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England's Toasts: Admiral and Author: Nelson and Jane Austen

Lecture to the Jane Austen Society Annual General Meeting
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I am particularly glad to be invited to speak at this year's AGM. Jane Austen and the Navy, Nelson included, happens to be a special interest of mine. But there is a more important reason than this. At a time when the bi-centenary celebrations for Nelson and Trafalgar are in full swing, with Nelson as the centre of attention, it seemed to me to be the very time to speak up for Jane Austen, to remind ourselves of her contribution, so very different from Nelson's, and the special place she holds in our history. I felt confirmed in the need to speak up for Jane Austen and her values when I read the publicity for the so-called 'Trafalgar 200' celebrations taking place at Portsmouth this year. For the 'Trafalgar 200' publicity comes with a strong whiff of political correctness, something that Jane Austen would not have countenanced.

Her Majesty the Queen is presiding over these events, in her ancient office of Lord High Admiral, and many foreign dignitaries have been invited. But fearful of offending these honoured guests, especially those from our closest European neighbours, the re-enactment of Trafalgar has not been advertised as showing the combat that actually took place between the British fleet and the Combined Fleets of France and Spain. Instead the engagement is described quite anonymously as being between 'a Red Fleet and a Blue Fleet'. Perhaps some nervous bureaucrat remembered all the fuss caused in France when it was realized that the British terminus for Eurostar was to be, of all places, at Waterloo. Similarly, the re-enactment of the Battle of Trafalgar is not described by its proper name. Instead, it carried a totally innocuous and inoffensive description: 'an early 19th century sea battle'. We can be sure that Jane Austen would not have countenanced such evasions and mealy-mouthedness, and it would surely have made Nelson turn in his grave. Nor would they have warmed to the idea of 'hospitality packages' for the benefit of spectators. Nor would they have approved of the of *The Business* newspaper. The centre spread for its issue of 22nd May was devoted to the promotion of 'Trafalgar 200'. Alongside details of ''The Hospitality Hotline', appeared an article from the business editor of *The Spectator,* with the title: 'Why British business has reason to be grateful for the Navy's vigilance', a mouth-wrenching statement that Jane Austen would *not* have endorsed, either for its style or sentiment.

It comes as no surprise to find that the Austen family's own commemoration of Nelson and Trafalgar has all along been more direct. On the one hand, there is the childish enthusiasm of Jane's niece Caroline, the second daughter of James. Born in the year of Trafalgar, she made the frame for a commemorative fire screen out of wood reputedly taken from the timbers of the

Victory, a precious memento that survives to this day in the Jane Austen Museum. Then there is the Nelsonic tradition most touchingly expressed in the wording Francis Austen chose for his gravestone. At the time of his death in 1865, he was 91, having served a lifetime, almost 80 years, in the Navy, rising to become its very highest-ranking officer, the senior Admiral of the Fleet. Laden with honours, he was Knight Commander of the Bath etc etc etc. Yet the wording he chose for his gravestone[1] – in Wymering Churchyard, near Portsmouth – records none of this, not his high rank, his honours nor his incomparable record of service. The stone carries no more than his name, the years of his birth and death, 1774 to 1865, and four words: 'One of Nelson's Captains'.

In this fact alone, Francis chose to be remembered.

This proud and dignified Nelsonic tradition was continued into later generations. It comes through most strongly in *Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers*, the biography of the brothers Francis and Charles. The book was written jointly by John Henry Hubback, a grandson of Francis, and Hubback's daughter Edith. Hubback was wonderfully informed. His own father mentally ill, he spent his childhood in his grandfather's home, treasuring the Admiral's stories of his life at sea and absorbing the naval atmosphere of Portsdown Lodge. Forty years later, in the early nineteen-hundreds, together with Edith, he set down a record of the lives and naval achievements of his grandfather and his great-uncle, Rear-Admiral Charles, showing in detail the ways in which their sister Jane drew upon the sailor brothers' knowledge and experiences, their mannerisms and their ways of speech, nautical colouring which found its way into *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*.[2]

What is perhaps most remarkable, from our point of view, is the fact that the Hubbacks and their publisher, John Lane, agreed that the book should also stand as a tribute to Nelson. They set the date of publication for the precise centenary of Trafalgar Day, 21 October 1905, an act of commemoration was not unnoticed, the book receiving upwards of sixty reviews.[3]

