

*The Nelson Society of Australia Inc.  
Newsletter*

*April 2011*



Hilt of the Midshipman's Dirk, presented to  
Midshipman Rebecca Poultney ANC on January 21 2011

*Program of Events*

All meetings begin at 7pm for a 7.30 start unless otherwise stated.  
St Michael's Church, Cnr The Promenade & Gunbower Rd, Mt. Pleasant.  
Please bring a plate for supper.

- |             |         |  |
|-------------|---------|--|
| Mon. May 9  | 7pm     | Interview with Sir William Hamilton<br>by Betty Foster |
| Mon. May 30 | 10 30am | US Memorial Day Service, King's Park                   |
| Mon July 11 | #1.30pm | "Battle of the Nile" -Mike Sargeant                    |
| Sun Sept 11 | 10.30am | Visit to Cannington Maritime Museum                    |

# Note the trial time of this General Meeting in the afternoon.

NELSON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA NELSON FUNERAL COMMEMORATION SERVICE  
 ST MICHAEL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, MT PLEASANT, WA 9 JANUARY 2011  
 "LORD HORATIO NELSON'S DEATH AND FUNERAL " ROBERT K O'CONNOR QC

Lord Horatio Nelson was hit by a shot from a sharpshooter with a musket while he was on the quarterdeck of the *Victory* at 1.30 pm on 21 October 1805. He was taken below, where it was soon realised that the shot would be fatal. At the time, all who died during sea battles, including senior officers, were thrown overboard, with no ceremony at all. Those who died after the battle were invariably given a brief service, weighted down, and tipped over the side of the ship. At the Battle of Trafalgar, Nelson was the only exception. Nearing death, Nelson whispered to Captain Thomas Hardy "Don't throw me overboard, Hardy", to which Hardy replied "Oh, no! Certainly not". Nelson died at 4.30 pm. Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood at first planned to get Nelson's body back to England as soon as possible on the *Euryalus*. However, the crew of the *Victory* were horrified and demanded to be allowed to bring Nelson's body back on his own flagship the *Victory*. Collingwood acceded to their wishes. Nelson's uniform jacket had already been removed before his death. Following his death, all his clothing except his long shirt was removed. Most of his hair and pigtail were cut off and were sent to Lady Emma Hamilton. The pigtail is now on display at the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth Surgeon Dr William Beatty had to decide how to get Nelson's body back to England without it decaying. There was no lead for a coffin, so a leaguer, the biggest cask on board, was used. Nelson's height, 5' 6", was the average for those days, and so the cask was of the right size. The cask was filled with brandy. Brandy's degree of strength, which governs its antiseptic quality, made it more appropriate than rum. Nelson was placed in the cask standing on his head. A Marine sentry stood guard over the cask day and night. The *Victory* took a week (21—28 October.) to travel from Cape Trafalgar to Gibraltar and during that period, the cask brandy was drained off and replenished once with a mixture of brandy and spirit of wine (which is surgical spirit) .*Victory* remained at Gibraltar from 29 October. to 2 November for partial re-fitting. From 3 November to 4 December. (just over a month), *Victory* carried Nelson's body from Gibraltar to St Helen's at Portsmouth, anchoring in the Solent channel. During that month, the cask liquor was replenished twice, becoming two-thirds brandy and one-third spirit of wine. At Portsmouth, a lead coffin was brought on board. Nelson's face was sketched by painter Arthur Devis who stayed on board for the trip to the Nore, during which time Devis did his famous painting 'The Death of Nelson'. On 11 December, the *Victory* sailed for the Nore at the Thames estuary. Dr Beatty noted the external state of Nelson's body: it had perfect preservation, without being

the smallest degree offensive. Beatty conducted the autopsy of the body, finding that all the offal organs were perfectly healthy and so small that they resembled those of a youth, rather than a 47 year old. Beatty found that the shot had passed through Nelson's spine and lodged in the muscles of his back, taking with it a considerable portion of gold lace, the lining of his epaulette, and a piece of his coat.



The *Victory* anchored west of Dover from 12 -16 December. While there, Nelson's body was wrapped in cotton vestments, and rolled from head to foot with bandages of cotton, resembling ancient embalming. The body was put in the lead coffin filled with brandy holding in solution—camphor and myrrh. The lead coffin was enclosed in a wooden one and placed in Nelson's cabin until 21 December. *Victory* sailed from the Dover area on 16 December, but bad weather prevented her from anchoring off the Nore until 22 December.

Upon reaching the Nore, another wooden coffin was used. This one had been made on the instructions of Nelson's friend Captain Ben Hallowell from the mainmast and iron of the *L 'Orient*, and Hallowell had presented it to Nelson after the Battle of the Nile. This elaborate piece of craftsmanship was the most elegant and superb ever seen in Europe. The covering was of fine black velvet with treble rows of double gilt nails, and it was all finely enriched with gold matt, enclosed and chased. When the body was taken from the lead coffin, it was witnessed by officers and Nelson's and Hardy's friends as being in an undecayed state. This was the last time Nelson's body was seen by human eyes, as it was then dressed and placed in the coffin made from the *L 'Orient* mast and then covered with the shrouding. On 23 December, Nelson's body was transferred to the yacht *Chatham*. On the yacht's way to Greenwich, all ships and vessels dipped their colours to half-mast, church bells tolled, and at the forts of Tilbury and Gravesend minute-guns fired in salute. On 27 December, the date for the funeral was set for 9 January. On 4 January, the Prince of Wales and other privileged persons attended at Greenwich to pay their respects. Nelson's coffin lay in state for three days 5-7 January in the Painted Hall at Greenwich. 15,000 people were admitted and filed past the coffin. When the doors were closed at the end of the three days, a long queue of members of the public was unable to gain admission.

Nelson's funeral was arranged and organised by the College of Arms and its heralds. On 8 January at 12.30 pm, Nelson's coffin was taken by slow march from the Painted Hall to the King's Stairs at Greenwich. There was a very large crowd, and many were hurt as they attempted to get a view of the coffin.

The procession and huge flotilla of barges and boats, the like of which has never been seen before or since, commenced its 21 km trip from Greenwich up the River Thames to the Whitehall Stairs in central London. Tens of thousands of people had arrived before sunrise to take up positions along the Thames to witness the spectacle of the procession. There was a stiff wind which was biting and bitterly cold. The oarsmen rowing in the barges and boats struggled to make headway. The principal convoy of barges numbered 17. Nelson's coffin was on the third barge, which had originally belonged to King Charles II. The coffin was covered in black velvet, the top was adorned in black plumes, and in the centre there were four shields of Nelson's coat of arms.

Three banner rolls bearing the lineage of Nelson's family were fixed on either side of the barge. The fourth official mourning barge carried the official mourner, 84 year old Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Peter Parker, who as Commander-in-Chief in the West Indies, had first taken young Lt Nelson on his flagship the *Bristol* in 1778.

This barge also carried many assistant mourners and supporters including Captain Hardy. Lady Emma Hamilton did not take part. As the procession passed the Tower of London, the Tower's great guns fired at minute intervals from the wharf, and were answered by the gunboats escorting the procession.

In the strong winds, it took the procession three hours to reach opposite the Whitehall Stairs, arriving at 3.30 pm. Difficulties were experienced as the barges manoeuvred to disembark people and the coffin. There was a huge wind gust and a squall of rain as the coffin was transferred from the barge to the hearse. Only the coffin and associated mourners landed at the Whitehall Stairs, the others disembarking at the Palace Yard Stairs. The coffin was held overnight in the Captain's Room at Admiralty House.

