

# The Nelson Room

Old Royal Naval College Greenwich

## HISTORICAL RESEARCH & IMAGE SELECTION

in support of

### NEW INTERPRETATION SUBMISSION

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# The Nelson Room

## A new interpretation

Take yourself back to the year 1805. Britain is in the height of invasion fever, with Napoleon lining up his troops in Boulogne, and rapidly building up an armada of barges to carry his army to conquer Great Britain. All he needs is six hours control over the English Channel to effect a landing.



*Robert Holborn caricature of Napoleon – Caricaturestation.com*

The only thing standing against him is a thin line of weather-worn ships in the Royal Navy fleets, stationed in the Channel, off the Nore, and in the Mediterranean. These ships had been continuously blockading Continental ports since 1803, in an attempt to keep the French navy locked into port. One of the country's leading naval commanders at the time is Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson.



By **June 1805**, Napoleon had more than 150,000 men; 10,000 horses; 500 cannon; and over 1500 flat-bottomed boats and barges waiting. All that was needed was the French squadrons from Toulon, Rochefort, and Brest to merge together with the Spanish fleets at Ferrol and Cadiz. This consolidation needed to be maintained for long enough to be able to hold the English Channel for sufficient time to allow these ungainly craft to cross, as the British army was felt by Napoleon to be insignificant against such a powerful force.



*Nelson's blockading squadron. By Thomas Buttersworth - National Maritime Museum*

In **March 1805**, the French fleet in Toulon, under Admiral Villeneuve, had broken out and as a diversion had headed across the Atlantic to attack Britain's West Indies possessions. However, Nelson pursued him with his Mediterranean Fleet. The surprise was lost. As a result, Villeneuve abandoned Napoleon's orders, requesting that he attack the colonies, and simply turned around and headed back to try and break through to meet the Brest fleet. However, when they met with Admiral Calder's British ships, off Cape Finistere in **July 1805**, an indecisive action took place. This saw Admiral Villeneuve retreat back to Vigo. A month later in September, Villeneuve fell back again to Cadiz.

The British Admiralty's dissatisfaction at the result of the Cape Finistere action ended in Admiral Calder being recalled to face a court martial for his failure to press home his attack. In fact, heavy fog was largely responsible for the inability of Calder's fleet to get to grips with the French. Calder was no Nelson.

In turn, Napoleon blamed Villeneuve for the failure to join the Brest fleet and he abandoned his immediate plans to invade by August. Instead Napoleon turned his attention to defeating

the Austrians and Russians, which he was to achieve at the Battle of Austerlitz after Trafalgar.



*Admiral Calder's action by William Anderson - National Maritime Museum*

The retreat led to a brief respite for the worn-out British fleets, and allowed Nelson to be relieved after two years of being continuously at sea. He returned to Britain, to be greeted once again as a national hero. He was mobbed in the streets and feted wherever he went. However, with the two powerful French and Spanish fleets still intact, and still located within the Western Approaches, the fear of invasion persisted for as long as the Allied fleet remained in existence. Total destruction of the enemy fleet was therefore called for.





*Nelson leaving home for the last time - Eyre Crowe - Norwich Castle Museum.*

On 15 **September 1805**, Nelson re-joined his 104 gun flagship HMS **VICTORY** at Portsmouth, and returned to take command of the British fleet off Cadiz. His 27 ships of the line waited for the next French move.

The hero worship Nelson faced in Britain had started after the Battle of the Nile back in 1798. There was certainly something special about the man. Nelson's friend and second in command, Cuthbert Collingwood, described it as follows:

"Lord Nelson is an incomparable man, a blessing to any country that is engaged in such a war. His successes in most of his undertakings are the best proofs of his genius and his talents. Without much previous preparation or plan he has the faculty of discovering advantages as they arise, and the good judgement to turn them to his use. An enemy that commits a false step in his view is ruined, and it comes on him with an impetuosity that allows him no time to recover."

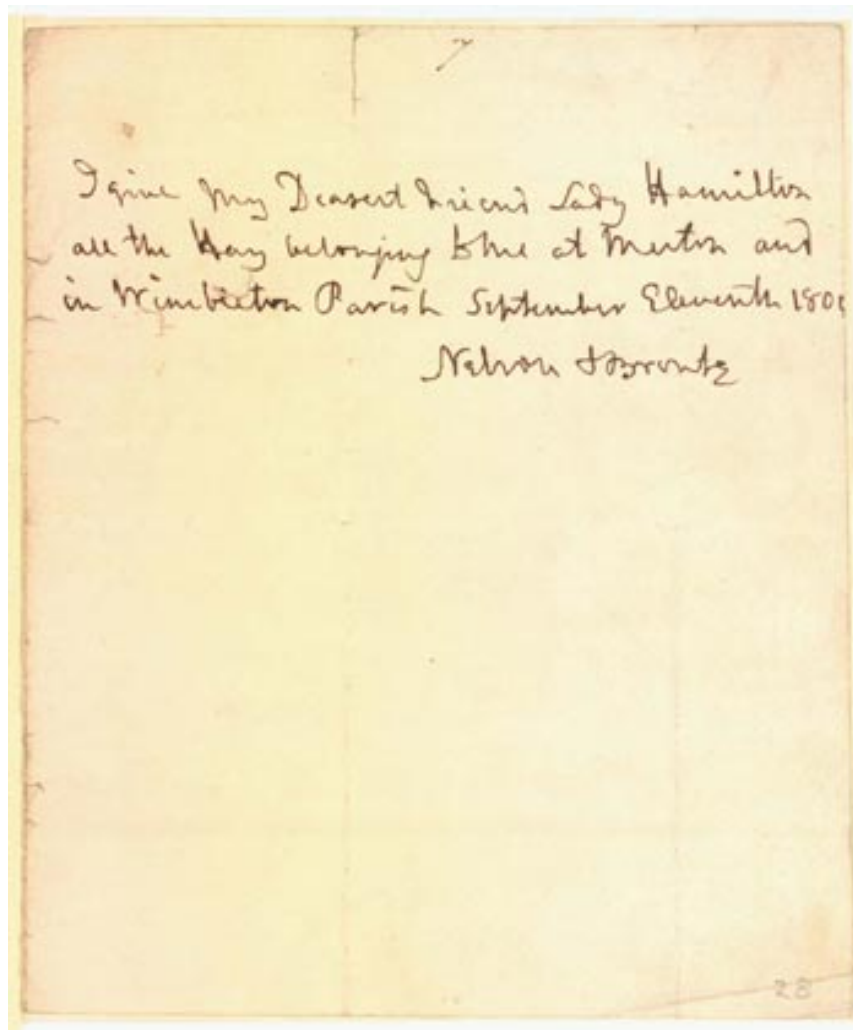
Collingwood in a letter to Dr Alexander Carlyle in August 1801.