All this tells us of the flourishing Nelson tradition within the Austen family. But exactly how Jane Austen regarded Nelson is not so clear. His name is not mentioned in the novels and perhaps this is no surprise. In *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*, Jane Austen's attention is upon sailors at home, in the embrace of family life, or on the way to marriage, not upon war heroes and their deeds. And there is only a single reference to Trafalgar. This comes in *Persuasion*,[4] when Anne Elliot is commending Admiral Croft to her father as someone worthy of respect, someone suitable in his eyes to take the tenancy of Kellynch Hall. Amongst his credentials, she says, is the fact that 'He was in the Trafalgar action'.[5] But no more is made of it than this. There is no reminder that Admiral Croft, as a veteran of Trafalgar, as to be numbered among the noblest of war heroes, and honoured as one of Nelson's chosen few, one of his far-famed 'Band of Brothers'. Jane Austen's surviving letters are equally unforthcoming. Trafalgar goes unmentioned; Nelson is mentioned once only, and then indirectly, in a passing reference to The *Life of Nelson* by Robert Southey.

Although there is almost no direct evidence to go on, we can be certain that when the report of Trafalgar first became public – that was on the sixth of November 1805 – the Austen family, Jane included, would have devoured the news. The destruction of the Combined Fleets of France and Spain was the greatest naval victory of the war, a cause for national celebration. And beyond this, the Austens also had a personal stake, for Francis was serving in Nelson's Fleet as Captain of the *Canopus,* the Flagship of Rear Admiral Thomas Louis, Nelson's third-in-command. So we can take for granted that when the Austens scanned the list of those killed

or wounded and they would have been relieved, but also baffled that there were no names of men serving in the *Canopus.* This was especially puzzling as Admiral Louis was known to be one of Nelson's oldest and most trusted comrades, the very officer he would choose to have alongside him in the heat of battle.

It was not until some weeks later that the Austens learned that the *Canopus* had actually missed Trafalgar. This was a misfortune that haunted Francis for the rest of his life. He came to regard it as *the* disaster of his career. It came about in this way. Nelson had been on leave in England during August and September of 1805 and he rejoined the Mediterranean Fleet at the end of September. The Fleet was then fully occupied in keeping a close blockade on Cadiz Harbour, where the Combined Fleet was sheltering. Nelson found that his ships, kept constantly on duty at sea, were running short of water and provisions. So he arranged a rota for groups of vessels to take it in turn to go to Gibraltar and North Africa to replenish their supplies of food and water; and according to Nelson's plan, the *Canopus* was to lead the first group on 3 October.

On the afternoon of their departure Nelson invited Admiral Louis and Francis to take a meal with him on the *Victory*. Francis never forgot the occasion. Many years later he was able recall every detail of the slightly heated conversation that took place between Louis and Nelson, Louis protesting that while the *Canopus* was away 'the Enemy will come out, and we shall have no share in the Battle'. But Nelson was quick to reassure him and explained his thinking. 'The enemy *will* come out, and we shall fight them; but there will be time for you to get back first. I look upon the *Canopus* as my right hand [she was his second astern in the line of battle Nelson had prepared]; and I send you first to insure your being here to help beat them.'[6] These words were etched in Francis's memory and forty years late he was able to send a verbatim account to this exchange to Sir Harris Nicolas for his monumental edition of Nelson's *Dispatches and Letters* published in 1844-46.[7] Frances would also have known of a letter that Nelson sent to Louis the previous day, insisting on his 'speedy' return if news reached him of the enemy coming out of Cadiz. [8] By implication, this gave Louis the freedom to act at his own discretion, cut short his loading of supplies and re-join the Fleet.[9] But despite all these precautions and reassurances on Nelson's part, it was Louis who was proved right. The enemy did 'come out' and the *Canopus*, on convoy escort duty further eastwards into the Mediterranean, missed the Battle.

