

The Nelson Society

Aims and Objectives

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

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EDITORIAL

As the Chairman reports elsewhere in this edition, a highlight—one of many—of our recent Trafalgar weekend in Norfolk was the opening of the Nelson exhibit alongside the Lord Nelson pub at Burnham Thorpe. The suggestion of a (long overdue) permanent exhibition to commemorate Nelson in his birthplace village was first made in 2017 by the National Museum of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth. This wonderfully untouched village, which still so strongly evokes Nelson’s childhood, has always been a destination for Nelson tourists and so, apart from some excellent graphics in the church, it was faintly absurd that there was nothing in a more formal sense to satisfy their curiosity.

Fortuitously, Holkham Estates had recently purchased the Lord Nelson pub following its closure a few years before. I identified the adjoining, rather ramshackle building, formerly a post office and shop (see Volume 14, part 6, Spring 2022) as the ideal site for a pocket-sized walk-in exhibition, free to all and open with the pub. With the enthusiastic support of the Earl of Leicester and Peter Mitchell, the chief executive of Holkham Estates, a series of plans were drawn up for display. However, it was a very difficult brief to fulfil, as space was very limited and the installation had to be robust. It also had to tread the difficult path between varying degrees of interest and knowledge of Nelson from visitors: from the very well-informed—Society members! —to those who frankly (and there are too many of them) have never heard of the admiral.

At the outset we were anxious to place the exhibit firmly *in* Norfolk, especially since the recent and regretted closure of the Norfolk Nelson Museum at Great Yarmouth. Other museums already tell the whole story of Nelson’s life and we had neither the space nor the inclination simply to do a pale imitation. I have been long aware of William Faden’s fascinating map of Norfolk, published in 1797, and it struck me that it would be wonderful to print it on the floor of the building (easier said than done!) whilst flagging sites in Norfolk, using Nelson’s signal at Trafalgar, of especial interest to the admiral. The map makes full use of a difficult space and, accompanied by information panels on the walls and a reproduction of the stern of *Victory*, together with a voiceover read in Nelson’s distinctive Norfolk accent, offers the visitor a rewarding and unique experience. For example, school parties are already booking to visit. As a Society we should all feel proud of supporting this project which, as Graham remarks, completely honours our mission to promote and introduce Nelson to a wider audience. I would like to thank you all for it.

Martyn Downer
November 2022

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

One of the highlights of our Trafalgar Weekend in Norfolk, and in particular Burnham Thorpe on Trafalgar Day, was the *Experience Nelson* exhibition at the Lord Nelson pub. This is located in an outbuilding near to the entrance of the pub and is a new visual/graphic display representing Nelson's life for all to experience visiting the area. It was promoted by the National Museum of the Royal Navy, who also operate the Historic Dockyard at Portsmouth and other sites in England. The building was refurbished by Holkham Estates who own and had refurbished the Lord Nelson pub, where we held our first 2022 Trafalgar Dinner that evening. Our Editor Martyn Downer was a consultant on the project. Entry to the visual/graphic display is free, and open as part of the pub. The theme divides Nelson's life into three phases: Horatio the boy growing up in Burnham Thorpe, Nelson the man and his naval career, and Lord Nelson, the hero with his great victories, international fame and lasting legacy to this nation.

Although the concept was put into operation by the National Museum of the Royal Navy, there were a number of donations to make this possible. I am very proud to announce that The Nelson Society was one of these, in fact a major one with a donation of £12,000. This was carefully considered by the Committee who were unanimous that the project fits strongly within our objectives – 'to advance public education in the appreciation of the life and achievements of Admiral Lord Nelson'. This was a large amount of money, possibly the largest single donation the Society has made to one project, and this sum represents approximately one third of our combined reserves. While we do still have adequate funds for our present and immediate future prospects, we now need some legacies, gifts and donations to rebuild our reserves for contributions to future worthy causes.

This is my last address to the Membership, as my term of office ends on 31 December after three years. My first year was easy due to restrictions of Covid. The second year was partly operational, with the full Trafalgar Weekend in the City of London as things relaxed in the latter part of the year. This year has been very full. Surprisingly, I have enjoyed representing The Nelson Society, although I prefer to be more of an administrator. Certainly, it has been a lot of hard work. What has impressed me most is the high regard in which The Society is held, both at home and abroad. This has led to some very rewarding experiences: our reception in the City of London and in particular the College of Arms last year; our fantastic reception by the City of Santa Cruz this year in their commemoration of the Battle of Santa Cruz of 1797 (in particular, receiving the presentation to The Nelson Society by the City of Santa Cruz, from the Mayor, in their Parliament building, was truly memorable); and recently, our invitation by the Laskaridis Foundation to attend the official opening of the 'Nelson letters' exhibition at Portsmouth, and as their guests at dinner on board HMS *Warrior*.

Certainly, an interlude in my life to be cherished. Thank you all for your support.

Graham Capel, November 2022

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

It's time to renew your membership for 2023. Subscription fees for next year have been held at the same rates as for 2022, and a Renewal Form is enclosed with this issue – please take the time now, to check that your standing order is up to date – or pop a cheque in the post now, to beat the Christmas post – your payment is due on 1st January. Use the form to confirm your latest contact details and also to sign up for Gift Aid if you haven't already.

Thank you in anticipation of your continuing support. Members can look forward to a quarterly 'good read' when the 'Nelson Dispatch' reaches them, and a great programme of events and meetings. It was good to see so many new members at the Trafalgar weekend in October where new members were made welcome at a special drinks reception with the Committee, and also at the very sociable Pickle Night dinner in November. A warm welcome to new members who have joined, or re-joined recently: Ken Williams, Peter Allan, Julian Kirk & Gina Wise, David Holmes, Peter Fallart, Sidney Tear, Jeremy Knight, Flora Fraser, Paul Richards & Alison Gifford, Lady Coke and Trevor McIlroy.

We're sorry to report the passing of Dr Barry Moyse, member since 1989. Many will remember him from Trafalgar weekends and Pickle Night dinners, which his wife Denise tells us he always enjoyed: 'He was a great devotee of all things Nelsonian and our eldest daughter is named obliquely in memory of the great man (Emma). Nelson was one of Barry's great heroes and he loved all things Royal Naval'. Sadly we must also report the death of Carol Geddes, who attended for many years with her son Jeff; and Joy Sarson, a popular member who many will know from our events, which she attended with Michael Salter. Our sincere sympathies to Denise, Jeff, Michael and their families.

I wish all members a happy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to your company in 2023 whatever these troubled times may bring.

Sue Morris, Membership Secretary

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2023

Further details and Booking Forms will be given in forthcoming issues of the 'Nelson Dispatch' and on the Website www.nelson-society.com. Why not put the dates in your diary now!

Tuesday 14 February - Battle of St Vincent Commemoration, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

A visit to the exhibition 'Nelson in his own words' at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, to see Nelson letters and other items loaned from the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation in Athens, with a talk by curator Martyn Downer, and

lunch in the Dockyard Boathouse No 7 Restaurant. BOOK NOW – FORM ENCLOSED. Further details below.

Saturday 1 April: Battle of Copenhagen Commemoration, Bath

Based at Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Lunch and a talk by **Professor Andrew Lambert**, Naval Historian and author of ‘Nelson: Britannia’s God of War’. BOOK NOW – FORM ENCLOSED. Further details below.

Friday 12 May: The Nelson Room and Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich

Guided tour, including visit to the newly restored Nelson Room where Nelson’s body lay before his funeral, and lunch in the Old Brewery restaurant. BOOK NOW – CONTACT PAUL GANJOU. Further details below.

Tuesday 16 - Thursday 18 May: Visit to the Nelson Tower at Forres, Moray, near Inverness

This visit will be based at the Royal Highland Hotel, Inverness and will include a guided visit to the famous Forres Nelson monument and other sites of interest in Inverness and Forres. BOOK NOW – FORM ENCLOSED. Further details below.

Saturday 5 August: Battle of the Nile Commemoration, Exeter

Our usual ‘Nile Luncheon’ has a new venue for 2023, the excellent Devon Hotel in Exeter, Devon.

Guest speaker to be confirmed. (Booking form with next issue).

Early September 2023: Ljubljana, Slovenia

A proposed 5-day visit to the city of Ljubljana and environs, to see sites visited by Nelson and the Hamiltons in 1800, and to present a plaque on the site of the Hotel Elephant which hosted Nelson in 1800. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO SUE MORRIS. Further details below.

Sunday 1 October: Service for Seafarers, Portsmouth Cathedral 1100

Members are invited to attend this annual service followed by a procession to the Nelson statue on Grand Parade for a wreath-laying ceremony. CONTACT JEANETTE RYDER.

Friday 20 – Sunday 22 October: Trafalgar Weekend, Dartmouth, Devon

A weekend of events based in Dartmouth, including the Annual General Meeting, and our Trafalgar Dinner at Britannia Royal Naval College. Booking forms Spring 2023.

Saturday 11 - Sunday 12 November: Pickle Night Dinner and Remembrance event, Portsmouth

Evening dinner at the Royal Maritime Club to commemorate the arrival of HMS *Pickle* in 1805 carrying news of the Battle of Trafalgar. VIP places at Portsmouth Guildhall for the Remembrance Parade on Sunday. Booking forms Summer 2023. CONTACT JEANETTE RYDER.

EVENT NOTICES 2023

BATTLE OF CAPE ST VINCENT COMMEMORATIVE EVENT, PORTSMOUTH - TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2023

In a break with tradition, our next Battle of Cape St Vincent lunch will be held at the Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth, on 14 February 2023. The event will fall into two parts: the morning session will comprise a visit to the Nelson Gallery of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, with a guided visit of the ‘Nelson in his own Words’ exhibition (see report on page 468 of this edition of the ‘Nelson Dispatch’). Our guide will be Martyn Downer, who curated the exhibition on behalf of the Laskaridis Foundation. We will break for a fish and chip lunch to eat together in a specially cordoned off area of the Boathouse 7 café. Members can also purchase wine/dessert with their meal. In the afternoon, members will have a choice of Dockyard attractions to visit – any one of HMS *Victory*/ the *Mary Rose*/ HMS *Warrior* or any other museum. We have therefore negotiated a special ‘two-attraction’ Dockyard admission ticket for the day, which is not available to the general public. The total cost of the event including admission and lunch is £45. (If you already have Dockyard entry 'season ticket' the cost of the event to you will be £20 to include lunch). A Booking Form is enclosed, please return with your payment by Weds 25 January, to **Chris Brett**.

*This is a one-day event, but members who are in Portsmouth might like to extend their stay for a Curator-led visit to the ‘Silver City’ exhibition at Portsmouth Museum & Art Gallery on 15 February. Covering 500 years of Portsmouth’s history this free exhibition (which runs until 26 Feb 2023) includes Nelson’s snuffbox and other items of interest. Contact **Jeanette Ryder** if interested.*

BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN COMMEMORATION 2023 The Nelson Society and Bath Royal, Literary & Scientific Institution Lunch and Lectures by Lt Col Ray Aldis and Professor Andrew Lambert BATH, SATURDAY 1st APRIL 2023

Our next Copenhagen commemoration will be a one day event to be held jointly with the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (BRLSI), at 16-18 Queen Square, Bath BA1 2HN. It will be held on the anniversary of the Battle of Copenhagen. We will meet at the Institution for coffee at 10.30 am. The morning session will comprise two lectures: the first by Lt Col Ray Aldis, Nelson Society historian and the second by Professor Andrew Lambert, Naval Historian and author of ‘Nelson: Britannia’s God of War’. Ray will speak on ‘Nelson and Bath’, and Professor Lambert on ‘Strategic Effect: Nelson, Copenhagen and the end of the Revolutionary War’. Lunch will be taken at the nearby Bath and County Club after which there will be a guided walk following the UNESCO/Nelson Society City of Bath ‘Nelson Trail’, led by Bath City Guide and Society member Clive Johnstone. The cost of the event is as follows: Attendance at the lectures: £12.

Lunch (two courses plus coffee): £23. Guided walk: no charge but donations for the Mayor of Bath's charity will be accepted (suggested donation of £2 per head). We are also able to offer an 'attendance by Zoom' option for the lectures, at a cost of £6. A Booking Form is enclosed. Please complete and return with payment, to **Chris Brett** by 15 February.

VISIT TO THE PAINTED HALL, NELSON ROOM & 500 YEARS OF HISTORY TOUR, ROYAL MUSEUMS GREENWICH
12 MAY 2023

This is a wonderful opportunity for members to visit a very special World Heritage site and enjoy a Guided Tour of the Painted Hall and the newly refurbished Nelson Room, of which the Society has been a benefactor; followed by lunch in The Old Brewery. It will also be possible after lunch to take part in a '500 Years of History' site tour lasting 45mins, and to visit the National Maritime Museum - including the Nelson, Navy, Nation Gallery - and the Cutty Sark. Cost: £30 per person, including 2-course lunch. Full details in next issue but please register your interest with **Paul Ganjou** by email paul@ganjou.com or calling 07981 787042.

VISIT TO THE NELSON TOWER, FORRES, MORAYSHIRE:
A WALK IN THE PARK, 16 - 18 MAY 2023

Ronnie Kane



In the last issue we announced a visit to the Nelson Tower in Forres, a remarkable 1806 memorial to Lord Nelson in the spectacular setting of the pretty Morayshire village of Forres, overlooking the Moray Firth. This Nelson Society event will span 16/17/18 May 2023 (arriving Tues 16th and departing Fri 19th) and is centred on the Highland Capital City of Inverness. The King's Highway Hotel, Inverness, is a 3-star establishment situated in the Old Town and is offering en suite rooms at under £90 per room per night (early booking essential).

Wednesday will be spent sightseeing, exploring the city (Botanic Gardens, Castle Museum etc). Members are free to make their own arrangements to see 'Nessie' and Urquhart Castle or take in a distillery tour for example.

On Thursday, we will take the train to Forres, a 30-minute journey. Advance booking is necessary to obtain best discounted fares. (Ronnie will advise nearer the time.) At Forres we will be met by the Heritage Trust volunteers who have offered to be our hosts for the visit. En route to the Tower we will stop off at the historic Tollbooth where light refreshments will be laid out for us, after which we proceed to Cluny Park and Nelson's Tower. As well as exhibits on each floor of the Tower there is a wonderful view to be had from the top overlooking the Moray Firth. Meeting us at the Tower will be the Lord Lieutenant of Morayshire, Major General Seymour Monro who has invited us to his home to view the portrait of

his ancestor, Commodore Charles Brisbane at the taking of Curaçao. Later in the evening back in Inverness we round off the day with a Dinner with guest speaker Rev John Maynard. The cost will be £48 per person including Port.

On Friday morning, those of us not extending our stay, will make our way home. A Booking Form is enclosed with this 'Nelson Dispatch'. Meanwhile do not hesitate to contact **Ronnie Kane** with any questions or suggestions you may have regarding this visit. **roninspain2010@gmail.com**

BATTLE OF THE NILE COMMEMORATIVE EVENT - EXETER SATURDAY 5 AUGUST 2023

To commemorate the Battle of the Nile in 2023 we are having a change of venue from Buxton, which has served us well for a number of years, but it was felt that a change would be refreshing. Organised by committee member Jon Ponting, the event will include lunch at the excellent Devon Hotel, with a guest speaker to be announced. Full details and a booking form will be given in the next issue, but please do save the date in the meantime.

