

NEWS DELIVERED

BATTLE WON, NELSON DEAD

An Admiralty Office statement issued yesterday confirmed speculation that Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson has died in battle. This follows earlier rumours circulating as early as November 2nd that Lord Nelson had succeeded in destroying a large part of the Combined Fleet in the harbour of Cadiz.

In dispatches received at 1am yesterday by William Marsden, Secretary to the Board of the Admiralty, reports by Nelson's second-in-command, Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, from on board HMS Euryalus confirm that the Commander in Chief was killed in action on October 21st at about 2pm. The tragedy occurred at the very moment that the battle against the combined fleets of France and Spain was won.

In a detailed version of the events of the 21st given in his dispatch, Collingwood describes how Nelson 'received a musket ball in his left breast,' before sending an officer to deliver Collingwood 'his last farewell'.

Collingwood also details the meritorious conduct of the British ships and their Officers, both in battle and in the ensuing bad weather. Noted heroism came from the crew of the Temeraire who fought off a Spanish ship on one side and a French ship on the other but managed to take them both. There was also evidence of great humanity. During the later stages of the battle, British boats were launched to assist in the rescue of enemy seamen from the burning French vessel, Achille.

The dispatch containing this vital and significant news of great importance to our national security was carried by hand all the way from the battle scene off the coast of Trafalgar, south-east of Cadiz, by Lieutenant John Richards Lapenotiere, the Commander of HMS Pickle. Lapenotiere, 35, from Ilfracombe in Devon has been in command of HMS Pickle for over three years. Pickle, a schooner with 14 guns, is undoubtedly the swiftest ship in Nelson's Trafalgar Fleet and Lapenotiere is a seasoned Officer with a strong track record of efficient message delivery.

A spokesperson for the Admiralty said: "Vice Admiral Collingwood's trust in Lapenotiere was clearly justified. He had written a note to the Secretary William Marsden explaining that he had no speedier or safer means of conveying the message."

The Georgian Times has obtained exclusive access to a copy of Lapenotiere's instructions from Collingwood. They state: "You are hereby required and directed to proceed in His Majesty's Schooner under your command, and on your arrival in Plymouth, you are immediately to forward the accompanying dispatches to the Secretary of the Admiralty by taking them yourself express to him." He continues: "... As I trust you are full aware of the great importance of those dispatches being forwarded as soon as is possible, I rely on you using every exertion, that a moment's time may not be lost in their delivery."

It appears that our hero Lt. Lapenotiere has done his Commanding Officer proud in delivering the dispatches from off Cape Trafalgar in under 11 days.

THE JOURNEY

In spite of reportedly heavy seas, HMS Pickle managed to arrive in the English Channel less than nine days after parting company from the rest of the fleet outside Cadiz. Crew reported that Pickle had almost sunk in a terrible gale off Finisterre on October 31st, saved only by Lapenotiere's order to throw four of the schooner's heavy guns overboard, thus making the vessel much lighter. The weather in the Channel was judged unfavourable for a continued journey to Plymouth with the winds dropping to a light southerly and the crew having to deploy large oars to keep her moving. Lapenotiere evidently decided that the fastest course of action would be to put in to Falmouth and continue the journey overland.

We understand Lapenotiere lost no time on arrival in Falmouth in securing a post-chaise express for London. The journey requires 21 changes of horses at posting inns along the way. Solomon Bunting, an expert on the post-chaise network across southern England, describes the route as "long, tortuous, but well-travelled and known in extreme detail by the post boys who ride the horses. It would normally take several days for a traveller to cover the distance the Lieutenant covered, crossing seven counties of England, a distance of over 270 miles all told. The weather has been uncommonly dry for several weeks. These roads are normally like quagmires at this time of year. The fact the roads were rutted, hard and dusty might have helped or hindered Lt. Lapenotiere's progress, but I'll tell you something for nothing, it's a good job he has sea legs as the rocking of the carriage in the post-chaise would make anyone seasick. Especially at that pace."

Lapenotiere left Falmouth before midday. It is unclear whether he was accompanied by staff of any kind.

ANOTHER NAVAL OFFICER?

