not think I could get through it; but as I am come forth, I feel that I that I ought to do this disagreeable service as well as any other if judged necessary.” [*The Life of Admiral Lord Nelson K. B. from his Lordship's Manuscripts*’. Volume 2. James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur, 1809. p29].

Examination of documents held by the Royal Museums Greenwich include a set of orders (CRK 14/106) given by ‘*Lord Viscount Nelson to Captains to put themselves under his Command.*’

No account can be found to date of the speech that Nelson provided to the Sea Fencibles. It is possible that this was not undertaken in person but was delegated to Becher to communicate to his men.

Before leaving Sheerness, Nelson had made the first set of orders directing which ships and vessels would be stationed. The handwritten orders, signed by Nelson at Sheerness, 27 July 1801, illustrate two distinct and characteristic hands.

The main script is clear and concise and possibly belongs to Nelson's aide Captain Edward Parker. The annotations and amendments, however, are less precise and potentially belong to Nelson himself. Further research will be necessary to validate these assertions.

The document provides a detailed list of ships and vessels and their respective captains. For the purpose of this article I have only sought to include those craft that were ordered to the East Swale or Whitstable Flatts.

'Redoubt' Floating battery - James Keith Shepard

'Providence' Cutter - William Cowan

'Firm' Floating battery - Bulkely Mackworth-Praed

'Wolfe' Gun boat - William Robinson

'Gallant' Gun Brig - William Lyall

'Haughty' Gun Brig - William Field.

Over the coming days and weeks Nelson would deploy additional vessels to the East Swale and Whitstable Flatts, in particular flat-bottomed Gun barges.

The initial findings of this research were shown to the public at a small exhibition hosted by Whitstable Community Museum and Gallery during the Autumn of 2021. Local artist Ellie Beer was commissioned to produce a reconstruction of how the East Swale Squadron would have been deployed.

The next phase of research will seek to provide a focus on the identification of those Sea Fencibles who lived and worked in Whitstable, Seasalter, Tankerton and Swalecliffe. This will be achieved through examination and correlation of family archives, crew manifests and pay-lists.

Although it is too late to inform my former workmates of our recent findings, we can however take the next best step by informing their living descendants of the critical role their forefathers played in protecting Kent and Britain from enemy invasion.



Pat Todd, Lord Mayor of Canterbury and Faversham, and artist Ellie Beer at the recent Whitstable Museum exhibition.

Timescapes Kent is a community volunteer group that is committed to historical and archaeological research that will extend and enhance understanding of the development of Whitstable.

The members of Timescapes Kent are passionate about the past and in the sharing of their findings with the wider community.

**MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS
EMMA'S SONGBOOKS: REDISCOVERED MUSIC FOR NELSON
A CONCERT ON SATURDAY 11 DECEMBER 2021**

Sue Morris



In the Museum of London (MoL)'s library, within the sheets of three music books previously owned by Lady Emma Hamilton, lay several unknown songs dedicated to her lover Lord Nelson's naval victories, which were re-discovered by MoL Librarian Lluís Tembleque Teres, who previously shared with us his re-discovery of Emma Hamilton's score for 18th-century composer Joseph Haydn's masterpiece *The Creation* (see 'Nelson Dispatch' Vol 14 part 2 p91).

When Lluís discovered songs dedicated to Nelson that were little known and even unrecorded, there was much excitement, and as a result the Museum of London collaborated with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama to present a wonderful concert, which I was lucky to attend as part of a small audience which included several descendants of Nelson and Emma. A video recording of the concert was also available to stream after the event.

Lluís introduced the evening by explaining his discovery of the music and the development of the concert. The programme would be based on a volume of manuscript music, which was donated to the Museum in 1931 by collectors Ernest and Rachel Makower along with two other volumes (Emma's personal copy of *The Creation*, and another volume of printed music). Other volumes of Emma's songbooks are held by The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, New Haven, US (18 volumes) and the Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, London (2 volumes). The Museum of London website gives a great deal more detail on the provenance of the songbooks now in museum collections, and a careful analysis of the different bindings, for those interested.



Emma's songbooks (copyright MoL)

The MoL songbooks contain over 20 music scores collected during her life. Among these are several scores — one sea shanty, another cantata and two hymns — dedicated to Lord Nelson's naval victories at Cape St. Vincent (1797), Aboukir Bay (Battle of the Nile, 1798) and Copenhagen (1801). Each piece was written by a personal friend of Emma and it is likely that each gave their scores to her as a gift. These books include a mixture of styles of music and composers, with some recurring names such as Italian musicians G. G. Ferrari, G. Millico, N. Signorile and D. Cimarosa, Irish tenor M. Kelly, and French composer A. Rosselli, among others. The bound music albums would have been part of Emma's personal library and would have been included in the 14 carriages and three baggage wagons that transported all the Hamiltons' belongings from Italy back to Britain in 1800.

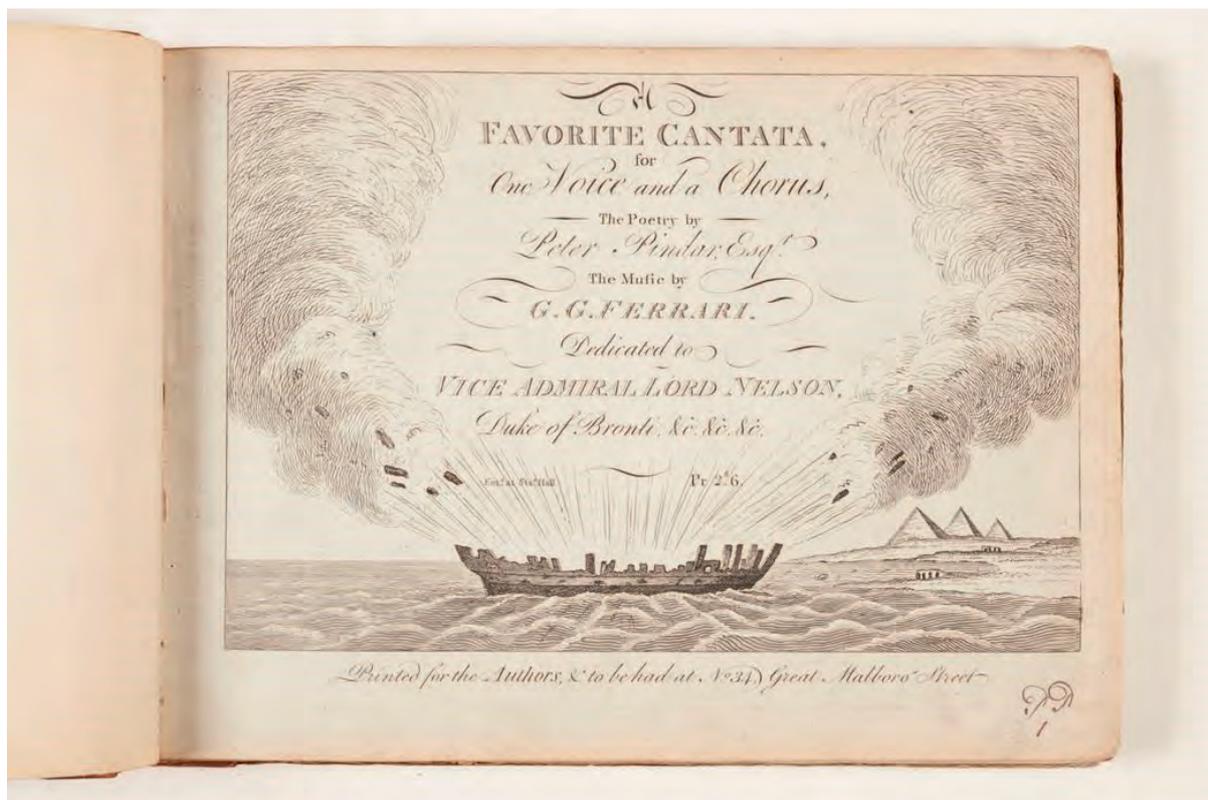
Some of the music on the concert programme was commissioned in 1802 – coincidentally the opening year of the very same Docklands building in which we now sat for the performance.

Lluis then introduced the musical programme, to be performed by singer Mhairi Lawson from the Guildhall School, accompanied by Guildhall performers on the harp, flute, fortepiano and violin.

The first item sung by Mhairi was the 1805-published Cantata by G. G. Ferrari, with lyrics by poet Peter Pindar, celebrating Nelson's victory at the Nile in 1798. It was commissioned by Emma when Ferrari was visiting Merton Place in 1802. Ferrari planned the Cantata in Italian but asked Pindar to write the lyrics in English. Ferrari and Pindar spent a week at Merton, where they wrote and performed it to great approval. In his autobiography, Ferrari implies that Nelson might not have shared quite the same passion for music: 'while the beautiful siren was singing her heart out, his Lordship was slumbering...'

While it was printed and made available commercially in London, few copies of this score seem to have survived.

The lyrics include the stirring words: "*...Yet who alas can blame the Lyre, that pours a sound... to Britons dear? ... the song shall future heroes fire, and bid them kindle as they hear, through dangers seek the wreath of fame, and bleed to gain a Nelson's name...*".



'Favourite Cantata' by G G Ferrari and Peter Pindar, with illustration of ship 'L'Orient' exploding at the Battle of the Nile, and Pyramids in the background (copyright MoL)

Mhairi then gave a talk on 'Emma's singing', describing her musical education. Emma developed her performance skills early in life, but it was in Italy that she was exposed to a formal education; her music lessons in Naples are very well recorded in her biographies. Even before marrying her, Sir William was keen on offering her an education ("manners, language and musick [sic]"), so he employed respectable teachers such as Signor Gallucci, who taught the soon-to-be Lady Hamilton music three times a day. Her other renowned teachers were Angelo Diopioli, Giuseppe Aprile and Giuseppe Millico (for singing) and Fedele Fenaroli (keyboard accompaniment). Italian household names such as D. Cimarosa, Giovanni Paisiello and Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi had her singing their newest works. The complexity of some of the pieces in Emma's collection implies a degree of accomplishment on her part. No doubt that the earliest pieces in her library would have been collected during her musical training in Italy, the scores being used during her lessons, practices and numerous performances. Emma's skills were soon broadly recognised, and she often performed for local personalities and foreign visitors. By the time Emma Hart became Lady Hamilton (1791), popular magazines were praising "her elegant accomplishments and great musical abilities", which were now famous all around Europe.

Mhairi's second performance was Millico's two 'Ariettes' and 'Canzoncine per chitarra'. Millico was a much-travelled castrato singer and composer, and was Emma's singing teacher in Naples. The first Ariette, sung in Italian, described the

beauty of the sea and ended with an invitation ‘Let us go and play there, my darling.’ The second Ariette took the form of a lover’s complaint. Next was ‘Canzoncine per chitarra’ (Songs for guitar), appropriately as the MoL also has Emma’s guitar which was also donated by the Makowers. Sadly, the guitar is too fragile to be played now, and Mhairi accompanied herself on a modern folk guitar, but Emma’s guitar was on display and we were able to have a close look afterwards. A beautiful instrument, made by John Preston c 1780, it features a hammer box, which was considered more elegant for women to play, rather than plucking the strings. The ‘Canzoncine’ manuscript has Emma’s own embellishments and the words ‘Composed by EH’ in Emma’s handwriting. Sung in Italian, the mournful songs described the pain of abandonment and the cruelty of fate.



Emma Hamilton’s guitar, made by John Preston c 1780

Next on the programme, Dr Christopher Suckling, Head of Historical Performance at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, gave a video presentation on ‘Domestic music making’. He explained that the purpose of domestic music in the late 18th century was largely to ‘kill time’, well-to-do women often having more time than men to become extremely accomplished even though they never performed in public as professionals. Musical evenings were on the face of it a social diversion, but songs had the function of strengthening social networks and in this case, reinforcing support for Nelson. While the ladies played, composing was, however, seen as an appropriate hobby for the nobleman, and many of the songs in Emma’s books were composed by men friends, such as the Duke of Queensberry, (aka ‘Old Q’) better known for his scandalous behaviour than his musical talents. It is difficult to judge Emma’s ability from documents alone, however the fact that Haydn gave her music and she spent a good deal of time with him, must have counted for something, and she was often described as having a ‘heavenly’ voice.

In the second half of the concert, Mhairi, accompanied on the piano, performed Haydn's songs with lyrics taken from Shakespeare: 'The Spirit's Song' (*'Hark! What I tell to thee, Nor sorrow oe'r the tomb, My spirit wanders free, And waits till thine shall come'...*) and 'She never told her love', (... *'She sat like Patience on a monument, Smiling at grief'*). We could imagine Emma singing these plaintive and mournful songs, like Mhairi with great pathos and emotion. In the final part of the concert we heard Michael Kelly's very jolly song 'Once more let Fame her trumpet sound', and two of the Duke of Queensberry's Sea Songs 'In spite of the Russians', and 'With Grog and Nelson'. Mhairi rehearsed the unsuspecting audience who then joined in with great enthusiasm the rousing choruses of these songs.