The funeral took place the next day, 9 January. 1806, 80 days after Nelson had died, and today is exactly 205 years since that day. The funeral procession commenced forming up before daylight at three assembly areas. The funeral car, designed to resemble the *Victory*, left Admiralty House at noon, and made its way past Charing Cross, the Strand, Temple Bar, Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, to the western entrance of St Paul's Cathedral. The route was 2 km long and took two hours. There were well over 100 carriages in the procession. When the parading troops arrived at St Paul's at 2 pm, the last contingent had not even left Admiralty House. The marchers included over 4,000 Army personnel, numerous Admirals, 100 naval



captains, Greenwich pensioners, 48 seamen from the *Victory*, and Royal Marines. The crowd paid homage to Nelson in silence, except for the sound of men removing their hats. In its grandeur, the procession was indistinguishable from that for Royalty. I imagine that, in some ways, it would have been similar to the funeral procession for Diana, Princess of Wales in September 1997. At St Paul's, the cathedral doors had been opened at 7 am. A huge crowd had been waiting in the bitter cold to get in, and a number had been injured in the crush. On entry, they had six hours to wait for the head of the procession, and a further hour until the funeral car arrived.

In the cathedral, there was a large central light to which 130 lamps were attached. At 2 pm the coffin was carried through the western entrance by 12 seamen from the *Victory*. The organ and a choir of 100 men and boys boomed out: "*I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he who believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*"

The funeral service lasted for four hours. At 5.33 pm the coffin was lowered into the grave under the dome of St Paul's. At the burial, Nelson's male relatives, naval officers carrying Nelson's banners, and close family friends, gathered round.

They were joined by seamen from the *Victory* holding the tattered colours of *Victory* at Trafalgar.

Following prayers and hymns, the Trafalgar colours carried by *Victory's* seamen were supposed to be furled up and placed in the grave. However, a large part of the ensign was

ripped off and torn into smaller pieces which were quickly divided among the sailors as mementoes. Only what was left and the other flags were put into the grave. There was a low wail from the sailors who bore and encircled the remains of their Admiral.

The service concluded just before 6 pm. It was 9 pm before the cathedral was completely cleared. The inscription on Nelson's coffin listed Nelson's 13 titles and honours, and concluded: "After a series of transcendent and Heroic Services, this Gallant Admiral fell gloriously, in the moment of a brilliant and decisive victory over the Combined Fleets of France and Spain, off Cape Trafalgar, on the 21st of October 1805." The immortal memory of Nelson has been immeasurably enhanced by the two-month journey of his

body in a cask of brandy from Trafalgar to Greenwich, his laying in state for three days, the 21 km procession up the River Thames, his two-hour procession through the streets of London, the four-hour funeral service at St Paul's, and the sarcophagus marking his grave being on display under the dome of St Paul's for the past 205 years and for many centuries to come. Thank God Nelson was not thrown overboard, with or without a brief service, on the day he died on the *Victory*.

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I gratefully acknowledge that the information above comes from *The Trafalgar Companion*, by Mark Adkin, Epilogue, published in 2005 by Aurum Press

Robert K O'Connor QC



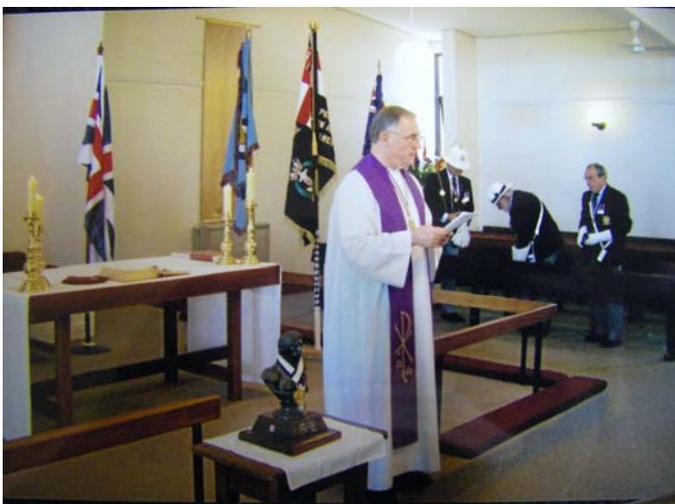
Rev Joe Newbold



The Blessing of the Nelson Plaque and the laying of the wreath in the Garden of St Michael's Church which followed the Commemoration Service.



Standard Bearer Graham Chapman reads the Royal Marine Prayer



Standard Bearers

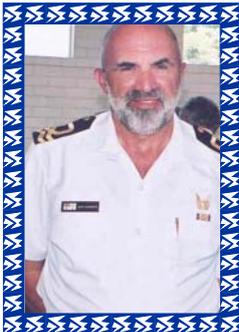


Mike Sargeant, John Lyall and Bob Woollett



20 January 2011  
*Presentation of the  
Midshipman's Dirk to  
Mid Rebecca Poultney ANC  
HMAS Creswell, Jervis Bay,  
by Vice Chairman Bob Woollett*

It is both a pleasure and an honour today for me to represent the Nelson Society of Australia at this inaugural award of the Midshipman's Dirk. The idea of making an award to an outstanding Navy Cadet Midshipman was originally conceived by one of our members, Lt John Ashworth, back in 2008.



An approach was made by his colleague Lt. Peter Veltcorp, to the Australian Defence Credit Union,

who generously agreed to assist with the purchase of a Midshipman's Dirk from Sword World Australasia and we extend a warm welcome to Annette Costrain and Jennifer Miller from the local branch of the Australian Defence Union. Both the Navy and the Nelson Society are very pleased you are able to join us on this occasion.

The Dirk was dedicated at the Nelson's Society Annual Trafalgar Memorial Service, held in St George's Cathedral in Perth on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2008 and was subsequently handed over to the Office of the National Commander of Naval Cadets to make the arrangements for the Award.

At this point it might be appropriate for me to say a few words about the Nelson Society of Australia. Based in Perth in Western Australia and now having some 60 members, it was formed in 2001 with the aim, like its counterpart in the United Kingdom, of studying and promoting the public awareness of the life and times of Admiral Lord Nelson.

Bi-monthly meetings are held throughout the year to hear talks about Nelson's career and achievements or a naval topic of general interest, but the main focus is on the weeks surrounding the 21<sup>st</sup> October, the Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, when the already mentioned Memorial Service takes place, a ceremony is arranged to present the Nelson 'Sword of Excellence' and a Pickle Night Dinner is held to celebrate the arrival in England in November 1805 of a ship of that name, bearing the news of the great victory.

A pamphlet giving further details of our activities is available on the table to the left, together with some copies of our recent newsletter, and you are very welcome to help yourself to these if you are interested.

Many qualities worthy of our attention and emulation

come to mind when we consider Nelson as an exemplary leader: his moral and physical courage; his ability to plan in the minutest detail; and his grasp of the strategic importance of a battle and his tactical mastery during it. But there are two other qualities exemplified by Nelson which I thought we might dwell on for a few moments and which I understand you were encouraged to bear in mind when making your nomination for the award of the Dirk, namely teamwork and mentor skills.

The first of these was the hallmark of what came to be known as 'The Nelson Touch' – his willingness to consult his fellow officers and involve them in his plans and decisions. This was graphically demonstrated prior to his victory at the Nile in 1798 when he held a meeting of his Captains on the eve of the battle to explain his daring scheme to attack from inshore the line of French ship's lying at anchor in the Bay of Aboukir.

And it featured even more notably in the lead up to Trafalgar when he again held a council of war, this time on HMS Victory, to ensure everybody's agreement and co-operation in his bold plan to attack the heart of the French and Spanish Fleets with two lines of ships crossing the enemy's course.

With regard to his skills as a mentor, Nelson took his responsibilities for those under his command very seriously and showed a particular interest in the training and instruction of the apprentice officers in his ship, the Midshipmen. He himself, of course, had joined the Navy as a Midshipman at the age of 12 and was always mindful of the encouragement and assistance he had received from his Captains, particularly from his uncle Maurice Suckling, on board the "Raisonnable" and from William Locker on the "Lowestoffe". Later, as Captain of the "Boreas" on passage to the West Indies he had no less than 30 Midshipmen under his command. A passenger on the ship at the time, Lady Hughes, was greatly impressed by the attention Nelson paid to the young men he called his children and she later wrote he would ask nothing of them he would not do himself.