The next move came in October, when Admiral Villeneuve, facing the ignominy of being replaced by Napoleon for his failure to successfully carry out his wishes, decided to once again break out. His Allied fleet of 18 French and 15 Spanish line of battleships left port on **19 October** and would face the British off Cape Trafalgar.

It is important to note that the Franco-Spanish fleet was following Napoleon's orders to head back to the Mediterranean, for a feigned attack in Southern Italy. There was never any intention to head towards the English Channel by this time. Nelson knew this and correctly

guessed that he needed to place his ships between Cadiz and Gibraltar. This confirms the belief that Napoleon had given up his invasion plans for that year.

However, it still became important for the British to capture or destroy as many enemy vessels as possible.



*Codicil to Nelson's will written just before Trafalgar. National Archive*

Nelson's "Pell Mell" battle came to pass on **21 October**, with Nelson raising his famous signal, "England Expects every man to do his Duty" as the fleet slowly approached its adversary. Nelson's signal Lieutenant, John Pasco, is said to have suggested changes to the intended signal of "Nelson Confides that every man will do his duty."





*John Pasco, Nelson's Signal Lieutenant at Trafalgar - [Aboutnelson.co.uk](http://Aboutnelson.co.uk)*

The British split into two divisions, the “Weather” and “Lee” Columns. Nelson led the fleet into battle, with his old friend and second in command, Cuthbert Collingwood, leading the other division in the 100 gun ROYAL SOVEREIGN.

The battle was a terrible experience for both sides, with light winds increasing the level of damage sustained by the leading ships in the British fleet, due to the slow speed of the approach.



*Victory breaks the line - Geoff Hunt*

During this approach, the men of the British ships had to lie down on the decks, unable to fire back, as the French and Spanish fleets aimed their guns at the masts and sails. Collingwood said to his officers as **ROYAL SOVEREIGN** prepared for battle, "Now, gentlemen, let us do something today which the world may talk of hereafter."

Nelson's tactics were a variation on those used earlier by Admiral Duncan at the Battle of Camperdown of 1797. The tactics enabled the splitting of the Franco-Spanish fleet into three sections, with the van (at the head of the fleet) being effectively cut off from the battle. This is due to the difficulty of turning the ships around in the light winds to rejoin and support the centre. Indeed, it took four and a half hours for the eight ships at the head of the fleet to re-join the centre of the action, by which time the centre and rear of the Allied fleet had already been overpowered, and 14 ships had already surrendered.





*The Battle of Trafalgar - The deck of the VICTORY around 1.00 pm – William Haversham*

The battle was a huge triumph for the Royal Navy, and was the culmination of years of training and careful planning. The well-schooled and experienced Royal Navy was facing an ill-trained and inexperienced adversary, crewed by poorly fed (in the case of the Spanish fleet, undermanned) and sick men. Despite these shortcomings, the allied fleet still put up a very stiff fight.



*Victory at Trafalgar – Sketch for the painting in the painted hall by Clarkson Frederick Stanfield.*

At the height of the battle, at around 1.15 pm, Nelson was shot on the quarterdeck of VICTORY as his ship grappled with the French 74 gun ship of the line REDOUTABLE, under Captain Jean Jacques Lucas.



*Nelson receives his mortal wound on the deck of the Victory - J.M.W. Turner – Tate Gallery*

Nelson was taken from the quarter deck, four decks down to VICTORY's orlop deck, below the ship's waterline.

Collingwood, in the ROYAL SOVERIGN, known by the nickname, the "West Country Wagon", due to the high number of Devonian crew members, was fighting against the mighty 110 gun SANTA ANA. The Spanish ship was just out of dry dock.

The Lee column had a number of heavily engaged vessels behind him in the British line. Immediately behind this great first rate, was the 74 gun HMS BELLISLE. She was to end the battle totally dismasted, but still was able to take the surrender of the ARGONAUTA.





*BELLEISLE at Trafalgar by William Huggins - National Maritime Museum*

One of the next in line was the HMS BELLEROPHON, known as the “Billy Ruffian”, under the command of Captain John Cooke. He was not to survive the battle, but his ship still took the surrender of the enemy vessel MONARCA. Ten years later, this ship was to finally take the surrender of Napoleon, after the Battle of Waterloo.