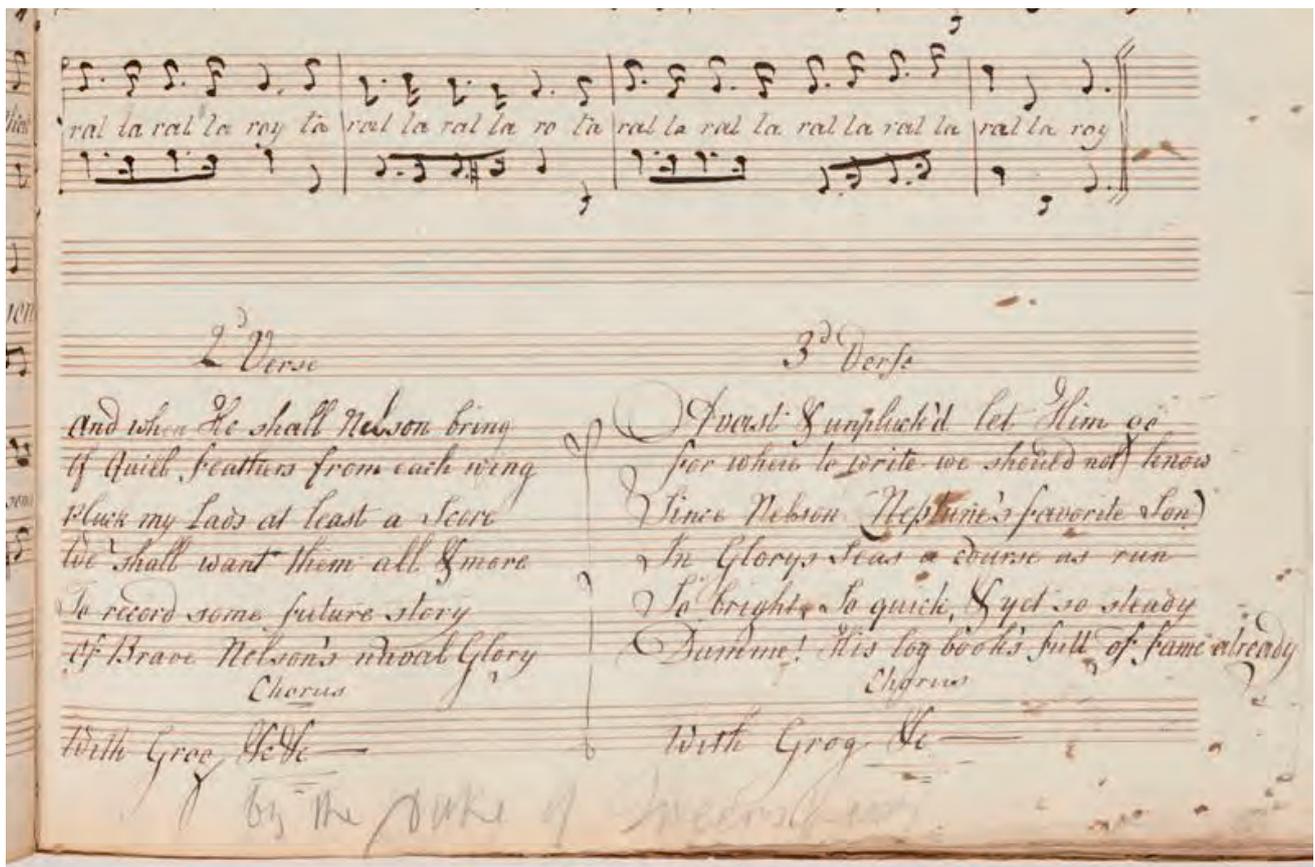


Michael Kelly 'Once more let Fame her Trumpet Sound' (copyright MoL)

Michael Kelly was an Irish tenor, protégé of Sir William Hamilton in Naples and met Emma there in 1801-02. Kelly dedicated the original music and lyrics to Emma, celebrating Nelson's victory at Copenhagen, and wrote it in April 1801, within

hours of the news of Britain's victory over the Danish fleet reaching London. Its performance at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane was reported by the press of the time, although with conflicting reports about its score. It includes the lyrics: *'Once more let Fame her Trumpet sound, To speak our seamen's worth. Once more those foes whom envy joined Have felt Britannia's worth. By Parker and by Nelson led, All opposition's vain. At Copenhagen's gates our tars, Have crushed the haughty Danes, And Denmark's fall the signal be Of Happiness and Peace!'*

The final 2 songs of the evening were written by William Douglas, 4th Duke of Queensberry ('Old Q'), a landowner and society figure whose gambling, immense wealth and horse racing exploits have overshadowed his musical skills...until now! Biographers say that he had an ear for music and could play the harpsichord. The sea shanty tribute to Nelson, whose lyrics were in a letter from him to William Douglas, was sold at an auction in 2013. The new discovery shows that the Duke added music and a chorus to words transcribed by Nelson after he heard his crew chant the song in the aftermath of victory at Cape St. Vincent. William Douglas's authorship of the score is recorded in Emma's own hand. The first celebrates Copenhagen and contains the lyrics *'In spite of the Russians, the Swede and the Dane, Old England forever shall rule o'er the main, And while there's a Nelson to fight on our side, Our fleets on the ocean in triumph shall ride'*.

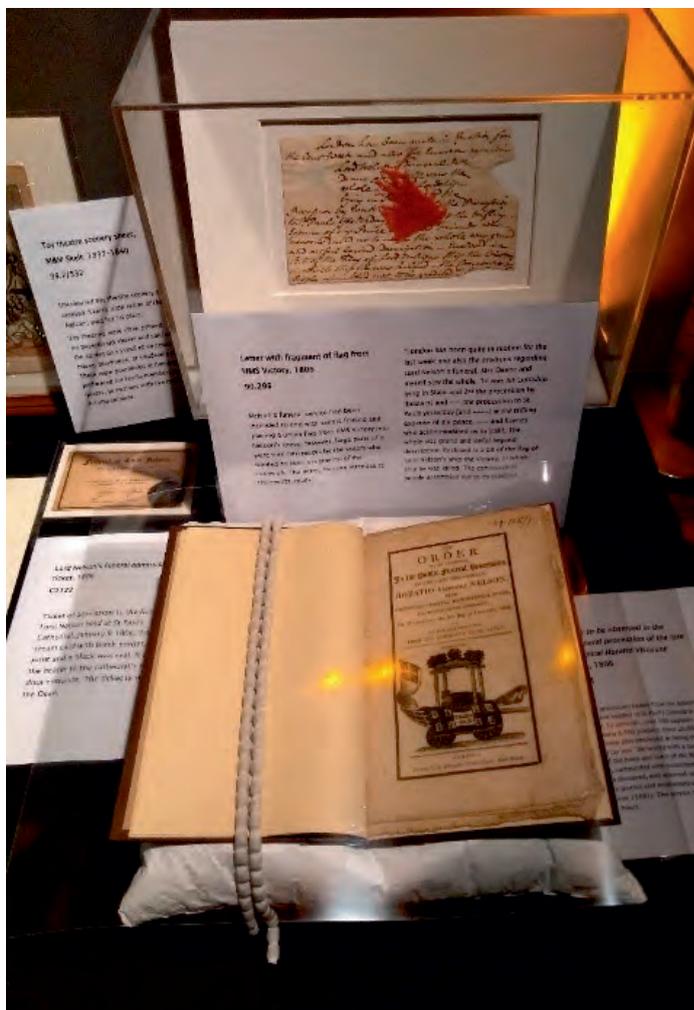


Queensberry's 'With Grog and Nelson' (copyright MoL)

The second ‘With Grog and Nelson’ includes the words ‘*Let but British thunder by Nelson be hurled, To fight single-handed and conquer the world..... And when He shall Nelson bring, Of quill feathers from each wing Pluck my Lads at least a score, We shall want them all and more, To record some future Story, Of Brave Nelson’s Naval Glory. Avast & unpluck’d let Him go, For where to write we should not know, Since Nelson (Neptune’s favourite son) In Glory’s seas a course is run, So bright, so quick, & yet so steady, Dam me! His logbook’s full of fame already!*’

The audience joined in the Chorus ‘*With Grog and Nelson both together, We’ll drink and conquer in all weather*’, with plenty of extra ‘*ral la ral la ral la ral la roy*’s bringing the concert to a rousing end.

To complement the musical performance we were able to view at close hand a display of 15 objects from the MoL collection, rarely on display and curated



specially for the event, including Emma’s songbooks, ‘Creation’ score, and Guitar; Wanhal’s ‘Battle of Aboukir’ score; contemporary fashion prints showing ‘Egyptian’ and military/naval styling; Gillray caricatures including ‘Dido in despair’ 1801 and ‘The Plagues of Egypt’ 1798; Nelson Funeral ticket, and framed letter from an attendee at Nelson’s funeral, with a fragment of the flag from HMS *Victory*; objects associated with ‘Old Q’ including a snuffbox, print of ‘the old goat of Piccadilly’, Rowlandson cartoon; ‘View of Merton Place’ (Hughson) engraving 1806-9; and a Toy theatre scenery sheet ‘Death of Nelson’ – 1837-40.

Letter with fragment of ‘Victory’ flag, Order of Nelson’s Funeral Procession

The letter describes the event as follows: ‘*London has been quite in motion for the last week and also the environs regarding Lord Nelson’s funeral, Mrs Deane and myself saw the whole. 1st was his Lordship lying in State and 2nd the procession by [boaters] and --- the procession to St Paul’s yesterday [and---] at the trifling expense of six pence. --- and friends who accommodated us to [call]. The whole*

was grand and awful beyond description. Enclosed is a bit of the flag of Lord Nelson's ship the Victory, in which ship he was killed. The concourse of people assembled not to be credited..'

Conclusions

This concert was a wonderful window into Emma's life and was proof that she was a talented and well-connected woman in her own right. Music was obviously a passion and an important part of her life. We will never know what Emma's voice really sounded like, but this concert brought Emma to life in a unique and memorable way.

We must not ignore how special these songs would have been to Emma, how retaining their manuscripts probably felt like holding onto private letters to Nelson. By gifting them to Emma, the friends that composed them were paying a private tribute to a love story that others saw as a very public scandal. As a whole, the wealth of Lady Hamilton's music collection echoes her personal connections with some of the most famous composers of the period, adding, many years later, interesting details to a story that continues to generate a great deal of interest.

We are grateful to Lluís Tembleque Teres and the Museum of London for the additional information and photos used in this article.

THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM, LONDON FIGHTING TALK: ONE BOY'S JOURNEY FROM ABANDONMENT TO TRAFALGAR

Jeanette Ryder

I first visited the Foundling Museum in Brunswick Square, London, a few years ago, and was very interested to learn about the children who had spent time in the care of the Foundling Hospital, whose charter was granted in 1739. I returned in December 2021 to view a special exhibition called 'Fighting Talk, one man's journey from abandonment to Trafalgar'.

Fifty years after the Foundling Hospital placed its last pupil in foster care, the museum opened in 2004 as the Foundling Museum. The museum you see today was constructed in the 1930's on the grounds of the old Foundling Hospital. More than 200 years before that, a philanthropist, Thomas Coram, had established the hospital to care for abandoned babies. He was appalled by the conditions children faced in London as, although the city was a powerhouse of industry and wealth, it was also disease-ridden and polluted and child mortality rates soared. Every year about a thousand babies were abandoned by parents, suffering extreme poverty or disease.

The Foundling Hospital was designed to care for and educate England's most vulnerable young people. One of my favourite artists, William Hogarth, played a big part in Coram's vision by encouraging leading artists to donate their work, and he helped to transform the Hospital into the UK's first public gallery.

The composer Frideric Handel held benefit concerts in the Hospital's chapel, so it became the place to be seen, and to be seen helping.

The recent exhibition 'Fighting talk' told the extraordinary story of a working class boy, George King (10 June 1787 - 31 July 1857) who was child number 18,053 at the Foundling Hospital. There he was taught to read and write - a rare skill for working-class people in the eighteenth century. George's education enabled him to create his own account of a life lived through some of history's most momentous events, including travelling to newly-independent America, the Cadiz blockade and his first-hand account of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The astonishing original manuscript of George King's autobiography was shown as part of the display, which also included a fragment of the flag from Nelson's coffin, correspondence between the hospital's matron and Lady Emma Hamilton (annotated by Nelson), and two rare Naval General Service Medals, of which only 221 were awarded retrospectively when it was first issued in 1849.

King's autobiography tells a fascinating history of a boy growing up in the eighteenth century. Originally apprenticed to a confectioner in London, King ran away and was press-ganged into the Navy in 1804. His memoir provides accounts of life below deck, on shore and in battle, including his account of the Battle of Trafalgar where he fought aboard HMS *Polyphemus*, which took 200 French prisoners and towed HMS *Victory*, bearing Nelson's body back to Gibraltar. The exhibition also deals with the physical and mental toll of George's life at sea as described in his autobiography; nowadays we would recognise the signs of someone struggling with the effect of witnessing the horrors of war at close quarters, but these effects were not always addressed in George's day.

George King's health began to decline after 24 years in the Navy and so he changed tack and travelled to Charleston in America where, amazingly, he worked as a teacher. Here he must have witnessed the life of enslaved people in South Carolina. Eventually he returned to England on a ship carrying cotton. Back in England he tried dock work, haymaking, hop-pickling and being a policeman, but when he fell on hard times he was lucky enough to gain a place at the Royal Naval Hospital in Greenwich, where he ended his days and died in 1857. His 'Diary of the Incidents of the Life of the Undermentioned' was written when he was settled in Greenwich, but it is thought he had kept notes so he could write up the 'incidents' in great detail. Part of the exhibition is an excellent film presentation, which shows the actual pages with sections read out by an actor, including expert curator talks which give useful background to George's story.

I found the exhibition very interesting and was pleased to learn that Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge become the Museum's Patron in 2019. This patronage recognises the Museum's work with vulnerable children and young adults, to improve their skills, confidence and wellbeing, by delivering training, mentorship programmes and creative projects, led and developed by contemporary artists, writers and musicians, using creative action to transform and improve the lives of young people who have lived in the care system.

ARTICLES

THE BOY ON THE BURNING DECK The Remarkable Story Linking a Young Boy to Admiral Nelson and Napoleon Bonaparte Henri Lachèze

PART THREE

Benjamin Hallowell Carew (1761 – 1834)



Rear Admiral Sir Benjamin Hallowell Carew (1760-1834) by John Hayter (1800-1895) British School (Royal Museums Greenwich)

Benjamin Hallowell is pivotal to our story. At the Battle of the Nile he commanded HMS *Swiftsure* and witnessed first-hand the tragic events on the night of August 1st. He was among the group of officers whom Nelson called his ‘Band of Brothers’ but although familiar to naval historians, his name is barely recognised today. Personally, I have always had a soft spot for Hallowell because although he had a prestigious naval career and covered himself with honour and glory, he seems to stand out from his contemporaries through his sense of humour and undoubted eccentricity. His portraits show a man seemingly more relaxed than his fellow officers.

Hallowell is often described as a Canadian but he was in fact born in Massachusetts. He began his career at the age of 16 in 1777 and ended as a full admiral, a man much respected and admired. Described as ‘a giant of a man’ with thin hair, penetrating eyes and boxer’s features, his bearing was thought of as ideal, strong and corpulent but not overweight. A man of ‘sterling good sense’, he was also described as ‘enterprising, cheerful and thoughtful, of a very generous nature’. Typically when he captained the *Courageous*, he famously set up a band to entertain his men on board. By 1798 when the Battle of the Nile took place he was already a much-decorated officer with a great deal of battle experience behind him. When he inherited a large family estate in Canada on condition he change his name to Carew, he left England for Canada and died there in 1834.