On one occasion a Midshipman was showing some anxiety about going aloft. "Well, sir," said Nelson to him, "I am going to race to the mast head and I beg I may meet you there". This duly happened and the young man was congratulated and given a cheerful greeting at the top of the mast by his captain who had arrived there just before him.

Two of Nelson's protégés as Midshipmen, later served with him as Officers. In 1801 Edward Parker was in the attack on Boulogne on the French coast, when he suffered an injury from which he later died. Nelson was distraught –if he had been Parker's own father, he said, he could not have suffered more and at the funeral he was seen leaning against tree weeping copiously. Nelson requested a lock of the young man's hair be cut so that it might be buried with him when he died, a wish that was fulfilled five years later when he was entombed in St Paul's Cathedral in London.

A second protégé, William Hoste, was responsible for initiating a well known mark of gratitude to his benefactor. After promotion to Lieutenant he served with Nelson at Tenerife, St Vincent and the Nile, and subsequently in 1811, as Captain of the "Amphion" he inflicted a decisive defeat on the French at the Battle of Lissa in the Adriatic. This was a victory inspired by a signal which in the annals of naval communication, ranks close to Nelson's own message at Trafalgar that "England Expects that Everyman will do his Duty".

The 16 coloured flags which flew aloft on the halyards of "Amphion" on that occasion simply spelt out the words "Remember Nelson", an injunction which animated his own crew and that of the accompanying ships and which has been an inspiration for the Royal and Royal Australian Navies down to this day. And I suggest it can do the same for all of us gathered here today.

And so it is with great pleasure that I present the Midshipman's Dirk for 2011 to Midshipman **Rebecca Poultney** who has so fully demonstrated her leadership, teamwork and mentoring skills on the 2011 Graduation Course.

Heartiest congratulations to you, Rebecca, from the

Nelson Society of Australia and our best wishes for the future both in the ANC and in your chosen career. Nelson would have been impressed and very proud of you, as I'm sure he would have been of all the fellow members of your course here today.



The  
First Winner  
of the  
Midshipman's Dirk  
2011  
Rebecca Poultney.  
Presented by  
Bob Woollett  
Vice Chairman  
of the  
Nelson Society of  
Australia. Inc



*The Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel  
The Rocks, Sydney*

On his way to Jervis Bay to present the Midshipman's Dirk at HMS Cresswell in January our Vice Chairman was fortunate enough to be the guest for the night at the Lord Nelson's Hotel in the Rocks in Sydney.

To add to the interesting display of pictures and other items of Nelson memorabilia which adorn the walls of the Hotel, the owner, Blair Hayden, was presented with the Society's No 300 Bottle of Nelson's Port, suitably inscribed and housed in a skilfully crafted wooden case by John Caskey. He was also given a Commemorative Nelson Medallion and a copy of Colin White's *The Nelson Encyclopaedia*. Judging by the crowded bar throughout the afternoon and evening 'The Lord Nelson' is clearly a popular watering hole for both locals and visitors and the Brewery situated alongside produces no less than nine varieties of ale, ranging from *Victory Bitter* to the latest version of *Nelson's Blood*, known as 'Annihilation'. Arrangements are underway for the Society to acquire a case of 'Three Sheets Ale' for refreshments at General Meetings or for use as Raffle Prizes.



# *Sister Susannah (Maud Mary) Nelson*

*Talk given by Betty Foster on 14th February 2011 at the Nelson Society Meeting*

In 1901 a vessel the 'Australia' steamed into Fremantle from London and amongst the passengers were three remarkable English women, members of the Anglo-Catholic Order of nuns begun by one Emily Ayckbowm and formed out of the Oxford Movement. The Sisters had come to Western Australia to set up a school here in Perth, known today as Perth College in Mt Lawley.

You may all be wondering what is the connection between these Sisters and the Nelson Society?

Well, one of these three woman, a Sister Susannah, was formerly known as Maud Mary Nelson, and was Admiral Lord Nelson's great great niece. She will be the subject of our short talk this evening.

As Maud's personality develops in this talk watch for the many similarities with her great great Uncle Admiral Lord Nelson.

Her great grandmother was Nelson's sister Susannah. She married Thomas Bolton and changed his name from Bolton to Nelson by deed poll in the months before he died in

1834, enabling his first born son Thomas to inherit Lord Nelson's title and become the second Lord Nelson of Trafalgar and Merton. He then died within the year and his twelve year old son Horatio became the third Earl. Thomas had changed the surname of Horatio and two of his other sons to Nelson, so they could inherit the title if required. Through Horatio the title has passed down to the current tenth Earl who was born in 1971.

The third son of Thomas and Frances Eyre was Rear Admiral Honourable Maurice Horatio Nelson who married Emily Burrard and had seven children. His eldest daughter was Maud Mary (May). His eldest son was Captain Maurice Henry Horatio Nelson so the names of their forebear and the connection with the Navy have continued down the generations.

In the archives of Perth College is a letter from Maud's youngest sister Alice who lived into her nineties. After her sister had died, she wrote to Perth College giving them an insight into their childhood.

Maud Mary was born in 1865 in the house of her grandparent's Frances and Thomas Nelson in Burnham Market, Lincolnshire. It was her great grandfather who took care of Lord Nelson's daughter Horatia after her mother Emma died. She stayed with him and his family until her marriage in 1823 to Philip Ward who was the curate of Burnham Westgate church.

In 1878 Maud's family moved to an isolated house deep in the countryside which helped to form her great love of the

outdoors. Alice recalls in her letter "We called her May and she was adventurous, courageous and high spirited, our old nurse called her a tom boy and declared she was' too free with her hands by half'. We had had a governess for us girls and May passed her Oxford and Cambridge local examinations both junior and senior with Honours.

When my brother passed into the Navy, May bitterly regretted that she could not follow the same calling. She loved the sea and her favourite books were Captain Marriott's stories and other tales of adventure. She was a voracious reader."

Alice writes of May's love of animals, she had a pet donkey in which she drove around in a small cart to visit the old and sick in the village, doing so at a very early age. She was not a social person but played a good game of cricket, famous for her hard hitting and reckless technique.

As a mature woman she decided to go to the Orphanage of Mercy at Kilburn in London to test her vocation to the religious life. Taking her final vows as a Sister of Charity she took her grandmother's name Susannah and later became Mistress at Kilburn Orphanage.

Alice finishes the letter: "I have written only of the merest externals but looking back I see how single minded she was — how at every stage of her life she used the opportunities for service which was available. How, in her quiet home life her unselfish, humble character endeared her to all who knew her".

A year after her arrival in Perth, the robust and capable Sister Susannah was sent to Kalgoorlie for a stay of 12 years. She wrote about that time.

"So it came to pass that on January 29th 1903 I found myself sitting in the small uncomfortable carriage with Sister Jane in the 'Goldfields Express' of those days, making our way up to the distant Golden City, Sister Jane had just arrived from England so she was even less used to the climate of Western Australia than the rest of us for we had already had a year's experience. Certainly this was a hot journey, we had never experienced anything like it. As the train dragged along over the interminable scrubby wastes, the sun was higher, we felt as if we were gasping for breath, Sister Jane begged me to open the window, near me, but when she felt the hot blast, as of a furnace, she



*speedily closed the window.”*

When the school in Kalgoorlie opened she was well prepared for the job as Sister Susannah already had a teaching diploma and many certificates and by the end of the year they had 63 pupils.

Sister Kate had to live in a house with no floor or windows and outside stood a large tent for cooking. Kalgoorlie weather was volatile and on one occasion the wind blew down the tent during a Church Service. Their dinner had to be rescued from the tram lines.

In extracts from a history of Perth College *“Built on Faith”* by Catherine May, the author comments that ‘fortunately if anyone was suited to such a mission it must surely have been Sister Susannah’.