Next came HMS MARS. She was badly shattered, and her Captain George Duff was also killed. His son Norwich Duff was onboard, acting as a midshipman on the lower deck. His letter home to his mother is a tragic account.

“My Dear Mamma, You cannot possibly imagine how unwilling I am to begin this melancholy letter ... He died like a Hero, having gallantly led his ship into action, and his memory will ever be dear to his King, his Country, and his Friends....Many a brave Hero sacrificed his life upon that occasion to his King and his Country. You will hear that Lord Viscount Nelson was wounded in the commencement of the engagement, and only survived long enough to learn that the victory was ours.... I have again to request you to endeavour to make yourself as happy and as easy as possible. It has been the will of Heaven, and it is our duty to submit. Believe me your obedient and affectionate Son,”

Luckily, HMS COLOSSUS supported HMS MARS in her dangerous plight and this ship was one of only two ships that took the surrender of two enemy vessels. These were the BAHAMA and the SWIFTSURE.

In Nelson’s Weather Column, the second ship in the line was the “Saucy” TEMEREIRE. She was to become famous as the artist, JMW Turner’s immortal subject, the “Fighting Temereire”. She joined HMS COLLOSUS in capturing two ships, with REDOUTABLE and

FOUGEAUX surrendering to her prize officers. She had earned her nickname due to her involvement in a mutiny in January 1802.

Thomas Freemantle, one of Nelson's closest friends carefully manoeuvred his ship HMS NEPTUNE, the third ship in Nelson's line, and took on the biggest ship in the world, the pride of the Spanish Navy, the SANTISIMA TRINIDAD of 136 guns. Once she had surrendered, he then placed his ship to protect the VICTORY from Dumanoir's returning Van squadron, which had been cut off at the start of the engagement.

At 4.15pm, while lying in VICTORY's cockpit on the Orlop deck. Nelson is told that battle has been won. At that time, 14 or 15 captured ships, known as "Prizes", had already been confirmed. Nelson complains that he had bargained on 20 ships. He dies some 15 minutes later. The accounts of his last words are jumbled. They included "Kiss me Hardy"; "thank God I have done my duty" and a request to Hardy to "anchor the fleet". Further, to "take care of my dear Lady Hamilton" being amongst his recorded last words. These were taken down by both Rev Alexander Scott and Surgeon William Beatty in their accounts after the battle. Both individuals had been present at the time of his death.



*The death of Nelson by Arthur Devis. - Portsmouth Naval Museum*

A seaman nicknamed "Jack Nastyface" (actually named William Robinson) serving on HMS REVENGE, the ninth ship in the line of Collingwood's division, states that they learned of Nelson's death by a visiting boat at around 5.00 pm. This was about the time all fighting ended, and the French ship ACHILLE exploded soon after. He stated that "...in fighting under him, every man thought themselves sure of success. A momentary but naturally melancholy pause among the survivors of our brave crew ensued".



The explosion of **ACHILLE** leads to the general calm after an exhausting battle, with two fleets of shattered ships rolling on a heavy swell.



*The end of the battle - Nicholas Pocock - National Maritime Museum*

One of Nelson's last wishes was that his body was not to be thrown overboard. He had earlier stated that he wished to be buried in Westminster Abbey or St Paul's Cathedral. Captain Hardy was therefore faced with the dilemma of what to do with Nelson's cadaver, at a time when the ship was badly damaged and facing the clear signs of an impending storm as the swell grew. In the end Hardy and William Beatty, the surgeon, chose a Leaguer (a large barrel) of French Brandy from the ship's stores to preserve the body in. On the morning of **22 October**, Nelson was placed in this barrel and it was lashed on its end on the main gundeck, next to the ship's main mast, with a marine sentry posted to guard the body.

The Royal Navy had won its 18 prizes at great cost in lives. 1,587 seamen and officers died or were wounded in the British fleet. However, this pales into insignificance when the Allied fleet is examined. The true numbers remain unknown due to the lack of accurate records. However, including those who drowned at sea in the coming storm, it is believed that up to 7,000 men many have been lost in the French and Spanish fleet, and around 20,000 were taken prisoners.

The stress and strain for the British officers and crews who had just fought so hard was exacerbated by this massive storm that was to last from the morning of **22 October** until **27 October** and they struggled throughout to try and keep the damaged fleet afloat.

Midshipman Roberts onboard HMS VICTORY writes...

“The hull is much damaged by shot, particularly in the wales, strings and spirketting, and some between wind and water.”

“the starboard cathead shot away... several ports damaged, the channels and chain plates damaged by shot....the mizzen mast shot away 9 feet above the deck, the main mast shot through, the main yard gone....the foremast shot through in several places...the bowsprit, jibboom and cap shot and the spritsail yards and flying boom gone....the ship makes 12 inches (of water)per hour”

It is clear from this statement that the ship was all but a floating wreck.



*HMS MARS in the storm after Trafalgar, carrying the captured Admiral Villeneuve by Geoff Hunt.*

Many of the dismasted ships were uncontrollable in the huge seas, rolling and pitching, embayed against the hostile coast line of Cape Trafalgar. Guns had to be jettisoned, and prizes abandoned. The VICTORY and TEMEREIRE's adversary REDOUTABLE were the first to be lost on 22 October.

HMS ROYAL SOVEREIGN, was in as poor a state as the VICTORY, and was taken under tow by HMS EURYALUS. Collingwood transferred his flag to the undamaged frigate and wrote his first despatch. His opening words are about the loss of Nelson rather than the fact that a huge victory had been won, such was the effect of the loss on one of his oldest friends.