Jon Ponting

VISIT TO SLOVENIA SEPTEMBER 2023

Following the interest shown in Nelson's visit to Ljubljana during his overland return with the Hamiltons in 1800 (TND articles vol 13 part 11 'Three Slovene Admirals and Lord Nelson' and Vol 13 part 12 'The Slovenian connection'), member



Keith Miles (author of the first article) has suggested that we visit Ljubljana to present a plaque at the Hotel Slon, site of the 'Hotel Elefant' where Nelson and his party stayed, and visit the theatre and places associated with Nelson. We are thinking of a 4-5 day visit in the first 2 weeks of September 2023. We will benefit from Keith's expert knowledge, as his wife is Slovenian and they are members of the British Slovene Society. The British Ambassador in Ljubljana is likely to be involved. We hope to negotiate a good deal at the Hotel Slon, and there should be some good sightseeing – Ljubljana is a beautiful city with many historic buildings and good restaurants, with stunning mountain scenery and the beautiful Lake Bled nearby. I have no doubt that this will prove to be a memorable visit. Further details will be given in the next issue, but it would assist with our planning to have an idea of how many would be seriously interested in going, please can you let me know now, if you think you might come. You will need to book flights and hotel as soon as possible.



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Sue Morris susan.morris0410@gmail.com

EVENT REPORTS

225th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE THE NELSON SOCIETY VISIT 20 - 27 JULY 2022 Brian Gibbs

All the members of the party who travelled to Tenerife have contributed to this report, but particular acknowledgement and thanks is given to the contributions that have been made by Jenny Newbold and Graham Capel.

It was a small party of Society members who travelled to witness the 225th Anniversary of the Battle, however, the arrangements put in place by the Tertulia de Amigos del 25 de Julio 1797 (The Group of Friends of 25 July 1797) for the visit could not have been bettered. We were given a very warm welcome by all we met, treated royally and wined and dined during the four days of what was a very full itinerary prepared for us by our hosts over the four days Friday 22 July to Monday 25 July.

The Tertulia de Amigos del 25 de Julio was – in their words - founded to ‘rescue the Gesta (heroic deeds) from oblivion.’ Rather like the aim of the Nelson Society to keep the memory of Nelson’s achievements alive, the Tertulia wish to ensure that the people of the Canary Islands do not forget the momentous occasion when this tiny island community defeated what was then the greatest sea power in the world, and her greatest commander.



The group members pictured with John Lucas, our excellent local guide and interpreter.

(L-R) John Flynn, Brian Gibbs, Elizabeth Gibbs, Jenny Newbold, John Shotter, Graham Capel, John Lucas, Jenny Flynn, Alastair Robertson.

The photo is taken at the spot where Nelson lost his arm (hence the pose), see later in the report.

Day 1- Friday 22 July

On our first day we were taken by minibus to the Mando de Canarias to meet the Lt General Commander of the Spanish Army in the Canary Islands and Balearics, D. Alejandro Escámez Fernández, at his Headquarters in Santa Cruz, where incidentally General Franco declared his ultimately successful military uprising against the Spanish Government. Here we were shown a film of the Spanish

Army's present deployment and given a tour of this magnificent and historic building, including the Throne Room.



Throne Room



Official Plaque of Santa Cruz



We then went to the Town Hall to meet the Mayor, José Manuel Bermúdez Esparza, and were given details of the history of this important building which acts as the Parliament building. In the Parliament Chamber were three magnificent stained-glass windows, the left hand one representing the victory over Admiral Nelson in 1797.

The Mayor then presented the Society with a splendid official Plaque of the City of Santa Cruz.

Presentation of the Plaque

After meeting the Mayor, we were whisked off to view artefacts related to Nelson's attack on Santa Cruz at the Almeyda Military Museum, the centrepiece of which is a large diorama showing Santa Cruz and the battle area as it was in 1797. The Museum houses some special relics from the engagement, amongst them a gun from one of the British launches, which, when the curators cleaned out the barrel, was found to have been loaded with langrage: essentially, bits of old junk. In this case, it included odd slivers and bits of turned wood, metal fragments, and what appear to be peach stones! The Almeyda also holds a pair of British Union flags, one from HMS *Emerald*, and another which was probably intended to be flown when the British took the town. (For any members interested in a comprehensive overview of the Museum, this is available in an article written by Ray Aldis, and published in the 'Nelson Dispatch' Vol 13 Part 9 Winter 2020).

Following military music and readings recounting the attack, including one by Nelson Society member Alastair Robertson, we enjoyed a banquet luncheon on the terrace at the Museum, overlooking the harbour with members of the Tertulia, The Lt General Commander and officers from the Spanish Army, the Assistant Mayor, and Captain Stephen McGlory, the new British Defence Attaché based at the British Embassy in Madrid.



In the evening, we were treated to a play in our honour organised by the Tertulia with a children’s version of the Battle of Santa Cruz, entitled and put on by the children at the Circle of Friends Theatre, a remembrance of the ‘Gesta del 25 de Julio’, ‘A Record of an Event’ written with portions in English especially for us.

Day 2 - Saturday 23 July

Day two started with a private guided tour with Dr Fatima Hernandez of the Natural History Museum, an extensive museum of the natural and archaeological history of the Canary Islands, and their indigenous people, the Guanche who were originally from North Africa. Similarly to the ancient Egyptians, the Guanche



mummified their dead before burial, unintentionally leaving clues to their culture for archaeologists to study centuries later. As we were now in the ‘old’ city of Santa Cruz, the Plaza de España, we were taken to see the remains of the wall of the Castillo de San Cristobal, the old fort, which were finally demolished in the 1920’s and now stand below the Plaza. Here can also be seen ‘El Tigre’, the cannon that the Spanish maintain injured Nelson’s arm. We then went to the place where Nelson attempted to land and was wounded. The landing jetty where Nelson was hit is now a flower bed with a plaque commemorating the event. The photo of the plaque is accompanied by the words reproduced below. The group photo on the first page of this report is at that very spot, which is now some 200m



distant from the sea, as a result of the expansion of Santa Cruz.

A PLACE IN HISTORY

AT THE EARLY HOURS OF 25th JULY 1797, AT THIS VERY SPOT. WHERE THE WAVES BROKE ON THE THEN CALLED ALAMEDA'S BEACH, TOOK PLACE AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT HISTORICAL HAPPENING.

HERE, REAR ADMIRAL HORATIO NELSON, COMMANDING A BRITISH ROYAL NAVY SQUADRON, WAS LEADING HIS TROOPS WITH THE INTENTION OF CONQUERING SANTA CRUZ WHEN A SHOT FROM THE CANNON 'EL TIGRE' ON THE BATTLEMENTS OF THE CLOSE SAN CRISTOBAL CASTLE, FRUSTRATED HIS PLANS AS HE WAS GRAVELY WOUNDED BEFORE COMING ASHORE.

IMMEDIATELY HE WAS TAKEN BACK TO HIS FLAGSHIP, HMS THESEUS, WHERE HIS RIGHT ARM WAS AMPUTATED.

**THE BRITISH FORCES THAT COULD DISEMBARK FOUND THEMSELVES DISORIENTATED AND CORNERED BY THE SPANISH TROOPS AND MILITIAS COMMANDED BY GENERAL ANTONIO GUTIERREZ, AND WERE FORCED TO SURRENDER BEFORE SUNRISE ON THAT HISTORICAL DAY.
PRAISE AND GLORY TO THE HEROES!**

Wording on the plaque



Nearby was a children's play-park with climbing structures in the form of the cutter HMS *Fox* (struck by cannon fire and sinking) and Nelson's flagship *Theseus*, surrounded by launches with oars and climbing nets, and barrels 'floating' in the sea. It is beautifully done, and a good way of keeping history alive for the children of today.

Manning one of the 'launches'

In the evening the re-enactment of the Battle of Santa Cruz took place through the streets of the City, The re-enactors had assembled in an enclosure, obviously separated into Spanish and British camps with flags flying and guns, swords, pikes and even a cannon which was fired every half hour. The dress of the participants was correct: Navy Blue and Redcoats for the British and White with red cross bands for the Spanish.



Spanish camp re-enactors



A battle scene in the evening

The action began at about 8.30 pm with a parade of the British taking up their position near to the Convent of La Consolation, where the original British attack

took place on the other side of the Barranco de Santos watercourse, ‘the Gully of Saints’, a stream bed that runs through Santa Cruz, but it was dry when we were there. The gunfire across the bridge leading into the town was tremendous when the Spanish tried to resist the British approach. The mock battle took place all evening through the narrow streets and ending at about 10.30 pm at the Convent of Santo Domingo, where Capt. Troubridge had eventually consolidated and threatened to burn the town if the Spanish did not surrender, but of course the Spanish refused. As in 1797, the British also lost in 2022!

Day 3 - Sunday 24 July

The next day we journeyed to Mount Teide, the volcano which at 3715 m high is the dominant feature of the island and is often snow-capped in winter. Mount Teide last erupted in 1909, but lava flows and fragmented rock structures from



past eruptions are still very visible. Leaving Mount Teide we travelled north to an international Observatory, where a number of countries have established Sun, Moon and Planet observatories, including Great Britain and USA (NASA). The original observatory on the site was built by London University in the 1970's, and included some parts from an ex-World War 2 Tank.

Members at the Observatory, Mount Teide

We were privileged to have a guided tour of the Astrophysical Observatory of the Canary Islands, one of the four principal observatories in the Northern Hemisphere, led by Tertulian Carlos Quintana, who showed us the telescopes, explained their function, and gave us lunch in the scientists' dining room.

We next travelled down to visit the northern city of Puerto de la Cruz, and



John Lucas and the Dragon Tree

the garden belonging to John Lucas. John comes from a long-established British family with trading connections in Tenerife going back almost two centuries, and now lives in a magnificent and historic house, one of the oldest in Puerto de la Cruz, which he restored in the late 1990s. It is now a balconied colonial-style house with a wonderful Orchid Garden, which has been part of the house for centuries and has been visited by many celebrities. We were given a tour of the Garden and then had a cream tea with a glass of Cava under the shade of Flamboyant flame trees.

There is a wonderful Dragon Tree in the garden, a rare tree which only grows on Tenerife, Madeira,

Cape Verde Islands and Morocco. John also has a resident Iguana about 2 ft long with a missing right foreleg which he calls ‘Nelson’.

Day 4 - Monday 25 July

Our final day began with a memorial service in the former Anglican church of St George in Santa Cruz, where Captain Stephen McGlory, the British Defence Attaché, and our Chairman unveiled a plaque, worded (in English and Spanish):

**IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF THE MEN OF THE ROYAL NAVY
AND THE ROYAL MARINES WHO FELL IN THE FAILED ATTEMPT
TO TAKE THIS TOWN OF SANTA CRUZ ON THE 25th JULY OF 1797
UNDER THE COMMAND OF REAR ADMIRAL HORATIO NELSON
FOR ANGLO-SPANISH FRIENDSHIP ON THE 225TH
ANNIVERSARY, JULY 2022**



*Plaque unveiled
by Graham Capel
and Capt Stephen
McGlory*



Following the service, we were taken to see the various coastal forts to the north of the bay of Santa Cruz, where Nelson’s first landings were attempted in the two days before the final assault on Santa Cruz. We toured the key places where Nelson’s assault occurred and saw the Castillo de Paso Alto, a citadel north of Santa Cruz where Troubridge’s first shore attack went awry, and which fired on



the landing boats on 25 July, also the ruins of the tower at San Andrés, farther north, which also engaged with the British ships on the night of 25 July. The area is surrounded by barren hills which were a considerable obstacle, then as now.

On the way back we stopped to inspect the anchor of HMS *Theseus* which is displayed in the middle of a traffic island, opposite the Naval Command of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. It was dredged up in 1997 and has been verified by comparison with other anchors at the Greenwich Maritime Museum. It was amazing that the iron survived over 200 years in the sea, and is now on display in open air. Usually such items disintegrate! (pictured left)

At midday we were entertained at the Royal Club Nautico de Santa Cruz, where the Naval Attaché and Chairman signed the visitors' book to commemorate the occasion of our visit on the 225th anniversary of the battle.



The wreath is set adrift

Captain Stephen McGlory and our Chairman together then cast a wreath adrift into the sea as a further commemoration. A Spanish soldier in eighteenth century uniform fired a musket shot in their honour as the wreath was released. (The wreath floated back into the marina as we were enjoying cocktails and Spanish Tapas on the Club's splendid veranda!)



In the evening, there was another wreath laying ceremony, near to the Plaza de Espana, Santa Cruz, where just the President of the Tertulia, Luis Garcia Rebollo and The Nelson Society Chairman laid a splendid wreath at the monument of General Antonio Gutiérrez de Otero, the Spanish Commander, who is a national hero in Tenerife (*pictured left*).

This was followed by a Military Parade and Solemn Mass in the Church of La Concepcion where the tomb of General Gutiérrez lies. This was also the day of the patron Saint, Santiago (James) of Spain. The Nelson Society were given VIP status on the red carpet for the Military Parade, and our own reserved pews inside the church for the lengthy service. The eulogy at the tomb of General Gutiérrez was composed by Alastair Robertson.



Nelson Society Chairman Graham Capel accepts the glass Lighthouse model

The Tertulia had arranged a farewell dinner for us in the Casino in Santa Cruz (not a gambling casino, but a Club). The President of the Tertulia, Luis Garcia Rebollo, thanked the Society for coming for the celebrations and presented us with a glass model of the Lighthouse of Santa Cruz. Our Chairman (with his arm in a sling for effect) responded in Spanish and English thanking the Tertulia for their hospitality and the superb itinerary, and presented them with a framed picture of Nelson leaving Portsmouth for the Battle of Trafalgar.

I am sure that none of us will forget the graciousness and generosity of our hosts, who upheld the spirit of General Gutiérrez, and I hope that we likewise did Nelson proud.

MINTERNE HOUSE VISIT, 16 AUGUST 2022

Sue Morris

Following the popular visit to Minterne House, Dorset by Society members in 2017, we arranged a follow up trip, somewhat delayed due to the Covid pandemic, and sadly in the interim, Lord (Edward) Digby passed away. However the visit arranged by David Curson on 16 August this year proved to be just as enjoyable and the present Lord (Henry) Digby an equally good host, giving us a detailed lecture on the history of Minterne House, the Digby family and the life and career of their illustrious ancestor Admiral Sir Henry Digby, Captain of HMS *Africa* at Trafalgar. His lecture also explored the themes of ‘Tactics, technology and teamwork’, keys to British navy’s success then, as now. Lunch was taken in the beautiful dining room, with our host serving us wine with our sandwiches, and casually informing us that the chairs we were sitting on, had been at Trafalgar on HMS *Africa*! The weather was atrocious, torrential rain deterring us from viewing the famed gardens, but this only gave us more time to listen to an Archivist’s lecture on the ‘scandalous life’ of Digby’s daughter Jane, and to examine the many paintings, artefacts and documents around the impressive house, some of which had been brought from the Minterne archives specially for us to view. There were too many highlights to mention, but certain items stand out (besides the Trafalgar chairs) – Digby’s youthful geometry/navigation exercise books ; a book ‘shivered’ by the impact of gunfire at Trafalgar; Digby’s original letter to his uncle Robert regarding his threatened court-martial after Trafalgar; his hat reputedly worn at Trafalgar and his Lloyds Patriotic Fund sword.

