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THREE SLOVENE ADMIRALS AND LORD NELSON Keith Miles

The following article was published in the Slovenian history magazine 'SLO' in May 2020. Thank you to member Keith Miles, and to SLO for allowing us to publish an English version of the article.



At the international conference at Primorska Univerza in Kopet, Keith Miles (Honorary President of The British-Slovene Society) gave a talk with Edmund Phillimore (Royal Navy retired) about what may be described as 'hidden history' or lesser known history of Slovenia. This was followed by a longer version of the talk at the Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transport of Ljubljana University in Portoroz. This article is a resumé of the talks together with interesting pictures. The talks were called 'Three Slovene Admirals and Lord Nelson'. The first part covered Lord Nelson's visit (virtually unknown both in Slovenia and in the United Kingdom) to Slovenia and his stop in Ljubljana. The journey was described in a small booklet called 'Nelson's Overland

Return in 1800', published by The Nelson Society in 2000 (note 1).

Napoleon, by his victories in Northern Italy at the end of the 18th century, had left Great Britain as the only combatant against revolutionary France. With its combined French/Italian fleet, France was dominant in the Mediterranean. However Nelson had overwhelmingly won the Battle of the Nile in August 1798, which left the Royal Navy in the commanding position in the Mediterranean, and Napoleon's Army was stranded in Egypt. Nelson became an international hero in those countries opposed to revolutionary France.

This led to a period of relative calm in the conflict and Nelson had fallen in love with Lady Hamilton who was the wife of the British Ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples. Nelson wished to return by ship with Lady Hamilton, but this was refused on the grounds that there were no large ships available in the war situation. This is sometimes considered an excuse, because the Admiralty in London did not approve of the scandal of Nelson's romantic liaison, although hardly anyone knew of her pregnancy. So Nelson decided to travel overland around the Queen of Naples' party which was going to Vienna; he would continue around to the edges of French control and influence to the North Sea, and catch a ship to England.

The party travelled across Italy from Livorno to Ancona and caught a ship to Trieste, which was under Austrian control. A small squadron of ships took them to Trieste and this comprised four rather neglected Russian warships, three frigates (including the *Bellona* sent by the Austrian Emperor) and a Brigantine. It was a relatively poor quality 'fleet' that was partly manned by Neapolitan sympathisers to the turncoat rebel Admiral Caracciolo. Although Nelson was concerned for his future career, he was lauded almost everywhere by concerts celebrating his victories.



Maps of Nelson's Overland Journey 1800 (note 2)

The party made a short stop at Adelsberg/Postojna, having travelled over what were reported as terrible road conditions, although the wonderful countryside was also mentioned. Nelson's party arrived in Ljubljana two days after the visit by Queen Caroline, who had stayed in the Bishop's palace. However Nelson's party was not afforded this courtesy, and they stayed in a hotel. Although there are apparently no records, it would seem likely that they stayed in the best known inn at that time, Hotel Elefant/Hotel Slon. On the evening of 14 August 1800, the party were guests of the Ljubljana Philharmonic Society at a soiree in honour of

Nelson. The society at the time was one of the oldest in existence and Nelson spoke favourably about the orchestra, who played the Battle Symphony, which was followed by the singing of the aria 'La virtu britannica'. (Details are taken from the work by Otto Erich Deutsch, originally written in 1939 and published in 1982 in German, then in English in 2000) (note 3).

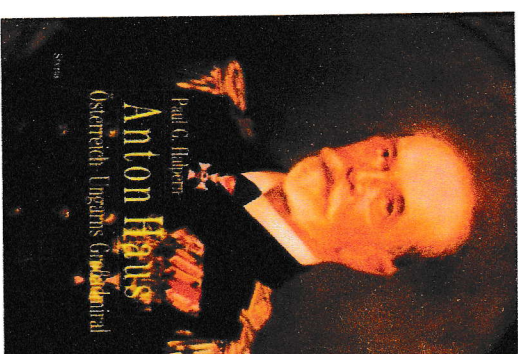
The journey continued to Klagenfurt and then to Vienna. The two maps illustrated show the routes to Vienna and then onwards through the mainly German states, stopping in Prague and Dresden, to Hamburg where Nelson and his party stayed and eventually caught a mail packet ship to England. The Admiralty had once again not found a frigate for the Admiral to travel in.