The morning after the battle, daylight revealed an appalling scene of floating debris and devastation. Having disposed of the dead and tended to the

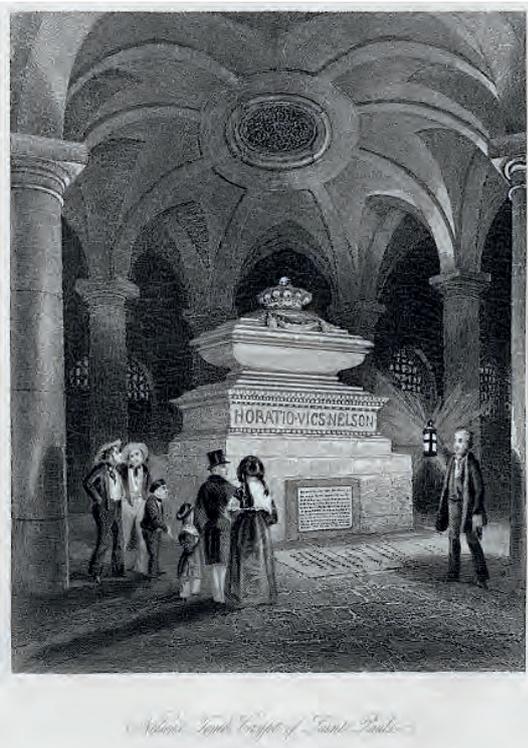
wounded, Hallowell then put his crew to scavenging the valuable wood and iron parts from the wrecked French ships, which he went on to sell, hoping partly to defray the expense of tobacco, fresh fruit and vegetables for his men.

Theophilus Lee, a crew member of the *Swiftsure*, recounts how he struggled in vain to bring aboard some valuable spars and how he requested that Hallowell be informed that he had done his very best to carry out Hallowell's firm orders to retrieve everything possible. Hallowell, instead of holding him to account, typically commended him for his valiant efforts.

Brilliant admiral though he was, it is not for his prowess in battle that he has an important role in this story, but because he was a man who had an unconventional view of the world, as revealed by his decision to ask the ship's carpenters to use the best timbers from *l'Orient* among those salvaged, for a gift he would then make to Admiral Nelson.

The Gift

Some months after the Battle of the Nile, on 23 May 1799 when Hallowell caught up with Nelson's ship in Palermo, he made him this surprising gift - a coffin, described as 'extremely plain', part of the main spar of the destroyed enemy ship, *l'Orient*. It was accompanied by a letter from Hallowell which reads as follows:



"Sir, I have taken the liberty of presenting you a coffin made from the main mast of the *Orient*, that when you have finished your military career in this world you may be buried in one of your trophies. But that period may be far distant is the earnest wish of your sincerest friend, Benjamin Hallowell".

Nelson's Tomb: Engraving, Thomas Shepherd c1830

A certificate was pasted underneath the coffin stating "I do hereby certify that every part of this coffin is made of the wood and iron of the *Orient* most of which was picked up by his Majesty's ship under my command in the Bay of Aboukir".

It surprised and discomfited Nelson's officers yet Nelson himself was delighted with the gift. He was very aware that death was only a gunshot away and considered the coffin to be a timely reminder. He propped it upright in his cabin, but it so distressed both his men and his orderly that he later moved it below decks. It accompanied him on board for six years until his death at

Trafalgar when indeed it was used for his burial, thus serving the purpose for which it had been intended. On the day of his death (21 October 1805), Nelson's body was placed in a cask of brandy to preserve it until it reached England on 4 November. It was then transferred to a lead coffin filled with spirits. After an autopsy it was then transferred yet again to Hallowell's wooden coffin which was itself encased further in two lead and wooden coffins. He was taken ceremonially up the Thames on 8 January 1806 and this multi-layered coffin was placed in the marble sarcophagus originally made in the 16th century for Cardinal Wolsey and donated by George III. It lies today in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral. Few people realise that he is buried in a wooden coffin made from an enemy ship destroyed at the Battle of the Nile.

Hallowell's name may well be associated with great naval prowess but his really interesting contribution to history is his strange and imaginative gift.

Shore Leave

Giancante's link to both Napoleon and Nelson, hinges on Admiral Hallowell's order to his men aboard the *Swiftsure* to collect the floating debris of the exploded *l'Orient*. Not only would salvaging the wood be useful for repairs or to be sold, but also because it would keep his men busy. Like all commanding officers he was anxious to find something to occupy his men when not at sea and, as they were now after the battle, idly anchored off Aboukir. In fact they remained there for many months. This highlights an aspect of seafaring even up to the present day with which many of us are unfamiliar: the boredom of inactive crews when



neither at sea nor in battle. The problems which then ensue, not least the high degree of anti-social behaviour which inactivity engenders, have always been recognised as a precursor to mutiny.

*The 'Hermione' Mutiny,
February 1797
John Augustus Atkinson*

Naval crews, then as now, were composed predominantly of young men in the prime of life and who, when deprived of female company, confined for many months in unsanitary and dangerous conditions, away from loved ones, badly nourished and subject to tight restrictions at all times, were frequently inclined to fight, get drunk, become insubordinate, or simply abscond. While kept constantly occupied either in the routine of navigation and maintenance, or swept up in the maelstrom of battle, men had little time to question their treatment or make

trouble. Therefore, given that ships could be at sea for many months, even years, the question of shore leave was paramount.

In 1796 during the 4-year blockade of Toulon, Admiral Collingwood regularly reported on the boredom of his men, reduced to observing the French port, with no chance of action. He describes his endless efforts to distract his restless men by making musical instruments and organising musical evenings.

The mutiny in 1797 of naval crews off Spithead, one of the most serious recorded British mutinies, was triggered by the lack of shore leave and medical services. In modern times, mutiny spread like wildfire in 1931 on the ships of the British Navy, from Portsmouth to Invergordon, the result in part of the rumoured curtailment of Christmas shore leave.

However, although the need for shore leave was recognised as essential for the physical and mental well-being of the men and an opportunity to disembark the injured, sick and incompetent, the dangers it presented were many. The greatest was the high attrition rate (25% or more), men who had to be replaced at a moment's notice. The British had notorious 'press gangs', who forcibly captured able-bodied men on the street and brought them on board ship, a practice only abandoned in 1812. In France however, Colbert had partly resolved the problem of naval recruitment in 1683 through a register of able bodied men to be called on at all times to man the fleet, enticed with state benefits, tax exemptions and detailed contracts.

Even more problematical was the chaos and frequent rioting on shore resulting from the sudden release of several hundred men at a time from very tight confinement. Although ships in port meant welcome business for brothels and innkeepers, for the townspeople they spelt trouble. Chaos and debauchery were the norm. While in modern times military police reduce the chance of civil disturbance, well into the 20th century there were frequent riots, disorder and skirmishes between sailors and locals.

In 1736, 1300 sailors of the Dutch East India Company disembarked in Table Bay, South Africa after 7 weeks' confinement and the result was a major



riot between sailors and dismayed citizens, who described it as 'sharp fighting and tumultuous disorder'. As late as 1945 the town of Halifax in Nova Scotia was entirely ransacked by several thousand navy personnel allowed to disembark simultaneously to celebrate the Allied Victory.

Press photo - VE Day Halifax 1945

The result, the press observed, was ‘a town reduced to London after the blitz’.

The problems associated with shore leave were so prevalent that commanding officers often preferred to have food and supplies ferried out to them when anchored offshore rather than risk their men landing. They even invited wives and prostitutes on board, turning a blind eye to the subsequent orgies on the decks, whence the expression, ‘son of a gun’!

Therefore it was primarily to stave off the potentially explosive inactivity of his men that Hallowell ordered them to collect up the fine timbers of *l’Orient*, which were now scattered widely across the bay.

Is this story true?

Although there are numerous first-hand accounts of this battle, what happened precisely in the final moments aboard *l’Orient* cannot be verified. Nor do we know exactly which sources Mrs Hemans used or how she came to learn of Giancante’s fate which so inspired her. She must have read the official accounts of the battle but bearing in mind that news of the British victory took several weeks to reach Paris and London, the facts had had time to get distorted. Indeed, several conflicting and/or misleading reports were published before more accurate naval records were published by both the French and British.

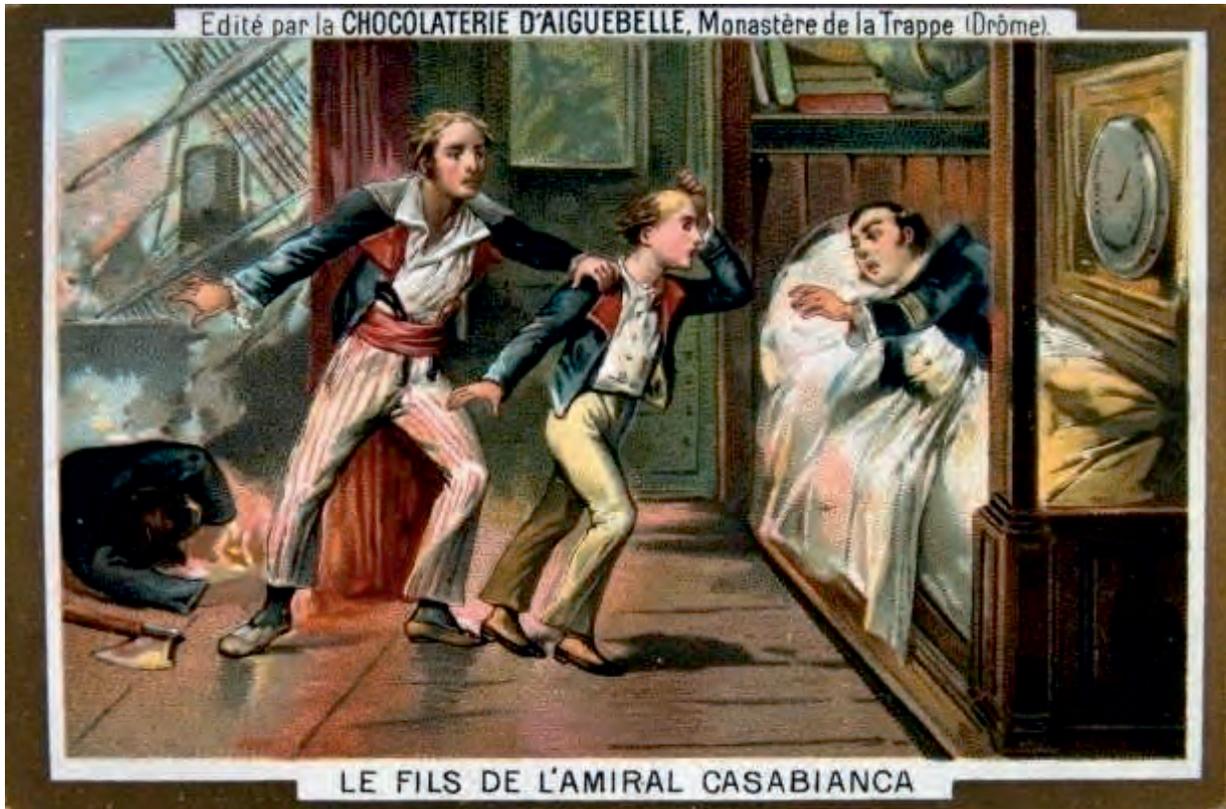
Or, she may have read some of the many first-hand accounts by officers and men above and below decks, who gave their own versions. On the French side the clearest accounts come from Blanquet and also from Admiral Villeneuve and several flag officers who survived. Long after the event men were publishing their memoirs, most notably the mariner John Nicols and Captain Foley of the *Goliath*. Whatever the source, the broad outline of events is clear and undisputed although the detail is not.

The truth of the matter is that by the time *l’Orient* exploded it was already dark and in the noise and clamour, the roar of flames, explosions of gunfire and overwhelming chaos, it would have been very unlikely that anyone could see exactly what was happening and all but impossible to distinguish the small figure of a young boy when the decks were engulfed by flames.

So while some accounts say that the dying Luc Casabianca was taken below decks and was joined there by his son, (as shown in the 19th century lithograph below), others say the father and son were sighted in the water, clinging to wreckage and yet more often, that they both died in the lee of the main mast.

What is certainly true is the extent and horror of the explosion which was verified recently in 1984. A diving operation hoping to retrieve the Maltese treasure trove, found remnants of cannon projected by the huge explosion more than 500m from the battle scene, and determined that the ship had blown up not just from one end as had been thought, but from both ends.

Records clearly indicate that Giancante was aboard his father's ship, that Napoleon himself gave permission for Giancante to accompany his father and that they both died in the battle. The boy's heroic death may be hearsay, but there are enough authentic details to lend some credence to the account given by Felicia Hemans. Beyond this, all is speculation, but interesting speculation nonetheless.



Depiction of Luc Casabianca being joined by his son below decks (19th century French lithograph distributed by the Aiguebelle Chocolate Company)

The Legacy

The story of Mrs Hemans' poem as well as that of the Battle of the Nile, might seem anecdotal, anchored in the fog of the past, if it weren't for the fact that Mrs Hemans has recently become the focus of renewed interest in the context of Women's Studies, particularly in the USA. Similarly Napoleon's sea battles, where his losses outweighed his victories, are now examined even in France, to the same degree as his victories on land. Today's historical and literary commentators place events in a wider context than before, providing us with a more balanced and nuanced picture of events, free of the contemporary bias which colours so many past accounts. What are today's views of the poet, the protagonists and the battle?

The Poet

I have always been intrigued by the fact, mentioned in the beginning of this book, that someone as famous in her day as Mrs Hemans should have sunk so deeply

into obscurity when, to the ears of a 21st century public, her work sounds not so dissimilar to that of still famous contemporary poets. Work by Professor Susan Wolfson of Princeton University, a specialist in women's studies in general and Felicia Hemans in particular, sheds some light on this.

Mrs Hemans wrote at a time when women, both in France and England, had a small window of opportunity to express themselves despite the fact that so many of them still felt it necessary to confirm their status as respectable wives and /or mothers. Indeed, in both France and England, it was customary for many to use their married title – Mrs Hemans, Mrs Gaskell, Madame de Staël, Madame de Sévigné. And nowhere is this status more obvious, as Professor Wolfson points out, than in the conflation in French of 'woman' and 'wife' into one word, 'femme' meaning both. But this period was followed by one of rigid division between the social roles of men and women, which continued until the early 20th century. This is clearly mirrored in women's fashion: the comfortable flowing dresses of 1800 soon gave way to corseted constraints throughout the following century.

It follows logically therefore that figures such as Mrs Hemans, whose literary critics were men, and who did not conform to the later notion of female propriety - dependent, weak-minded, sentimental - came in for derision more than any of her male counterparts. She was described as 'expressive but not creative', 'ultimately facile', 'chauvinistic and derivative'. Sir Walter Scott wrote of her "she seldom teased anyone into thought". Her popularity among women readers was itself taken as proof that women were naturally drawn to the emotional and superficial while Tennyson, Wordsworth, Byron and Keats called upon nobler, male, sentiments.