Francis was bitterly disappointed and set all this down in a long letter written at sea to his future wife, Mary Gibson, over the course over the next sixteen weeks at sea, between mid-October and early February 1806. The day the *Canopus* left for Gibraltar was, he told her, 'the most inauspicious of my life'; 'to lose all share in the glory of a day, which surpasses all which ever went before, is what I cannot think of with any degree of patience' – and much more in similar vein.[10]

Francis was conscientious in writing home and as Jane was his principal correspondent, he would have sent her a rather less personal Trafalgar letter to be shown to other members of the family. It would have included much of what he wrote to Mary Gibson about missing Trafalgar, about Nelson's death, and the qualities that made Nelson outstanding as a leader of men:

> …I am truly sorry to add that this splendid affair has cost us many lives, and amongst them a most invaluable one to the Nation, that of our gallant and ever to be regretted Commander-in-Chief, Lord Nelson, who was mortally wounded by a Musket shot, and only lived long enough to know his Fleet was successful. In a public point of view, I consider his loss as the greatest which could have occurred, nor do I hesitate to

> say there is not an Admiral on the list so eminently calculated for the command of a Fleet as he was; I never heard of his equal, nor do I expect again to see such a man –11

What we hear in these last few words is the unmistakable note of personal loss.

This letter would have taken some weeks to find its way back to England. In the meantime, Jane Austen would have seen the muted celebration of the glorious victory, muted because, with Nelson's death, Trafalgar was won at so great a cost. Nelson's funeral came at the end of January 1806. It was a suitably grandiose affair. The procession was so long that by the time it reached St Paul's, those at the end were still in Whitehall, and the ceremony in the Cathedral lasted four hours. One spectator was an acquaintance of the Austens, the sixteen-year-old Charlotte Plumtre. She wrote that she was 'gratified with the sight' of the 'funeral…it was between three & four hours passing the window'. But, she added, candidly, that she thought 'it was a great pity to waste so much money on a corpse, ' and that she hoped that 'there will not be such a fuss with poor Mr Pitt', this being was Pitt the Younger, the Prime Minister, whose funeral was immediately to come, as he had died only four days before, on 23 January.[12]

Among the leading artists of the day, there was a race on to produce *the* great memorial work, a painting that would rise to the full drama and tragedy of Nelson's death. The undoubted winner was Benjamin West, an artist whose work Jane Austen knew and admired.[13] An American, with a Europe-wide reputation. West had come from the Continent to England many years before with an established reputation. He was appointed historical painter to George III and became President of the Royal Academy. His 'Death of Lord Nelson', a vast painting, was widely admired and a great popular success.[14] However, it has to be said that as a pictorial account of how Nelson actually died, it bears little relationship to the well-known facts – that whilst standing prominently on deck, he was brought down by a French sniper with a single bullet and was carried away immediately and taken below to the confined space of the cockpit, a part of the vessel lantern-lit and under the waterline, used in time of battle as an operating theatre and dressing station for the wounded. Accompanying Nelson were no more than five or six in attendance. So few, and in such a humble setting, was not the material for a great ceremonial canvas. West was convinced that Nelson should not 'be represented dying in the gloomy hold of a ship, like a sick man in a Prison Hold'.[15] He wanted to create what he called a 'spectacle', a grand and awe-inspiring scene. So he transported the dying Nelson back to the quarter-deck, an elevated platform which could provide the very stage and setting for the passing of a hero; moreover, a stage large enough to contain an assembly of Nelson's comrades, nearly sixty of them, and each one designed to be a recognisable portrait. To this, West added a spectacular background. Through the smoke of battle could be seen the ships of Nelson's Fleet, their flags signaling the message of 'Victory', 'close Action' and 'England expects every Man to do his duty'; and beyond them, 'the Vessels of the vanquished Enemy which are marked with all the work of Battle, Destruction, and Defeat'.[16] Placed next to Nelson himself, was the standing figure of the *Victory's* Captain, his beloved Hardy, acquainting Nelson, somewhat prematurely, the list of the captured ships.