The physical environment was harsh and accommodation primitive but she was a born handywoman, digging holes, planting trees, doing carpentry odd jobs and clearing rocks and stones in the school yard. Well wishers finally put a floor and windows in the house.

In 1917 she came back to Perth to teach at Cowandilla School in Mount Street, the former home of our first female Parliamentarian Dame Edith Cowan and later at Perth College where she was on the staff of the Junior and Intermediate school. She is remembered as a ‘law unto herself’ in the favourable sense.

As a teacher she had a quick temper and was well known for letting fly with a piece of chalk, a book or duster if her patience gave way. The girls took Sister Susannah missile attacks in their stride.

She was universally regarded as a kind and genuine person. She was remembered as the tall, lanky, down to earth and highly physical sister who happily kicked the netball back over the fence whereas others would have handed it demurely.

Large boots protruding from the bottom branch of a tree meant Sister was pruning. Her boots were famous partly because they were clodhoppers and partly because Sister would sole them with old motor tyres.

Everyone knew that Sister Susannah was connected with the Nelson family and that her relatives were also nautical. Her nephew was an officer on HMS ‘Hood’ and during the visit of the fleet to Fremantle, Sister Susannah took a group of girls to see over the battle ship and other ships including the ‘Repulse’.

When a film on Nelson’s family was showing in the early days of pictures, Sister Susannah had special dispensation to attend with some girls. Those with her recalled that as soon as the feature started she excitedly recognised various relatives. This was the only time a Sister of the Order can be remembered going to the pictures.

An old girl Nancy Dunbar remembers Sister as an occasional play producer *“She was a wonderful person*

*with an amazing sense of humour and one of the highlights of the school year was one of her break-ups. She had ideas of producing a dramatic performance with middle school children She generally did something like the Crusades, a spontaneous thing she whipped up on the spot. She’d collect some odds and ends of equipment like a star, a lantern and a banner and would get the children all behind the scenes and the school would assemble in the Studio and the performance would begin. Well, from the moment the first words were spoken, the whole assembly rocked with laughter. It was so funny because she got exasperated with the cast and would rush on to stage dragging off one victim and putting another and shouting ‘You can’t do that’ or ‘put that there’ or ‘that’s no good’ or ‘get out of there’ and this went on the entire performance.*

*It was very much off the cuff and we used to look forward to the dramatic performances of Sister Susannah and she herself, after all the exasperation would end up in shrieks of laughter. She was an amazing person”*

Some girls felt there was more to Sister Susanna than met the eye ‘I always felt I missed something by not getting to know her’ Nancy Russel recalls. ‘She had personality.’

Sister Susanna taught up to the last week before she died on 13th July 1943. She lived a long life of 77 years and is buried in Karrakatta cemetery along side Sister Jane and other Anglican Sisters, one of whom, Sister Kate, founded a orphanage in Parkerville.

The students of Perth College were evacuated to that orphanage in World War 11 as the Army took over their school. Parkerville was the last teaching post of Sister Susannah.

Her obituary in the ‘West Australian Church Times’ said of her: *“Sister Susanna was greatly beloved by all her knew her and has served her church and her fellow man and woman with devotion throughout her long life. She was known and loved by every generation of Perth College girls all of whom will remember with gratitude her influence on them for good especially when they were but Juniors in their school.*

*There was an indefinable charm and graciousness about her*



*due to her early training as a member of one of England’s highest and most notable families. She was a daughter of Rear Admiral Nelson and was a descendant of the branch of the Nelson family which succeeded to the title after the death of Lord Nelson.*

*Well done good and faithful servant. “*

After the war two small golden angels were placed one on either side of the altar of the chapel at Perth College in her memory.

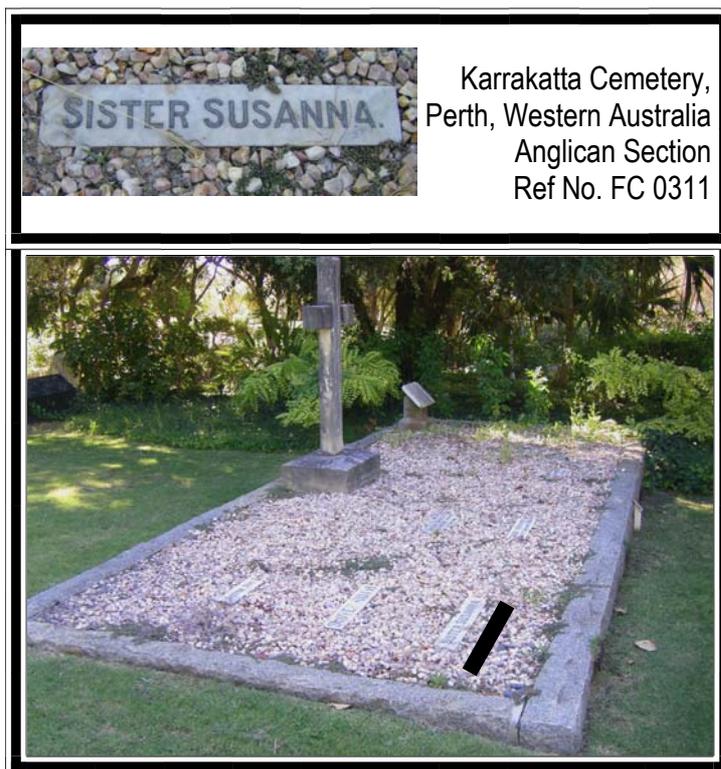
She is remembered as a remarkable woman and a fine representative of the Nelson Family. Her great uncle would have been very proud of her achievements.

To give you all a bonus at the end of this talk I would now like to introduce you to my friend Bee Hannerman who first told me about Sister Susannah's connection with Admiral Nelson and who was actually taught by her at Perth College in the early thirties.

Bee kindly arranged for Perth College historian, Patricia Montgomery, to provide me with all the information for this talk.

Another piece of information which came to light was that Sister's Susannah's grand niece sailed her boat to Dunkirk to rescue soldiers.

The bravery of their illustrious ancestor lives on in the family.

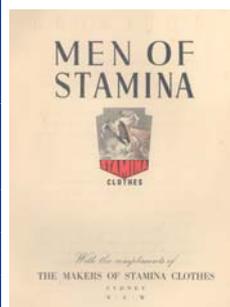


Karrakatta Cemetery,  
Perth, Western Australia  
Anglican Section  
Ref No. FC 0311

## *Sister Susannah's Family Tree*

### The Reverend Edmond Nelson m Catherine Suckling

1 Edmund Nelson	1750	ni	
2. Horatio Nelson	1751	ni	
3. Maurice Nelson	1753-1801	age 48	ni
<b>4. Susannah Nelson</b>	<b>1755-1813</b>	<b>age 58</b>	<b>m Thomas Bolton 1752-1834</b>
<b>1. Thomas Nelson (Bolton)</b>	<b>1785-1835</b>		<b>m Frances Eyre 2nd Earl Nelson</b>
1. Horatio <b>Nelson</b> (Bolton), Trafalgar	1823-1913	age 90	<b>3rd Earl Nelson</b>
2. Reverend Hon John Horatio <b>Nelson</b> (Bolton)	1825-1917	age 91	
3. Frances Catherine Bolton	1827-1877	age 50	m. J Petteward
4. Susannah Bolton	1829-1900	age 73	m. A Blunt
<b>5. Rear-Adm. Hon. Maurice Horatio Nelson (Bolton)</b>	<b>1832-1914</b>	<b>age 82</b>	<b>m Emily Burrard</b>
1. Captain Maurice Henry Horatio Nelson	1864-1942	age 78	
<b>2. Maud Mary Nelson</b>	<b>1865-1943</b>	age 77	ni
3. Reverend Edward John Nelson	1867- 1940	age 73	
4. Charles Burrard Nelson	1868-1931	age 63	
5. Emily Frances Nelson	1870-1961	age 91	ni m. McCausland
6. Horatio William Nelson	1871-1910	age 39	
7. Alice Nelson	1876-	age 90+	ni alive 1966
6. Reverend Edward Foyle Bolton	1833-1859	age 25	ni
7. Henry Bolton	1835-1863	age 28	ni
5. William Nelson	1757-1835	age 78	ni m S Yonge 1st Earl Nelson
<b>6. Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson</b>	<b>1758-1805</b>	<b>age 47</b>	<b>m Frances Woolward</b>
1. Horatio Nelson	1800-1880	age 80	m Rev. Philip Ward
Emma Hamilton nee Lyon mother of Horatio	1765-1815	age 50	
7. Anne Nelson	1760-1784	age 24	
8. Edmund Nelson	1762-1813	age 51	ni
9. Suckling Nelson	1764-1797	age 33	ni
10. George Nelson	1765-1766	age 1	ni
11. Catherine Nelson	1767-1842	age 75	m George Matcham



## 'Men of Stamina'

In editing this newsletter I am always on the look out for the unusual and recently found a little gem of a book hidden in my library. It was printed by the Australian 'Stamina' clothing company during WW2 to boost the morale of the ordinary person and as a source of inspiration to all who read its pages.