Peter Goodwin is currently working on a biography of Henry Digby and we very much look forward to reading his work on this fascinating character.

The rain did not spoil what was a most enjoyable day, and thanks are due to David Curson for organising the event, and to our hosts Lord Digby and Lady Dione for their warm hospitality in their beautiful and historic home.



Lord Digby serves wine at lunch



Dining chair from HMS Africa

MENORCA 2 - VISIT 13-20 SEPTEMBER 2022

Graham Capel

The first visit to the Mediterranean island of Menorca in June 2022 by The Nelson Society was a great success as you will have read in John Maynard's report in the last 'Nelson Dispatch'. This second trip this year was equally successful, with just as much to interest us on the island as before, but with a few extras. We covered all of the Nelson places of interest. From the Port Mahon Hotel where our group stayed, we could see where HMS *Foudroyant* would have anchored opposite Golden Farm on the opposite hill, overlooking the 5km long deep-water harbour where Nelson arrived on Sunday 13 October 1799. Ships in Nelson's time used the golden wheat fields of Golden Farm (real name San Antonio) in summer as a marker to drop anchor.

It is recorded that Nelson went ashore on Monday 14 October 1799 to visit General Erskine in the military barracks. He would probably have been rowed ashore into the sheltered bay of Cala Corb – called the 'cove of bodies', as this is where they would have been washed ashore. We did not stay long to view this now attractive little cove filled with local 'Llaut' fishing boats, but we did walk up the ramp, as Nelson would have done, and into the British-built Military Parade Ground, now the town square of Es Castell.

We visited the Museo Militar in Es Castell – 'the Castle' now, but in Spanish times it was 'Villacarlos', and in British times when we built it in 1714/19, it was 'Georgetown'. In the military museum we saw the Jim Mapp's collection, and the model of Nelson dictating his memoirs on deck, which he did on Tuesday 15 October 1799. (You may recall that on our previous visit we had presented the Isla del Rey with a copy of these for display). We also saw one of three Nelson



letters of dubious authenticity which Jim had collected in the 1960s with the price of £60 still visible – but hopefully on one of the fakes! The museum has a very impressive display of the military history of the island, from sling-shot wielding natives in Roman times, up to modern warfare equipment.

*Jenny Newbold, Philip and
Marian Lumley outside the Town
Hall of Es Castell*

Es Castell still has its impressive parade ground, now partly enhanced with children's play areas but still surrounded by its extensive barracks, all empty but painted in military colours and with images of soldiers in various windows to give

it animation. Sad, but still impressive. We visited the present Town Hall in the square where Nelson would have asked General Erskine for troops to relieve Malta, still French from Napoleon's capture on the way to Egypt in 1798.

From the roof of the Hamilton Hotel (Lady Hamilton never visited Minorca, despite persistent rumours) in Es Castell we had a commanding view of the harbour entrance, where in May 1756 Admiral John Byng lost the Battle of Minorca – according to the French, and believed by the British Government, who made him a scapegoat for failing to re-capture the island already overrun by 12,000 French troops. He paid the price for 'failing to do his utmost to destroy the enemy', and was shot on the deck of HMS *Monarch* in Portsmouth harbour on 14 March 1757, to quote Voltaire in 'Candide' 'pour encourager les autres'.

Our next Nelson port of call was the magnificent Hotel Almirante or Collingwood House. This is located on the south side of the harbour and was where Admiral Collingwood, as Commander in Chief of the British Mediterranean, was brought ashore gravely ill in February 1810. The weather was so bad that it was not until 9 March 1810 that he was carried aboard HMS *Ville de Paris* which sailed for England. Sadly, Collingwood died the following morning just outside Mahon harbour. He had never returned to his beloved Northumberland since he took the victory at Trafalgar in 1805. He is at rest in St Paul's alongside Nelson. The Hotel Almirante is privately run, and decorated with an enormous collection of Collingwood memorabilia. There is a sketch of Collingwood's dog 'Bounce', but in my opinion a dog of the size depicted would have vanished down the scuppers very quickly! Other Sea Captains of the era had huge Newfoundland dogs which are far more plausible and likely to have survived. Collingwood had occupied Room No 9 on the first floor of this lovely colonial-style building. There are the usual ghost stories abounding.

Walking along the high cliffs on the south side of the harbour of Port Mahon towards the ancient Moorish city of Mao (Mahon), we could look down on Isla Pinto which was the naval base built by the British in their first occupation of the island between 1708 and 1756. It was maintained for ship repair and even small ship building in the second British occupation of the island from 1763 to 1782 and continued in the third British occupation of the island from 1798 until 1802 when Nelson visited. Nelson was rowed down the harbour on Thursday 17 October 1799 to visit the Naval Port Commander of the base. HMS *Foudroyant* sailed at 0600 on Friday 18 October 1799. In the six days when Nelson visited Menorca from 13–18 October 1799, only three visits by him ashore are recorded, and we visited all of these locations.

During our previous visit in June we had not been able to visit the Cathedral of Santa Maria in the centre of Mahon where the 3200-pipe, Swiss-built organ is installed. This was escorted to the island from Barcelona in 1809 by Admiral Collingwood's ships. It took over one year to put it together, but it has been played in the Cathedral since 1810. We were lucky to be able to attend a lunch time performance, and resounding it was.

As we had now covered the Nelson-related and other historic features of this island, which is only about 22 miles long and 10 miles wide, we turned our attention to less academic pleasures. The Nelson Society members visited the Menorca Cricket Club – the MCC, where we rested in the shade of an olive grove for a drink watching English cricket. On the Friday we attended the Fiesta of Cala en Porter. Menorcan fiestas are quite something, including exciting displays with the jet-black local horses.

No Nelson Society trip would be complete without a visit to the Isla del Rey where General Luis Alejandro and his volunteers, including Graham Capel, have for the past 18 years been rebuilding this British Naval Hospital originally built in 1711 and rebuilt into a 1200 bed hospital in 1772. Our group were shown the Nelson Society donated items in the Anglican Church Hall. We also attended a special service in the Anglican Chapel on the Isla to commemorate the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, which was reported and pictured in the local press. Altogether another memorable Nelson Society visit to the island of Minorca.

SEAFARERS SERVICE, PORTSMOUTH, 2 OCTOBER 2022

Graham Capel



Every year the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of Portsmouth invite The Nelson Society to this Service for Seafarers in the Cathedral, and to lay a wreath at the statue of Lord Nelson in the nearby square at Grand Parade, followed by the traditional casting the wreath into the Solent by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth. This is through the auspices of Jeanette Ryder who is the Regional Secretary for Portsmouth and the South East of England. Jeanette also lays the wreath and



takes part in the parade.

The Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire represented the King, and the Lord Mayor of the City of Portsmouth and the Mayors of Gosport, Fareham and Havant were present all in their civic regalia. A cadet read Nelson's Prayer at the statue before the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth consigned the wreath into the sea.

There were three Maces at the ceremony. One caught our eye for its ornate wood carving. The Mayor of Gosport, Cllr Jamie Hutchison told us that it had been carved from timbers from HMS *Victory*, and donated to Gosport many years ago. It is a magnificent carving. The Mayor has subsequently managed to find a copy

Mayor Cllr Jamie Hutchison and the Gosport Mace

of the original inscription in the copper of the Mace stem, now well worn away. It reads: *Presented to the Mayor & Corporation of The Borough of Gosport by Charlie Edwin Pincher November 1929 (?or 1922, when the Borough was formed) This Mace is made from the original timber and copper used in the construction (1765) and sheathing (1823) of HMS Victory. Designed by Martin Snape (a local artist).*

The Borough of Gosport also has a statue of Nelson, similar to the one in Portsmouth but smaller. We will investigate further!

It was an historic and moving ceremony in this nautical city with important Nelson connections, and a considerable honour for The Nelson Society to be invited.

THE LASKARIDIS NELSON COLLECTION – EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL NAVY, PORTSMOUTH 12-13 OCTOBER 2022

Sue Morris

In 2016 a group of some 20 Nelson Society members visited the impressive Nelson collection of the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation in Piraeus, Athens. The visit was led by The Nelson Society's Nick Slope, who had been invited to take on the work of cataloguing this extensive and unique collection of Nelson letters, documents, paintings and memorabilia, the largest collection of documents related to the British Admiral outside the United Kingdom. The collection includes personal items, as well as handwritten letters.

Nick's untimely death prevented his completion of the project, but work was continued by Martyn Downer, and continuing cooperation between the Foundation and the NMRN has culminated in a stunning exhibition of some 50 items from the collection, a number of which are being published and exhibited for the first time, and Martyn has been the curator and writer of an excellent illustrated catalogue. Entitled 'Nelson in his own words', the exhibition has many highlights including intimate letters from Nelson, portraits, a platter from HMS *Victory* and a betrothal ring that Nelson gave to Emma Hamilton.

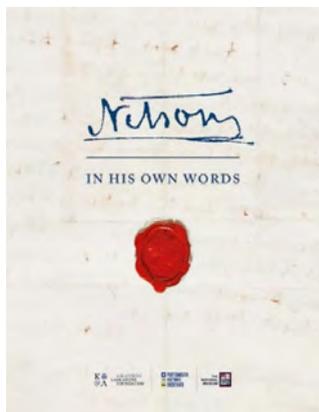
The exhibition is now open and is expected to last for 6 months. Nelson Society members have the opportunity to attend a special visit led by Martyn Downer on 14 February, which will also form our 2023 commemoration of the Battle of St Vincent (see event notices, page 454, for further details and booking form).

The exhibition was formally opened at a launch on 12 October, which Chairman Graham Capel, Vice-Chairman Chris Brett, and Secretary Sue Morris attended (along with Martyn Downer of course). Mr Panos Laskaridis (President of the Foundation) and Vice-Admiral Konstantinos Mazarakis (General Director of the Foundation) were present along with Dominic Tweddle (General Director NMRN) and Matthew Sheldon (Executive Director, NMRN Operations), the

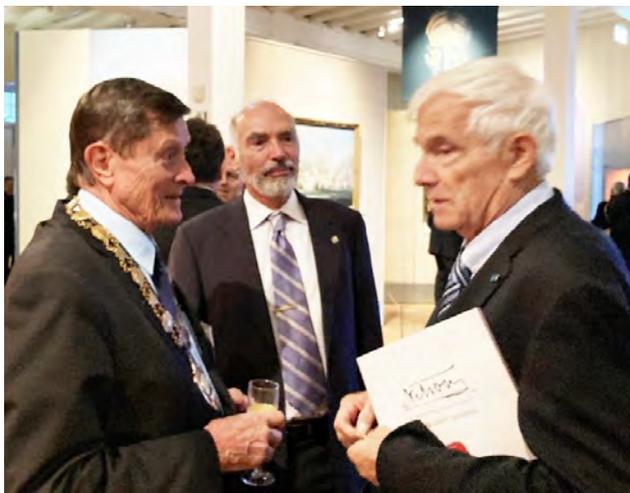
Greek Ambassador and Greek Defence Attaché, Heads of Army and Navy Staff, a party of some 45 Greek academics, Foundation members and Hellenic Navy Officers, and a number of guests from Portsmouth including the Lord Mayor. After our introduction to the exhibition, we walked over to HMS *Warrior* for a sumptuous dinner on the main gun deck, where we were addressed by the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Martin Connell CBE, and drank to the Loyal Toast (to ‘The King’, for the first time for many of us) and the Immortal Memory.

The following day 13 October hosted a full-day conference based in the Museum’s Lecture Theatre in Boathouse 6 (Action Stations), Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, entitled ‘From Nile to Navarino’. The purpose of the conference was to highlight the presence of the British Royal Navy in the Eastern Mediterranean, from the time of Nelson to the Greek Revolution. Distinguished Greek and British historians took part including Hon. Prof. Thanos Veremis (University of Athens), Prof. Andrew Lambert (King’s College London), Prof. Gelina Harlaftis (University of Crete, IMS/FORTH), Dr. Katerina Galani (NHRF, Hellenic Open University), Dr. Sukru Ilicak (IMS/ITE) and expert researcher Martyn Downer. The presentations focused on the connection of British sovereignty in the Eastern Mediterranean after the naval battle of Aboukir, at the Nile, where Nelson annihilated Napoleon’s fleet, with the flourishing of the enslaved Greek shipping activity and the creation of a large merchant fleet, which it turned into a military one in 1821 and contributed decisively to the Greek War of Independence.

We felt privileged to attend these events, and Admiral Mazarakis was gracious to acknowledge the important part played by Nick Slope and the Nelson Society in forging the links between the Laskaridis Foundation and the UK, one outcome being this splendid exhibition. We look forward to further cooperation in the future, and hope to organise a further visit to Piraeus for members in the next couple of years.



(Above) ‘Nelson in his own words’ catalogue and exhibition



Nelson Society Chairman Graham Capel (L) with Mr Panos Laskaridis (R), President of the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation) and Vice Admiral Konstantinos Mazarakis (centre) General Director ALF

(Below) Dinner on HMS Warrior, Martin Downer (4th from right) with academic, naval and ministerial guests.



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

Graham Capel



Our 2022 Trafalgar Weekend in Norfolk was a great success with much enjoyment and interest for the 82 members and guests who took part in the varied events organised over the weekend. We were based at the historic Dukes Head Hotel in the Tuesday Market Square in the centre of King's Lynn. It was once a coaching inn, and Nelson

would have taken the London bound stagecoach from its central courtyard, which is now the breakfast/dining room.

On Friday 21 October, members travelled from the hotel by coach to Burnham Thorpe for the afternoon and evening events. On arrival at the Lord Nelson pub in Burnham Thorpe we had a surprise for everyone and a change in plans. The new ‘*Experience Nelson*’ exhibition in an outbuilding at the ‘Lord Nelson’ had just been completed, and we were the first group to be able to experience it. Our members were given commemorative tickets, and the Chairman cut a ceremonial ribbon to allow everyone inside. The floor is in fact a map of Nelson’s county of Norfolk, and the theme is the life of Nelson from the boy who grew up in Burnham Thorpe, to become a Naval Officer and to achieve fame and immortality. The wall facing the entrance depicts the battle of Trafalgar with the two British columns approaching the curve of the combined French and Spanish fleets, with the French *Achille* blowing up. The side walls depict locations associated with Nelson’s life and the famous flag signal from Trafalgar. As you turn around to come out, you are confronted with a representation of the stern gallery of HMS *Victory*. An audio commentary has ‘Nelson’ recounting his life - in the Norfolk dialect which he apparently retained throughout his life.



(Top L) The Chairman ‘opens’ the ‘Experience Nelson’ exhibition

(Above) Mark Hassall, Lady Coke, Martyn Downer and Sam Downer at the exhibition

(Lower L) ‘Stern gallery’ of HMS Victory

This is a great ‘Nelson Experience’ and a really positive attraction for Burnham Thorpe and the Lord Nelson pub, creating more public awareness of Nelson – a cause we are happy to support as donors.

After walking the ‘Nelson Trail’ around the village, our members made their way to the Nelson Memorial Village Hall, venue for the 2022 AGM (and several AGMs in the 1980’s). On the left of the picture is the site where the Nelson Society Time Capsule was buried in 2006, the Society’s 25th anniversary.