On 23 October, the storm increases and the remaining French & Spanish ships counter attack. They have five ships of the line, under the command of Commodore Baron Cosmao,



who breaks out from Cadiz to try and recover the prizes. Two ships, the NEPTUNO and the mighty SANTA ANA are successfully recaptured and taken back to Cadiz.

Collingwood orders the undamaged ships in his fleet to form a line of battle to protect the British ships and the remaining prizes.

Due to the storm continuing on the 24 of October, and the threat of the remaining French fleet, Collingwood orders the most damaged prizes to be scuttled. The mighty SANTISIMA TRINIDAD (the largest ship in the world at the time) and BUCENTAURE are sunk, along with the prizes INTREPIDE, the SAN AUGUSTIN and the ARGONAUTA. The VICTORY is also taken under tow by HMS POLYPHEMUS, although the tow ropes soon part in the bad weather. The Royal Navy had to work hard in trying to save the crews from the sinking prizes in high seas.

On 25 October, the continuing storm leads to the wreck of the INDOMITABLE with the loss of up to 1000 men, including crew rescued from the French flagship BUCENTAURE.

Throughout the storm, Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, as Admiral in charge of the fleet, had to try and gather accounts of the battle from his Captain's. He managed to compose a second despatch to William Marsden at the Admiralty on 24 October.



*Collingwood passing the despatch from HMS EURAYLES to the PICKLE by Geoff Hunt.*

Finally, on the 26 October the storm starts to abate and Collingwood passes his dispatches by boat to HMS PICKLE, while both ships are still at sea. By now, they are not far from

the site of the battle itself. On the same day, another Spanish line of battleship RAYO is captured by HMS DONEGAL while attempting to recapture further prizes. In the process, the RAYO is then wrecked and lost off the Spanish coast.

In the end only four of the British prizes were safely brought into Gibraltar, although luckily, by great fortitude, none of the Royal Navy ships were lost.

On **26 October**, the schooner PICKLE, starts the great race to get the shattering news back to Britain.



*Lieutenant John Lapontiere of the Pickle - National Maritime Museum*

PICKLE's commander, Lt John Lapontiere, raced back to Britain. On **28 October**, she met with Commander John Sykes in the 18-gun sloop HMS NAUTILUS off Cape St. Vincent in southwest Portugal. PICKLE passed the news by signal flag of the victory and death of Nelson. Both ships then race to get the news back, with Sykes saying he will escort PICKLE. However, PICKLE soon breaks away due to her schooner rig having better sailing qualities than those of the NAUTILUS.



On **2 November** PICKLE faced worsening weather, damages her bowsprit, and developed a serious leak. Lapontiere had to jettison four of her carronades to save the ship from sinking.

PICKLE arrived off Mounts Bay, in West Cornwall on **3 November** with the news of the victory being passed to the local fishing fleet as well as to HMS SUPERB, whose Captain summons Lapontiere to give an account of the victory.

PICKLE eventually moored in Falmouth on the morning of **4 November 1805**. The 1,300 nautical mile journey had been carried out at an average speed of around 6.5 knots. Given the adverse tides and winds the ship faced, she would have been travelling far faster than this, tacking backwards and forward to progress against the wind.

Lt Lapontiere then travelled by coach to London making the journey from Cornwall in 36 hours. There were 21 stops for new horses including Truro, Fraddon, Bodmin, Launceston, Okehampton, Crockerwell, Exeter, Honiton, Axminster, Bridport, Dorchester, Blandford Forum, Woodyates, Salisbury, Andover, Overton, Basingstoke, Hartfordbridge, Bagshot, Staines, Hounslow, Admiralty.

Lapontiere arrived at the Admiralty at 1.00 am on the morning of **6 November** and presented the despatches to William Marsden, second secretary to the Admiralty. Lapontiere's words were recorded to have been "We have won a great victory, but we have lost Lord Nelson". The news of the battle was announced in the London Gazette on 6 November the same evening. The Admiralty carefully edited Collingwood's account to hide the loss of the prizes and extent of the major damage faced by six of the British ships.

There still exist the records of the cost of Lapontiere's coach journey and the invoices paid by the Admiralty, in the National archive at Kew. The 271 mile journey had cost £46.

For his troubles, and speedy delivery of the message, Lapontiere was promoted to the rank of Commander. He was also given a prize fund sword and a gift of £500.

HMS NAUTILUS and John Sykes landed at Plymouth on the evening of **4 November**. He reported to the Port Admiral, who ordered Sykes to travel by coach to London as well. He feared that the PICKLE may have foundered in the bad weather.



*Engraving of John Sykes by Charles Bagniet in 1848 - National Portrait Gallery*

John Sykes arrived at the Admiralty just two hours after Lapontiere. With no detailed news to add, Sykes received nothing for all his troubles.

The news travelled quickly around the country. One of the first formal announcements was given in the Union Hotel in Penzance on the same day that the Pickle landed (**4 November**). News had been passed to the fishing fleet by the racing PICKLE, and they carried in the news with the day's catch.

Records of commemorative parades still exists particularly in Nelson's home county of Norfolk.





*London Gazette with Collingwood's despatch of the battle. National Archive.*

The news of France and Spain's defeat was also passed quickly back to Cadiz by the returning defeated ships that escaped Nelson. The noise of the battle had also been heard along the coast of Southern Spain and as far off as Morocco. The battle was well reported on the southern continent.