Included in their list of great "Men of Stamina " was Admiral Lord Nelson.

### Foreword

To make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, to increase the world's store of good things, to raise the standard of living for all men the world over, is a great achievement.

To establish in the minds of men, by just living amongst them, the principles of justice, truth and freedom-that, too, is a great and noble aim. But to live in such a fashion that men and women are moved from a life of selfishness to one of selfless service that is to achieve.

A study of the world's great people makes it clear that they, one and all, gave freely and generously of their best, not for private gain, but for the common good. Greatness is not the private preserve of the soldier or the statesman. The scientist, the man of business, the artisan, the teacher, the agriculturist, are equally great if they gladly give of their best in the spirit of service.

The world's great people have been those who have possessed, besides remarkable ability, the spirit of endurance. They have not been discouraged by mounting difficulties and shaking defeats. They have always produced that extra something which has been able to turn disaster into victory. They stuck to it and it was this invincible staying power which won in the long run.

The Pinnacle of Mankind is not reached by spending our days in a round of idleness and self indulgence. Rather, we achieve in proportion as we eagerly and gladly toil and strain after our ideals.

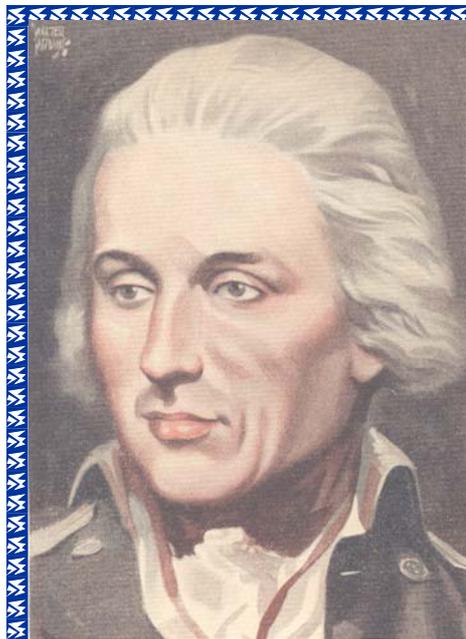
## Horatio Nelson

The spirit of this frail lad, Horatio Nelson who, by his bravery, stamina and tact, rose to the very pinnacle of naval fame, is one of the inspirations of our race. This son of a clergyman is considered to be the greatest sailor of all time. His men loved him, for he treated them as men.

Fighting fearlessly for England, he lost his right eye, then his right arm, but nothing could daunt him.

At Trafalgar he finally crushed the sea-power of his country's enemies: Nelson's last message to his men was: "*England expects that every man will do his duty*".

The artist, Walter Jardine, who painted Nelson, also freely painted all the other people in the book.



### Stupid History Calendar by Leland Gregory No 1

In 1801 Captain Horatio Nelson of the British Navy was engaged in attacking French troops in Copenhagen Denmark. Nelson knew he was being signalled to retreat but he didn't want to, so he picked up a telescope to verify the signal for himself. But Nelson, who was blind in one eye, purposely held the telescope to his sightless eye and said truthfully that he "couldn't see" any signal of retreat. Nelson continued his attack and won.

This event left us with a phrase that means to *ignore something* and is still used today to *turn a blind eye*.

## Nelson, Napoleon and Wellington

Part 2 of the talk Given by Mike Sargeant at the Maritime Museum in October 2010

Commenting after Trafalgar, Villeneuve paid tribute to Nelson and the British fleet, saying that, *"to any other Nation the loss of a Nelson would have been irreparable, but in the British Fleet off Cadiz, every Captain was a Nelson."* However, perhaps the ultimate compliment was to come from none other than Napoleon himself, when he told Captain Maitland of *Bellerophon* after his surrender in July 1815, *"If it had not been for you English, I should have been Emperor of the East; but wherever there is water to float a ship, we are sure to find you in our way."* He was also heard to complain on a later occasion that *"In all my plans I have always been thwarted by the British fleet"*.

Trafalgar was the culmination of an entirely new philosophy of British naval warfare that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century – complete naval domination through use of the blockade and the total destruction of the enemy when brought to battle – and Horatio Nelson was the chief architect of this new philosophy. He changed the way that the British public defined a naval victory; no longer were they to be content with the capture of a few ships - the enemy must be annihilated.

While Nelson's victory at the Nile curbed Napoleon's ambitions for the expansion of French interests to India and beyond, his even more significant victory at Trafalgar was to put Napoleon's oriental ambitions beyond reach for all time, and although it didn't win the war for Britain, it scotched any further thought of invasion and made an important contribution to Napoleon's ultimate defeat at Waterloo ten years later, as well as to a hundred years of peace in Europe. Significantly, it came at an opportune time for Britain's burgeoning economy; victory at Trafalgar increased Britain's maritime dominance, accelerating her economic and political development, establishing unchallenged spheres of influence in every corner of the globe, and encouraging a rapid expansion of trade and the creation of the largest empire the world has ever seen.

However, Britain wasn't the only nation in pursuit of an empire - the second of my subjects tonight – Napoleon Bonaparte - also had imperial ambitions.

In addition to being a military genius, Napoleon was a politician and administrator of some note, although his legacy is somewhat complicated, depending upon whether you're French or not!

He first came to public attention in 1793 when, as a young captain of artillery, he was seconded to the Republican army besieging the royalist forces in Toulon. He was instrumental in reducing the siege within three months, and his grasp of military strategy so impressed his seniors that, after the fall of Toulon to the Republicans in December 1793, he was promoted to brigadier-general.

Although the Revolutionary War started as a defensive war as France sought to stave off foreign intervention in her internal affairs, it quickly became a war of territorial acquisition once Napoleon reached a position of authority. His first taste of overall command was to set the pattern; the Italian campaign that

began in 1796 was initially conceived to defeat Austria and destroy the First Coalition - and these objectives were quickly achieved - but by the time the campaign finished in April 1797, Napoleon had established himself as a sort of proconsul over all of Northern Italy, reorganising the civil administration of the conquered territories and exacting tribute through heavy taxation and the systematic confiscation of Italian art treasures, for the benefit of himself and his family as well as the French government.

He managed to accomplish all of this without the authority of, or even reference to, the Directory back in Paris, who nevertheless publicly acquiesced to his audacity while quietly pocketing the loot! Alas, pillaging was to become one of the hallmarks of all Napoleon's campaigns and a necessary component of the financing of his many wars.

At the same time the Directory was placed on notice that the young Corsican major-general's ambition knew no bounds and they could either accommodate him or deny him at their peril. In the end it didn't matter because in August 1799, Napoleon took matters into his own hands when he escaped from Alexandria, which was still under blockade following the defeat of the French fleet at the battle of the Nile a year earlier. He reached Paris in November, mounting a *coup d'état* with the help of his brother Lucien, and the Brumaire coup, as it came to be known, established the Consulate, a triumvirate of which Napoleon was appointed First Consul.