It is easy to make fun of a picture like this. Yet in transforming the scene of Nelson's death West was drawing upon a long-established artistic tradition and he later explained to the diarist Farington the ideas by which he was guided in making these changes:

> There was no other way of representing the death of a Hero but by an Epic representation of it. It must exhibit the event in a way to excite awe & veneration & that which may be required to give superior interest to the representation must be introduced, all that can shew the importance of the Hero… To move the mind there should be a spectacle presented to raise and warm the mind, & all shd. be proportioned to the highest

> idea conceived of the Hero. No boy, sd. West, wd. be animated by a representation of Nelson dying like an ordinary man [West had in mind the didactic and inspirational function of art, the idea that this picture of the hero should inspire youngsters to heroism themselves, a point that carried some weight in time of war]. His feelings must be roused & his mind inflamed by a scene great and extraordinary. A mere matter of fact will never produce this effect.[17]

My guess is that Jane Austen found the calculated falsifications of West's picture unobjectionable. They were no more than conventions for representing the heroic ideal; no more than a stretching of the truth to reach a higher truth, an instance of artistic licence prevailing over 'mere matters of fact'. However, in the following year, 1807, West carried artistic licence significantly further. This was in his second Nelson picture, 'The Immortality of Nelson'. Here, West moves the heroic towards holy ground, adapting the classical form of an apotheosis expressing heroism, sacrifice and the divine reward. We see Nelson's corpse, swathed in a shroud, raised heavenwards by Neptune, his head supported by the winged goddess Victory, who offers Neptune's trident to Britannia.[18]

Are we to believe that Jane Austen was equally ready to accept the idealizing conventions of this highly allegorical picture, with its representation of Nelson's elevation towards sacred realms, wrapped in a winding sheet of white, symbolic of purity, With his wound marked out in vivid read – a representation totally indifferent to the awkward 'mere matters of fact' that enter into any consideration of Nelson's life?[19] The same question arises with some of the most widely circulating obituaries of Nelson.

Many of these bear little relationship to Nelson in the flesh. A distinctive, sanitizing, tone was set by the *Morning Chronicle*. In its issue for 7 November, with the news of Trafalgar and Nelson's death, the paper announced that it was 'impossible to conceive a human being of more pure benevolence and of more active virtue than Lord Nelson'.

However praiseworthy the 'pure benevolence' and 'active virtue' of Nelson's *public* life as a national hero, his *private* life was a very different matter. It was common knowledge that Nelson at home was living in sin, a flagrant adulterer. When he joined the Mediterranean Fleet at the end of September, he came hot foot from his home at Merton Place. Up to the time of Sir William Hamilton's death in 1803, Merton had housed a notorious *ménage à trois*: a scandalous household – they boasted of it as 'tria junta in uno' – [20] that included a cuckold, the elderly and complaisant husband, Sir William Hamilton; his wife, Emma, a former artist's model a kept mistress of several men, with a colourful, many would say, disgraceful past; Nelson, her acknowledged and besotted lover; and their love-child, Horatia.

Across this household of matrimonial disloyalty, the figure of Lady Nelson cast a long and accusing shadow. Lady Nelson was rejected and deserted by Nelson in 1800. He refused even to see her, despite her appeals for reconciliation and her declarations of forgiveness. Her uncomplaining and charitable conduct on her side won general respect and she was regarded as a model of the faithful and loving wife, the virtuous woman wronged. Equally, the truth about Nelson's behaviour remained scandalizing many years later his 'culpable disregard of domestic ties', his 'neglect, approaching to cruelty, of one to whom he was bound by honour, as well as religion, morality, and law, to cherish.' This concluded the *Edinburgh Review*, as late as 1814 was 'The notorious fact of Lord Nelson's domestic misconduct to his wife'.[21]

Is it difficult to guess Jane Austen's response to these 'mere matters of fact'? True enough, a few years earlier, back in 1798, Jane Austen had joined the nation in falling to Nelson fever, following his Victory of the Nile. We know from her letters that at a Hampshire ball, she

wore a Mamalouc cap in honour of Nelson, together with a Nelson cockade[22] (and thanks to the generosity of Diana Shervington, many of us have had the privilege of seeing these precious family heirlooms). But Jane Austen's enthusiasm for Nelson cannot have lasted for long. News of his infatuation with Emma, which dated from the Autumn of 1798, in Naples, where Sir William Hamilton was Britain's envoy, rapidly found its way back to England and featured widely in the scandal sheets. Emma's chequered past was raked over salaciously, her classic poses, her so called 'attitude', were parodied suggestively, and concern grew in naval circles – after all, here was an Admiral not only diverted from his duty but ensnared. By November 1799, the ripples had so widened that even *The Times* felt free to comment, drawing Nelson as a latter-day Mark Anthony captivated by an Emma-Cleopatra, the warrior tempted from the field of battle.[23] But Nelson paid attention neither to the public comments nor to the warnings of his friends in the service. As his infatuation deepened and Sir William seemed obligingly permissive, he kept company with the Hamiltons and eventually returned with them to England, a long drawn out journey of five months travelling overland from Italy in the Summer and Autumn of 1800.