With help from caretaker Holly Smith, the hall had been decorated with Trafalgar flags, Nelson Society banners and 1960’s British Rail posters of ‘Norfolk – Nelson’s County’, and the ‘top table’ on the stage with Margaret Blandford-Baker’s magnificent appliqué tablecloth and of course a bust of Nelson, in pride of place. The delayed AGM began at 5.30pm.



The Secretary and the Chairman ran through the agenda briskly. Coming to the Accounts for 2021, the Chairman ‘changed hats’ to report as Treasurer, donning an HMS *Nelson* Naval Rating’s hat to report a surplus of £5232 which had already been paid into our reserves. Sue Morris accepted a gift of a ‘King’s shilling’ – a 1758 George II silver shilling – no escape for her now! The meeting closed, appropriately, at 1805 precisely. Members were then able to mingle, with ‘bubbly’ and appetisers being served by Committee Members, and to buy books and merchandise including Nelson Society 2023 calendars, new this year. We then walked across the village green for our first Trafalgar Dinner, in the Lord Nelson pub, at 7.30pm.

After grace said by Rev John Maynard we enjoyed a splendid meal laid on by the pub, with Norfolk Venison Wellington as the main course. Lt Col Ray Aldis, our Historian gave a talk on *Why Nelson*, detailing Nelson monuments in the county. The Immortal Memory toast was proposed by American member and author Jennifer Newbold. Our coach returned us back to our base in King’s Lynn.

Saturday 23 October began with a walking tour of historic King’s Lynn, in two groups led by local historians Dr Paul Richards and Alison Gifford. King’s Lynn was one of England’s most important ports, a member of the Hanseatic League, and is steeped in maritime history.

Our walk began at the Minster, with its impressive memorial to William Hoste, and continued to the Town Hall with its 15th century stone floored Trinity Guild Hall and the 18th century Assembly Room, with stunning chandeliers and



portraits of royalty and local notables including of course Admiral Lord Nelson (a copy of the Hoppner portrait), and a small display of Nelson artefacts from the previous night’s grand Civic Trafalgar Dinner. Nelson and Fanny attended at least two ‘Lynn Feasts’ here, with the Vancouvers. We continued past medieval merchants’ houses and cobbled lanes stretching down to the River

Great Ouse, to Purfleet Quay with the magnificent Custom House built in 1683, and statue of Captain George Vancouver (1757-1798), a British Royal Navy officer born in King’s Lynn. He was best known for his 1791-1795 expedition, which explored and charted North America’s north western Pacific Coast regions, including the coasts of what are now the Canadian province of British Columbia, as well as the states of Alaska, Washington and Oregon. He also explored the Hawaiian Islands and the south west coast of Australia.

The walk finished at True’s Yard Fisherfolk Museum with its restored fishermen’s cottages.



Memorial to William Hoste in the Minster



Statue of Capt George Vancouver, and Custom House



Clinton Lee shows item to expert Martyn Downer

On Saturday afternoon we held a 'Nelson Roadshow' in the Nelson Room of the Dukes Head Hotel. Members brought items for discussion and valuation by our resident expert Martyn Downer (sadly Peter Clayton, our coins and medals expert, was not able to be present for health reasons). Graham Capel brought his collection of Free Fronts - pre-postage stamp folded letter fronts all signed by the sender, including one dated November 1800 signed

'Nelson and Bronte'. Member Clinton Lee brought along a number of items from his personal collection including a Nelson portrait brooch with a lock of hair and inscription from Earl Nelson. There were Nelson commemorative jugs, and seals, miniatures, medals etc, all of which sparked some very interesting discussion. Member David Burton of the Staithe Gallery in Wells-next-the-Sea brought along an interesting display of beautiful items made from *Victory* wood, and a large lump of *Victory* wood which was too heavy to put on the display, so it is on the

floor in the picture. It still carries inscriptions from the ship's carpenter from when *Victory* was laid down at Chatham in 1765. This was of great historic significance, and very valuable. It was also quite an achievement to get it up the stairs in the hotel to the first floor!

Local member Graham Barker also kindly provided a display of items from his collection including prints, and a ship model, walking stick and chair made from salvaged *Foudroyant* oak timber.



Staithe Gallery display, with chunk of original Victory wood



Items from Graham Barker's collection including Foudroyant chair

To round off the afternoon, local author Charles Lewis, gave an interesting talk about Nelson's Norfolk entitled 'I am myself a Norfolk Man'. A Nelson Society Associate Plaque and a framed copy of our Nelson Chronology were given for permanent display in the Nelson Room to commemorate our visit.

Our second Trafalgar Dinner took place in the hotel Ballroom, after a greeting of new members in the Hotel Bar, and the Chairman's Reception. Special guests were the Society's President, the Honourable Peregrine Nelson Hood, and guest speaker Dr John Sugden, Nelson biographer and a Vice President of the Society. Dr Sugden's talk on Nelson's 'Personality and Patronage' was based on his deep understanding of Nelson's character from his long-time research and analysis. He kindly signed copies of his 2-volume biography, 'A Dream of Glory' and 'The Sword of Albion', which is for many the most highly-regarded biography of Nelson in what is a very crowded field. The Chairman

presented him with a silver dish with a Georgian silver shilling dated 1758 (Nelson's birth year) embedded in the base.

There were many prizes in the raffle, which raised nearly £400 for the Society, and the top prize of a pair of silver serving spoons dated 1805 was won by our local historian guide Alison Gifford.



Jenny Newbold, John Shotter, Chris Brett, Hon Peregrine Hood and Dr Paul Richards listen to Dr John Sugden's illuminating talk

Dr John Sugden



Members gather at All Saints Church, Burnham Thorpe

The following morning we travelled from King's Lynn to Burnham Thorpe for morning service at All Saints Church, where Nelson's father was rector from 1755. In all of his youth until he left to go to sea aged 12, young Horatio Nelson must have sat in the church listening to his father's sermons. Later, when he was 'on the beach' and living at the Rectory in Burnham Thorpe with Fanny, they

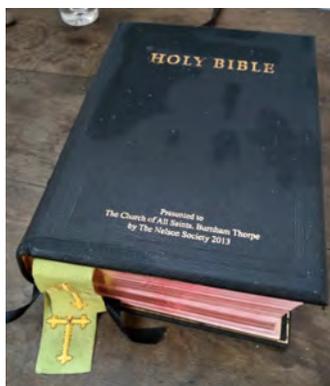


would have attended church every Sunday. Burnham Thorpe is now a shared parish with limited services, and our own Hon Chaplain Rev Terry Colling had been granted special permission from the Bishop of Norwich to hold a service. Our own Nelson Society church service in Trafalgar Weekend, conducted by our own Hon Chaplain, in Burnham Thorpe - it does not get much better than that! The

church was almost full with Society members and the local congregation, and our members generously added to the £500 donation given by the Society for this very special church. To quote our historian Ray Aldis: *'to sit in the church where young Horatio Nelson must have sat listening to his father's sermons, and again later with his wife, is a great privilege. I consider it equal to the service at St Paul's last year'*.



Members Rosemary and Michael Beardmore with Rev Terry Colling after the service



Lectern Bible presented to All Saints Church by The Nelson Society in 2013

This concluded the formal events of the Trafalgar weekend although a number of members continued their commemoration of our hero with a Sunday lunch at the Hoste Arms, Burnham Market. All in all a truly memorable and enjoyable weekend!

PICKLE NIGHT DINNER AND REMEMBRANCE SERVICE, PORTSMOUTH 12-13 NOVEMBER 2022

Sue Morris

The annual Nelson Society Pickle Night Dinner was held on Saturday 12 November at the Royal Maritime Hotel & Club in Portsmouth, to commemorate the arrival of HMS *Pickle* in Falmouth bearing the news of Nelson's Trafalgar victory, and his death. The evening proved to be an excellent event with our special guest and speaker, Cllr. Canon, Dr Hugh Mason, Lord Mayor of Portsmouth (*left*), whose talk on the highs and lows of being Lord Mayor, and the importance of the links between the city and the Royal Navy, was very interesting and entertaining.



Guests at the dinner 'Below Decks' (l-r) Paul Gilman, Christine Edgington, Sue Morris, Alan Cross, Lyn Cross, David Glanville (photo Carolyn Gilman)

This was a full weekend which began on Friday evening when 20 members dined in Ye Spotted Dogge, the exclusive and unique private residence at 11, High Street which was first licenced in 1523, and where George Villiers, the first Duke of Buckingham was murdered in 1628.



The courtier, statesman, and patron of the arts was a favourite and possibly also a lover of King James I. Buckingham remained at the height of royal favour for the first three years of the reign of King Charles I, until disgruntled army officer John Felton assassinated him here – and we were shown the very dagger he used.

John Shotter, Rev John Maynard, Jeanette and Terry Ryder dine at Ye Spotted Dogge (photo David Glanville)

On Sunday 13 November we were once again very fortunate to attend the Remembrance Parade in the square at Portsmouth Guildhall, where Cllr Lee Mason kindly arranged for Nelson Society members to have a sustaining coffee with guests in the Guildhall and then VIP places on the Guildhall steps to watch the very moving Parade, including the procession of Veterans and the sombre and stirring music of the bands of the Royal Marines Collingwood and Portsmouth Citadel Salvation Army.



An additional highlight of this year's Pickle weekend was a guided walking tour of the Dockyard, laid on by the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust, showing how the Royal Dockyard led the world in shipbuilding and repair, from Nelson's wooden ships right through to the 1980's. On Saturday morning, the Trust's chair Nigel Linger began the tour by describing Nelson's final morning



in Portsmouth as he walked alone from the George Inn, met three of his captains to give orders, and visited the new Blockmills to see Marc Brunel's revolutionary new machinery, which was an early mechanised 'production line' churning out wooden blocks.

Early blockmaking machinery and a selection of wooden blocks from the exhibition



Nigel also gave a vivid description of the case of the Scottish saboteur John the Painter, who was executed in 1777 for setting the rope house on fire and was hanged from the mizzenmast of the frigate HMS *Arethusa*, a crowd of 20,000 witnessing the hanging.

Next, Volunteer Grahame Willcocks, who himself joined the Dockyard as an apprentice in 1959, gave a tour of the Apprentice Exhibition in Boathouse 7 and explained the many trades operating in the Dockyard.



After lunch, we visited the Trust's private collection of historic maritime artefacts in their headquarters, upstairs in the lofty Georgian Storehouse 10. Nelson Society member and Trust heritage volunteer Cheryl Jewitt gave an excellent talk about the role of women in the Dockyard, including the 'Triangle Girls', the female workforce during World War I who wore the distinctive badges on their overalls.

Finally, Nigel Linger showed us just some of the fascinating exhibits in this Aladdin's cave of maritime history. We are grateful to Cheryl and the Trust volunteers for providing this very special and enjoyable day, their enthusiasm was infectious and we left reluctantly and only because we had to get ready for the Pickle Night Dinner!



Nigel Linger, Trust Chairman, shows our members some of the treasures of the Trust's Archives

SPANISH FLAG FROM TRAFALGAR ON DISPLAY



A flag from the Battle of Trafalgar was on display at the National Maritime Museum from 17-21 October. This huge flag (33x47 feet) once flew from the Spanish warship *San Ildefonso*, but became a poignant symbol of commemoration after it was captured during the Battle of Trafalgar. It hung at St Paul's Cathedral during Nelson's state funeral (visible to the left on this painting).

BLOOD & BATTLE: DISSECTING THE LIFE OF WILLIAM BEATTY

A new exhibition which runs from 5 November to 24 March at the National Maritime Museum examines the life and work of renowned 19th-century naval surgeon and physician, Sir William Beatty. Beatty joined the Royal Navy at the age of 18, surviving a yellow fever epidemic and a shipwreck and working his way up the ranks to become the Ship's Surgeon on HMS *Victory* and, later, Physician of the Channel Fleet. He performed life-saving surgery including amputations aboard HMS *Victory* during the Battle of Trafalgar. Famously,

Beatty tended to Vice Admiral Lord Nelson after his fatal injury during the battle. He later wore the musket ball that killed Nelson in a locket on his watch chain for the rest of his life. Visitors to the exhibition can hear Beatty's account of Nelson's death in his own words with excerpts from his 'Authentic Narrative of the Death of Lord Nelson'. The exhibition features a range of objects, including a replica of Nelson's life mask and 18th and 19th-century surgical instruments, including Beatty's own medicine chest. Visitors can experience what it was like to be in HMS *Victory*'s cockpit during battle, with an immersive recreation of the make-shift medical bay complete with sights, smells and sounds.

Nelson Society members will recall Dr Michael Crumplin's article 'The Death of a Hero' published in the previous edition of the 'Nelson Dispatch' (Vol 14 Part 7 p 409-417) which makes extensive reference to Beatty's role administering to the dying Nelson and the subsequent post-mortem.

STS LORD NELSON FOR SALE

In July this year, Classic Yacht Brokerage were considering all offers for the Sail Training Ship *Lord Nelson*. It was being offered for sale so the Jubilee Sailing Trust can concentrate efforts on their principal ship *Tenacious*. According to their website 'This must be a totally unique opportunity to acquire a substantial and impressive tall ship to either continue as a sail training vessel or adapt to charter work, commercial ventures such as sail cargo or conversion to an impressive private yacht. STS *Lord Nelson* was de-commissioned in July 2019 with care-taking work aboard since so will require systems, machinery and rig overhaul. Her previous certification and Lloyd's classification have lapsed although these could be re-instated following surveys. STS *Lord Nelson* can be moved in Category D waters without certification. In May 2022 the ship successfully completed the short passage from Bristol Docks to Barry Harbour, South Wales'.

STS *Lord Nelson* was originally commissioned by the Jubilee Sailing Trust, and the build was started in the summer of 1984 at the yard of James W Cook, Wivenhoe, Essex. She was designed by Colin Mudie, and is his design no 342. After J W Cook went into voluntary liquidation, *Lord Nelson* was moved to Vosper Thornycroft's yard in Woolston, Southampton. As a result of an industrial dispute at Vospers, *Lord Nelson* had to move again, this time to Coles Yard in Cowes where the remainder of the work was carried out. She was finally sailed in completed form from Southampton on 17 October 1986. She finished her final voyage on 10 October 2019 to Southampton, and was subsequently moved to Bristol docks for decommissioning

STS *Lord Nelson* completed 16,000 accessible voyages during her 33 years at sea with the Jubilee Sailing Trust. In the past, The Nelson Society sponsored a number of young people to undertake voyages with the Jubilee Sailing Trust.

ARTICLES

Following our reporting of HM The Queen Elizabeth's glorious Platinum Jubilee in our last issue, we are sorry to record the death of our much-loved monarch, and we extend a welcome to King Charles III who, as a naval man like his late father the Duke of Edinburgh, it is hoped, will espouse our cause. We reprint here his 1989 Trafalgar Night address (then as Prince of Wales) from TND, Vol 3 Part 12, October 1990.