During the four and a half years of the Consulate's existence, Napoleon consolidated power by systematically eliminating his political enemies - and a failed assassination attempt in December 1800 only strengthened his resolve.

A pragmatist and strong believer in orderly government, he also reorganised the civil administration of France, introducing the Civil Code (later to be named the '*Code Napoleon*' following his translation to Emperor) and negotiating the Concordat, an agreement between the Vatican and Paris that restored Catholicism as the dominant religion of France, but significantly, specifically precluded church interference in matters of state.

On the military front, a series of treaties in 1801 and '02 established a temporary peace in Europe, including the Peace of Amiens in March 1802, which brought a short-lived peace between France and Britain; it appeared that war was finally over and a collective sigh of relief was heard right across Europe – but not for long; Napoleon had merely paused to regain his breath while he planned his biggest campaign to date - the invasion of England - and war with Britain resumed in May 1803.

By 1804 he was the undisputed ruler of France and in December he crowned himself Emperor of the French, although the achievement of his ultimate goal had not slaked his thirst for war – if anything it had only whetted his appetite.



In August 1805, Napoleon was forced to abandon his plans for the invasion of England in the face of a growing threat from the east, a threat that was an obvious response to a series of intimidatory actions that included having himself crowned King of Italy and invading German territory, all of which appear to have been designed to provoke war. If so they were successful and in October 1805, while Nelson was busy destroying the Combined fleet at Trafalgar, Napoleon defeated the Austrians at Ulm and occupied Vienna in November; then on 2 December he won a brilliant victory over the combined Russian and Austrian forces at Austerlitz. A few months later the French seized Naples and Napoleon installed his brother Joseph on the Neapolitan throne.

In October 1806, Prussia declared war on France but was severely repulsed in a series of battles, the most significant of which were Jena and Auerstadt. The French occupied Berlin and then forged eastwards, defeating the Russians at Eylau in February 1807, Danzig in May and Friedland in June, leading to the Treaty of Tilsit in July 1807 and the cessation of hostilities for the time being. However, Tilsit may have brought

peace but it also brought a smouldering resentment, particularly as the recently imposed Continental System began to take hold.

In fact it was the Continental System that led Napoleon into his first serious miscalculation. Infuriated that Portugal, a sovereign state, was still openly trading with Britain, he decided to annexe Portugal using Spain as a stepping stone, and Lisbon was captured in November 1807. Then in May 1808 he forced the abdication of the Spanish king and installed his brother Joseph on the Spanish throne, but Spain had never been an enthusiastic ally and this usurpation of her sovereignty led to widespread riots which, together with the occupation of Portugal, gave Britain the opening it had been waiting 15 years for.

On 1 August 1808, Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley landed with an expeditionary army and within three weeks had forced the temporary expulsion of all French troops from Portugal. The Peninsula war was to continue for almost six years, ending with the battle of Toulouse in April 1814; it cost 250,000 French lives and even Napoleon himself, when in exile, was to question why he'd become entangled in such a pointless war that diverted resources from the main front in eastern Europe. Moreover, early British successes in the Peninsula War encouraged the Austrians to again declare war on France in April 1809, although a series of swift French victories led to the re-occupation of Vienna in May, and the battle of Wagram in July followed by the Treaty of Vienna in October 1809, brought relative peace to northern Europe for a further three years.

The French hold on Europe had reached its zenith, with French influence stretching all the way from Paris to Moscow and from Sweden to Italy, the '*Code Napoleon*' extending to all states under direct French control and the Continental System expanding to include all of France's allies.

The Emperor now turned his attention to the problem of the succession since his marriage had failed to produce an heir, although his many affairs and liaisons had produced a string of illegitimate children.

Napoleon had contemplated divorce on previous occasions, most notably in 1799 after he learned that his wife, Josephine, had

cuckolded him while he was marooned in Egypt, but he'd been dissuaded on the grounds that it would be bad for his future prospects. Now however, important issues of state were at stake. and in January 1810 the divorce was announced. Napoleon immediately sought a new bride, settling on the much younger Archduchess Marie-Louise of Austria; they were married in April 1810 and in the following March she presented him with a son - whom he immediately proclaimed King of Rome.

Meanwhile, the fragile peace with Russia was disintegrating under the weight of the Continental System and in June 1812, Napoleon made his second serious miscalculation - he invaded Russia with an army of more than 600,000 men. Initially, the campaign went well as the Russians retreated and on September 15, Napoleon entered Moscow at the head of a victorious army - or so he thought - but Moscow had been evacuated and the retreating Russians had set fire to the city.

Napoleon now found himself in an extremely vulnerable position and was forced to contemplate his own retreat. The Russian campaign was a classic case of imperial over-reach, with his lines of communication stretching back over thousands of kilometres. During previous campaigns the French army had always managed to live off the land, foraging for supplies in the conquered territories, and that was fine when they were fighting in Europe, but this time it was different - the Russians had adopted a scorched earth policy and had left little behind. To add to his difficulties the winter of 1812/13 came early and was to be a particularly nasty one - and the Russians have an old saying that their best generals are called January and February!

The French retreat from Moscow began in mid-October in rapidly worsening weather, bogged down in snow and ice and short of supplies, and as if hunger and the severe cold weren't enough, they were constantly attacked by bands of marauding Cossacks. By the time they'd managed to struggle back to eastern Prussia at the end of December, less than 40,000 of the original 600,000 remained - the rest had either been killed or captured.

Napoleon's defeat gave heart to Austria and Prussia who once more took up arms, joining with the advancing Russians to attack from the east, while Wellesley, now Lord Wellington, was advancing into south-western France. Napoleon struggled to raise another army and conscription of the 1814 cohort was brought forward by a year, but conscription had always been extremely unpopular and public opinion was turning against him. The French were growing tired of Napoleon and his wars; the country was almost bankrupt again and the flower of its youth had wilted in Spain and Russia.

In October 1813, the combined armies of Russia, Austria and Prussia defeated Napoleon at Leipzig, and French forces in Holland and Belgium surrendered as the allied forces advanced upon Paris; nevertheless Napoleon managed to delay their entry into the capital until March of the following year, but the allies finally forced his abdication on 11 April 1814 in favour of a new Bourbon king, Louis XVIII. Two days later



Napoleon tried to poison himself but the attempt failed and following his recovery he was exiled to the Mediterranean island of Elba where he arrived on 4 May - although it wasn't to last long because ten months later he escaped, landing at Cannes on 1 March 1815 with several hundred men. Despite his extreme unpopularity at the time of his exile, he still had a considerable following within the military, and in the face of mass defections and crumbling resistance from the royalist forces, he made a triumphant re-entry into Paris three weeks later at the head of an army of thousands, by which time Louis XVIII had fled.

Reinstated as Emperor, Napoleon announced that he was finished with war and wished only to consolidate the status quo, but the Allies didn't trust him and he was declared an international outlaw. The final showdown came on 18 June 1815 when the two sides met at Waterloo and by nightfall Napoleon had suffered his final defeat. On 15 July 1815 he surrendered to the Allies and boarded HMS *Bellerophon* for the voyage to England where he appealed to the Prince Regent to be allowed to remain, but the British Government was not about to repeat the earlier mistake and he was banished to St Helena in the middle of the South Atlantic.

This time there was to be no escape and he died on St Helena on 5 May 1821 at the age of 51. The official cause of death, stomach cancer, is still the subject of much controversy; however as with the assassination of JFK, conspiracy theories abound. The most popular is that he was poisoned by one of his staff, and certainly chemical analysis of his hair shows that he had very high concentrations of arsenic in his body, consistent with the administration of frequent small doses of the poison, although another theory propounds that the wallpaper was the culprit since arsenic was used extensively in the manufacture of the green wallpaper that was very fashionable at the time, and from which small amounts of the compound leached continuously into the surrounding air. Be that as it may, nobody has managed to pin it on the Brits - so if he was nobbled, it must have been a Frenchie wot dunnit!