Admiral Dumanoir, who lead the van of the French fleet, and who fired one of the last shots of the battle from his flagship **FORMIDABLE**, wrote an official despatch to Paris. This was received on **7 November**, by Alexandre d'Hauterive, French interim Foreign Minister. In turn, he sent news on to Talleyrand, Napoleon's Grand Chamberlain, who was at that time in Berlin. From the letter, it seems there had already been rumours circulating in the city the previous day.

Napoleon was already heading towards Austerlitz by this time, and received the news on 16 November. He is reported to have flown into a rage.



In the meantime, the battered survivors of the battle slowly made their way back to Gibraltar.





*HMS VICTORY is towed into Gibraltar by Clarkson Frederick Stanfield.- Somerleyton Hall*

**VICTORY** was taken in tow by **HMS NEPTUNE** on 27 December and after casting off the tow, arrived in port on **28 October**. Temporary repairs were started in Gibraltar to enable the shattered ship to be sent safely back to Britain.

The original intention was for Nelson's body to be placed onto the frigate **HMS EURAYLES** and sent back to England. However, **VICTORY's** crew refused. In the words of a Royal Marine "as we brought him out here, we would bring him home. So it was so".

The lack of dockyard facilities in Gibraltar prevented the **VICTORY's** shot up hull to be properly restored. As a result, the decision was made that she would be sent to England for a full refit again in Chatham. This was where the ship had been built in 1765, and where her 1803 great repair had also been carried out.

While in Gibraltar, the brandy preserving Nelson's remains was replaced with spirits of wine, effectively double distilled alcohol.

Throughout this period, corpses and wreckage from the battle and the following storm were being washed ashore near Cadiz. This continued for weeks after the fight.

On **4 November** **VICTORY** completed her temporary repairs and set sail for England.

On the same day, Richard Strachan caught up with four ships from Admiral Dumanoir's squadron off Cape Ortegal. All of the ships were captured. This included the 74 gun, DUGAY TROUIN, renamed HMS IMPLACABLE. Her last home was close to the VICTORY in Portsmouth. She was sadly destroyed in 1949.



*Battle of Cape Ortegal 4 November 1805 by Nicholas Pocock -National Maritime Museum*

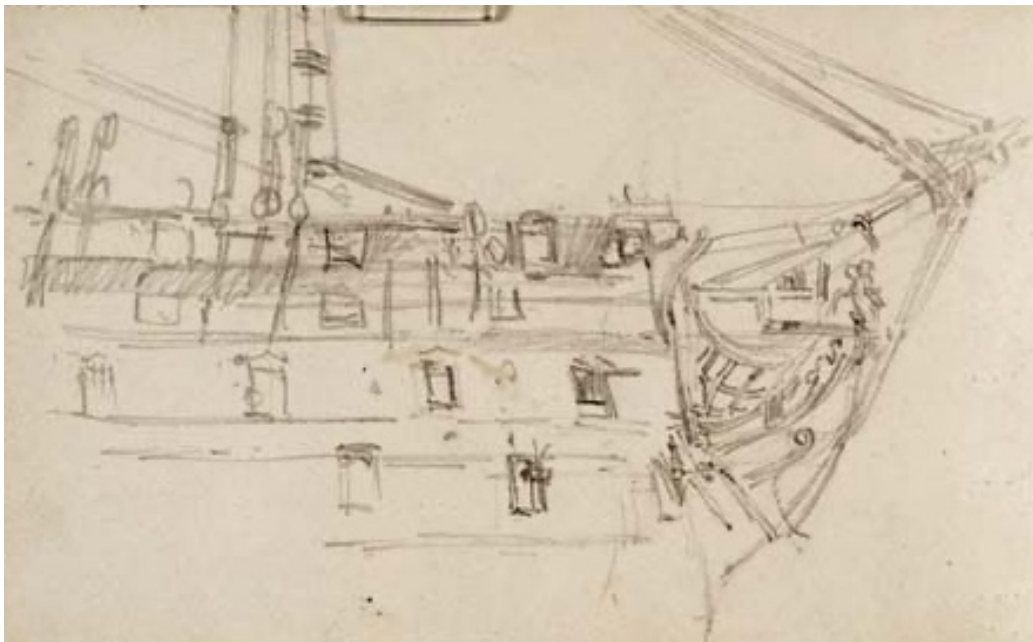
VICTORY arrived in Portsmouth on **2 December 1805**, to undertake additional emergency repairs. The ship was faced with a complex mixture of joy and grief at the loss of a national hero.

Such was the relief to the country at the removal of the threat from invasion, and destruction of such a large portion of Napoleon's fleet, that it was decided that Nelson should be given a state funeral.

The VICTORY was given orders to head for Chatham docks to be paid off. On **10 December** she sailed for Sheerness.