SPEECH MADE BY

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES AT THE TRAFALGAR NIGHT DINNER IN THE PAINTED HALL AT THE ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE GREENWICH, THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER 1989

Admiral President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As an erstwhile historian and semi-active, or semi-retired (perhaps semi-conscious at this stage of the evening!) Naval Officer ... I must confess to some feelings of awe and apprehension as I rise to my feet this evening: awe, when I consider that just behind where this table is positioned lay the body of the hero whose Immortal Memory we have gathered here together to commemorate. It is I think suitably significant to realise that he lay here for 16 days before his final river journey to Whitehall on that cold, bleak January day in 1806. I am also apprehensive because I am so conscious of my place in the great tradition of those honoured to be asked to propose the toast to the Immortal Memory.

To do justice in 15 or so minutes to the memory of one of our great national heroes who has captured the imagination of our island race for 200 years is no easy task. Indeed, because the ground is so well-trodden the desire to be original in some way or other is overwhelming. But how? What new light can I shed?

Let me tell you briefly about my quest for originality. My first thought was a theme as sweeping and grand as Nelson's heroic nature itself: to make a lofty comparison between him as the Decision Maker on the Spot and us today faced with the centralised process (and processors) which seem to have the potential to stifle initiative. How would Nelson have fared had everything he had done or planned had to be "info MODUKNAVY"? Or for that matter because of his love of amphibious operations, "MODUKARMY"?

But was I being fair? Are the circumstances of the ages really comparable at all?

For a start, Nelson saw precious little peace in Europe, and such periods that there were, were pretty fragile. Today's Europe has enjoyed 45 years of unbroken peace due, principally, to the determination and cohesiveness of the North Atlantic Alliance. Moreover, I discovered that in those fleeting moments of peace his age knew, Nelson indulged himself in activities which some today might regard as rather cranky - such things as gardening or fishing ... No doubt he talked to the plants too!

So I decided to look elsewhere for my original line. I hoped to discover that Nelson had an hitherto unrevealed passion for architecture. I grew hopeful when I recalled how impressed he had been by the splendours of the Neapolitan Court - but he had, of course, been even more impressed by other splendours in Naples - splendours, nevertheless, which were not necessarily unrelated to great architecture in terms of beauty, proportion, commodity and firmness! And these I think, (not surprisingly while in the Navy) fascinated him rather more than buildings?! Indeed, even the details of setting up his beloved Merton he seemed content to leave to Lady Hamilton and her husband.

I had to think again.

Something about him which showed he was a thinker ahead of his time, perhaps - for example, was there any evidence that he was, to use the modern jargon, the enemy of short termism? Was there evidence to show that his great mind transcended short term interests to look beyond the horizons of his time, into the longer term and the needs of generations yet to come? I thought of the call to plant more oak forests so the Navy of the future would not want for timber. This seemed promising until I was reminded that the idea was Collingwood's and not Nelson's.

In my now frantic request for originality I turned iconoclast. It is, after all, still very much the clever thing to do to debunk; to destroy reputations; the more venerable and respected the subject, the greater the pleasure of the attack, and the sense of triumph as the colossus crashes down from his or her pedestal. I did not have to do much research to dig out items on which early 19th Century tabloids, had they existed, would have fed for weeks. And I am not referring to his affair with Lady Hamilton or, indeed, the intriguing 'Dolly' with whom he occasionally dined on board - very badly indeed - if we are to believe the rather economical prose of his friend, Captain Fremantle.

Fremantle, some of you may recall, was a great friend whose diary, rather laconically, gives us an hitherto unrevealed insight into Nelson's dalliances east of Gibraltar. Between December 1794 and September 1795, four references are made to Nelson and this Dolly. They are of interest not only to the prurient, but to all of us who strive to gain a profounder understanding of Nelson's personality. It is interesting that, according to Fremantle, Nelson's attention paid to his Dolly was, I quote, "ridiculous", a characteristic noted in many of his other friendships; and, perhaps, an important ingredient in the make-up of his extraordinarily magnetic personality.

But back to what, it must be said, is the less attractive side of his personality:

- there is more than a tinge of dishonour in his repudiation of the truce negotiated with the Jacobins in Naples. It is difficult if not impossible to explain away to his advantage his activities in this sorry episode.

- his disloyalty to those superiors for whom he had little respect showed at best double standards. Hyde Parker and indeed others showed great forbearance.

But two anecdotes of his life in particular caught my attention because they offered if not the key to unlock the understanding of his genius, at least telling illustrations of the extraordinary effect he had on his contemporaries; faults and all. First is the observation of the wife of the then First Lord, Lady Spencer — and I have learnt subsequently to be aware of the judgement of a Spencer - when she set eyes on Nelson for the first time. It is worth quoting in full:

“The first time I saw him was in the drawing-room of the Admiralty, and a most uncouth creature I thought him. He was just returned from Teneriffe, after having lost his arm. He looked so sickly, it was painful to see him, and his general appearance was that of an idiot; so much so, that when he spoke, and his wonderful mind broke forth, it was a sort of surprise that riveted my whole attention.”

The other is the celebrated occasion of the encounter between Nelson and the young Duke of Wellington as related by the latter. Both were waiting to see the Secretary of State in the Colonial Office at Downing Street. Both had been kept waiting. Nelson struck up conversation in so egocentric a manner as almost to disgust the Duke. Nelson, perhaps perceiving that his audience was no ordinary mortal, left the room briefly, presumably to enquire who he was. On returning, Nelson was a different person. Again, his “wonderful mind” shone forth as he discoursed with great eloquence and knowledge on a host of matters, military and political. Wellington revised his opinion completely and satisfied himself that Nelson “was really a very superior man”. But, he had, indeed, been struck by a metamorphosis completed in seconds and showing two quite different sides of Nelson’s personality in starkest relief.

I suddenly felt that in a Socratic sort of way I had stumbled on the originality I was seeking. It lay in the realisation that originality did not matter. What did was the simple and self-evidently essential requirement to look at the whole man, not his strengths and weaknesses in isolation, if I was to begin to understand how this extraordinary man held his contemporaries spellbound.

And here it was: he was a flawed but truly British hero.

The Britons of Nelson’s time saw him as a hero all right, but there was so much humanity about and in him that they could identify with him, understand him, and weep like children when they heard he was dead. Like him, they might not always be wise, might not always be good, but given his sort of lead and inspiration, they would love their Nation and would do their duty.

“What is Nelson signalling about?” muttered Collingwood on seeing the famous flag-hoist at Trafalgar, “We all know what we have to do”. Collingwood’s sentiments were shared by ‘Jack’ as the signal was repeated. Nelson had, indeed, prepared his Fleet.

Attempts to explain the Nelson touch always seem to founder because, of necessity, the reader picks out subjectively episodes of Nelson's life and career which seem to him to illustrate it the best.

As any nuclear physicist will know, sub-atomic particles can sometimes only be detected from the effects they have on other particles or matter. They by themselves are undefinable and unidentifiable. So it is with the Nelson touch.

I offer several anecdotes to illustrate its effects:

— his arrival in the Fleet to supersede Collingwood before Trafalgar electrified and transformed the Fleet. "Nelson was the man to love" wrote Captain Malcolm of the *Donnegal*. "He is so good and pleasant that we all wished to do what he likes without any kind of orders" stated Duff of the *Mars*. Nelson described his reception as the sweetest of his life.

- the accounts of the desolation at the news of his death, in the Fleet, in Britain and, indeed, in Naples are well known.

- in May 1797 Nelson assumed command of *Theseus*, one of the ships which had been affected by the mutinies in home waters. The effect of the appointment is well illustrated by a Paper dropped on the ship's quarterdeck. It read: "Success attend Admiral Nelson! ... We are happy and comfortable and will shed every drop of blood in our veins to support him, and the name of *Theseus* shall be immortalised as high as the *Captain's*. Ship's Company."

As to why this should be, I offer three episodes which illustrate, first, his tremendous loyalty. Lieutenant, later Colonel, Despard had served with Nelson in Nicaragua. 23 years later Despard was on trial for high treason, destitute and apparently friendless. Unhesitatingly when Nelson heard of his plight, he testified to his character describing him as a loyal and brave officer.

Similar is the well-known story of Nelson's appearing as a character witness for one of his former sailors, with the unfortunate name of Carse and, almost equally unfortunately, accused of murder. At some personal inconvenience, Nelson attended his trial and persuaded the Court that such was his knowledge of this sailor that in his opinion he could only have committed the deed if mad. The Court so found and the sailor escaped the death penalty.

The last illustrates Nelson's understanding of men's needs. He identified their cause with his: "We are a neglected set, and, when peace comes, are shamefully treated." He insisted that men's quarters were properly ventilated. He encouraged music and dancing and took a personal and genuine interest in his men. As a young Lieutenant in HMS *Lowestoffe* he had been presented by the Ship's Company with an ivory model of the ship filled with dominoes. It went with him everywhere for the rest of his life, a valued token of the affection of his 'brave fellows'.

But what relevance has this for us today? And I do not mean just us here tonight, but all of us who inhabit these islands? Surely the football hooligans whose unnecessary behaviour at home and abroad bring shame on our Nation, surely these people are as immune to Nelson's qualities and values as the Devil

is to goodness? Surely the muggers, the deadbeats and the down-and-outs are deaf to his message? Nelson's story means nothing to them.

I am always impressed when I go on board a well-run warship; and there are few, if any, that are not well run in today's Navy. I am impressed not so much by the latest electronic wonder in the Ops Room that is giving some poor Greenie several sleepless nights or because all the stokers have clean overalls so rarely have they to venture out of their air-conditioned SCC. I am much more impressed by an atmosphere. I am not sure how to describe it - a sense of purpose, a sense of achievement. There is an almost tangible feeling of everyone's wanting to succeed and not wanting to let himself or his mates down. Or, in language which Nelson's sailors would have recognised, of everyone's wanting to do his duty. I suspect that this atmosphere would be sensed quickly by a sailor magically transported forward in time from Trafalgar to find himself at the back of the NAAFI queue in a modern Type 22.

The fact that people want to do their duty is certainly a product of leadership. But leadership is such an intangible thing. You can produce a manual of it, but if you follow the lessons therein it won't necessarily produce the results you want. The kind of truly inspiring leadership for which Nelson was famous (and to which all naval officers surely aspire) is, I'm convinced, a gift from the Almighty. It involves a deftness of touch and lightness of approach which few possess. It is an art rather than a science which can be learnt although we need to know the basic principles. I have come to the conclusion that natural self-confidence is a vital ingredient in all this. That communicates itself to others. It is something with which I must confess, I was not endowed in vast quantities and I suspect people may have followed me at one stage only out of intense curiosity and because they might have been intrigued to read about themselves in the tabloids in the ensuing disaster! When all is said and done Nelson's memory is immortal because of the effect he had on his sailors. And we can but marvel at it.

But who were those sailors? Certainly, few of us would have wanted to invite them home for tea. The iron discipline - of which the young Nelson was at first so suspicious and which subsequently he came to regard as indispensable - was not imposed for the hell of it. Many of these sailors were wild men indeed. Their runs ashore would have shocked even the stokers' mess deck of today! And yet these same men when they saw the lifeless body of their Admiral became, according to a contemporary account, like 'soft toads' ... "They have done nothing but blast their eyes and cry ever since he was killed. God bless you, chaps that fought like the Devil, sit down and cry like a wench".

Nelson's example lives on in today's Navy, and thank God for it. With what effect that example could be put to use elsewhere! In my travels around our land I see so many who are potentially ready to do their duty, if only someone could show them how.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Immortal Memory lives on as it must live on. I ask you to rise to drink to it.

LADY HAMILTON'S TWIN DAUGHTERS - A COLD CASE REVIEW

By Ken Williams, edited by Lily Style

The following article was sent to us by Lily Style of the Emma Hamilton Society, who has edited it from an essay by Ken Williams, a retired Thames Valley Police crimes squad officer who has extensively researched the evidence for Horatia having had a living twin who was admitted to the Foundling Hospital. We are grateful to Ken and Lily for this interesting piece of research.

In a letter to *The Times*, dated 19 August 1999, a former director of the Coram Foundation (the modern name for the Foundling Hospital) said that a man had visited the foundation in the 1970s and shown him a portrait of a young woman who was his ancestor: a former foundling named Emma Hamilton, and the twin sister of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton's daughter, Horatia.

This essay will explore available evidence for Horatia having had a living twin sister who was given to the care of the Foundling Hospital.



Horatia as a small child (Style family collection)

It's accepted that Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton's daughter, Horatia, was born on 29 January 1801 in the London home of Lady Hamilton's husband, Sir William Hamilton, at Piccadilly.

In Winifred Gérin's 1970 biography of Horatia Nelson she refers to a letter written to Lady Hamilton by Lord Nelson on 23 February 1801, which contained an intriguing reference to twins. Writing after Horatia's birth, in the guise of 'Thompson' (a fictitious member of his crew) to his wife, Nelson said "I daresay twins will again be the fruit of your and his meeting. The thought is too dear to bear...".

When Nelson biographer, Tom Pocock, published *Nelson's Women* in 1999, he referred to the issue of twins. Author and historian Stella Tillyard's 12 August 1999 review of *Nelson's Women* retells Pocock's account of Horatia being one of twins, of which the other had been deposited at the Foundling Hospital when only a few weeks old, and christened Emma Hamilton.

Tillyard's review prompted Commander J.G.B. Swinley (RN Retired) to write to *The Times* on 19 August 1999 – as cited at the start of this essay – to say that in the 1970s, when he was the Director of the Coram Foundation, he had

cause to examine the records but found that all girls born within three months of Horatia, appeared genuine [of accountable origin?]. Referring to the foundling child Emma Hamilton, he confirmed that she was fostered by Sarah Snelling, who wrote to the child's sponsor, Lady Hamilton, some months later to tell her that the child was doing well.

Tom Pocock's story of Lady Hamilton's twins was heavily criticised by Lesley Edwards in volume 86:3 of the *Mariner's Mirror*. Edwards asserted that the origin of the twins story came from Winifred Gérin's 1970 book *Horatia Nelson* calling it "a myth so powerful that even Tom Pocock was taken in..."

Edwards pointed out that the only reference to the existence of twins was made by Nelson in the aforementioned letter to Lady Hamilton of 23 February 1801. Edwards agreed that the letter was evidence that twins were born but thought it more likely that one died at or shortly after birth. The foundling named Emma Hamilton was one of six infants baptised at the Foundling Hospital on 18 April 1801. Three of the four boys were named after Nelson's fellow officers at the battle of Copenhagen sixteen days earlier and the fourth after Lady Hamilton's husband, Sir William. The girls were named Emma Hamilton and Mary Thompson. Edwards quoted Pocock as saying that Emma Hamilton "was a name surely chosen by a mother who had given her to an orphanage...", but took the opposite view that the last thing Lady Hamilton would have done would be to name her illegitimate child after herself.

Edwards said that Foundling Hospital records held by the London Metropolitan Archives showed that the foundling, Emma Hamilton, was the illegitimate offspring of Mary James and William Hughes, respectively a servant and a carpenter, and was born at Westminster Lying-In Hospital. All these details were assumed genuine as too many people would otherwise have had to have lied. Foundling Hospital records similarly refuted Mary Thompson being the missing twin as she was recorded as the daughter of Dianah Minnis, a servant, and John Hall, reiterating that far too many people would have had to lie to sustain the pretence.

Edwards reasoned that, if a twin had died it would have had to have been baptised in order to receive a Christian burial, but said she'd found no record of either ceremony locally so presumed the child must have been buried in secret. Edwards concluded that, given Lady Hamilton's history, she would not have been beyond trying to hide its existence, but "there is no evidence she abandoned a surviving child of the great Admiral. The twin was laid to rest and so should be this myth." Similarly, one of Lady Hamilton's more recent biographers attributes Nelson's reference to twins as just a sexual joke.