Of course to much of modern France, Napoleon remains a great hero, although the rest of Europe probably takes the more jaundiced view that he was a tyrant who brought misery and death to millions. That was also the opinion held by most of his countrymen at the time of his final abdication in 1815, which brought widespread relief to France - but the historical revisionists beavered away *post mortem* and less than twenty years after his death, Napoleon's remains were returned in triumph to Paris where they were re-interred in a magnificent sarcophagus in the chapel of Les Invalides.

In the end it took two men to orchestrate Napoleon's downfall; Nelson was of course one - the other being the third of my subjects for tonight - The Iron Duke.

Arthur Wellesley was born in Dublin in May 1769 (which makes him a few months older than Napoleon), the third son of a relatively impoverished Irish peer, Lord Mornington. He entered the army at the age of 18 and by the age of 24, having purchased two commissions, the first as Major and the second as Lieutenant Colonel, he found himself Commanding Officer of the Thirty-third Regiment. Early in 1797 he was sent to India where his elder brother Richard, was Viceroy. He served with distinction in the Second Mahratta War, achieving a notable victory at the battle of Assaye, and by the time he returned to England in 1805 as MajorGeneral Sir Arthur Wellesley, he'd gained something of a reputation as a successful general. He married his long-time

sweetheart, Kitty Pakenham, in April 1806, but although it endured until her death in 1831 it wasn't to be a particularly happy marriage. He also entered Parliament - as the Tory member for Rye in East Sussex - and in 1807 he was appointed a Privy Councillor and Secretary for Ireland, as well as serving in an unofficial capacity as a military adviser to the Government. Following the French occupation of Lisbon in 1807 and the annexation of Spain the following May, Wellesley landed at Mondego Bay north of Lisbon on 1 August 1808 in command of an expeditionary army and achieved immediate success at the battle of Vimeiro. Under the terms of the subsequent Convention of Cintra the French withdrew all their forces from Portugal, but the withdrawal was to be temporary; within a few months the French were back and the campaign continued on both sides of the border.

Following a significant victory over the French at the battle of Talavera in Spain at the end of July 1809, Wellesley was created Viscount Wellington and, with an uncharacteristic flourish for such an essentially modest man, he added a postscript to the first letter that he wrote as Lord Wellington, "*This is the first time I have signed my new name!*"

He achieved further military successes at Busaco, Fuentes de Onoro and Albuera, but possibly his greatest claim to fame in Portugal was his proposal for the establishment of a system of forts to defend Lisbon that came to be known as the "Lines of Torres Vedra", and which proved to be very successful in protecting the capital during the four years that it took to drive the French out of Portugal for good.

The Peninsula War finally moved out of Portugal in April 1812 with the capture of the frontier fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, followed shortly afterwards by victory at the battle of Salamanca and a triumphant entry to Madrid in August. Salamanca was to prove the turning point in the Peninsula War as Napoleon progressively withdrew his forces from Spain in support of the Russian Campaign, and following their defeat at the battle of Vitoria in June 1813 - after which Wellington was promoted to Field-Marshal - the French withdrew to the border fortresses of San Sebastian and Pamplona.

San Sebastian fell in September, followed by the surrender of Pamplona at the end of October and the campaign moved into south-western France. Victory over Marshal Soult at the battle of Toulouse on 10 April 1814 brought an end to the Peninsula War and on the following day, Napoleon signed the Instrument of Abdication.

Wellington was advanced to the highest rank of the peerage as Duke of Wellington and received a Parliamentary grant of £400,000 to purchase a suitable estate. He was appointed British Ambassador to France and in February 1815, he represented the British Government at the Congress of Vienna, which had been set up to deliberate on the future of France, but the Congress was interrupted by the escape of Napoleon from Elba and the Allies quickly formed the Seventh Coalition, appointing Wellington as supreme commander of all allied forces.

The final reckoning came at the battle of Waterloo, which was preceded by a series of minor battles and skirmishes that began on 15 June with a French attack on the Prussians at Charleroi, followed by an attack on Wellington's army at Quatre Bras on the 16<sup>th</sup> and the Prussians again at Saint-Armand on the same day. Battle proper commenced just before noon on 18 June 1815 and by Wellington's own admission it was "*the nearest run*

thing you ever saw in your life". By late afternoon the situation was looking desperate and just before 6 o'clock he was heard to implore, "Give me night or give me Blucher!" His prayer was answered shortly afterwards and the late arrival of the Prussians under Field Marshal von Blucher turned the tide in favour of the Allies.

Wellington, as was his custom, was everywhere, supervising attack and counter-attack and generally inspiring his troops. Towards the end of the battle Wellington's second-in-command, Lord Uxbridge, was riding with the Duke when he was hit by grapeshot and exclaimed, "By God, sir, I've lost my leg", to which Wellington is reputed to have replied, "By God, sir, so you have!"

Fighting went on well into the evening and casualties were enormous with 25,000 French and 22,000 Allied dead and wounded. In marked contrast to Napoleon, to whom casualties seemed to be of little consequence, Wellington was reduced to tears on more than one occasion, remarking to a friend, Lady Shelley, many years later, "I always say that, next to a battle lost, the greatest misery is a battle gained".

Waterloo was to be his last battle; after the war he went back into politics serving as Tory Prime Minister for three years between January 1828 and November 1830, and it was as Prime Minister that he challenged Lord Winchilsea to a duel over a slanderous letter that Winchilsea had had published in the press. The duel took place, both fired wide, honour was satisfied and Wellington survived the first and last time that a serving British Prime Minister has fought a duel.

He was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army in 1827, resigning the post on at least two separate occasions, but holding the office for the last ten years of his life. He retired from politics in 1835 and thereafter served as an elder statesman and adviser to the young Queen Victoria, with whom he was a firm favourite.

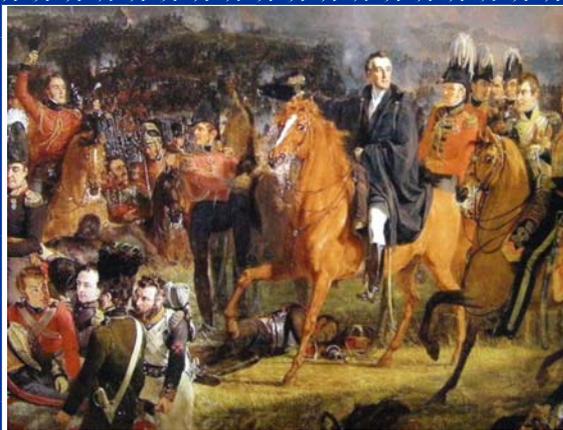
In January 1829 he'd been appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, a largely honorary post dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, and it was at Walmer Castle in Kent, the Lord Warden's official residence, that he died in September 1852, at the age of 83.

Although he'd suffered from a bad press at times, particularly during his parliamentary career, his death was universally mourned and he was thought by many to be the greatest Englishman to have ever lived - a fickle public having already forgotten Nelson!

He too was accorded a state funeral, another very grand affair, and fittingly he was buried in the crypt of St Paul's close by Nelson's tomb. The two men had actually met by chance in life - at the Colonial Office in September 1805, shortly after Wellington's return from India and a few days before Nelson sailed for Trafalgar. Not realising who Wellington was, Nelson began their discussion in a somewhat boastful and fatuous manner before suddenly excusing himself; when he returned a few moments later having discovered to whom he was speaking, his whole tone changed and they launched into an incisive discussion on war and politics that Wellington was to recall years later, observing that, "I don't know that I ever had a conversation that interested me more." By Wellington's own admission it was "the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life. Someone famously remarked that Wellington was the man to respect but Nelson was the man to love - although that didn't mean that 'the Duke' (as he was

universally known) was unpopular with the troops.