Happily, her reputation is being gradually restored. As Professor Wolfson emphasises, she is the classic example of a successful woman who, abandoned by her husband and responsible for a large family, was determined to succeed and did so brilliantly. Using her literary and business skills to achieve outstanding popular and commercial success, she is a perfect role model for modern women. The feelings of loss and regret which permeate her work, far from being the result of 'female melancholy' as they were often described, were a true echo of the experience of a great many women at the time, and no doubt in large part account for her amazing success.

Giancante Casabianca

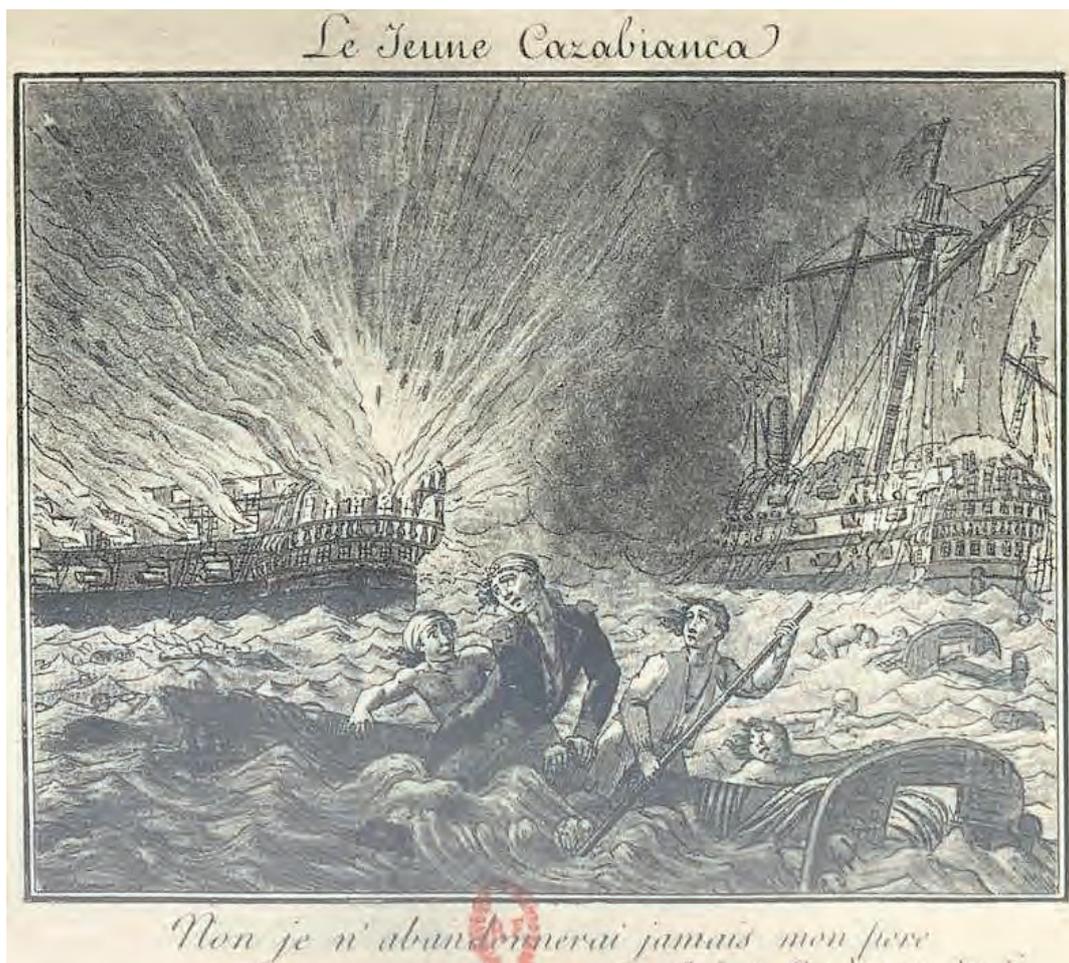
Although the name 'Casabianca' has been given to six ships of the French navy, it is in memory of his father, Luc Casabianca, and Giancante is quite unknown, indeed he isn't even mentioned in the genealogical listing of the Casabianca family in Wikipedia. Corsica did give his name to a secondary school but when I enquired, no one could tell me why. The school brochure mentions the heroic deeds of a young boy, the subject of a famous English poem. Thus we have come full circle, he is famous for being famous!

A conversation with a naval historian at the French Ministry of the Marine, drew contemptuous comments on the poem's 'lack of veracity' and 'British love of romantic nonsense' and I was reprimanded for taking an interest in anything so trivial! The only biography of Giancante is a romanticised reconstruction with little basis in fact.

The Battle

In no field of study is distortion more prevalent than in the recounting of military events, even today when cameramen and reporters are on the scene and seem to be giving us an unbiased view of events as they unfold. Most of us nowadays realise that there is no such thing as objective reporting and that there may be inadvertent or deliberate manipulation of facts for obvious political or commercial advantage.

Such distortion was already very prevalent during the Napoleonic wars and many battles won by Nelson or Wellington characterised as splendid victories for the English were minimised or ignored by the French and vice versa. On both sides there was a concerted effort by government and the printed press to repackage the experience of war in order to reinforce and confirm the mythologies that underpinned their respective nations' war efforts.



Rare French depiction of Giancante Casabianca, engraving, Charles Duplomb 1924

The events of the battle as described by both the French and British are well known, well documented and are relatively uncontroversial. Their significance in the short and long term much more so.

Commentators today in France are still reluctant to discuss Napoleon's distant approach to the navy, epitomised by the omission in a recent official publication of the (French) National Maritime Museum recounting Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, of any mention of the Battle of the Nile. Quite on the contrary, it states 'an extraordinary set of circumstances enabled his convoy of 300 ships to escape the English squadrons' which is only part of the truth.

The Battle of the Nile has been called by the British 'the most decisive naval engagement of the great age of sail, the most splendid and glorious success which the British navy gained'. But this too ignores the fact that the battle didn't resolve the war one way or the other. Nor did Napoleon himself at the time, rightly or wrongly, attach great significance to this battle.

End note

The histories of England and France have overlapped and intertwined for more than 1,000 years. Sometimes the two nations were united in purpose and action but sadly, far more frequently, were divided through conflict. Rarely did one country on one side of the channel make a move whether political, military, social or economic, without influencing the other. Even today the relationship between the two remains ambiguous.

Our respective perceptions of each other, once influenced by potted school



histories of major battles with their litany of defeats and victories, are now based on comparatively trivial, rather than momentous, issues. What the French and English (and I make a distinction here between England and the other three nations of the Union) think of each other today is more a matter of our respective standing in the World Cup, than what happened at Agincourt or at the Battle of the Nile. Personally, I think it is wonderful that today our rivalry is on the football field and not the battlefield.

Luc and Giancante Casabianca - bronze plaque, Louis Patriarche (1872-1955)

How strange and yet how fascinating that during the terrible conflict between their nations, Nelson and Napoleon, a great admiral and a great general, a Frenchman and an Englishman, have been connected irrevocably through the vagaries of fate and the story of Giancante. In the Battle of the Nile, the tragic death of this brave young boy, as it is recounted in poetry, indirectly provides a further link between the two men in maritime lore. Maybe this can be seen as a small contribution to the reconciliation of two nations which geography has placed closely side by side but history and politics have so often held apart.

Part One of this article appeared in the ‘Nelson Dispatch’ Vol 14 Part 3, Part Two in Vol 14 Part 4.

(Please note correction on page 237, thank you to Mr J Kenney: The painting shown does not depict the Nile battle but rather the burning of the US frigate *Philadelphia* by Lt Stephen Decatur USN on 16 February 1804. The *Philadelphia* had run aground in Tripoli harbour - in what is now Libya - in October 1803 and surrendered. The US Navy burned the ship to prevent its use by Barbary pirates. The painting shown was done by American artist Edward Moran in 1897. There is a Nelson connection in any event. When he heard of the operation he remarked that it was “the most bold and daring act of the age”).

If you have enjoyed this three-part article you may like to know that it is now available as an illustrated paperback book. To purchase for £5.99 from The Nelson Society, contact the Sales Manager David Curson, tel 07870 547255/01935 862746 davidcurson007@outlook.com

We acknowledge the kindness of Marie Lachèze in making this article available to The Nelson Society and for donating the books towards Nelson Society funds.

THE STORY OF NELSON’S CHRISTENING MUG

Dr Robin Agnew

In July 1803 the 28-year-old Surgeon George Magrath RN (1775-1857) was at the peak of his naval career when he was transferred to Nelson’s flagship HMS *Victory* to take up his appointment as Flag Surgeon to the Mediterranean Fleet.¹ At that time the Fleet was engaged in blockading the French in Toulon; this involved long periods at sea, when Magrath had ample opportunities of showing his surgical skills. (This was in spite of the fact that he was monocular in vision, the result of yellow fever in 1796). In a letter dated 30 May 1804 Nelson had written ‘...the health of the Fleet cannot be exceeded...Mr Magrath whom I admire for his great abilities every day I live...’². Fate intervened in the form of an outbreak of yellow fever at the naval base of Gibraltar, whose dockyard was vital in the event of any future fleet action against the French. At the height of the epidemic in October 1804 1,348 servicemen and members of their families were

admitted to the Gibraltar Royal Naval Hospital (RNH) and, by the end of December, over 5,000 deaths had occurred.³ The last death was on 2 January 1805.⁴



In order to cope with this dire situation, Nelson was forced to transfer his valuable Surgeon Magrath from *Victory* to RNH at short notice, copying his order to the Admiralty on 14 December 1804. Although Magrath arrived at the Rock close to the end of the epidemic, his presence as Medical Superintendent was to prove a great morale booster. He remained there until April, 1805 ‘kicking his heels’ while succeeded as Flag Surgeon in *Victory* by his fellow-countryman William Beatty.

Surgeon William Beatty (1773-1842) succeeded Magrath as Nelson’s flag surgeon in 1804 (after portrait by Devis)



It was some form of consolation to Magrath that on leaving the flagship in December 1804, in what amounted to a ‘pierhead jump’, Nelson presented him with a handsome christening mug as consolation. However, in spite of all his subsequent honours and decorations, it seems to me that Magrath would have swapped places with Beatty in administering the final care to the dying Nelson in the cockpit of *Victory* on 21 October, 1805.

Magrath’s Christening Mug (by permission of the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada).

As has been remarked: “Had Nelson not moved him to Gibraltar...he, not his fellow-Ulsterman, would have scooped the professional jackpot”⁵. The Admiral’s last-minute gift is the subject of this essay. In spite of Nelson’s promise to secure him a prime hospital position, a disgruntled Magrath had to be content with his appointment as Medical Officer at the Prisoner of War (POW) hospital, Mill Prison, Plymouth. He served there for nine years; the highlight of his stay being the care of the mortally wounded Captain W.H. Allen (1784-1813) after the

engagement between his ship the US brig *Argus* and HM brig *Pelican* off St David's Head in August 1814.



Capt. W.H. Allen (1784-1813) USN. (By permission of the Franklin D. Roosevelt library, New York and the Journal of Medical Biography, London)

Magrath was discharged on half-pay from Mill Prison in June 1814. Perhaps inevitably he was next appointed as Surgeon to the newly-opened HM Prison at Dartmoor. Living conditions made it an inhospitable place, especially in winter, when early temperatures were often below zero. However, Magrath maintained that the close physical contact of the POWs counteracted the bleakness outdoors there being only one death from hypothermia during his time as medical officer. He checked an epidemic of smallpox- although his cold baths treatment was unorthodox- and was also highly commended for his treatment under fire of the American POWs at the time of a riot in April, 1815.⁶



On the closure of Dartmoor Prison in February 1816, Magrath was discharged on half-pay and entered into civilian practice in Plymouth. He moved from Union Street to a house at the corner of George Street and Lockyer Street, where he resided until his death in June 1857.⁷

Royal Hotel, Theatre and Athenaeum, Plymouth. Magrath's home at the junction of Lockyer Street and George Place, Plymouth. The house is on the left of the picture, screened by trees.

There is a vivid description of Magrath's final days in Heather Carson's Memoir of 2013, during which a mob forced an entrance to his house on the day of his funeral and burial at St Andrew's Church, Plymouth. Fortunately, a member of his family (probably the Reverend George Maclear of Bedford) entered the house and removed the family plate. Presumably this included the

Christening Mug, which remained in the Maclear family until 1968. (See Note to reference 7). The Maclears are descendants of a distinguished Anglo-Irish family, several of whom have served in the British Army or as scientists. Perhaps the most famous was Sir Thomas Maclear (1794-1879) a 19th century astronomer and nephew of George Magrath, whose home at Biggleswade was a refuge when the surgeon was on leave from his duties in the Royal Navy. At that time George's brother, also Thomas, lived there. The astronomer's grandson Basil Maclear (1881-1915) was an Irish rugby international winning eleven caps between 1905 and 1907, having been sent to Fermoy in the County Cork by the British Army. He was killed in action serving as a Captain with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at the Second Battle of Ypres. His name is recorded on the Menin Gate at Ypres.

Heather Maclear Carson is the great, great, great-granddaughter of George Magrath's only sister Mary Magrath who married James Maclear in Ulster; she was still alive in 1857. George's estate of "under £20,000 22nd June 1858" was granted probate in April 1859 and eventually passed to the Rev. George Maclear of Bedford, who was Magrath's nephew. Through succeeding family descendants the Christening Mug finished up in the care of Hugh Maclear in 1968. For financial reasons, he offered the Mug for sale at Lloyd's of London. Its origin was authenticated as made in 1732 by a London silversmith, James Langlois; it was purchased by Mr David Bull of Lloyd's, who was the Curator of the Nelson Silverware Collection there. Word crossed the Atlantic and a campaign was organised to raise the sum of \$4,500 approx. for the purchase of the Mug by the Royal Canadian Military Institution (RCMI), Toronto. Following a dedication ceremony in the wardroom of HMCS *York* in June 1969, a Deed of Trust was prepared and executed by representatives of the RCMI and the Royal Ontario Museum held on 21 October 1969 (Trafalgar Night), when it was decided that the Mug should remain for posterity in HMCS *York* for so long as this site was available. There it remains as a visible token of Nelson's appreciation of his Flag Surgeon's service in 1803/4.

Notes and references

1. Ship's Muster Book HMS *Victory*: ADM 36/15898.
2. Nicolas N.H. *The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Viscount Lord Nelson*. London: 6, p.41.
3. Sawchuck, L.A., Burke, S.D.A. *Gibraltar's 1804 Yellow Fever Scourge: The Search for Scapegoats*. Oxford, 1998: 53, p.25.
4. Ibid, p.35.
5. Brockliss, L, Cardwell, J. and Moss, M. *Nelson's Surgeon: William Beatty, Naval Medicine, and the Battle of Trafalgar*. Oxford, 2008. p.196.
6. Thompson, B. *George Magrath: Nelson's Forgotten Surgeon*. Unpublished, p.8.
7. Carson, H.M. *Surgeon George Magrath RN*. For private circulation. 2013, p.13.