The next part of the talk referred to the two Austrian Admirals born in Slovenia. The first, Admiral Wilhelm Baron von Tegetthoff was born in Maribor in 1827, the son of an army officer. The Tegetthoff family were part of the German community in Maribor. He joined the navy at the early age of 13 which was common in many navies of that era. He had a distinguished career. He graduated from the Naval Academy in Venice in 1845 and was present at the blockade of Venice in 1849, when the local revolutionary government was active. He was Commander in 1863 of the small Austrian-Prussian fleet in the war with Denmark, raising the blockades of the mouths of the Elbe and Weser rivers.

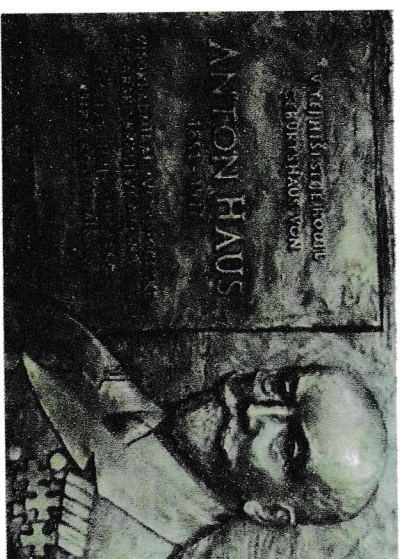


Tegetthof memorial in Maribor (Marburg) (picture: SLO)

He was made Rear Admiral and by 1866 was effectively in command of the whole Austrian Navy. At the Battle of Lissa (Vis) in 1866 he succeeded in defeating a superior Italian force using tactics not too dissimilar to those of Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar. Although it was a minor battle, his success can be evaluated by his losses of 68 men to Italy's 618. He was promoted to Vice-Admiral and then became head of the Naval Section in the Austrian War Ministry. Statues were raised to him in Maribor, Pula and Vienna, but only the one in Vienna remains today.



The second distinguished Slovene Admiral was Admiral Anton Haus, who was born in 1851 to a Slovene-speaking family in Tolmin. He was not a contemporary of Tegetthoff, but must have known of him and perhaps, as he joined the navy in 1869, looked to him as an example. His father had come from Slovenj Gradec and was a public servant in Tolmin. Orphaned in his childhood, Anton went to relatives and then in Ljubljana attended Grammar School. In 1869 he joined the Austrian Navy and later became an instructor at the Royal Naval Academy in Reka. He commanded a corvette in 1900 in the multinational intervention in China at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. (As an aside, an officer in the Austrian fleet in China was Georg von Trapp, mostly famous from the musical and film 'The Sound of Music', but in real life a



Anton Haus – Halpern's biography, and birthplace memorial plaque (pictures: SLO)

successful submarine commander in WWI and follower of Admiral Haus' belief in submarine warfare). The strategy that Haus employed in WWI was to operate in the Adriatic, knowing that the navy was no match for the British and French to operate in the open Mediterranean, and so to maintain a fleet in being.

When in May 1915 Italy joined the allies, Haus was hugely successful by his attacks on Italian coastal ports, disrupting railways and movements of troops and supplies to the Soca Fronta. He was made Crossadmiral in 1916 and the senior Austrian naval officer, the only serving non-royal person to receive this title. He was a proud Slovene who kept in touch by reading daily the newspaper 'Slovenski narod'. He died in Pula in 1917 of pneumonia.

The third and most surprising of the 'Slovene' Admirals is Baron Jeffrey de Raigersfeld, an Admiral in the Royal Navy. Jeffrey was born in London but



the family was of Slovene origin. The family name was in the Slovene form Rakovec who were farmers from a village named Rakovica pod Sv. Jostom, near Kranj. The family had gained nobility in 1698 and a baronetcy in 1747. The family had moved up in Austrian society by education, marriage, business acumen, and public service. (Full details are available in the Slovene National Biography). Jeffrey's father Baron Janez Luka had come to London in the service of Austrian diplomacy, and he married Elizabeth Steward and their son Jeffrey was born in 1771.