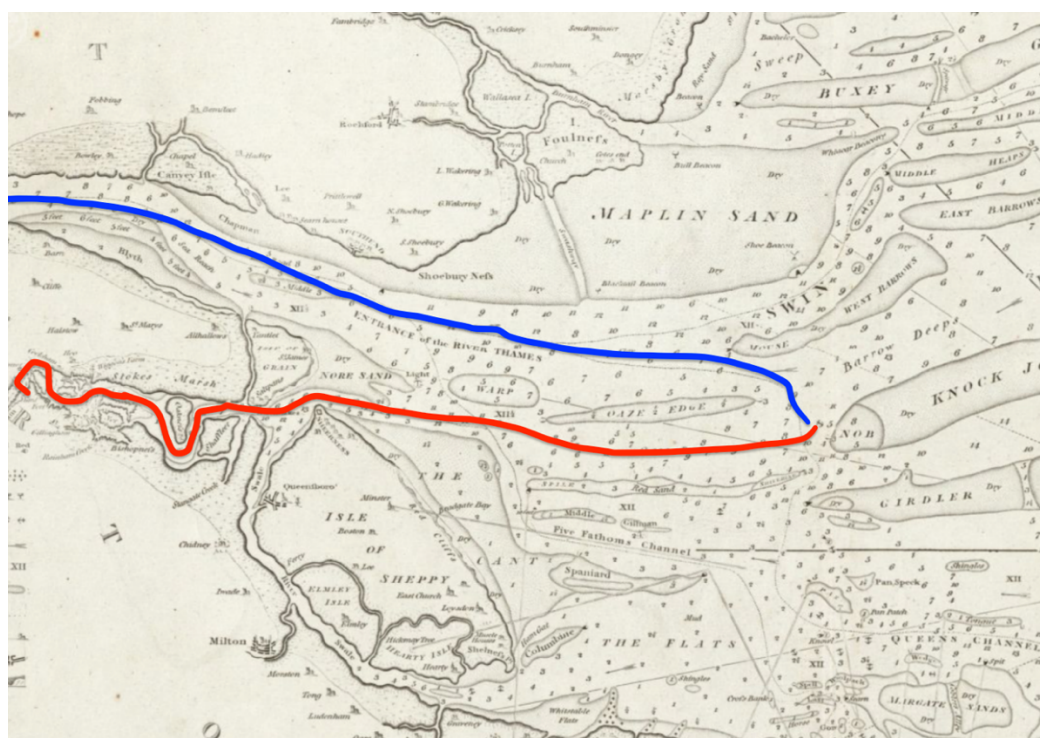
On **11 December**, William Beatty performed an autopsy on Nelson's body and removed the fatal bullet and the gold braid from Nelson's uniform from within the wound. This is now held in the Royal Collection at Windsor. After the autopsy, the body was dressed and placed in a lead coffin, which was filled with brandy.





*Victory at Sheerness sketch by JMW Turner - Tate Gallery*

On 17 December VICTORY anchored off the Swin anchorage, at the mouth of the Thames, close to the entrance to Chatham. During the time at Chatham, the artist JMW Turner visited the ship and drew sketches of her and her crew, and recorded some of the as yet unrepaired damage.



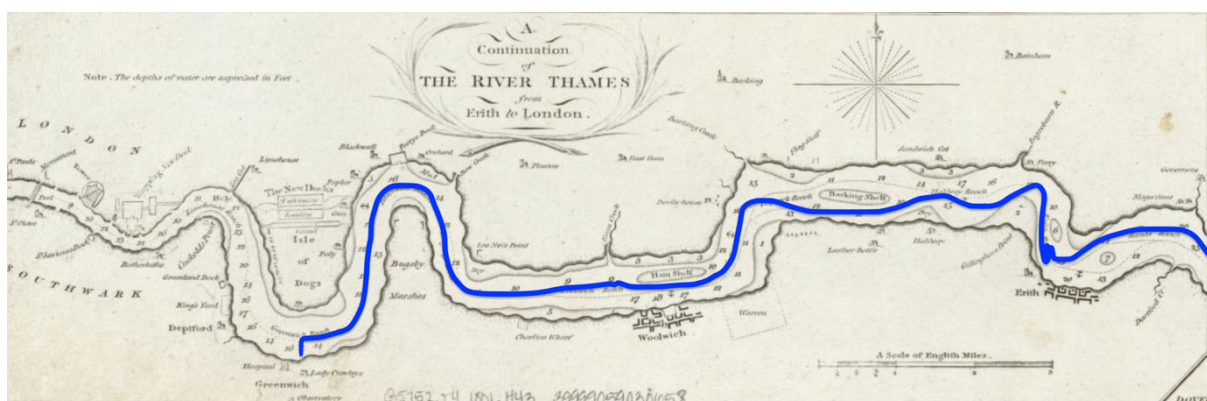
*Anchorage position of the VICTORY in the Swin and the journey of the ship (in red) up to Chatham Dockyard, and of the Yacht CHATHAM carrying Nelson's body (in blue).*



*Chatham Dockyard, by Nicholas Pocock, showing the Yacht Chatham on the right next to the three decker. Kent History*

On **23 December**, Nelson's body was placed on board the dockyard yacht, CHATHAM and taken up the river to Greenwich. Rev. Alexander Scott accompanied the body, along with Able Seaman Thomas Bartlett, a 23 year old from Martinstown, Winterborne St Martin. VICTORY's muster book reads "Discharged 22 Dec 1805 Chatham Yacht with the remains of Lord Nelson"