Note: Heather Maclear Carson is related by marriage to Surgeon George Magrath and has compiled and a well-written and illustrated monograph on him, which was

published for private circulation in 2013. She has graciously allowed me to use this as a work of reference. On page 13 of this she quotes from the Rev. George Maclear's recollections as told to his daughter in later life: "Sir George was much attached to him, [Rev. Maclear] and it was understood had made a will in his favour, which could not be found in after times, when failing intellect helped to place him under objectionable female influence, and he was personally neglected, robbed right and left of pictures, plate, valuable and curious things..." The mystery remains then whether or not, Nelson's Mug was amongst those objects purloined at that time or was it rescued by the Rev. George Maclear, who was the Surgeon's favourite nephew?

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Barbie Thompson, independent researcher of Plymouth, Devon, who first drew his attention to the existence of the Mug in 2015. Subsequently she has provided useful links with its final resting place in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto; Heather Maclear Carson has sent me a copy of her biographical sketch of her ancestor entitled *Surgeon George Magrath RN*, an invaluable source of information on her family; Ryan Goldsmith of the Royal Canadian Military Institution and Maggie Birtch of the Royal Ontario Museum were most helpful in providing information on the Deed of Trust; Guy St Denis kindly provided me with photos of the Mug.

NELSON AND MUSIC

Dr John Easton Law

Editor's Note: Member Dr John Easton Law, who is based in South Wales, has compiled this survey of 'Nelson and Music' which brings together a number of different facets of Nelson in relationship to music, some of which have been covered in more detail in previous editions of the 'Nelson Dispatch', others which bring us up to date with 20th and 21st century contributions. The survey is timely as the Museum of London has recently brought to our attention the existence of Emma Hamilton's personal music collection which is in their care, and in December 2021 put on a concert of 'Emma's songbooks: rediscovered music for Nelson' in partnership with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, which is reviewed by Sue Morris on page 278 of this issue.

C S Forester's Horatio Hornblower found music excruciating, unless it was from bosuns' pipes and Marine drums. Patrick O'Brian's Jack Aubrey enjoys picking up his violin after challenging encounters. Moving from informed and evocative fiction to the historical record, Nelson appears to have had a keen ear for, and memory of, bosuns' pipes, in fact recognising the sound produced by a veteran, Tom Cleaves, during his visit to Swansea in August 1802, as was recorded in later numbers of *The Cambrian*. (see 'Nelson Dispatch' [TND] Vol 13 Part 8 p 491).

Nelson also very much appreciated musical receptions following on from victories or triumphant progresses, especially when the comely Lady Hamilton offered or was prompted to sing, striking her famous – or notorious – 'attitudes'. This had happened on his arrival in Naples after his victory at the Nile in 1798. It

happened again, albeit on a lesser scale, during his tour of South Wales in the summer of 1802 (TND 13/8/p491).

Earlier, in 1800, Nelson and his entourage experienced a much more international journey, returning to Britain from Naples via Vienna, Prague and Dresden in the company of Queen Maria Carolina of Naples, her children and members of the Neapolitan royal household and court. (See the excellent accounts in *'Admiral Nelson and Joseph Haydn'* by Otto Erich Deutsch, The Nelson Society 2000; *'Nelson's Overland Journey 1800'* by Thomas Blümel, The Nelson Society 2000; Keith Miles on the Slovenian part of the journey in his article *'Three Slovene Admirals and Lord Nelson'* in TND 13/11/p668; Sue Morris on *'Nelson in Prague'* in TND 14/1/p17, and the Slovenian visit in *'The Slovenian Connection'*, TND 13/12/p747).

The party included an aspiring poet Miss Cornelia Knight (1757-1837). She was the daughter of Rear-Admiral Joseph Knight and a friend of the Hamiltons in Naples. Deutsch tells us that she wrote several tributes to Nelson following the Battle of Nile, including additional verses to *'God Save the King!'*.

The party reached Livorno (Leghorn) on 14 June 1800. Italy was experiencing a rapidly moving confrontation between revolutionary and reactionary forces, the drama of which was later captured by Victorien Sardue in his play *Tosca* (1887) and even more effectively by Giacomo Puccini in his opera of the same name (1900). Nelson appears in neither, though Sir John Moore, commanding British troops at Livorno, recorded the arrival of someone 'more like the Prince of an Opera than the Conqueror of the Nile' (North, *Nelson at Naples*, p305).

Nelson's party arrived at Ljubljana (Laibach) on 14 August 1800 where they were treated to a concert presented by the local philharmonic society. The concert included Haydn's 'Battle Symphony'; this was probably his 'Military' symphony, number 100 in G Major, premiered in London in March 1794. Haydn was 'the' composer of the day, his works being very popular in Britain and parts of the Continent. His symphony was followed by an aria, 'La Virtu Brittana'. Deutsch suggests that this could have been taken and set to English words from Handel's opera *Teseo* (Act 4, Scene 6, the aria appearing in *The Lady's Magazine* for August 1800).

On 18 August 1800 the party reached Vienna, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In Vienna there was already a 'Nelson cult', as there had been in Naples. Deutsch has identified two little-known early musical celebrants, Johann Wanhal with a piano sonata and Ferdinand Kauer with a piano trio, both celebrating the Battle of the Nile. However, Joseph Haydn was 'the' composer of the day. He had been much fêted in London. He and Nelson exchanged gifts. A high point of Nelson's visit was a performance of Haydn's D Minor mass. This had been written in 'troubled times', reflecting the French threat to Austria-Hungary and was first performed at Eisenstadt in September 1798. Although not composed for Nelson, it became known as the 'Nelson Mass'.

Lady Hamilton also sang the composer's *Spirit's Song*, and his *Nelson Aria*. The latter was a selective setting of a poem by Cornelia Knight, celebrating the victory at the Nile, now available among the composer's songs and cantatas as *The Battle of the Nile* - English soprano Emma Kirkby's treatment is particularly effective. Emma Hamilton later received an autographed copy of Haydn's *Creation*. This has been recently well described by Lluís Tembleque Teres (TND 14/2/p91). Haydn clearly saw Emma as more than just a 'stunner'.

However, it is an oddity that no really significant music was composed in the Admiral's memory, considering that he is widely commemorated in many other ways such as place names, statues, portraits, engravings and prints. R J Bartellot surveyed the poetry written in his memory (TND 9/7 p435) and the 'Nelson Dispatch' regularly records commemorative events. HMS *Victory* at Portsmouth is an iconic, if much restored and much visited monument. A painting of the *Victory* hangs in the boardroom of Portsmouth City FC and a Nelson mascot accompanies the local football team Pompey! There is even a locomotive, *Lord Nelson*, preserved at the National Railway Museum, York – and Churchill even addressed his cat as 'Nelson'!

Nelson's exploits were celebrated in commemorative ware, for example by the Cambrian and Staffordshire potteries. In the nineteenth century, newspapers like *The Cambrian*, assiduously recorded events associated with the Admiral and his 'heroes'. Trafalgar Day (21 October), though never a national holiday, was often marked. *The Cambrian* held poetry competitions following Nelson's victory and death, although what was offered is as yet unclear...

Of course there was a great deal of music performed - at appropriate moments muffled - before, during and after Nelson's state funeral at St Paul's on 9 January 1806. The music was of a traditional, patriotic nature with Handel, Purcell, and Arne featuring prominently, and choral and organ works drawn from what might be called 'the cathedral tradition'. Later, the order of service was explored in the *Musical Times*, 1 October 1905. A recording of the music performed by the choir of Portsmouth cathedral - *The State Funeral of Horatio Lord Nelson KB* - was released in October 2005.

But nothing was composed, commissioned or inspired by Nelson's achievements on the level of Beethoven's celebration (Op. 91) of Wellington's victory over Joseph Bonaparte at Vitoria on 21 June 1813, a work that became a European 'hit' after Waterloo. Nothing has been composed for Nelson or Trafalgar to date along the lines of Tchaikovsky's celebration (1880, Op 49) of Russia's defeat of Napoleon in 1812. Deutsch's thorough study reveals that relatively little was composed following Nelson's death compared to what happened in terms of music and theatre following his victory at the Nile. Nelson's death obviously muted the celebrations of his victory, as is suggested by one of Deutsch's entries. A John Braham contributed music to *A Melo-Dramatic Piece, being an occasional attempt to commemorate The Death and Victory of Lord*

Viscount Nelson (1805). Braham's contribution remained in the concert repertoire - for example in concerts at the Crystal Palace - during the nineteenth century.

There is of course a long tradition of music evoking and celebrating Britain's relations with the sea, from *Hearts of Oak* (David Garrick, William Boyce 1759) and *Rule Britannia* (James Thomson, Thomas Arne, 1740), to *Portsmouth Point* (William Walton, 1925), and beyond. The 'beyond' includes an opera, *Nelson*, composed by Lennox Berkeley with a libretto by Alan Pryce-Jones. It was begun in 1949, completed in 1951 and first performed in 1954. In the course of composition, Berkeley was invited, with piano, to join the Home Fleet by Rear-Admiral Charles Lambe and toasts were taken off St Vincent and Trafalgar. The opera focuses on the relations between Nelson and Emma Hamilton. It includes a prophetess, Serafina, and its scenes range from Naples to Nelson's cabin on the *Victory*, to Nelson's house at Merton. The opera was not an instant success, though it did receive a later and somewhat more favourable reception.

Much more successful was Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd*. Britten had already demonstrated his ability to evoke the sea in his earlier opera *Peter Grimes* particularly in its *Sea Interludes* (1945). The libretto for *Billy Budd* by E M Forster and Eric Crozier was based on a novella by Herman Melville and is set on a warship in 'the age of Nelson'. The opera was first performed in 1951 and in a revised form in 1964. The Melville novella was turned into a fine film, *Billy Budd*, directed by Peter Ustinov and starring both the actor/director and Terence Stamp (1962).

To date, among the more effective musical celebrations of Britain and the sea is Henry Wood's stirring, carefully researched and nuanced *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*. In the 'Nelson Dispatch' (9/9), an article from the *Daily Mail* (29 September 2007) is reprinted which analyses the composition as originally performed, a collection of bugle calls and shanties. There are no explicit references to either Nelson or Trafalgar, but the work was composed to commemorate Trafalgar and premiered, among other Trafalgar celebrations, in 1905. Wood was modestly surprised at its instant and enduring success.

In 1973 Albert Elms, the film and TV composer, and a former director of music for the Royal Marines, wrote the march *Battle of Trafalgar* which was first performed in 1974. Re-arranged for orchestra and choir it was performed with some success under the baton of Sir Charles Groves in St Paul's cathedral in 1981. Still more recently, following a BBC commission, Errollyn Wallen composed a cantata *English Heart* in memory of Nelson and Trafalgar which was first performed at Portsmouth Cathedral on 21 October 2005.

In view of the extent of commemorative material across a wide range of media, it is perhaps surprising that music does not feature more prominently, but there is a possible explanation. You can visit the Walker Gallery in Liverpool to view Benjamin West's *Death of Nelson*. You can climb Carlton Hill in Edinburgh to view 'Nelson's Telescope'. You can buy a print or a very rare Staffordshire

representation of the Death of Nelson on e-bay. But if you discount the *Nelson Mass*, the musical memory is less accessible. Perhaps only the deaths of royals, and figures from Antiquity and the Bible have been treated musically?

However, for reasons of morale, and as an inspirational commander across the ranks, Nelson himself acknowledged, and drew on Britain's nautical tradition, a tradition captured in Henry Wood's popular *Fantasia*. That the contemporary composer from Belize, Erollyn Wallen, composed a cantata in Nelson's memory, suggests that there may be more musical commemorations to come. Music and musicians surrounding Nelson and the Hamiltons deserve further research.

Notes

The impact of Emma Hamilton is well discussed in *Emma Hamilton. Seduction and Celebrity*, edited by Quintin Colville for the Royal Museums, Greenwich (London, 2016); a recently discovered portrait by Richard Westall was reviewed by Martyn Downer (TND 13/11). For the background, I have also benefited from Jonathan North's *Nelson at Naples* (Stroud, 1918).

Unfortunately, I have been unable, to date, to consult, *The Sea in the British Musical Imagination*, ed. Eric Saylor (2015).

For the Nelson memorabilia from Cambrian, Staffordshire and other potteries, I am grateful to Robert Leonard and Helen Hallesy.

Much has been written on Nelson's funeral. I have followed Peter Warwick's *Voices from the Battle of Trafalgar* (2005).

On matters musical, apart from the sources cited above and the obvious reference works, I am indebted to David Wyn Jones and to Christopher Gordon.

The 'Nelson collection' I have held since the death of Sid Kidwell – a keen member of the Society – has been very useful. It is being transferred to the Newport Ship Museum.

James Law kept an eye on the writing. The article is dedicated to him.

CLOSE EXAMINATION OF NELSON'S CORRESPONDENCE

Terry Colling

Over the past couple of years we have seen how a letter from Nelson can be adulterated to fit the desires of politicians in the slavery anti-abolitionist lobby following Nelson's death. Nelson's letters were originally collated by Clarke and M'Arthur, and changes in spelling and punctuation can be excused as Nelson was often writing in haste and the standardisation of spelling and grammar was changing rapidly during his lifetime. However it appears that some of his letters were changed when transcribed to avoid any embarrassment to the establishment, and it would be good if there could be a new transcription of as many original letters that are publicly available. Primary sources are the real treasure of historians and I am sure that there is work to be done over the next few years to make sure that Nelson's true written words are recorded for posterity.

Whilst looking for something else in my Nelson library recently, I happened to open a book called *Nelson in England: A Domestic Chronicle* by E. Hallam Moorhouse, published in 1913. I had found this book in a box at a church fête many years ago. It is not a particularly academic book, concentrating on the times that Nelson was away from active service, but for 50 pence it was worth

saving, and it does have many black and white illustrations. Also it contains a folded facsimile of one of Nelson's letters, which Moorhouse does not even mention in her text or index. I decided to read it and noticed that it was a little different from the version that I had previously read in volume VI of Nicolas's *The Dispatches and Letters of Lord Nelson*, and I decided to investigate further. The letter in 'Nicolas' was sourced from *The Life of Admiral Lord Nelson*, by Clarke and M'Arthur, Vol. ii. p. 363, but as the Preface to Volume I of 'Nicolas' points out, he was denied access to the primary sources they had used.