Pocock agreed with Edwards' assessment and accepted Swinley's evidence that the foundling named Emma Hamilton was not Lady Hamilton's child. Swinley, however, drew attention to Lady Hamilton's involvement with the other foundling girl baptised on 18 April 1801, Mary Thompson, saying "who else would have chosen the name Mary Thompson, a *nom de plume* used in her private

correspondence with Nelson...”

The parentage of the foundling named Emma Hamilton seems to be accounted for but, regarding Mary Thompson (foundling number 18641) matters are not so straightforward. As we’ve seen, Foundling Hospital records list her as the daughter of Dianah Minnis. She is described as a servant employed by Mrs Sharp at 21 Greville Street, Hatton Garden, London. In her petition she claimed the father of her child was John Hall, a carpenter lodging with Mrs Gennels at house number 4, opposite the church in Shoreditch, London. Minnis stated that she became pregnant following the promise of marriage, but Hall had abandoned her by returning home to Worcester and was never heard of again. In her deposition, Mrs Sharp said that she [Minnis?] was seldom out of her house and had no followers. She was at a loss to conceive how the misfortune happened and knew nothing of the father of the child. Enquiries by the Foundling Hospital found no trace of anyone named Gennels near Shoreditch church.

When contacted, Lesley Edwards said she’d found no record of Dianah Minnis being admitted to Westminster Lying-In Hospital. This was the closest of the four lying-in hospitals in Georgian London that accepted unmarried mothers. This poses several questions. Where did she have her child? Was she really pregnant at all? If she was not pregnant, why did she petition the Foundling Hospital to admit the child who was christened Mary Thompson on 18 April 1801?

It seems that, if Minnis had been pregnant, she likely either miscarried or the child was stillborn – a similar view held by some regarding Lady Hamilton’s confinement – but there’s no trace of a baptism or burial of a child with the surname Minnis at this time, though it could have been buried with a different surname, or in secret. Minnis’s mistress, Mrs Sharp, seems to have believed her servant had been pregnant, but we can’t know if she actually saw her in that condition. Clearly Minnis went missing from the household at the relevant time, since Mrs Sharp’s deposition says she would be willing to take her back “when she is relieved”.

It’s of note that the Foundling Hospital’s officers were unable to find any trace of the alleged father, Hall, in Shoreditch. Of course, Hall may only have told Minnis that was his address and perhaps she never visited him there, but this is unlikely because she claimed to have known him for six months. It seems coincidental that she alleged Hall had absconded to Worcester, because she’d worked there prior to her employment with Mrs Sharp. It is also possible that, if pregnant, she made this story up wanting to conceal the true identity of her child’s father.

Minnis’s child was baptised Mary Thompson at the Foundling Hospital on 18 April 1801, but her date of birth was not recorded, just her age, which was given as three months. This could suggest a birth date of 18 January 1801 but, as a general usage, is more likely to encompass any date of birth from mid to late January, thus including the 29th - the day on which Horatia, and therefore any

twin sister, was born. The only other record of a birth date for the child is given in her apprenticeship indenture when she is recorded as being fourteen years of age on 18 February 1815. This cannot be correct either, as it would mean she was two months old when admitted as a foundling, not three. She would later come to believe that her birth date was 18 January 1801.

Another researcher found Minnis's story unusual. In 1989 Patty Sileski wrote a PhD dissertation at Stanford University entitled, *The Women of the Laboring Poor: Love, Work and Poverty in London, 1750–1820*. She had studied numerous records at the Foundling Hospital, telling the stories behind their mothers becoming pregnant, including Minnis, not least because of the testimony of her employer Mrs Sharp.

Enter Lady Hamilton, a woman born into poverty who endured class and gender discrimination and became a Dame of Malta; a self-taught woman, a polyglot; a singer; a dancer; the inspiration behind the 'Jane Austen' fashion revolution; the most-painted woman of her day; the closest friend of the queen of Naples; a spy courier for the British during the Napoleonic wars; and the inventor of a completely new artform (her Attitudes). Would she have been capable of the subterfuge of having one of her new-born twins anonymously admitted to the Foundling Hospital under the guise of being Minnis's child? Evidence is sparse, circumstantial, and peppered with conflicting opinions.

Pocock described Lady Hamilton as "being familiar with discreet ways of concealing pregnancies and births", and his critic, Lesley Edwards, believed she wouldn't have been beyond trying to hide a twin's existence, because, in Gérin's words, it "added yet more to Lady Hamilton's sum of burdens" and "there would be obvious difficulties in hiding two illegitimate children". According to Gérin, Lady Hamilton had a similarly throw-away attitude to her first child, Emma Carew, who'd been born when she was a young teen forced to make a living as a courtesan. Pregnant and destitute, Charles Greville, the second son of the Earl of Warwick, took her as a live-in mistress on condition that her baby was sent away. Greville changed her name to Emma, polished her up, and gave her to his uncle, Sir William Hamilton (who confounded convention by marrying her, thus making her Lady Hamilton). According to Gérin, Lady Hamilton's first child's "existence was at no time revealed to Lord Nelson." However, this is challenged by Jacqui Livesey in a 2014 article, entitled 'Finding the lost daughter of Lady Hamilton', who puts the case that Nelson was aware of her first-born daughter (by this point known as Miss Hart), but her husband, Sir William Hamilton, had blocked contact to preserve his family's reputation:

Exchanging fraught letters in September [1801], Nelson responded with genuine empathy to Lady Hamilton's very particular plight, '... *if your Relation cannot stay in your house in Town, surely Sir William can have no objection to your taking her to the farm [Nelson's newly-bought property at Merton in Surrey]... The pride of the Hamiltons surely cannot be hurt by sitting down with any of your Relations. You have surely as much right for your Relations to come*

into the house as his could have. It has vexed as I know it must give you great pain. Make use of me for your happiness.’ And a week later, roused by Sir William’s continued intransigence, *‘Tell me how I can do anything for you at this distance... I hope Emma, you take care of your relative; when you can get her well married & settled we will try and give her something...’*

It was a pattern, while Sir William lived, that would repeat itself each time Lady Hamilton attempted to bring her daughter into the family fold. The delicate wording of ‘your Relative’ begs the question whether Nelson, by then, was aware of the true nature of Lady Hamilton’s relationship to Miss Hart. It was a discreet, tactful term he accorded to no other member of his mistress’ family.

In this light, Lady Hamilton’s separation from her first-born child was dictated by the men who controlled her life: first Greville, then Sir William (but not Nelson). Georgian society was highly sexist, classist and prejudiced against illegitimacy. Lady Hamilton had beaten the odds by rising to a social pinnacle despite her gender and lowly birth, but the taboo against unmarried motherhood was unassailable. She and Nelson were well aware of this, hence their pretence that Horatia was the daughter of Nelson’s crewman named Thompson. Lady Hamilton’s familiarity with – to quote Pocock – “discreet ways of concealing pregnancies and births” was, therefore, not something she’d learnt from personal choice. This begs the question of motivation: why would a loving mother consign one of two living, new-born babies to the Foundling Hospital?



The Foundling Hospital

Lady Hamilton employed a discreet and reliable nurse, Mrs Gibson from Little Titchfield Street, London, to look after Horatia. According to Mrs Gibson's surviving correspondence, she judged Horatia to have been less than eight days when Lady Hamilton delivered her in an unmarked carriage. Lady Hamilton and Nelson maintained the pretence that Horatia was their goddaughter, and the child of the fictitious Thompsons. Gérin believed that Lady Hamilton had selfishly consigned Horatia's twin to the Foundling Hospital because two babies would have been harder to conceal than one, but this seems illogical. Why would people be less likely to have believed Lady Hamilton's account of Horatia's origin if she had a twin sister?

Lady Hamilton was an active supporter of the Foundling Hospital, so it's theoretically possible she was involved with the admission of Minnis's child, who was baptised Mary Thompson in April 1801. Four months earlier, on 21 January, the hospital had closed a loophole permitting illegitimate children to be admitted with no questions asked for a fee of £100. This was three days after the notional birth date of Minnis's child. However, Horatia – and therefore any twin she may have had – was born a week after the loophole closed. Lady Hamilton's Coutts's bank account (included in Sylvia K Robinson's 2016 biography, *In Defence of Emma*) makes no mention of a payment to Minnis, or of any unaccounted payments that might have been directed to her.

There is, therefore, no motivational or financial evidence to back the theory that Lady Hamilton gave a healthy new-born twin to the Foundling Hospital and chose the baptismal name of Mary Thompson. There are, however, a few points of interest.

Firstly, Horatia was also baptised with the surname Thompson. It seems strange that, of the six foundling infants baptised on 18 April 1801, all but Mary Thompson were named for people connected to Lady Hamilton and Nelson. Three boys were named for officers at the battle of Copenhagen; the other boy was named William Hamilton; and the other girl was named Emma Hamilton. From whence did Mary Thompson's name originate?

Secondly, Swinley's account of a man visiting him in the 1970s with a portrait he claimed to be of his ancestor 'Emma Hamilton' who was a former Foundling Hospital internee, is certainly intriguing. This mysterious visitor's motivation can though be queried. There have been many people, past and present, with strongly held beliefs that Lord Nelson was their direct ancestor. Their stories, however, have invariably fallen flat for lack of concrete proof. So it might be that Swinley's visitor had muddled the tale of the missing twin with a family myth of Nelson descent.

Thirdly, as we've seen, the foundling Mary Thompson's admission documentation is shaky under scrutiny. There seems to be no record of her mother, Dianah Minnis, giving birth in any of London's lying-in hospitals, and she seems to have lied about the whereabouts of the father, John Hall. Foundling Hospital investigators found no trace of him, and Minnis's landlady seemed

perplexed that she could have had the opportunity to meet and become intimate with any male friend.

Mary Thompson returned to the Foundling Hospital on 24 October 1805 at four-and-a-half years of age, after being cared for in Chertsey, Surrey, by a nurse named Elizabeth Woodhatch. This was the same town in which the other foundling, Emma Hamilton, had been nursed by Sarah Snelling. The Foundling Hospital's inspector, Mr Living, had been responsible for both families. Returning to Swinley's reference to a note sent by Snelling to Lady Hamilton on 20 May 1801, it is worth quoting it in full: "Mrs Snelling takes the liberty to acquaint Lady Hamilton that the child she received from the FH [Foundling Hospital] is well and much grown..." This is strange wording because Lady Hamilton did not 'receive' a child, and Snelling's charge, Emma Hamilton, is not named. As both the nurses must have known each other because they lived in the same small town and undertook the same role for the Foundling Hospital, under supervision of the same Inspector, could Snelling not have equally been referring to Mary Thompson? Unfortunately, the whereabouts of Snelling's original note is no longer known, and the National Maritime Museum only holds a copy.

Mary Thompson was apprenticed to Captain Levi Philipps of the Honourable East India Company's Bombay Marine Service on 12 January 1816, to do 'household business' at 55 Guildford Street, Bloomsbury, opposite the Foundling Hospital. Philipps lived there from 1813 to 1817 and in 1818 moved to Roper's Buildings, Harrow Alley in the Portsoken ward of the City of London. He had spent years in India and was twice married, with a family, but how many of them were living at those addresses when Mary Thompson was learning 'household business' is not known. The apprenticeship of a female to a single gentleman was not permitted by the Foundling Hospital, although records show there were those who could circumvent the rules. Mary's apprenticeship to Captain Phillipps expired on 18 January 1822.

We hear no more of Mary Thompson until 21 January 1821, when her husband to be, Robert Clark, applied for a Vicar General's licence for them to marry, possibly because of Mary's difficulty as a foundling in proving her age. Both are recorded on the licence as being of 21 years of age or above but she was only 20, not 21, and not of 'full age' to marry. Perhaps this was why they married a year later, on 22 January 1822 (the day after her perceived birthday) in her own parish church of St Gregory by St Paul's in the city of London. However, the delay could be explained by their wedding date being four days after the expiry of her apprenticeship to Levi Philipps. The surname of one witness is Thompson, suggesting he was relative of Mary's, but he was the rector's clerk and unrelated to the bride.

Swinley's reason for searching through Foundling Hospital records in the first place was because of the male visitor who'd shown him a portrait of a young woman he claimed to be Horatia's twin sister, the foundling Emma Hamilton, and his ancestor. However, the foundling, Emma Hamilton, never married so it would

be unlikely, though not impossible, that she bore children. She can be found in the census records for Lambeth in 1861 and Chertsey in 1871 and 1881 living near members of her adopted family, the Snellings. She is shown as unmarried, living alone with the status of ‘annuitant’ (although it is not known from whom she received a pension). She died in Chertsey in 1884 three years after Horatia. It may be that, although Swinley’s visitor believed he was descended from the foundling named Emma Hamilton, his family story muddled over the course of two centuries, and his ancestor may have been the foundling named Mary Thompson.

Nothing can be known with certainty unless further evidence comes to light. It would be good to see the portrait Swinley was shown and, better still, to find living relatives of the unnamed man who possessed it. An increasing number of people have submitted their DNA test results to genealogical databases, so it’s possible that a match will show up between someone who’s traced their ancestry to Mary Thompson and a confirmed descendant of Admiral Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton.

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NELSON IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The National Archives based at Kew have drawn up this very useful guide to items in their collection relating to Nelson, which is accessible online at <https://beta.nationalarchives.gov.uk/stories/horatio-nelson/>
We are grateful for their permission to reproduce parts of the guide here.

The National Archives holds a vast array of documents relating to the career of Horatio Nelson (1758–1805) which showcase his emergence from humble beginnings and his outstanding naval prowess. Many documents relate to Nelson’s life in the Royal Navy, ranging from logs, journals, diaries and letters which record his joining the Royal Navy at the age of 12, becoming a captain at the age of 20, and his promotions to Admiral.

Records of Nelson's professional life

Nelson's first ship:

The ship’s muster book, of Nelson’s first ship HMS *Raisonnable*, records that a Horace Nelson from Wells, aged 12, was mustered on 1 January 1771 as a Midshipman. This predates Nelson’s actual appearance on the ship by several months. Influence and interest was really important for many would-be officers embarking on a naval career. Nelson was fortunate in this respect as his uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, who was to play a pivotal role in his early career, had secured Nelson his first appointment and was using his influence to jump start his nephew’s career before it began, enabling Nelson to gain the minimum six years’ service required to take the examination to qualify as a Lieutenant.