It is believed another Naval Officer may have been travelling to London express at the same time as Lapenotiere. An eye-witnesses from Dorchester reports: "On Tuesday 5th November about noon, two officers of the Navy came through the town, following each other, at about an hour's space of time, in two post-chaises and four horses to each, from the westward; the first reported that he brought good news of great importance, and the second, that his despatches contained the best and most capital news that the nation ever experienced. They changed post-chaises at The Antelope and galloped off, post-haste, in the direction of Piddletown, almost five miles hence."

A secret source close to the Admiralty has revealed that the second Officer described may have been Captain John Sykes, the commanding officer of HMS Nautilus, who had taken it upon himself to act as back-up to Lt. Lapenotiere and docked at Plymouth one day later, but arrived at The Admiralty a mere few minutes after him

The same source tells us that Lapenotiere's words on seeing Secretary William Marsden at 1am yesterday morning were "Sir, we have gained a great victory, but we have lost Lord Nelson." The Secretary himself was not yet in bed at that time but had been up, working late on naval affairs.

FOG AND SMOKE SLOW PROGRESS

Our reporter in Hounslow spoke to an innkeeper at The George who claims to have provided the final post-chaise used by Lapenotiere, although he concedes it may have been another officer he served. "It was late, approaching midnight," he explains. "We had a busy night full of revelries on account of it being the two-hundred year anniversary of Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot".

Our travel expert Solomon Bunting tells us the latter stages of the journey would have been made difficult, even though the roads are good from Dorchester all the way to London, by the thick fog England has been experiencing. "You can normally cover the ground across that stretch of the route at close to 10 miles per hour. But in this thick fog it's easy to get lost in London, especially with the smoke of the bonfires tonight." He concludes, "Lapenotiere deserves a medal. I hope he gets rewarded for his safe and swift delivery of this momentous news."

WHO IS JOHN RICHARDS LAPENOTIERE?

We cast a spotlight on the gallant naval messenger who delivered the news safely via a 1300-mile journey over sea and land in under 11 days.

- Born Ilfracombe in Devon, 1770
- Recently married to Mary Ann, has two daughters by first wife, Lucia.
- Entered Royal Navy aged 10
- Previously Commander of the Joseph, a cutter used mainly for the delivery of naval communications between ship and shore
- Accompanied Captain William Bligh on his return visit to the Pacific after the scandalous mutiny on The Bounty of '89.
- Favourite colour blue

The 21 coaching stops between Falmouth and London where Lapenotiere would have changed horses:

Truro	Exeter	Blandford	Basingstoke
Fradden	Honiton	Forum	Hartfordbridge
Bodmin	Axminster	Woodyates	Bagshot
Oakhampton	Bridport	Salisbury	Staines
Launceston	Dorchester	Andover	Hounslow
Crockernwell		Overton	

Wanted: POWDER MONKEYS; children from age 10 in search of adventure and excitement. The thrill of the high seas awaits those courageous enough to apply.

For sale by auction; a FINE MARE, the property of a post house, guaranteed sound. Used on Falmouth to London coaching road. Walks, trots, gallops and leaps remarkably well. To prevent trouble, trial allowed.



Can you answer these questions?

Questions

1. Who died at around 2pm on 21st October 1805?

2. Vice Admiral Collingwood wrote his dispatch on board HMS...?

3. Lapenotiere's journey from Falmouth to London took how long?

4. In what year did the Gunpowder Plot take place?

5. If Lapenotiere was able to secure four fresh horses at each of his stops, how many in total helped him on his journey? (*think carefully!*)

6. How many guns were there on HMS Pickle when she arrived in Falmouth?

7. How many inns are named in the article?

8. What was Lapenotiere's average speed in miles per hour as he travelled by post-chaise between Falmouth and London?

Answers

A. Collingwood B. Nelson C. Sykes

A. Temeraire B. Victory C. Euryalus

A. 11 days B. 38 hours C. 9 days

A. 1805 B. 1705 C. 1605

All answers to the above questions can be found or calculated from the information in the article overleaf. To check your answers, visit www.thetrafalgarway.org/georgian-times