The letter which I have transcribed below is how Nelson wrote it and shows his spelling 'variations' and very little conventional punctuation. I am sure we can forgive Nelson for his speedily written letter at a time when he was greatly engaged with his duties in the Mediterranean.

Victory May 14th 1804

Dear Sir

I was by the Leviathan favord your letter of Jan-ry 14th The Superb was in company with the fleet and the gentleman has I hope fully executed his commission I therefore shall send him a letter to the Captain of the agincourt which ship is immediately going to England to give him a passage and every accommodation in his power.

I remember you most perfectly at Burnham and shall never forget the many little kindnesses I received from your worthy brother with whom I was always a great favorite. Most probably I shall never see Dear dear Burnham again but I have the satisfaction in thinking that my bones will probably be laid with my fathers in the Village that gave me birth (totally different are my sentiments from Lord Camelford on that and I hope almost every other point).

Pardon my Dear Sir this digression but the thoughts of former days brings all my Mother into my heart which shows itself in my eyes May heaven my Dear Sir long preserve you in health for the sake of your family and friends and amongst the latter allow me to place the name of your very faithful servant

Nelson & Bronte

Rev. Dean Allott

This is how it is published in *The Dispatches and Letters of Lord Nelson, The Nicolas Edition Volume VI*:

TO DR. ALLOTT, DEAN OF RAPHOE.

(From Clarke and M'Arthur, vol.ii. p. 363)

14th May, 1804.

I remember you, dear Sir, most perfectly at Burnham, and shall never forget the many little kindnesses I received from your worthy brother, with whom I was always a great favourite. Most probably I shall never see dear, dear Burnham again; but I have the satisfaction in thinking that my bones will probably be laid with my Father's, in the Village that gave me birth. Pardon this digression; but

the thoughts of former days brings all my Mother into my heart, which shows itself in my eyes. May heaven, my Dear Sir, long preserve you in health, for the sake of your family and friends; and amongst the latter allow me to place the name of your very faithful servant,
Nelson & Bronte

The first missing paragraph was perhaps of no particular importance as it only relates to the receipt of a letter from Dean Allott and the delivery of Nelson's reply. The most interesting omission, in my opinion, is the aside in brackets at the end of the second paragraph: '*(totally different are my sentiments from Lord Camelford on that and I hope almost every other point)*'.

Morbidity was displayed by Nelson on several occasions and perhaps thoughts instigated by his correspondence with Dean Allott made him dwell on his own future death, but why would he mention Lord Camelford in this aside? The answer is that Lord Camelford (Notes 1 & 2) died following a duel on 10 March 1804 and had asked that £1,000 (approximately £100,000 in today's money) from his estate be given to the city of Berne in Switzerland and that his body should be taken to the island of St. Pierre, in the Lake of Bienne in Switzerland for burial.

The state of war in Europe made this impossible at the time and Lord Camelford's body was embalmed and was placed in the crypt of St. Anne's church, Dean Street, Soho, London. After the Napoleonic Wars it was planned to take his body to Switzerland and his friend Lord Hertford tried to carry out his wishes. Lord Camelford however was such a controversial figure at the heart of the aristocratic establishment that family and country did not want to be reminded of his life and death, and in consequence the Church of England legal authorities, blocked his re-interment. Opinion probably was also, 'Why would an Englishman and a Lord wish to be buried abroad?'

St. Anne's Church closed its crypt in the 19th century and it was then bombed during the Second World War. The tower remained and the ground was a car-park for many years until rebuilding took place in 1992. It is now a modern church/community building retaining the old tower with the vaults being converted into toilets. When Lord Camelford's body was removed from the vaults is a matter of speculation, but almost certainly his remains have been re-interred in the Necropolis cemetery on the outskirts of London. St. Anne's Churchyard and vaults during Victorian times had become a matter of concern with unscrupulous vergers abusing their powers to gain fees for burials, as London's churchyards became full to overflowing. Nikolai Tolstoy in his excellent biography of Lord Camelford, *The Half-Mad Lord*, suggests that the elaborate coffin was covered with silver escutcheons and ornaments which would have been very tempting to those with access to the vaults, rendering the coffin unrecognisable when removed, which is possibly why apocryphal stories about his body's disappearance have persisted. Vast numbers of bodies were removed

from the Churchyard in 1874, when mounds of decaying bodies became a health hazard. The vaults might have been cleared at the same time, but it is possible that Lord Camelford was re-interred either following the bombing in 1940, or perhaps before the rebuilding of the Church in 1992.

Nelson obviously had contempt for Lord Camelford, who, had he not been a cousin of the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, and the brother-in-law of Lord Grenville, Foreign Secretary at the time, might well have been hanged for murder. Camelford's wealth and influence, would, I am sure, have continued after his death, in that Lord Grenville was still a political force following a short spell as Prime Minister before Clarke and M'Arthur published their collection of letters in 1809. Although there were great political tensions at this time with the abolition of slavery and Catholic emancipation being central to debates, the aristocracy still held great sway protecting their positions from criticism. It might be a small omission from our knowledge of Nelson's personal views, but it is another example of how Nelson's correspondence has been misused, this time by deletion. Whilst my volumes of 'Nicolas' will remain a treasured resource, I might treat its content with a little healthy scepticism in the future.

Notes: (1) *The Half-Mad Lord Thomas Pitt, 2nd Baron Camelford (1775-1804)*.

Nikolai Tolstoy, published 1978.

(2) *Lord Camelford – Officer, Gentleman and Thug*.

Ray Aldis, 'Nelson Dispatch', Volume 13 Part 12 Autumn 2020.

Victory May 16th 1804
 Dear Sir
 I was by the Leviathan of a word
 your letter of Jan^{ry} 14th. The superb was in
 company with the fleet and the gentle
 man has I hope fully executed his com-
 mission I therefore shall send him a
 letter to the Captain of the account which
 ship is immediately going to England to
 give him a passage and every accommo-
 dation in his power
 I remember you most
 perfectly at Burnham and I shall never
 forget the many little kindnesses I received
 from your worthy Brother with whom
 I was always a great favorite. most
 Dear Sir all off

probably I shall never see you again but I have a satisfaction in thinking
 that my bones will probably be laid with
 my father's in the village that gave me
 birth (totally different are my sentiments from
 Lord Camelford's on that and I hope almost
 every other point)
 Pardon my dear Sir this
 digression but the thoughts of former days bring
 all my mother into my heart which shows
 itself in my eyes May heaven My
 dear Sir long preserve you in health
 for the sake of your family & friends
 and amongst the latter allow me to place
 the name of your very faithful serv^t
 Nelson D'Arville

NELSON'S NEEDLES – A QUESTION OF PROVENANCE

Mark Barton

While Nelson's Needle on Portsdown Hill overlooking Portsmouth will be well known to members of the Society, this article is about a completely different Nelson's needle – a sailmaker's needle.



When Greenwich was a Naval College, it held a needle with an inscription, 'Ld Nelson's Death & Victory Octr. 21st 1805' that, according to the family that gifted it, was the one used to sew up the shroud that protected Nelson's body on its final journey. This item is now framed and displayed at the Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham, where the staff courses from Greenwich co-located with their equivalents from the other Services. The item is now on display in the Royal Naval Division offices at the college.

While it is certain there could well have been a needle and the needle that exists has been identified as being a Georgian sailmaker's needle in style, could it be that this is the actual needle?

It is reasonable to think there was a needle involved in the preparation of Nelson's body for transport home. Surgeon Beatty's account tell us that the body, having been stripped except for a shirt was initially placed in a cask that was filled with brandy but on the 24 October gas escaped from the body and caused the lid of the cask to open. Therefore, the brandy was drawn off and the cask refilled. The brandy was replaced twice more before *Victory* arrived at Spithead. On 11 December, Nelson's body was removed from the cask, the bowels were removed, as was the bullet that killed him, and the corpse was wrapped in cotton vestments and bandages. It does not seem that sewing was involved at this stage. The body was then placed into a lead coffin filled with brandy mixed with camphor and myrrh and that coffin was then enclosed in a wooden one made from the mainmast of the French ship *L'Orient*. Then, eventually, two months after he died, the lead coffin was opened and the body taken out. Finally:

The body was then dressed and placed in the shell made from *L'Orient's* mast, and covered in shrouding. This was then enclosed in a leaden coffin, which was immediately soldered up and put into another wooden shell. It then left the *Victory* and was conveyed to Greenwich Hospital. (Note 1)

It is probable that this shroud - the only one mentioned in the accounts - was a protective cover for the wooden shell, and was probably made of canvas and it would probably have been sewn up. This would likely have been organised by the sailmaker of HMS *Victory*, William Smith of Northfleet who was discharged into HMS *Ocean* on 15 January 1806. It is quite possible that William Smith kept the needle and had it engraved and it eventually made its way to Greenwich. So far, so straightforward.

The problem is there are at least two such needles. A needle that appears to be identical to the one now at Shrivenham was sold by auction in 2015. The auctioneer described it as a commemorative sailmaker's needle from the early 19th century. It is inscribed absolutely identically with 'Ld Nelson's Death & Victory Octr. 21st 1805.'(Note 2)

Commodore R J Fisher presented the Shrivenham needle to the Staff College. The father of one of his cadets gave it to him when he was a divisional officer at BRNC in 1973. This father, Mr G C Wood, stated that his father had left it to him when he died, its earlier ownership is unknown. The needle sold at auction in 2015 came from a collection of Nelson memorabilia of good quality and made £280.

With the two needles inscribed identically in every respect, it does not seem credible that this is a similar case to the flag cut up by the sailors who pulled the carriage for the funeral, so they could each have a piece.

So that seems to leave two reasonable possibilities. Either William Smith used two or more needles, had them engraved and then either sold or passed them on to two different people. Alternatively, and I think more likely, an enterprising individual marked up and sold a couple of sailmaker needles, cashing in on the fame of Nelson, in the style of relics of the True Cross, perhaps thinking of the tradition that sailors who die at sea are sewn into their hammocks, before being committed to the depths.

The more of these needles there are, then the more likely the latter option becomes, but currently I can only find the two. If anyone knows of any more then do let me know.

Nelson's Needle – Image Courtesy of Charles Miller Ltd

(1) *The Death of Lord Nelson*. W Beatty, (Constable, Westminster, 2nd edition 1895) p68.

(2) Charles Miller Ltd Auction 12 May 2015 Lot 98.

A PORTRAIT OF NELSON, PALERMO SCHOOL c 1799

Peter Clayton has sent us this interesting item from Bonhams. The portrait was sold on 27 Oct 2021.

Description: Palermo School, circa 1799, Profile portrait of Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson (1758-1805), wearing the Chelengk presented by Emperor Selim III, in his bicorn, displaying his Naval gold medals, the Ottoman Order of the Crescent and the Order of the Bath

Charcoal 17.8 x 12.7cm

Provenance:

Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy (1769-1839), to whom reputedly given by Nelson; his nephew, William Mansfield (1832-1892), Portesham House, Dorset; his son, William Hardy Manfield (1859-1937) who married Julia Mary Manfield (née Butlin, 1881-1974), who was the great aunt of the current owners. The picture was exhibited in Dorchester County Museum, in 1905, in connection with the coming Trafalgar Centenary.



According to family tradition the present drawing (along with that of King Ferdinand IV of Naples, lot 42 in the same sale, and a group of miniatures of about the same date) was given by Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson to Captain Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy, his close comrade, in whose arms he famously died at the Battle of Trafalgar. Both the drawing of Nelson and that of King Ferdinand of Naples, (which was by family tradition discovered hidden behind the portrait of Nelson) were in the Hardy Manfield collection at Portesham House and now belong to a collateral

descendant. Although Hardy was evidently pleased with the drawing, the accuracy of its resemblance to the Admiral was questioned by Hardy's nephew, John Manfield when, as a midshipman he was invited to dine on board the *Victory*: in his diary for the 5 August 1804, he wrote: 'I dined with Lord Nelson, Admiral Murray and Captain Hardy and I assure you your picture is not the least like his Lordship.' Nelson portrait expert Richard Walker suggests that 'There is an Italianate cast to his features that find an echo in the Italian proverb, 'Inglese italianato, Diavolo incarnato', though this is perhaps too emphatic for this ponderous and rather ludicrous figure. A nearer assessment is given by a modern correspondent in *The Times*, who says, 'the artist has in this case turned Nelson into a complete macaroni.' (A 'macaroni' in this sense was someone who adopted a particular effete and affected style of appearance that became fashionable from the 1770s.) These commentaries on the drawing underline its unique importance as an immediate and personal representation of Nelson's appearance from a local perspective, marking it apart from the better known, more staid and formal depictions of the celebrated hero.

The drawing of Nelson is widely purported to have been drawn during Nelson's stay in Palermo between January 1799 and June 1800, where King

Ferdinand and Queen Maria Carolina had sought refuge ahead of the impending French invasion, escorted by Nelson and accompanied by Thomas Hardy (along with Sir William and Emma Lady Hamilton and the King's favourite dogs). The British ship *Vanguard* (of which Hardy was captain) reached Palermo with its large convoy on the 26 January 1799. It was also in August 1799 that the Ottoman Sultan Selim III specially created the Order of the Crescent for Nelson, making him its first Knight and sending him the insignia that month. He is seen wearing the order in the present portrait and it was mostly likely in this celebratory context that this drawing was commissioned.

The distinctive Chelengk seen here prominently displayed on Nelson's bicorn, was a plume of more than 300 diamonds with a unique rotating central feature surrounded by exquisite enamelled flowers. Like the Order of the Crescent it was presented to Nelson by Sultan Selim III in recognition of his daring 1798 defeat of the French fleet in the Battle of the Nile, when Egypt was still under the control of the Ottoman Empire.

Notes courtesy of Bonhams.

SEA RATIONS IN NELSON'S NAVY

Ray Aldis

Whilst browsing through some archive documents I came across an old copy of the monthly magazine of the church of St Mary the Virgin, Merton (many of you reading this will know that this is the church where Nelson and the Hamiltons once worshipped). In the magazine was a piece that had been reprinted from an article first published in *The Sunday Telegraph* in 2004. Having read it through it seemed as good today as it was 18 years ago. I hope you enjoy it.