How closely Jane Austen followed the events of the Nelson-Emma story, we have no direct evidence. We do know, however, that she was not averse to tittle-tattle and gossip herself; her letters to Cassandra tell us how she sharpened her wit on adultery and adulterers; and there is no reason to suppose that she closed her eyes to the satirical prints of Rolandson, Gillray, and Isaac Cruikshank or to the veiled and the not-so-veiled stories that appeared in the press. Moreover, through Francis and Charles, and other naval relatives, the Austens had the advantage of being on the naval network, that informal line of communication along which naval rumour and naval gossip travelled freely – not least at Bath, a great gathering ground for naval men. From early 1799 until mid-1800, Francis was serving in the Mediterranean Fleet, itself a hotbed of rumour and speculation. In May 1799, he carried dispatches to Nelson at Palermo, at this time the scandalous heart of the affair. It stretches belief that Francis was so very discreet that no hint of these matters entered his letters home, or so tight-lipped as to say nothing when he returned to Steventon in the Autumn of 1800. Or that Charles, also serving in the Mediterranean during this time, would have failed to report naval gossip quite so colourful and intriguing and the one question on everyone's lips – who *really* had command of the Mediterranean Fleet, Lady Hamilton or Lord Nelson?

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Unluckily for us, there is no record that Jane Austen said anything on these matters. The single mention of Nelson's name comes in a letter of 1813; she is writing, somewhat facetiously, to Cassandra about the newly-published biography of Nelson by Robert Southey: 'I am tired of Lives of Nelson, being that I never read any. I will read this however, if Frank is mentioned in it'.[24] Frank was not mentioned. So if we accept Jane Austen's word at face value, Southey's *Life* – excellent in itself, but one of a multitude of Nelson biographies – passed her by unread. But perhaps this is not surprising. In whatever light Nelson's conduct was discussed among the Austens, the treatment of his wife was an offence which could not be ignored, excused or laughed away. Jane Austen was a practising Christian, we would say devout. She regarded the bonds of marriage as sacred, binding and morally accountable. How seriously she took these matters is evident in *Mansfield Park*. In that drama of marriage, infidelity and adultery, the absent villain of the piece, the lurking source of its corruption, is an Admiral, Admiral Crawford. Jane Austen's judgement upon him is unequivocal and damming in the words of the novel, it is his 'vicious conduct' which has 'corrupted' his wards, the next generation of Crawfords, Henry and Mary, to whom the 'contagion' has spread. We are told

that soon after his wife's death, the Admiral installed a mistress in his Mayfair home and the Crawford brother and sister were brought up in this 'bad school for matrimony', the establishment in which such 'a bad domestic example' was set. It is to Admiral Crawford that Henry owes his 'corrupted mind', and Mary her shallow cynicism, her 'perversion of mind'.[25] Of the Crawfords, Jane Austen might say, as she said of another scandal-wracked family, 'What can be expected from a Paget, born & brought up in the centre of conjugal Infidelity & Divorces'.[26]

But not all Admirals were Crawford/Nelsons, their feet in the mire. Some enjoyed lives of lasting happiness and fidelity in marriage, marriages that were strong enough to survive the uprooting and separation of war. Jane Austen saw such couples around her in the Austen family and their naval circle, and she gives us a lasting image of such a union in her affectionate portrait of Admiral and Mrs Croft. And in the all-enveloping domestic world of Captain Harville and his family in their crowded little home at Lyme Regis.

Within his own family, Nelson's success at Trafalgar had a somewhat bizarre outcome.