Boaty	No. Entry	Year	Age at Entry in the Ship	Whether Prent or not	where Born.	Letter of Entry in the Ship	MENS NAMES	Qualities	D.D. or R.	Time of Discharge
	2104	1771	12	Novel	Wells		James Melvill	Ab		
	1	1771		Prent	Wells		Horace Nelson	Mid		
	1504			Prent	London		Math Anderson	Boys		

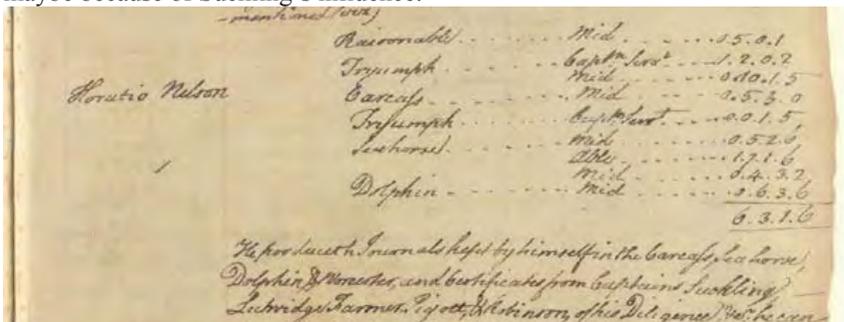
The Reasonable's muster book

Title: Ship: RAISONABLE. Reference: ADM 36/7669. Date: 1770 Nov - 1772 Jun

Nelson qualifies as a Lieutenant:

On taking his Lieutenantcy examination, Nelson’s uncle Maurice Suckling was Comptroller of the Navy, the highest ranking official of the Navy Board, and one of the officers on Nelson’s examination board. Allegedly, Suckling did not inform his fellow officers on the Board that Nelson was his nephew because he

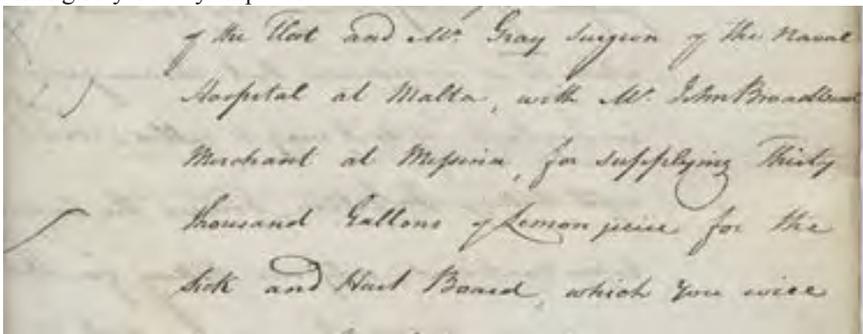
did not want him to be favoured. Nelson's passing certificate shows the ships he served on and the time he spent on each of them. Nelson was under 19 years of age when he passed his Lieutenantcy examination. Naval regulations stipulated candidates had to be aged 20 or over, but this was not enforced in Nelson's case maybe because of Suckling's influence.



Nelson's passing certificate, 9 April 1777
 Title: Lieutenants' passing certificates. Reference: ADM 107/6. Date: 1762-1777

Nelson's letters:

The National Archives holds many letters written by Nelson throughout his illustrious naval career. One such letter written by Nelson in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean to the Admiralty from HMS *Victory* on the 7 August 1804 gives an insight into his skill as an administrator and practical knowledge of the cost of lemon juice, both in England and Sicily. Lemon juice was vital as a measure to stave off the disease of scurvy, among Royal Navy ships' crews.



Nelson, writing on 7 August 1804
 Title: Letters from Commanders-in-Chief, Mediterranean: including Admiral Nelson
 Reference: ADM 1/408. Date: 1804

Illnesses, injuries and wounds:

Nelson, who suffered from sea sickness, endured various life threatening diseases, injuries and wounds throughout his naval career.

In the medical officer's journal for HMS *Theseus* dated 25 July 1797, there is a description of the injury sustained by Nelson which led to the amputation of his right arm which was caused by a musket ball passing a little above his elbow severing an artery. Perhaps, surprisingly, he sustained this wound on land while leading a military assault to capture the Spanish island of Tenerife. After the amputation without anaesthetic, Nelson was reputed to declare to the surgeon that he should have heated the knives used, as cold knives caused more pain.

July 25th

When and where put in the Sick List.	Statement of the Case when put on the List.	Symptoms and Treatment while under Cure.	When discharged to Duty, Died, or sent to the Hospital.
25 July	Compound fracture of the right arm by a musket ball passing thro' a little above the elbow, an artery & vein the arm was immediately amputated, and the following give him 1℥ Opia ʒij ꝑ℞. stercor. ʒ. Rep. Pice Opia ʒij	Rep. Pice Opia ʒij ꝑ℞. stercor. ʒ.	

An extract from the medical officer's journal
 Title: *Theseus*. Includes report of Admiral Nelson's injuries at Tenerife. For description... Reference: ADM 101/123/2 Date: 1797-1798

Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar:

Under Nelson the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars (1793–1815) won some spectacular naval battles, and his finest naval victory, which cost him his life, was the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The ship's log for HMS *Victory* on 21 October 1805, records Nelson's death shortly after 15:40 when he died after having been given the news of a great victory.

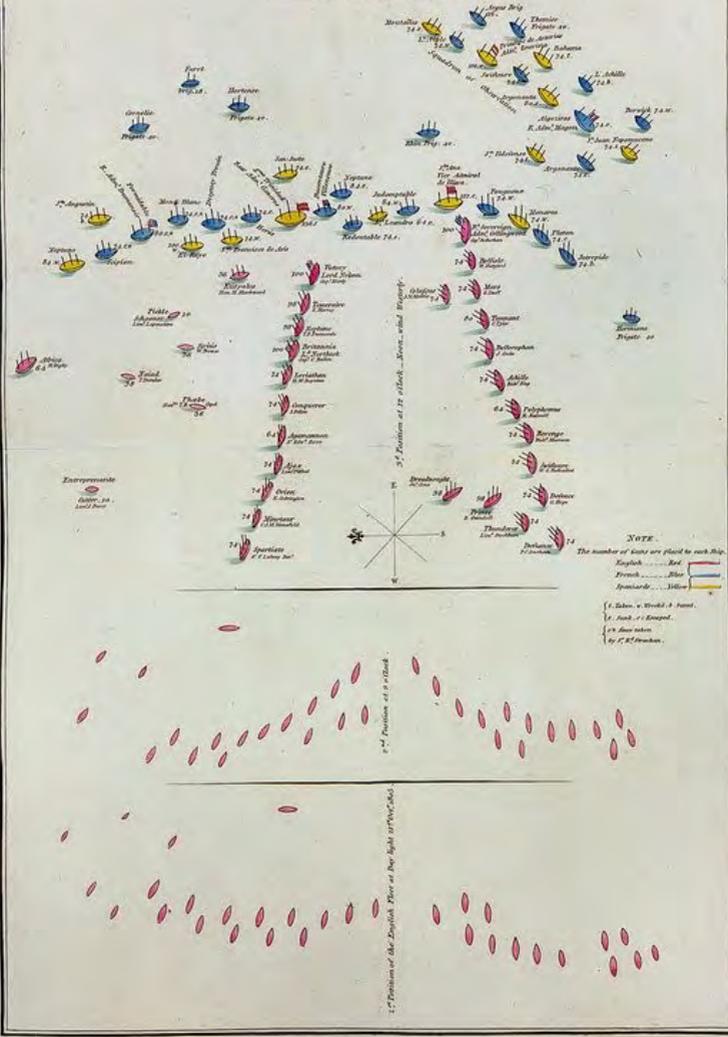
Monday 19 1797 10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10
Tuesday 20 1797 10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10
Wednesday 21 1797 10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10

Nelson's death recorded
 Title: Captains' logs. (Described at item level). Reference: ADM 51/4514. Date: 1794 Aug 2-1809 Mar 22

AN ACCURATE PLAN of the THREE POSITIONS of the BRITISH FLEET.

Before Lord Nelson commenced the Action with the Combined Squadrons of France
 & Spain on the 21st Oct. 1805, Cape Trafalgar bearing E.S.E. 3 leagues, Drawn by
 M. Lewis, Tally Purser of H.M. Ship *Exeter* who was a Spectator of this Glorious Victory.

Published by Doolittle by LAURENCE SHUTTLE, 20, Pall Mall Street, London.



Position of the British Fleet commanded by Admiral Lord Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar (catalogue reference: MPI 1/536)

Your Trafalgar ancestors:

Find out whether you have an ancestor who served with Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar. We've listed all of those who served in the Battle of Trafalgar (on the British side!) with service histories and any biographical details we've found.

Nelson, Trafalgar and those who served:



An online exhibition to commemorate the bi-centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar, highlighting key episodes in Nelson's personal and professional life and a searchable database of those who served in Nelson's fleet at Trafalgar.

Nelson's will:

One of the most significant documents held by The National Archives relating to Nelson is his final will and testament. Leading up to the Battle of Trafalgar, Nelson had become increasingly anxious about his personal finances being estranged from his wife and how he would provide financially for his mistress, Emma Hamilton, and illegitimate child, Horatia.

He first drew up his will on 10 May 1803, to which subsequently he added many further codicils.



His final will and testament

Title: Will of Horatio Nelson 10 May 1803. Includes six codicils dated 13 May 1803, 6 September... Reference: PROB 1/22. Date: 1806-07-11

Read more:

Visit the National Archives website and find the links to these useful guides:

[How to look for records of Royal Navy commissioned officers.](#)

This is a guide to some of the most significant records of Royal Navy commissioned officers held at The National Archives. Commissioned officers became officers by being awarded a royal commission, usually after passing an examination.

[How to look for records of Royal Naval correspondence](#)

This guide will help you to find letters, minutes and documents known as ‘case files’, kept and compiled by the Admiralty, the body in charge of the Royal Navy.

[How to look for records of Royal Navy ships’ voyages in log books](#)

This guide will help you to find Royal Navy log books at The National Archives. These records reveal the location of Royal Navy ships and submarines, wherever they were in the world, and the voyages they took, from around 1669 onwards.

[Listen: Dissecting and cataloguing medical officers’ journals in ADM 101](#)

Bruno Pappalardo introduces the collection of medical officers’ journals found in ADM 101. These journals give a detailed insight into a ship’s daily activities, as well as the science and wildlife that was encountered by British Navy medical officers.

[Listen: Tracing ancestors in Nelson’s Navy](#)

This talk gives an overview of the essential finding aids and documents held by The National Archives which can be used to trace ancestors who served in Nelson’s Navy.



HMS Victory flying Nelson’s signal, centenary of Trafalgar.

Image library ref: COPY 1/490 (481)

NOTES AND QUERIES

From Member Keith Simpkins, who sent us this in response to Ray Aldis' article 'A Nelson Library' in the previous edition of the 'Nelson Dispatch'.

PRUNING A NELSON LIBRARY

Most Nelson Society members I'll wager possess, like Ray Aldis, a Nelson library. My own library over the years had got out of control, metastasising from four bookcases to several piles on the floor. Something had to be done.

My first move was to buy a supply of large cardboard boxes and select a dozen or so of excellent quality fairly modern editions of which there were many examples to put in each. Thus fortified my first port of call was to Tennants, the well-known North Yorkshire auction house on the outskirts of Leyburn, for appraisal by their book and manuscript specialist with a view to auction. I had bought and sold through Tennants for many years. My wife Jennifer and I always like visiting their palatial premises, not least for their excellent café. We staggered in with five heavy boxes and readied ourselves for the auctioneer's verdict. He dismissed my cherished collection in less than a minute, saying that there was no market and declining to put them in one of their sales. He recommended a charity shop! Somewhat chastened we prepared to reload, but I was keen to jettison one box because our car could comfortably accommodate four, but a fifth was more challenging. I was aware that at the end of the lounge area of the café were large bookshelves with space for more books, so I asked permission to put them there. So on later visits, whilst enjoying our full English, we have been reacquainted.

Leaving Tennants we parked in nearby Leyburn near a charity shop, I forget which. The lady in charge said that they were inundated with books and couldn't possibly take any more. Every charity shop in Leyburn was in a similar position she said. (Possibly for the people of Leyburn the Kindle has taken over). Perhaps if we came back in three months we were told we might be lucky. Again we left crestfallen.

Our next stop on our way home was Middleham, the renowned racehorse training centre, where we parked in the square. It's a very pleasant town and after a leisurely stroll we sat outside a pub sipping our coca-colas, whilst watching strings of horses walking between their stables and the gallops. Riders politely wished us good morning, smiled and touched their helmets. You never know we could be rich owners!

Then in the corner of the square I spied an antique shop and went to investigate. In short order I had bought a small tin labelled 'Fitzsimons' first aid snake bite outfit, complete with full instructions'. Well you never know! Investigating further I spotted several bookshelves, with hallelujah, some gaps. So I engaged the owner Pat Clarke in conversation, and enquired whether she was interested in some lovely Nelson related books. She said yes, that she really liked books, and next time I was passing I could bring them in. I can do better than that

I said, and in no time we had unloaded four heavy boxes of books for inspection. Pat was clearly impressed as she examined them. I had mentioned a sum of £5 a box, and without me asking she handed me £50.

What a lovely lady! That worked out at about £1 a book.

So the moral of the story is that if anybody offers you £1 for any of your surplus books, bite their hand off. Or alternatively find a café with some empty book shelves, or better still bring them to a Nelson Society AGM for sale to members who are earlier in the Nelson library chain than you.

ANOTHER OAK BADGE

From member David Ridgus:



I was particularly interested in the article on the oak badge (TND Vol 14 part 7), not least because I also possess one and it was nice to have some historical context for its production. Mine is number 1042 and is in its original box. It was a kind gift from a friend who is a numismatist and came across it amongst a coin collection. The original box is inscribed as coming from 'Spiers and Pond'. This seems slightly odd though as rather than a jewellers as I assumed, a quick google search showed that Spiers and Pond were a well-known hotel chain at the turn of the

20th Century. The article did prod me into doing a bit of on-line searching. The following comes from a member of a genealogy group who had one of the badges, but his had been made into a necklace. He knew nothing about it but had found the following description from an unnamed source commenting on the Earls Court Exhibition.

“At the present moment, however, the Victory is the Flagship of the Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, and is in good repair. A large quantity of the timber damaged in action and decayed has been removed from time to time but much of the old vessel yet remains. One occasionally meets with souvenirs of the old ship, as, for instance, easy chairs, constructed of her old timber, and I have in my possession a badge which is a pass to the Welcome Club of the Naval Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, at present at Earls Court which consists of a portion of Victory's old timbers held by a rim of copper made from the sheathing of the Foudroyant, also one of Nelson's old flagships. I believe that all members of the club are in possession of this souvenir.”

This suggests that the badge acts as ‘pass’ to get you into the Welcome Club’s part of the exhibition. I then found a postcard from 1909 showing the Welcome Club itself at Earls Court. See below.



EMMA HAMILTON'S MUSICAL SPHERE: FURTHER REFLECTIONS

Member and music historian Stephen Wall has sent us his research into the singer Michael Kelly and others of Emma's contemporary music scene, following our articles earlier this year on Emma's songbooks (TND 14/6 pp 371-373, 14/5 pp 278-285) and 'Nelson and Music' article by John Law (TND 14/5 pp 300-304).

I thought I would let you know what I have found out about Michael Kelly. After Naples and appearances throughout Italy, he went to Vienna where in 1786 he created the roles of Don Basilio and Don Curzio in Mozart's 'The Marriage of Figaro'. In his 'Reminiscences' of 1826, there is an account of a musical evening at the Vienna apartment of Stephen Storace at which Haydn, Vanhal, Dittersdorf, Mozart and of course Kelly, played together. A group of like-minded people and is it not interesting that Vanhal, Haydn and Kelly wrote works that have a Nelson connection. Mozart died in 1791 but had he lived longer, we may speculate that he may have made a contribution. I discovered that Dittersdorf died in the year following the Battle of the Nile - a plausible explanation of why he did not compose a work with a Nelson connection. Of the five we know who attended Stephen Storace's quartet party, the three who were able to write works with a Nelson connection did so. Eaton Law speaks of a 'Nelson cult' but here is potentially evidence of a Nelson musical circle. The dots are there but they have not been joined.