Nelson's Diet

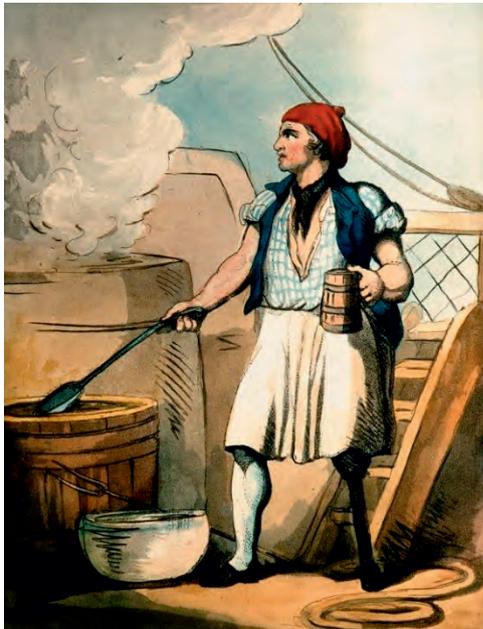
Modern nutritionists might well approve of Admiral Nelson, whose bicentenary is next year. Nelson never added salt to his food, convinced that it caused scurvy, and he was an altogether thoughtful eater. Although he had often dined to the tune of 'The Roast Beef of Old England' drummed out by the ship's band, the great naval hero himself would make do with the liver or wing of a fowl, accompanied with a modest plate of macaroni and vegetables. He was particularly fond of onions, placing great trust in their health-giving properties. 'I find onions are the best thing that can be given to seamen,' he once observed, gnomically.

Nelson was as careful about the food his men and officers ate as he was about his own diet, often commenting with pride on the healthiness of his fleet. The Georgian sailor's diet was often much better than you might imagine from those schoolroom myths of rotten meat and weevilly biscuits.

The basic sailor's ration was provided through the Victualling Board, which was remarkably efficient in ensuring 'that the food provided for naval seamen was both good and plentiful'. The standard weekly ration was a hearty mixture of beer, salt beef, salt pork, pease, oatmeal, butter and cheese, plus a pound of hard biscuit a day. This yielded an average daily intake of more than

5,000 calories, twice the recommended quota for modern landlubbers and also more than the 3,200 calories that modern crews need, but modern crews do not have to haul three-ton guns around or expend calories keeping warm.

In addition, there were nice extras which the bare ration does not reveal. Some of the salt beef would be substituted with dried fruit – luscious Malaga raisins, tiny currants from Corinth, or green ‘kismish’ (sultanas) on the East



Ships' Cook 1799

Indies station. Pursers would buy oranges and lemons for their crews whenever they could, and sometimes exotica such as mangoes, dates, figs, pumpkins and pomegranates. All ships were supplied with fishing-tackle to catch fresh fish, which went first to any invalids and then to the rest of the crew. As for fresh meat, livestock was often kept on board – Nelson himself was fanatical about it because of his belief that excessive salt from brined pork was dangerous. As well as oxen to slaughter, there were wet chickens, kept for their eggs and then killed and eaten once they stopped laying. Many men and officers even kept chickens as pets (instead of parrots!) for their own personal supply of eggs.

The diet of officers was enriched with all manner of condiments and spices: white, black and ‘Chyan’ (cayenne) pepper, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, nutmeg and mace, mustard and curry powder; lemon and mango pickle and ‘yellow Indian pickle’ (piccalilli), mushroom ketchup; pickled onions and walnuts, cucumber and cabbage; soy sauce; tarragon, chilli and elder vinegars; anchovies and French olives; capers and celery seed; and horseradish.

Another thing that must have made eating bearable for Nelson’s men was the scrupulous fairness with which food was doled out. Cooks used special large forks called ‘tormentors’ to portion or ‘prick’ out fresh meat, ensuring there was no favouritism.

Meals cannot have always been appetising. Weevils in bread were sometimes a problem, though not often. The other major vermin were rats, but astonishingly these were not entirely bad news. Canny sailors would catch rats and sell them to hungry ship’s boys; ‘peppered, salted and grilled, they were declared good to eat. They taste rather like fresh rabbit and, like all fresh meat, contain a small amount of vitamin C’.

(Extract from The Sunday Telegraph)

If the above has whetted your appetite, for further reading I recommend ‘Feeding NELSON’S NAVY – The True Story of Food at Sea in the Georgian Era’ by Janet Macdonald, Chatham Publishing, 2004.

THE TRAFALGAR FABERGÉ EGG

Michael Shaw



Readers of ‘The Nelson Dispatch’ might be interested in this Fabergé egg, which I spotted on a recent cruise around the UK. It is one of a limited edition of 50, which was commissioned by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to commemorate the Bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 2005. Proceeds from the sale of these eggs helped to fund the purchase of a new lifeboat, *City of London III*, for Sennen Cove in Cornwall.

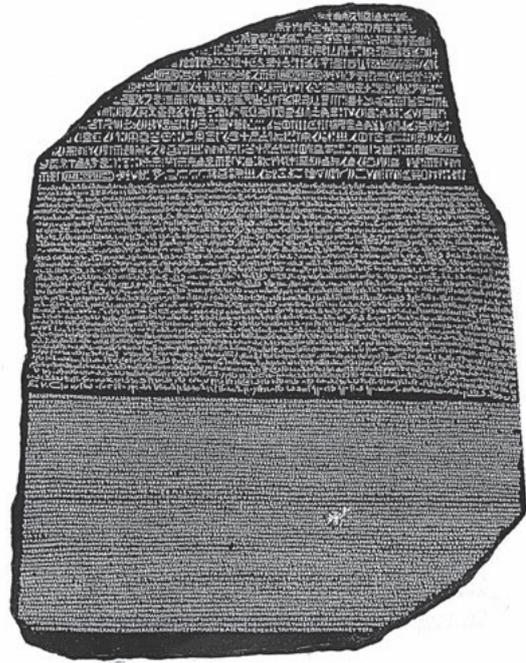
The egg was designed by Theo Fabergé (1922–2007), grandson of the legendary jeweller Carl Fabergé. It is 18 cm high, and is made of sterling silver, painted cobalt blue with guilloché enamelling. On the front, it is adorned in 24-ct gold with a detail from Auguste Mayer’s 1836 painting *Redoubtable at Trafalgar*, while the reverse shows Nelson’s Naval Gold Medal. As is traditional with Fabergé eggs, there is a ‘surprise’ inside: a silver and gold bust of Nelson, modelled on that by John Flaxman (1755–1826), showing him wearing the hat and coat he wore at Trafalgar.

These eggs were originally sold for £10,000 each, with at least half of that going to the RNLI. In 2019, a ‘Fabergé-esque Trafalgar commemorative egg’ (presumably one of this series) was sold at Sotheby’s for £13,750.

NELSON AND THE PHARAOHS

John Maynard

This may sound far-fetched, but there is a case to be made that Nelson played a key role in unlocking the secrets of Ancient Egypt and the Pharaohs. And it is all to do with the Rosetta Stone. In the eighteenth century Europeans were already fascinated by the huge and mysterious ancient monuments along the Nile. So when Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798 scholars hitched a lift alongside his military forces. Qualms of conscience about removing artefacts from their historic sites were still very far in the future, so the scholars busied themselves acquiring anything which might be of interest. Soldiers rebuilding fortifications in Rosetta dug up a piece of stone which immediately aroused a great deal of interest. It was part of a stone obelisk with inscriptions in three different languages. One of them was Greek which could be readily interpreted and might therefore provide a key to the other ancient Egyptian writings.



But then Nelson made his dramatic arrival in Aboukir Bay, destroying the French fleet. With the wreck of his grand plan to cut off the British trade route to India, Napoleon abandoned his forces and returned to France. In the circumstances his army had no option but to surrender, but the terms of the Treaty of Alexandria also required the handing over of antiquities, which of course included the Rosetta Stone. These were duly shipped home, and avoided the misfortune of one of Sir William Hamilton's collections of historic Mediterranean artefacts which had been lost at sea in 1798.

A note in English painted on the Rosetta Stone reveals that the King had received it, and recognising its significance had immediately passed it into the care of the British Museum, where it became (and still is) a star attraction. This kind of stone pillar with an inscription in three languages was a means of disseminating public information; bizarrely this one was about tax breaks for senior clergy! Under the Ptolemys who then ruled Egypt, classical Greek was the language of administration; the other two inscriptions were in the everyday language of Egypt known as Demotic, and the classical Hieroglyphics understood only by the priestly hierarchy.

Back in England the three inscriptions were copied and published worldwide for intense study. An English scholar called Thomas Young made the crucial first step when he worked out that hieroglyphs could be used phonetically.

But it took more than twenty years of intellectual endeavour, before in the end it was not an English but a French scholar, Jean-François Champollion, who cracked the system of hieroglyphs and made it possible to understand the vast amount of writing on papyri, tombs and monuments.

But without Nelson the Rosetta Stone might have gone astray, been lost at sea, or fallen into the hands of a private collector as a mere curiosity, and never brought to the attention of the right people. Nelson, being Nelson, did the right thing and played a key role in unlocking the mysteries of ancient Egypt and the Pharaohs.

Note: This article is largely based on information from Neil MacGregor's excellent 'A History of the World in 100 Objects'.

FIRST WITH THE NEWS OF TRAFALGAR

Ray Aldis

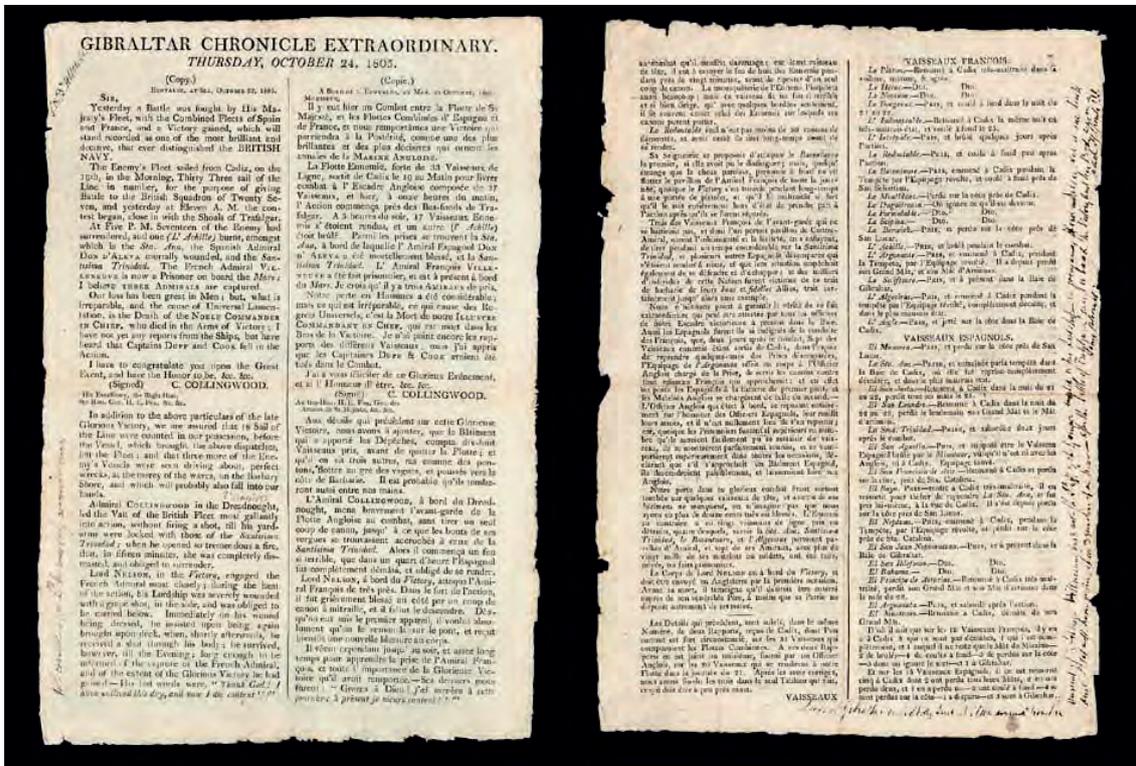


Victory being towed into Rosia Bay, by Charles Vickery

Episode 3 of the 2021 Channel 4 TV series 'Treasures of the World', presented by Bettany Hughes, featured an edition of the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, the world's second oldest English language newspaper, that on 24 October 1805 carried the first news of the victory at Trafalgar; a full two weeks before the dispatches carried by Lt Lapenotiere reached the London newspapers. Having watched the programme, Society member John Maynard contacted us suggesting that this might be of interest to 'Nelson Dispatch' readers.

On 22 October 1805, Vice-Admiral Collingwood had transferred his flag to Captain Blackwood's frigate, his mighty HMS *Sovereign* having been battered to a mastless hulk. As he began to draft his dispatch for the Admiralty, a fishing

boat from Gibraltar was sighted (the Rock, with its British Garrison, was only 70 miles away), so Collingwood dashed off a quick letter for the Governor, General Fox. With Collingwood's note, the fishing boat rapidly returned to its home port and delivered it to the Governor. He, in turn, passed on a copy to the Editor of the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, who published it in his edition for 24 October 1805:



Sir,
Euryalus, at Sea, October 22
 Yesterday a Battle was fought by His Majesty's Fleet, with the combined Fleets of Spain and France, and a victory gained, which will stand recorded as one of the most brilliant and decisive that ever distinguished the British Navy.
 The Enemy's Fleet sailed from Cadiz, on the 19th, in the Morning, Thirty Three sail of the line in number, for the purpose of giving Battle to the British Squadron of Twenty Seven, and yesterday at Eleven A.M. the contest began, close in with the Shoals of Trafalgar.
 At Five P.M. Seventeen of the Enemy had surrendered, and one (L' Achille) burnt, amongst which is the Sta. Ana, the Spanish Admiral Don D'Alava mortally wounded, and the Santissima Trinidad. The French Admiral Villeneuve is now a prisoner on board the Mars; I believe Three Admirals are captured.
 Our loss has been great in Men; but what is irreparable, and the cause of Universal Lamentation, is the death of the Noble Commander in Chief, who died in the Arms of Victory; I have not yet any reports from the Ships, but I have heard that Captains Duff and Cooke fell in the Action.
 I have to congratulate you upon the Great Event, and have the Honor to be, &c.
 C. Collingwood

It was to be another five days before the badly damaged *Victory*, bearing Nelson's body, was towed into Gibraltar's Rosia Bay by HMS *Neptune*. Aboard the former flagship and many other ships of the British fleet were badly injured seamen that had to be carried ashore for treatment in the Garrison hospital. Sadly, many of them died and were subsequently buried in what is now known as the Trafalgar Cemetery. Today, 216 years after the momentous battle, the people of Gibraltar still organise an annual commemoration of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson, and remember those brave sailors and marines buried on their Rock. They also remain proud that it was their newspaper, the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, that was the first to publish the news of the Battle of Trafalgar.

REVIEWS

The Gentlemen Danes John A Nixon 231 pp, colour illustrations throughout. Soaring Kite (self published) 2021. Hardback £30.