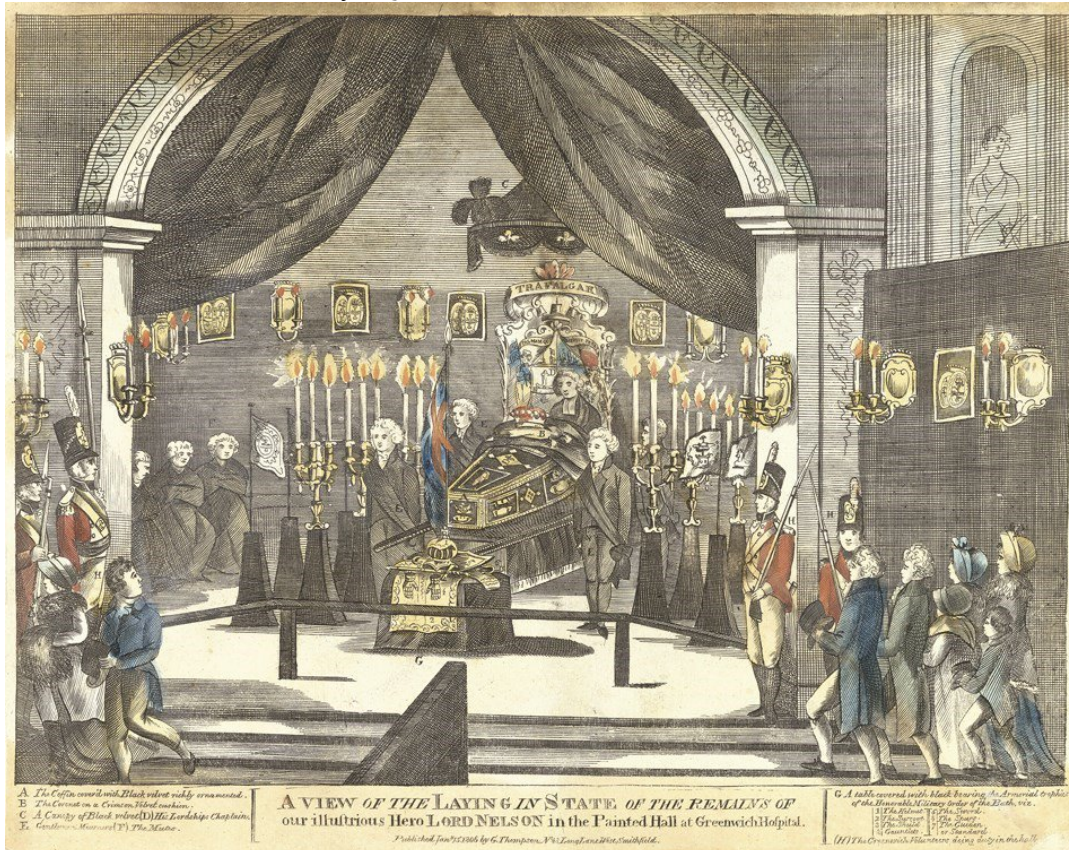
All forts and ships flew their colours at half-mast and fired minute guns as the graceful vessel moved up the river. They reached Greenwich on Christmas Eve. On the same day, the **9 January, 1806** was announced as the date for a state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral.



*1801 chart of the river Thames, with the voyage of the Yacht Chatham carrying Nelson's body.*



The coffin was taken ashore and laid in state in Greenwich Hospital. It was taken into the record chamber adjacent to the Painted Hall, now known as the NELSON ROOM. To quote Fairburn's account of the funeral of Lord Nelson "About five o'clock it was lowered from the yacht into a boat, and immediately conveyed to the hospital stairs. The coffin was enveloped in the colours of the VICTORY, which were bound round it. On landing, it was borne by a party of seamen belonging to the VICTORY, attended by Mr. Scott, and deposited in the Record-chamber belonging to the Painted Hall, and afterwards placed in a magnificent exterior coffin, previous to its laying in state."





The latter motto was Nelson's own invention. It referred to his relationship with William and Emma Hamilton, "three hearts in one". This was to be the closest that the government came to accepting the relationship with his mistress. She was the mother of his only child, a daughter called Horatia.

Between the 5-7 January the lying in state was visited by the general public. The actual numbers of visitors attending vary, but accounts at the time estimate 15,000 visited over the three days. Rev. Scott, Nelsons chaplain on VICTORY, remained with the body all of the time. Fairburn records that between 50 and 100 people were allowed to enter the room at a time, and many visitors had to be turned away, with some of the crowd turning angry and grief stricken at not being able to view the country's fallen hero.

People were travelling into London from all over the country to attend the ceremony along the route.

On the 8 January the cortege was taken up river to the Admiralty in the royal barge built for Charles II, escorted by around 38 barges associated with the livery companies, sea fencibles, gunboats and others. The full order of the procession is recorded in Fairburn's account. The river was thronged with onlookers in smaller boats, and the river banks were crowded with yet more people. All who watched took off their hats in respect and the minute gun was fired throughout the procession. The boat trip was followed by a procession from Whitehall Steps to the Captain's Room in the Admiralty building in Whitehall. The Chief mourner was Admiral Sir Peter Parker, with Captain Blackwood from HMS EURAYALIS his train bearer.



*Figurehead from Nelson's funeral car - National Maritime Museum*

On the **9 January**, the procession from the Admiralty began around 11.00, and the body was taken in the specially designed funeral carriage to St Paul's for service. Again the streets were lined with soldiers and onlookers. There were 126 private carriages and 63 mourning carriages in the procession.



*Nelson's funeral procession arriving at St Pauls. National Maritime Museum*

The procession included royalty, nobles, ministers, high-ranking military officers and at least 10,000 soldiers. The funeral service itself was attended by around 7,000 people including seven royal dukes, 16 earls, 32 admirals and over 100 captains together with 48 seamen and 12 marines from HMS VICTORY. No women were permitted, and neither Lady Nelson nor Lady Hamilton took part.

The service commenced around 1pm, and ended around 6 pm when Nelson's coffin was lowered into a marble sarcophagus originally intended for Cardinal Wolsey in St Paul's Cathedral crypt. The order of proceedings was interrupted when seamen from HMS VICTORY ripped the flag from their ship, which had been draped over the coffin, into pieces for personal mementos.