I must take issue with John Law in his categorisation of both Vanhal and Kauer as little-known early musical celebrants. That is the case of Kauer of whom there is little trace today, but it is definitely not the case with Vanhal. Haydn respected his work and the scholar H C Robbins Landon in 'The Mozart

Companion' speaks of the 'brilliant and versatile Vanhal'. The list of professional recordings of Vanhal in his own right is substantial. Recordings of his symphonies are also available on Youtube. Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were towering figures in the Viennese musical world and were it not for them, Johann Vanhal would be better known today.

NELSON ON THE MERRY-GO-ROUND



Nelson appears on the 1890's traditional Steam 'Gallopers'

Carters Steam Fair is a traditional English travelling funfair with rides dating from the 1890s to the 1960's. Over the past 40 years they have been rescuing and restoring vintage fairground rides and attractions taking them on tour around London and the South East for everyone to enjoy. One of the features which made Carters Steam Fair unique was the decoration of its engines, rides and transport with superb signwriting, and traditional fairground decoration created by Joby Carter, a leading expert on traditional sign writing and fairground art. Sadly it recently closed and is up for sale. Touring the fair has become increasingly difficult and takes its toll on the vintage rides meaning that more restoration is required each season. In order to preserve this unique piece of history it is hoped that that the rides can be located on a permanent site under cover. (Sue Morris)

THE WRECK OF THE INVINCIBLE

This ship, the 4th of this name, was a third-rate 74-gun ship built Deptford 1765 and wrecked off Happisburgh on the Norfolk coast on 16 March 1801 with the loss of some 400 lives. She was on her way to join the North Sea Fleet under the command of Admirals Parker and Nelson, and would have been at the Battle of

Copenhagen, but she ran aground with disastrous consequences. Many of the lost are buried under a mound in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin Church, Happisburgh. The story of the ship is the subject of Derek Hayes' excellent book 'His Majesty's late ship the Invincible', published in 1985 by The Nelson Society (*copies are still available to purchase from The Nelson Society*). Since the publication of this book, a memorial stone has been placed on the burial mound. Standing high above the Norfolk coast, the church and memorial provided a peaceful but thought provoking setting on the sunny October day when I visited recently. (Sue Morris)



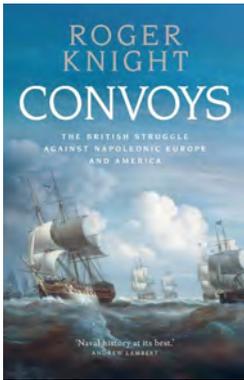
THE HUNDRED GUINEA OAK



This ancient oak tree, which grows in the grounds of country house 'The Vyne' near Basingstoke, Hampshire, is thought to be more than 650 years old. It owes its long life to William John Chute, who owned The Vyne during the 19th century. It is believed that the tree gained its name after he refused to sell it to a naval agent looking for timber at the time of the Battle of Trafalgar. When Chute refused the first offer of £100, the agent came back the next day with an offer of 100 guineas. According to diary entries written at the time, Chute said 'Any tree that increases its value by £5 overnight is too valuable an investment to lose'. (Sue Morris)

BOOK REVIEWS

CONVOYS. Roger Knight. 387 pp, 21 colour plates, 6 maps, Yale University Press, Newhaven & London, 2022. Hardback from £19.45.



Roger Knight is curator emeritus at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. He is author of several books, most notably his prize winning *The Pursuit of Victory: The Life and Achievement of Horatio Nelson* (a copy of which should be found on the bookshelf of all Nelson Society members). In this latest book, Roger Knight turns his attention to the subject of convoys and examines how this feature of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars was of such vital importance in the long battle against Britain's foes residing just 20 miles away across the Channel. The author helpfully explains that convoys are '*temporary gatherings of ships voyaging between friendly ports, keeping together to be protected by escorting warships*'. A simple definition maybe, but Knight goes on to illustrate how this system of convoys was necessary to ensure the safeguarding of trade and the transport of troops. At this time of war, Britain's fate rested on the strength of its economy and this important new study shows how convoys played a decisive part in ensuring victory.

When one thinks of convoys, one immediately imagines those long voyages across the Atlantic and to the Far East, yet this book shows that the bread and butter of convoying was undertaken in the North Sea, between the Baltic, Northern European and Home ports. It may come as a surprise to many readers that despite being at war with France Britain still, at least during the early years, allowed trading between the two countries of licensed items such as foodstuffs (not unlike buying gas from Russia today!). The statistics of this 'local' trade are mind-boggling and the threat from French privateers was ever present. The need for protective Royal Naval escorts far exceeded availability, so the shortfall was met by commandeering civilian ships (complete with their crews), arming them with cannons and putting a Royal Naval officer on board to train and command them (some may recall the Falklands war in 1982 when we all became familiar with the term 'STUFT' (Ships taken up from Trade); new to us then but not to the Royal Navy which had been doing exactly the same thing 200 years before during Nelson's time). This book not only examines the practical difficulties of 'convoying' it also looks at the terrible hardships faced by all those involved. The loss of life, caused mostly by storms and navigation errors, was appalling, but the convoy system, backed by an at times corrupt insurance industry, continued successfully throughout the war. This outstanding book fills a hitherto neglected

gap in the story of maritime warfare in the age of sail and is a must for all those who enjoy reading about this enthralling period of history.

(Footnote – Although always considered the great warrior, Nelson did more than his fair share of convoy duty: as a midshipman to India on *Seahorse* under Capt George Farmer, as an acting lieutenant to Gibraltar on *Worcester*, as a lieutenant to the West Indies on *Lowestoffe* under Capt William Locker, as a captain commanding *Albemarle* to the Baltic and Canada, and with *Boreas* once more to the West Indies).

Ray Aldis

THE PRIVATE MISADVENTURES OF NELL NOBODY. Jennifer Newbold. 419 pp, Luminare Press, USA, 2022. Paperback & Kindle. Available from Amazon.co.uk, and through most UK bookshops. £16.27. Also to order from The Nelson Society £16.00 + postage, contact David Curson at Sales.



The front cover illustration (*'Agamemnon Opens Fire'* by artist Geoff Hunt) gives a clue as to the setting of this book: Nelson's time in the Mediterranean from 1793, which includes Nelson's first fleet action in Admiral Hotham's squadron and his chase of the *Ça Ira*, moving on to the Battle of Cape St Vincent - a very formative period of Nelson's life. We do not normally review fiction books in the 'Nelson Dispatch', but this is an exception for two reasons. Firstly, it is written by Jennifer Newbold, an avid Nelson historian, a member of both The Nelson Society and the 1805 Club and a regular contributor to our 'Nelson Dispatch'. Secondly, the story is 'all Nelson'.

The story line is unusual to say the least, and I will not divulge it to you. The book begins with Nelson at the sieges of Bastia and then Calvi where his eye is damaged by flying gravel. The book conveys his agony and the trauma when he comes to realise that his right eye is unsighted - you suffer with Nelson in his tent on a mountainside. The book then describes Nelson's first major action as part of Admiral Hotham's squadron in HMS *Agamemnon*, and the chase and eventual capture of the *Ça Ira*. The story is told from the quarterdeck, as if you were there, experiencing his feelings and frustration when the action was not pursued. Description is given from a personal point of view, close to Nelson himself. This creates constant interest and character development, all of which give the author's personal view of Nelson, and is very revealing. Was he really like that? you ask yourself - and the answer is 'probably'! The action continues with the Battle of Cape St Vincent and the injury and acclamation he receives there. Then, the culmination of the story. I will not spoil this by giving you a clue! The ending will take you totally by surprise. I am still thinking about it now.

A very good read from an unexpected point of view, coupled with plenty of early Nelson history. But do remember that it is pure fiction – or is it?

Graham Capel



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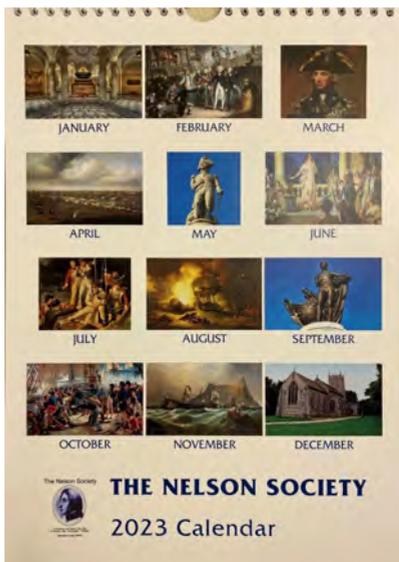
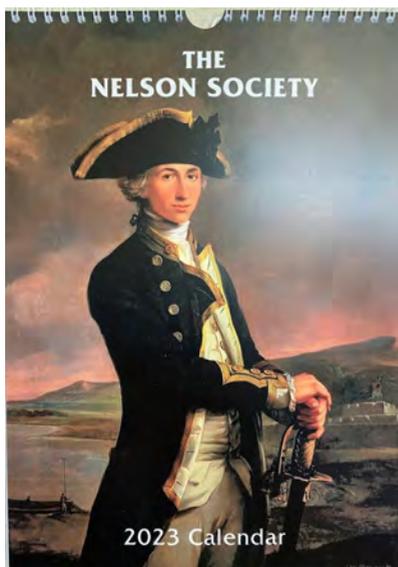
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NELSON SOCIETY MERCHANDISE AND MEMORABILIA

NEW - 2023 NELSON SOCIETY CALENDAR



The Nelson Society is pleased to announce a new calendar for 2023.

The calendar is illustrated with a selection of paintings, statues and structures associated with Lord Nelson.

The calendar is A4 size, with each page divided approximately half picture and half calendar dates, with key events recorded.

Priced at £15.50 each, the calendars will be available to buy at Nelson Society autumn events.

They will also be available to order online (<https://nelson-society.com/shop/>) Alternatively, please order directly from the Sales Manager David Curson. davidcurson007@outlook.com or Tel 07870 547255.

Calendars ordered for delivery by post will also incur postage and packing charges.

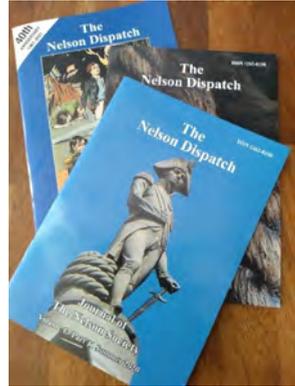
We're sure you will want to buy this exclusive Calendar for yourself, or as a year-round Christmas gift for your friends and family!

(We won't be publishing new Christmas cards this year, so we hope you will be buying our 2023 calendars instead!)

All purchases support The Nelson Society and help to fund our projects.

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.



Donated Memorabilia and Books

From time to time the Society is fortunate to be given members' Nelson books, pictures, prints, ceramics and other memorabilia, to be sold for the benefit of the Society. These are usually offered on the Sales Table at Nelson Society events. If you would like to be sent a list of items periodically please let Sue Morris know. If you have items or books to donate, please kindly contact Graham Capel in advance, rather than bringing them along to Nelson Society events, as we may need to arrange transport and storage.

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

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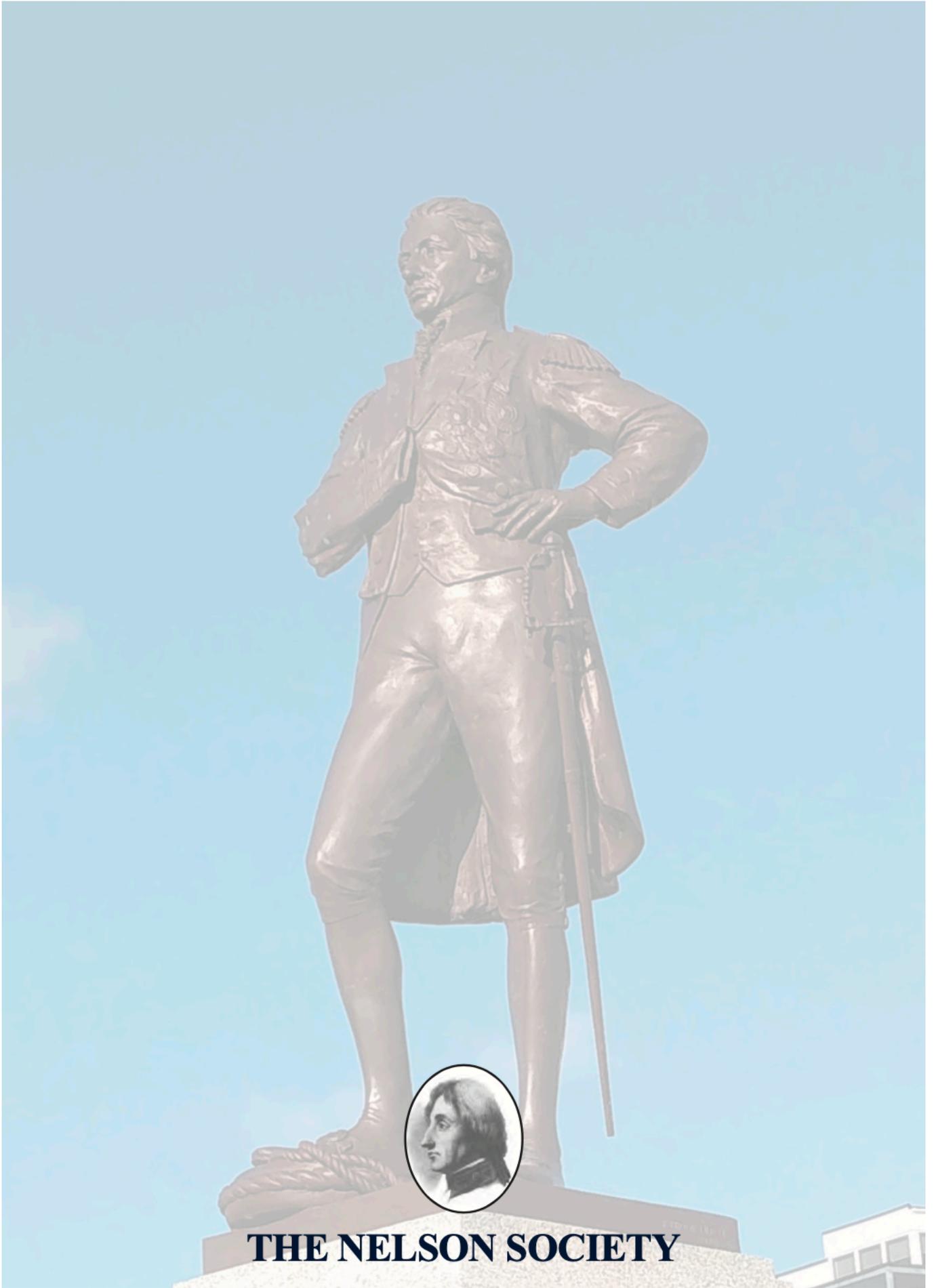
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Advertising copy is best provided in electronic form either as a PDF or Word document depending on the content and reproduction quality required by the advertiser.

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