Jeffrey joined the Royal Navy in 1782 and served at sea until 1802, followed by various appointments until 1828. He wrote a personal record of his time in a book called 'The Life of a Sea Officer', which was as a private publication and was more a serious record than an intended work of high literature. It was highly regarded professionally, and was republished for seamen to read in 1929.

When he finished his initial sea service and came ashore, he married Mary Hawker and they had two daughters Catherine Harriet and Harriet Elizabeth. Catherine Harriet married Sir John Phillimore, who is the great grandfather of Edmund Phillimore and the fifth generation of Royal Navy officers.

It is clear from Baron Jeffrey's sea service that he was very reliable and trustworthy, as illustrated by his command in 1810 of the Sea Fencibles (Local defence attachments established at the time of the threat of an invasion), and as a very good officer he was recalled for service in April 1815 from 'the reserve' to be captain of the ship *San Josef* during scares about Napoleon running rampage again across Europe before he was prevented at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Baron Jeffrey was eventually promoted to Rear Admiral. He was a talented artist,

and as the Slovenes are known for their love of art and culture, one would like to think that he inherited his talent from his Slovene genes.

Editor's notes on the SLO article

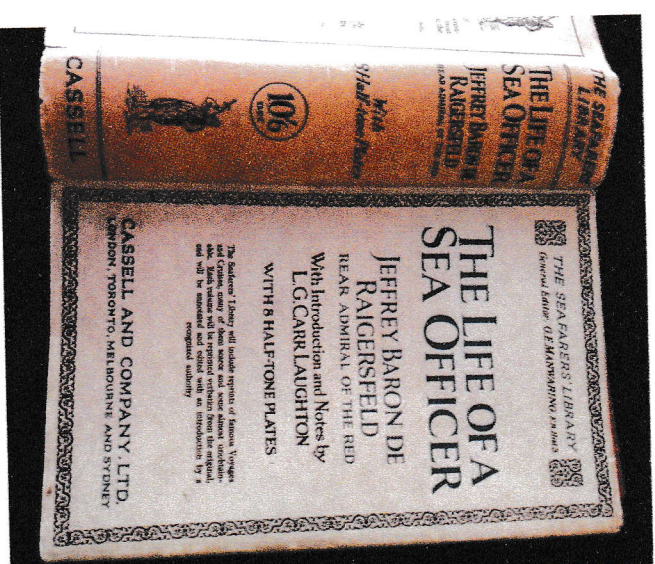
Note 1 – *Nelson's Overland Return in 1800* – this work by Thomas Blumel 2000 is available from The Nelson Society

Note 2 – maps originally published in Thomas Blumel's *Nelson's Overland Return in 1800*.

Note 3 – *Admiral Nelson and Joseph Haydn* – Otto Erich Deutsch, English translation published by The Nelson Society in 2000, available from The Nelson Society

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON BARON JEFFREY DE RAIGERSFELD

Sue Morris



My own interest in Raigersfeld was sparked by this original article by Keith Miles, and I acquired a copy of 'The Life of a Sea Officer', which has proved to be an informative and highly entertaining read. Written around 1830 for his family, after his naval service ended, it was first printed privately, and eventually republished in 1929 by Cassell in a handsome edition with an excellent introduction and analysis by naval historian Leonard G Carr Laughton, who was the first Editor of the Society for Nautical Research's esteemed publication 'The Mariners Mirror'. There are recollections of Jeffrey's early life, childhood and school days (it is speculated that when at school in Whitehaven he may have seen or heard about the John Paul Jones raid in the US War of Independence). There is plenty of colourful detail of his service experience from his time as a Midshipman progressing eventually to the rank of Rear-Admiral. During these years he served under Collingwood on the *Mediator* as Captain's servant, served on HMS *Speedy* which was well known for the exploits of Cochrane, and served a number of times under Hood. Raigersfeld describes the education of young officers, the promotional system in the navy,

the use of discipline, and food on board (including the delights of eating rats), as well as giving insights into the characters of commanders such as Collingwood. His experiences as a prisoner in France, and his escape, are vividly described along with many other snippets such as seeing Napoleon from the shore on board *Bellerophon*, and even sketching him.