Granted he had a reputation for being a man of few words and was never guilty of being overly fulsome with his praise, yet he was extremely well regarded, especially amongst the ranks and particularly for his ability to inspire confidence.



The Duke of Wellington

On one occasion during the Peninsula War he had to sort out a particularly difficult situation and as he rode up he heard a soldier exclaim, "Here comes the bastard as knows how!" Wellington claimed it was the greatest compliment that he ever received!

As a general, Wellington was not so much a military genius as a thorough professional and he prepared meticulously for every battle. In common with Nelson he took great pains to ensure that his men were adequately fed and equipped -

in stark contrast to his opponent who, despite his oft-quoted dictum that "an army marches on its stomach", for the most part left his troops to fend for themselves. Wellington was also a stickler for strict discipline both on and off the battlefield but, thanks to Napoleon's predisposition to looting and pillaging, it was often a very different story with the French, although it has to be admitted that they were generally well disciplined in battle.

Both Nelson and Wellington were men with highly developed senses of duty to their country and obligation to those under their command. Napoleon on the other hand, always had an eye to the main chance and one gets the impression that for Napoleon it was Napoleon first and France (or the army) second - while their separate interests aligned as they often did, there were no problems, but when push came to shove, one soon learned not to stand between Napoleon and the door!

A good example was Napoleon's escape from Egypt in 1799; realising that the time was ripe to climb the political ladder, he had no qualms about deserting his army, leaving them marooned in Egypt in an extremely hostile environment. It caused huge resentment and the few who survived that bitter experience never forgave him.

Nevertheless, while there is little doubt that he was an inspiring leader and as a battlefield commander he probably has no equal, I believe that Napoleon's lasting legacy lies in the civil rather than the military sphere.

In the early years of the Revolution, France had struggled under a series of governments that could best be described as chaotic, and her financial system was little better. Napoleon brought stability and order after more than ten years of revolution by completely reforming the administration of France and introducing the rule of law with the 'Code Napoleon', which remains the basis of much French law today and indeed the legal systems of many of the European nations that came under Napoleonic rule. Most of these reforms were commenced during the Consulate and as First Consul, Napoleon could rightly claim to have saved the Revolution.

Nevertheless, his translation to Emperor in 1804 gave a large measure of truth to Lord Acton's later observation that "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" and therein, perhaps, lay the seeds of his ultimate downfall.

Nelson and Wellington were both honest men, particularly to themselves. Nelson was certainly a self-publicist, but while he may have occasionally varnished the truth, it was at least the truth that he embellished. Napoleon on the other hand, being one of the first dictators to recognise the value of propaganda, was a consummate manipulator of the truth, maintaining strict censorship of the press and frequently changing the facts to reflect greater credit upon himself or to destroy his political enemies. Nor was he above fixing the odd election with the help of his brother, Lucien, and between them the Bonaparte brothers could have taught the Chicago Democrats a thing or two about vote rigging!

Modern psychiatry would doubtless classify Napoleon as a psychopath. He paid scant regard to the huge number of casualties that resulted from his wars - for instance, the Peninsula War and the Russian campaign alone cost 650,000 lives, most of them French. Some estimates put the number of French deaths from all of his battles at around the one million mark and total deaths as high as three million. An incident from October 1795 perhaps illustrates the point: the young Brigadier-General Bonaparte was instrumental in quelling an attempt by royalist rebels to storm the Palais de Tuileries, the seat of the newly established Directory, in the process of which fourteen hundred rebels were mown down in the streets of Paris by the legendary "whiff of grapeshot" from his heavy artillery. Somewhat callously, Napoleon described the incident to his brother Joseph - "We killed a great many of them. They killed thirty of our men and wounded another sixty... Now all is quiet. As usual I did not receive a scratch. I could not be happier." As with all of the great autocrats in history, there was a significant element of ruthlessness to Napoleon that manifested itself not only in this heartless disregard for the lives and well-being of others, but also in a failure to recognise his own mistakes when things went wrong, often claiming to be the victim of others' shortcomings, which usually resulted in a search for scapegoats. As a tyrant he may not have been in the same league as say, Hitler, Stalin or Mao Tse Tung, but he was certainly of the same mould.

That he based his strategy on a unsustainable model was another factor in his downfall. Britain was the perennial enemy standing in the way of his ambition to rule Europe if not the world.

Despite fighting something of an indirect war until the Portuguese landings in 1808, Britain nevertheless remained the focus of resistance to Napoleon and a thorn in his side - after all she was fomenting discord and financing his enemies. Basically there were only two ways to force Britain out of the

war: the first was by strangling her trade and the second was by invasion - or a combination of both. Unfortunately for Napoleon both of these options required a powerful navy - which he didn't have. The French navy had rarely been a match for the Royal Navy and the Revolution had weakened it further by removing many of its best officers. Those who remained didn't lack for zeal or fighting

spirit, but they did lack experience - and the naval blockade only made a bad situation worse. On top of that, one of Napoleon's great failings as a political leader was his complete lack of understanding of the nature of warfare at sea and a refusal to listen to the advice of his admirals.

The Royal Navy's superiority, together with Britain's strong and stable government and sophisticated financial system, allowed her to keep the French at bay until an opportunity arose to intervene directly on the Continent, using the Royal Navy to contain both France's navy and French overseas

trade. In the end the British trade embargo and the Continental System brought France to its knees - the trade embargo because it gradually strangled French overseas trade and the Continental System because it was basically unenforceable, although probably its worst failing was that it caused huge resentment amongst France's allies, and it was almost certainly indirectly responsible for the pointless Peninsula War and the Russian Campaign. Napoleon wasn't the first commander in history to discover that it's very hard to fight a war on two fronts, and in the end he exhausted the goodwill of the French people - and their wealth as well! The Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars spanned 23 years; millions died and millions more suffered injury, misery and hardship, but it's paradoxical that war sometimes brings progress to society and in that sense at least, the wars represented the labour pains of modern Europe. Post-war France was unrecognisable compared to the pre-revolutionary version; by 1815 she was a constitutional monarchy, the church no longer participated in matters of state and she was probably further democratically advanced than even Britain.

Britain too had changed, not only because of the war but also thanks to the Industrial Revolution that was transforming her economy, and which she was able to export following the end of the war.

The course of the nineteenth century saw the consolidation of Germany and Italy into nation states, while at the beginning of the twentieth century, another war brought about the break-up of the Austrian and Ottoman empires and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Many of these changes were the direct or indirect consequences of the French Revolution and the subsequent Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.

Certainly there were other major players on the European stage at the time, but these three historical giants - Nelson, Napoleon and Wellington - who between them had such an enormous impact on the future of Europe, have captured history's imagination.

By the same token it's also worth remembering that had it not been for the French Revolution and the wars that followed, they would almost certainly have remained historical non-entities. Such is the fickle finger of Fate!



Napoleon's retreat from Moscow

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Richard Savage (Chair), Ron Ingham, John Caskey,  
John Ashworth and Mike Sargeant.

#### Bell Tower Display

Ron Ingham and Mike Sargeant

**Any inquiries ring Richard Savage 9310 6365**

### STOP PRESS

A report and photographs of the very successful luncheon held at Quinlivan's Restaurant on the 5th April will feature in a special 10th Anniversary Edition of the Newsletter to be published in July.

## THE NELSON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (INC).

### Membership Application/Renewal Form

PLEASE ENTER ALL INFORMATION IN CAPITALS.

Preferred First Name.....Last Name.....

Home Postal Address.....

Suburb.....State.....P/C.....

Telephone Home.....Office.....

Mobile.....Date.....

Email address.....

I hereby apply to join/renew my membership and enclose herewith annual subscription \$30.00.  
Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to The Nelson Society of Australia (Inc).  
Internet Banking to BSB 806-015 Account 230345. At Narration please give surname & initials.

Signed.....

Post to: Membership Officer, N.S.A. (Inc),  
Mr. John Lyall, 184 Mitchell House  
AFME, Bull Creek Drive, Bull Creek WA 6149