In the late 1980s Nelson Society member John Nixon was walking through the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin Minster in Reading when a weathered stone tablet, mounted on the wall of the church, caught his eye. The tablet commemorated one Laurethes Braag, a Danish merchant who died as a prisoner of war on parole in Reading in 1808. Thus started a detective story in which the author uncovered the little known saga of parole prisoners in the

Napoleonic wars and of some 600 Danes and Norwegians given this status in Reading between 1807 and 1814. John, a Danish speaker and author with contacts in Denmark, was well placed to explore this fascinating aspect of Reading's history, one which is redolent of national policy in the period. A key element running through the book is the story of Hans Birch Dahlerup, a young naval officer captured a full three times and bought to Reading on each occasion. Fortunately Dahlerup kept a diary throughout his life which he developed into his memoirs, which provide a great deal of local colour to his time on parole. The book describes the freedoms of the 'prisoners' and their relationship with local residents who respected them and treated them with kindness. The prisoners were free to roam the countryside and were even able to attend social events, and Dahlerup's story is a tribute to a man who received numerous decorations in his own country. This book is thoroughly researched, beautifully illustrated and clearly written and would be an enjoyable read even for those with little interest

in the Napoleonic era. A knowledge or affinity to Reading is not necessary. The town merely provides the setting for this remarkable story. **Chris Brett**

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR ON THE BBC – A POSTSCRIPT

In the previous issue of the ‘Nelson Dispatch’, Ray Aldis reviewed a recent edition of Melvyn Bragg’s series ‘In Our Time’ on BBC Radio 4 where the Battle of Trafalgar was discussed with James Davey, Lecturer in Naval and Maritime History at the University of Exeter, Marianne Czisnik, author of a number of distinguished works on Nelson and Kenneth Johnson, Research Professor of National Security at Air University, Alabama. Interestingly, listening to the programme on the BBC Sounds podcast, the listener is treated to an extra ten minutes of discussion. In this ‘bonus discussion’ one of the speakers asserted that it was a matter of record that Nelson opposed the abolition of the slave trade. That speaker was contacted to ascertain the basis for their claim, and kindly replied, advising that the most recent piece seen on this matter was Professor Christer Petley’s chapter ‘The Royal Navy, the British Atlantic Empire and the abolition of the Slave Trade’ which quotes Simon Taylor’s letter referencing Laughton (*The Naval Miscellany*, Vol 1, pp438-9). As mentioned in the summary of the lecture given at ‘The Battle of St Vincent’ lunch on pages 270-1 of this edition of the ‘Nelson Dispatch’, it is clear that even the Laughton version of the letter was a corrupted version of the original. We have drawn the speaker’s attention to this, and dialogue with the speaker continues. The Nelson Society continues to be at the forefront of research on this matter, and continues to correct misapprehensions, which may occur at the highest levels! **Chris Brett**

OBITUARIES



SYLVIA ANDREWS 1936-2021

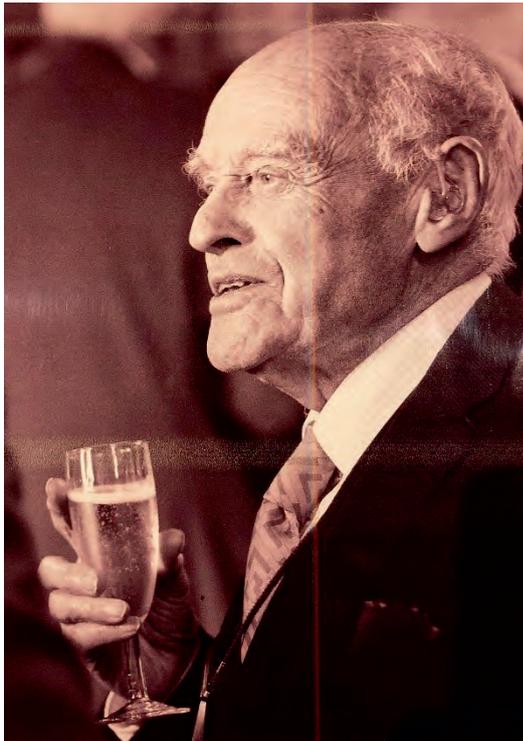
We are sorry to report the sudden death on 13 December of Sylvia Andrews who, with her husband of 60 years, Doug Andrews, was a keen member of The Nelson Society for many years and was known and loved by so many Nelson Society members. Sylvia was an excellent needlewoman and her favourite and all consuming hobby was her bobbin lace making, and just before the pandemic Sylvia kindly donated a beautiful Torchon Lace Bookmark, which had taken her three months to make. This was to be raffled at one of the forthcoming events with proceeds going to the Nelson

Society funds, which was Sylvia's wish. Now that we can hold events again, this will be done, although it is sad to think that Sylvia won't be at the event.

Doug and Sylvia joined The Nelson Society in the early 1990's and were often seen at the various events. Sylvia will be sadly missed but we look forward to welcoming Doug when he is ready to return, and meanwhile we send him our deepest condolences.

Jeanette Ryder

ANTHONY (TONY) NOËL ROPER 1923 – 2021



Tony Roper died aged 97 in hospital at Plymouth on Armistice Day, 11 November 2021. The funeral was held on 29 Dec 2021 at St Petroc's Church, South Brent, Devon. A Nelson Society member since 2013, Tony had many friends in the Society and was an enthusiastic participant at events and contributor to the 'Nelson Dispatch'. He attended every Trafalgar Weekend since 2013 and had booked for our City of London weekend in 2020, sadly he was not able to join us when this finally took place in 2021, and he was much missed. He contributed 2 major 'Nelson Dispatch' articles: 'Nelson's descendants in South Brent, Devon' in Summer 2015 (which elicited a vigorous correspondence), and 'The West Indies and Egypt, combined operations' (Winter 2019).

Tony's middle name Noël was suggested by his father as he was born so near Christmas Day (26 December 1923). Born in Mill Hill, London, he was at school at Ardingly from where he volunteered in 1941 and was selected for the Royal Engineers. From serving in the Middle East he was posted to Italy for action in the campaign 'From Toe to Top' including Montecassino. George VI appointed him Lieutenant in 'our Territorial Army' in 1950. Later he was an ardent supporter of the Royal British Legion in Ivybridge and he was a member of the Naval & Military Club, London.

Following the Army he worked in Marketing & Advertising with Crawfords, and British Aluminium where he rose to Commercial Director, and the Energy Industries Council. Apart from Nelson, his other passions were collecting bronzes and etchings, breeding Boxer dogs, cooking and enjoying good food and fine wine. He was a very keen gardener and plantsman, and his ashes were scattered beneath the beech tree at his home. He was widely known and hugely well-regarded by the entire South Brent community where he had lived since 1984.

Sue Morris

Ronnie Kane writes:

‘I first met Tony at the Trafalgar Dinner in Bath, 2019. I had thoroughly enjoyed his ‘Nelson Dispatch’ article based on his ancestor, Patrick Irvine, a soldier in the theatre of operations which began with Nelson’s fleet annihilating the French fleet in Aboukir Bay, leading to the British Army, under Generals Abercrombie and Moore, defeating the French forces at Alexandria. As I shook his hand and we conversed, I felt a ‘connect’ with that historic period; connecting with Patrick trudging over the desert sands of Egypt to confront the enemy. Tony clearly had a great and broad understanding of our Georgian history and inevitably our chat led to my hero General Sir John Moore. Anyway, I wanted you to know how glad I am that I have this lovely memory of Tony’.

NELSON SOCIETY MERCHANDISE AND MEMORABILIA

Gifts and merchandise

We have a great selection of special Nelson Society merchandise for sale including ties, scarves, umbrellas, lapel-pins, bow-ties and cuff-links. We also have limited numbers of The Nelson Society’s own specialist publications including many out of print titles unavailable elsewhere. All these make wonderful gifts for the Nelson enthusiast. If you would like to buy, do take a look at our website Online Shop. Please contact David Curson (Sales Manager) for all information and further details of prices and availability. And don’t forget we have back numbers of ‘The Nelson Dispatch’ going back up to 40 years and Binders if you wish to complete your collection.

Memorabilia and books

From time to time the Society is fortunate to be given members’ Nelson memorabilia, to be sold for the benefit of the Society. The sort of things we receive for example are pictures, prints, ceramics and other memorabilia, all Nelson or Navy related. Members have the opportunity to acquire some of these items, to benefit them and also the Society. These are usually offered on the Sales Table at Nelson Society events. If you would like to be sent a list periodically to see if there might be anything of interest, please let Sue Morris know. We also have a number of excellent donated Nelson and Navy related books, modestly priced or available for a donation. Let Sue Morris know if you would like to be on this mail listing.

Thank you for supporting The Nelson Society! Your purchases and donations help us to achieve more of our aims and objectives.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE NELSON SOCIETY

Membership is open to anyone who is interested in Nelson, his life and times. Members are sent free quarterly issues of the ‘Nelson Dispatch’, and are able to participate with their guests in our varied programme of events, luncheons, lectures and visits to relevant places of interest. Contact the Membership Secretary, whose details appear on the inside front cover of this issue, for details of how to apply, and current subscription rates.

CONTRIBUTIONS & ADVERTISING

Contributors

Any contributions, whether fully researched articles, short features, queries or letters, will be welcomed. Please send material initially to the Executive Editor, Sue Morris. Ideally, material should be sent in **by email, as a plain Word document** which we will lay out. Any references should be included as end-notes. (Please additionally send as a pdf, if your article includes figures or tables so we can check it is accurately displayed). Illustrations and photographs are very welcome and should be sent separately as jpeg files **numbered and identified with detailed captions**. Articles should ideally conform to our house style and 'Notes for Contributors' are available on request. Please contact the Executive Editor for advice on any of the above.

Deadlines

Edition	Researched articles and full page adverts	Letters, notes, event notices and reports, small ads
Winter (publication 28 Feb)	30 December	15 January
Spring (publication 31 May)	31 March	15 April
Summer (publication 31 Aug)	30 June	15 July
Autumn (publication 30 Nov)	30 September	15 October

Advertisers

Black & White Advertising:

Price	For 1 insertion	For 4 identical consecutive insertions (each)
Full page A5	£145	£100
Half page A5	£85	£63
Quarter page A5	£48	£36
Eighth page A5	£28	£23

Colour Advertising:

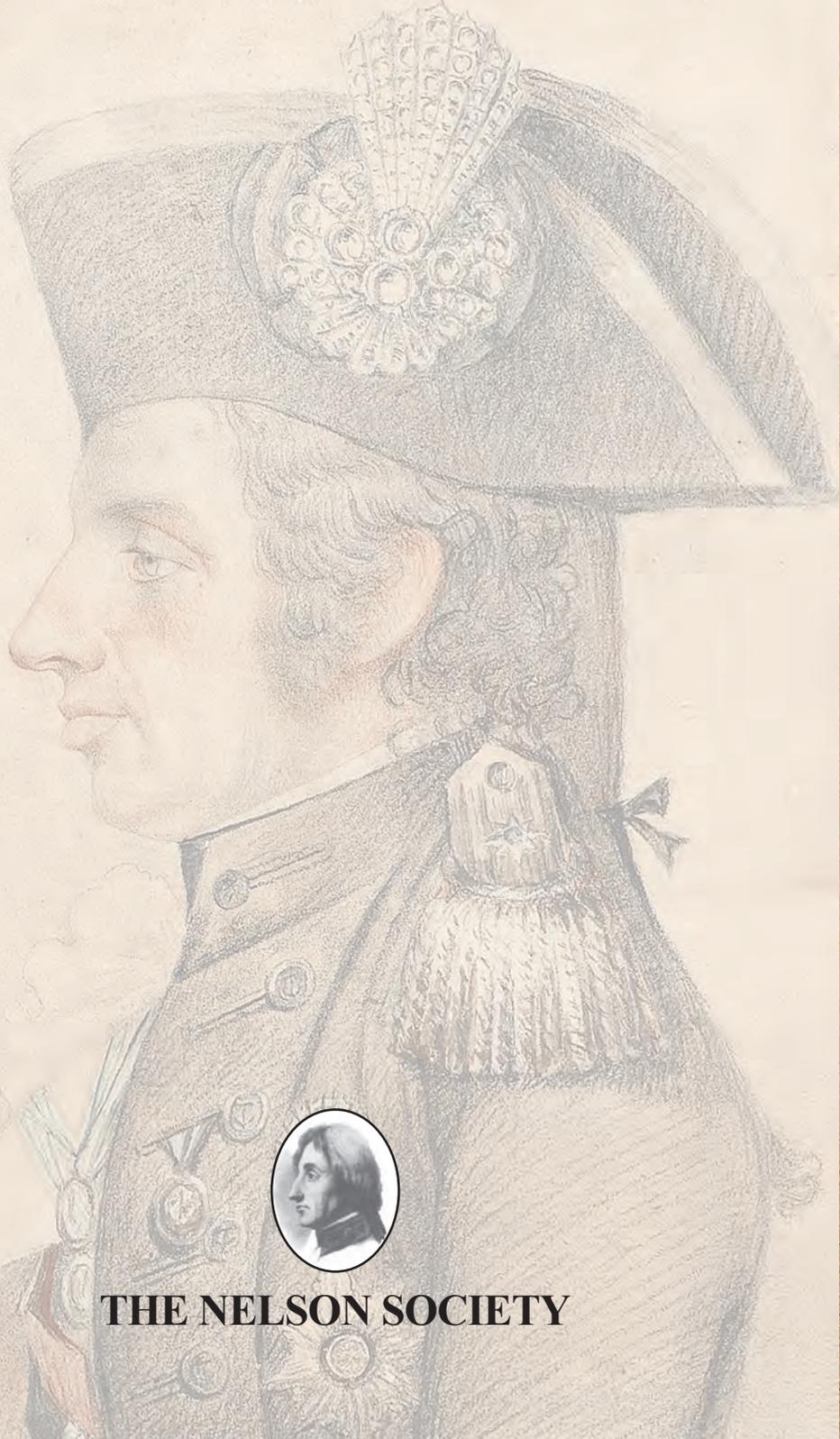
Price	For 1 insertion	For 4 identical consecutive insertions (each)
Full page A5	£175	£130
Double facing pages A5	£300	£900
Half page A5	£100	£75
Quarter page A5	£60	£45
Eighth page A5	£35	£30

Please contact the Executive Editor (Sue Morris) for further information.

Any additional pre-printing work by our printer will be notified to you before the advertisement can be placed together with a quotation for the price.

Advertising copy is best provided in electronic form either as a PDF or Word document depending on the content and reproduction quality required by the advertiser.

The Editor's decision regarding suitability of any material is final
--



THE NELSON SOCIETY