As Nelson died in action, Parliament decided that the honours and rewards that would have gone to him, had he survived, should, instead, pass to his elder brother, William Nelson – a clergyman, ill-famed as 'a boorish, grasping scoundrel', a scrounger after 'deaneries and bishoprics'. So William Nelson found himself created 1st Earl Nelson of Trafalgar and Merton. Parliament also voted him £90,000 (upwards of six million pounds in to-day's money), intended to enable him, as a newly-created Earl, to buy an estate appropriate to his rank in society. A further £10,000 was provided to furnish the house, and £15,000 for each of his two daughters, plus an annuity of £5000 to him and all succeeding holders of the title, a payment which continued for another 150 years, until it was ended by Parliament in 1947.

Only two years after his ennoblement, William Nelson lost his only son, Lord Trafalgar, the next in line. When his wife died in 1828, the Earl, then aged 71, was so determined to produce an heir that he proposed to Hilaire Barlow, a beautiful young widow of 28. After refusing him several times, she eventually accepted the Earl, plus a handsome settlement of £4000 a year and a house in Portman Square. But as far as William Nelson's hopes were concerned, it was money spent to no purpose; Their six years of marriage, until the Earl's death in 1835, were childless. Two years later, the Dowager Countess married again. Her third husband was none other than one of Jane Austen's favourite nephews, George Knight, now a man of 42,famous in his time as a Kent and All England cricketer, but better known to us, through Jane Austen's letters, as 'itty dordie', this being little George's own babyish lisping of his name.[27] Their marriage, too, was childless. Hilaire died in 1857, George ten years later. So in this curious and quite unexpected way, the paths of the Austen-Knight and Nelson families converged, if only momentarily – but certainly with one very happy outcome: with us today, sitting on this platform, in the person of your President and Chairman, we have one of George Knight's great-great-great nephews and a cousin thrice removed.

To put the Admiral and the Author side by side, as I have done in the title to this address, is one might say, a markedly unfair comparison. When we look at Nelson's great marble sarcophagus in St Paul's, a monument tomb originally intended for Cardinal Wolsey; and the huge outdoor memorial of Trafalgar Square, with its column and its statue in the sky, We are viewing Nelson truly heroic proportions, *à la* Benjamin West. How very different the Austen memorials in Winchester Cathedral. Unshowy, modest and in proportion, we would say: the

brass tablet, the window and the sombre gravestone, all of them properly in touch with Jane Austen's 'mere matter of fact'.

Discussing the contrasts between Nelson, the celebrated man of war, and Jane Austen, the anonymous lady of letters, could take us through teatime and beyond. Rather than do that, I want to do no more than identify the two points on which they stand side by side: both belong to that small and chosen band we toast , regarding them as national figures; and both stand equally, and incontestably, as jewels in the crown of Regency England.

To this conclusion, I would like to add what is really a postscript. At the time of Nelson's death, command of the Mediterranean Fleet passed to his second-in-command, Vice-Admiral Collingwood. His dispatch, reporting these events to the Admiralty was immediately carried to Falmouth in the *Pickle*, a fast schooner,[28] and the schooner's captain , Lieutenant John Richards Lapenotiere, brought the dispatch to London himself, by post chaise, a full 265 miles, with the horses changed twenty-one times along the way. Travelling non-stop, the journey took him thirty-seven hours. As part of this year's celebrations, Lapenotiere's journey is to be re-enacted. In three weeks' time, around August the fourth or fifth, a party of young naval officers, dressed in uniforms of the period, will represent the messenger, re-tracing his original route. But with one significant difference. This time, along the way these young men will be calling at all the public houses carrying the name of Nelson or Trafalgar, to join the locals in a drink or two in celebration. On this basis, one suspects that the journey is more likely to take 37 days than 37 hours. At all events, it so happens that our Chairman's home at Bridport is right on the route, bang opposite the *Admiral Lord Nelson*. So if anyone would like to join an unofficial Jane Austen Society welcoming party, I, understand that Patrick Stokes will be pleased to see them.

History has long fixed the Admiral and the Author, each in their place. But times and perspectives change. I, for one, still live in hope that one day, some at least of Jane Austen's lost letters – will come to light, to give us, directly, and in her own inimitable words, the Author's opinion of the Admiral.