*Nelsons funeral carriage engraving held by the National Maritime Museum*

It is interesting to note that Nelson's funeral car was preserved in Greenwich Hospital until between 1826 and 1835, when it fell into disrepair and was broken up. Only the figurehead still exists. Cuthbert Collingwood, Nelson's great friend and second in command at Trafalgar was also laid in state in Greenwich, with his coffin laid behind Nelson's funeral carriage in 1810. Collingwood's body was laid next to Nelson in St Paul's cathedral.

It is estimated that the funeral cost around £14,000 to organise. The bill for the funeral still exists in the national archive.



<u>Funeral Car, Hearse &amp; Mourning</u> <u>Caches</u>		
<u>The Car</u>		
Elliott	Temporary Roof & Enclosures covered with Sailcloth during the Building of the Funeral Car.	37 19 10 "
	A Magnificent Funeral Car on a Carriage 3 Platforms covered with Bays & Black Velvet, ornamented with Trophies & Escutcheons, Draperies over the Carriage Figures & Stems, the Corners finished to represent an ancient Caryatid Porch supported by 4 Palm Trees, ornamented with Black Cloth, & Silk fringe, a Vicar's Coronet at top gilt, the Corners curbed with Plumes of Coloured Feathers, Drapery round with Gilt, Velvet Draperies entwined round Palm Trees & fringed	30 48 3 "
	Use of a Primer Carriage temporarily	15 6 "
	6 Large Plumes of Coloured Feathers for above Car & Drapery when exhibited at King's Men & at Funeral	3 3 "
	6 Handsome Horses for the Car from O.A. & Co. O.A. & Co. leaving 2 <sup>d</sup> at King's Men.	5 5 "
	Use of Coloured Feathers for above Horses.	1 15 "

*Extract from the accounts for the funeral expenses. National Archive.*



*Part of Victory's flag, torn up at his funeral by crew of the Victory National Maritime Museum*







*Admiral Duckworth's battle with a French squadron off San Domingo on 6 February 1806  
by Nicholas Pocock*

Admiral Duckworth caught up one of the escaped Brest squadrons off San Domingo in February 1806. The entire fleet of five ships was captured or destroyed. With ships of the line taking upwards of two years to build, the losses of these ships lead to the Royal Navy holding a substantial advantage in fleet numbers for many years thereafter.

The Victorian navy would immortalise Nelson, with “Remember Nelson”, and his famous last signal, “England expects that every man to do his Duty” being emblazoned on ships of the fleet. Examples of this are still seen on the frigate UNICORN (afloat in Dundee) and the TRINCOMALEE, in Hartlepool and of course, the VICTORY became something of a shrine to the fallen hero during the Victorian and Edwardian period. Trafalgar night dinners continue to toast, the “Immortal Memory”

### **Trafalgar and the Greenwich Hospital**

There were many veterans of Trafalgar, who ended up spending their retirement, or long periods of illness at the hospital. One of these was Tom Allen, a long standing servant of Nelson, who came from Nelson’s home town in Norfolk (although born in the neighbouring village of Skulthorpe). He had been with Nelson at the battles of Cape St Vincent, the Nile and Copenhagen, but missed the Trafalgar campaign.



Captain Hardy allowed Tom Allen to become a Greenwich pensioner when he was the commander of the hospital in 1831. There is a memorial to him in the grounds of the college.



*Nelson's servant, Tom Allen, who died at Greenwich Hospital. National Maritime Museum*



*Greenwich Pensioners celebrating Trafalgar day in 1835 - John Burnett Wellington  
Collection – Apsley House.*

The above painting includes several other Greenwich pensioners present at Trafalgar, in the company of Tom Allen. John Stacy was onboard **VICTORY**, and William Welch was **VICTORY**'s Captain of the Main Top. John Simmonds from Kingston Jamaica was also present on HMS Conqueror at Trafalgar. He was at Greenwich between 1816 and 1826 due to ill health and fever caught when serving in the West Indies.





*John Simonds - Trafalgar veteran, who served onboard HMS Conqueror, wearing his Trafalgar medal. - Private collection - Ruth Crook?*



*Greenwich and Chelsea pensioners at Greenwich in 1845 by Andrew Morton – National Maritime Museum*

The Andrew Morton painting is interesting as it depicts William Mathews, (third gentleman from the left) a Boatswain, who was at Tenerife with Nelson in 1797, at the Battle of the



Nile in 1798. He also served in the **VICTORY** at Trafalgar. Next to him is J. I. Shaw, Boatswain, in the **AGAMEMNON** at the Battles of Cape St Vincent and at Trafalgar. Those with red jackets are Chelsea pensioners, former army servicemen, being given guided tours by the Greenwich pensioners.



*England Expects - The approach to Trafalgar English school 19th century - The Elgar Collection*

Greenwich Hospital also offered a refuge for Trafalgar veteran John Rome a landsman from Battersea. He had been employed as lighterman on the Thames and was pressed into service in 1803. He was assigned to the signal team, under Lieutenant John Pasco, and hoisted Nelson's famous signal. After the battle he deserted the Navy, but the promoted Captain Pasco used his influence to have the destitute man admitted to Greenwich Hospital in 1845. He died at the hospital in 1860.

John Pollard, a midshipmen from Cawsand, Cornwall, who claims to have shot the man who shot Nelson is also connected with Greenwich. He was awarded his hospital pension in 1853. Promoted to the rank of "retired commander" in 1864, he died in 1868.



*Mourning miniature portrait of Nelson - Private collection.*

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