Bibliography

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Notes and References

1 In Wymering Churchyard, near Portsmouth.

2 In *Cross Currents in a Long Life*, chapter xi, John Hubback describes the writing of Sailor Brothers. The idea for the book originated with his daughter Edith in the Autumn of 1904. Family papers and portraits were made available by captain Ernest Leigh Austen RN, the head of Francis Austen's branch of the family, and by captain L.P. Willan RN on Charles's side. Hubback also had material inherited through his mother, Catherine Austen.

The division of labour was agreed: 'Edith took up the literary part, while I endeavoured to deal with the naval history' (*Cross Currents*, p. 80). A chapter was submitted to John Lane, who 'published our book in October 1905, the centenary month of the Battle of Trafalgar' (ibid., p. 81). Although the book itself is dated 1906, the British Museum date-of-receipt stamp confirms Hubback's dating of October 1905.

John Lane declined to produce a second edition and Hubback 'interleaved in our own family copies' of the 1905 edition 'all the new matter that came to hand from so many quarters' (ibid., p. 82). These additions come in the form of extra pages of printed text, marginal notes and illustration. I have consulted one of these enlarged copies in Jane Austen's House at Chawton.

3 Not all the reviews were laudatory. Hubback noted that one reviewer 'found fault with our dressing up Jane in blue and gold, while admirals complained of the admixture of literary stuff with important naval narrative' (ibid., p 81). This too was the opinion of the *English Historical Review*: that 'the insertion' of the 'extracts is a mistake in the composition of the volume' (vol. 21, 1906, p.621). But, overall, Hubback was happy with the reviews, finding 'cordial approval in general' (ibid.).

4 There is an indirect reference to the Battle in Sanditon, where Mr Parker expresses his regret at naming his home Trafalgar House, 'for Waterloo is more the thing now' (*Minor Works*, p. 380).

5 *Persuasion*, p.22.

6 Nicholas Harris Nicolas ed., The Dispatches and Letters of Lord Nelson (1844-46, 1998), London: Chatham Publishing, vii.63.

7 vii.63.

8 Colin White ed., Nelson: The New Letters (2005), Boydell: Woodbridge, p.447.

9 *Nelson: The New Letters*, p.447.

10 *Jane Austen and the Navy*, pp.99-100.

11 Ibid., p. 99

12 From an unpublished letter of Charlotte Plumtre to George Polhill, 27 January 1806 (Plumtre Papers, Sevenoaks Library, U 1007 c72/3. For the text of this document I am indebted to Margaret Wilson.

13 See *Jane Austen Letters*, p.273.

14 Measuring 182.5 x 247.5 cm, it is to be seen at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

15 West, however, was soon to change his mind. In 1808, he painted just such a scene, 'The Death of Lord Nelson in the Cockpit of the Victory' (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich). As this was commissioned by John M'Arthur, joint-author, with James Stanier Clarke, of the official biography of Nelson – *The Life of Admiral Lord Nelson, K. B.*, 1809 – it is very likely that West accepted the need for historical accuracy in a picture which was to be included there as an illustration. For West, the artistic attraction of the piece seems to have been in what he described as 'The masses of the chiara-scuro' available to him in the lantern-lit space, shades of light and dark that contributed towards his aim of adding 'interest and sympathy to the affecting scene of historical composition' (quoted in Erffa, p.222).

16 From the wording of the 'Key to the Portraits &c.' that accompanied the print later engraved from the picture in 1811.

17 *Diary of Joseph Faringdon*, entry for 10-12 June 1807, viii.3064.

18 It has been suggested that Britannia entered into such allegorical scenes rather later in the nineteenth century and that this figure is really Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom and virtue (Noszlopy, *Burlington Magazine*, 1970), cxii.813-17).

19 Others found this picture difficult to swallow (see Erffa, p. 225).

20 *DNB*, 24.791.

21 *Edinburgh Review* (September 1814), xxii.400, 405.

22 *Letters*, p. 33.

23 *The Times*, 14 November 1799.

24 *Letters*, p.235.

25 *Mansfield Park*, pp.41, 456, 295, 46, 467, 225, 456.

26 *Letters*, p.333. The Paget Story is elucidated by Deirdre Le Faye in the notes to the Letters, pp. 463-64, 557, 560.

27 *Letters*, p.15

28 There is an odd coincidence in this name and the fact that Nelson's body was itself *pickled* in a cask of brandy to preserve it on the journey back to England.