Service record detailed in 'The Life of a Sea Officer'

[illegible]

Note.—This table is from a return of services called for by the Admiralty in 1817. The subsequent appointment to the *Sloemness* is added for the sake of completeness. It will be noticed that Raigerfeld misspelt some of his captains' names: Waldegrave, Henry Malcolm, Keith Elphinstone. When a double date is given, the earlier, in italics, is that of appointment.

Raigersfeld the Artist

Carr Laughton points out that although Raigersfeld describes his interest in art and how he took opportunities for instruction in art, the book does not mention his success in this pursuit. In fact he was an artist of great merit who exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy, sea-pieces, landscapes and interiors.



Detail of panoramic watercolour view of the Royal Navy's Sheerness Dockyard, with HMS Temeraire in the foreground, by Raigersfeld 1831 (courtesy of Bonhams)

As an example, Raigersfeld depicted a full panoramic view of the Sheerness Dockyard, which had just undergone significant redevelopment between the years 1815-1830, when most of the construction work was completed. One can see in the background the recently developed dockyard buildings and the Regency era architectural style employed. This work captures the massive scale of the newly formed dockyard and gives a first-hand impression of just how busy it was. The focal ship of Raigersfeld's work is HMS *Temeraire*, the 98-gun second-rate ship of the line launched in 1798, which gained notoriety and earned the name 'The Fighting Temeraire' for her heroic duties during the Battle of Trafalgar 1805. Most notably she defeated the French 74-gun ship of the line the *Fougueux* whilst simultaneously assisting HMS *Victory* in destroying the French 74-gun ship of the line the *Redoutable*, a fight that would claim Vice Admiral Nelson's life. The *Temeraire* would go on to fight throughout the Peninsula War, however, from 1820 she was permanently docked at Sheerness. Initially being used as a receiving ship for the housing and training of new naval recruits, in 1829 she was used as a victualling depot before finally being converted to a guard ship. One can see the permanent roof which was constructed, whilst she was docked in Sheerness, and considering the date of Raigersfeld's work, it seems likely that *Temeraire* is depicted in her duty as a victualling depot.

September 1838 would see the *Temeraire* take her final trip, tugged up the Thames to Rotherhithe to be broken up – this scene is immortalised in JMW Turner's masterpiece of the same year, 'The Fighting Temeraire'.

Another splendid work illustrates an incident from the Blockade of Brest, HMS *Montagu* forcing the enemy to move from Bertheaume Bay, 22 August 1800, and is housed at the National Maritime Museum.



'HMS Montagu forcing the enemy to move from Bertheaume Bay, 22 August 1800'. Oil on canvas, by Raigersfeld. (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich)

Family Connections

Baron Jeffrey died on 7 September 1844 at the family estate in Weaving in Kent. He was the last descendant of the noble Carniolan family of Raigersfelds.

The family connections survive through the Phillimore family (Jeffrey's daughter Catherine Harriet married Sir John Phillimore, who is the great grandfather of Edmund Phillimore and the fifth generation of Royal Navy officers), and the Whatman family (Jeffrey's other daughter Harriet Elizabeth married into the Whatman family, owners of the highly successful business of making the finest papers, which they innovated from small scale production methods to a more industrial model of manufacturing. The Whatmans were responsible for pioneering 'wove' paper – producing paper on a woven mesh material – resulting in a sheet of paper having a much less irregular surface than laid paper, immeasurably improving the quality of printed work. Its smooth surface lacked the furrows of traditional laid paper which caused pigment to

puddle on the page. Whatman paper was used by JMW Turner, John Robert Cozens, John Sell Corman and Cornelius Varley. William Blake used it for four of his illuminated books, the public being informed that they were printed on "the most beautiful wove paper that could be procured". Indeed, many of the masterpieces of Romantic watercolour painting in the early nineteenth century are on paper bearing their watermark).

Raigersfeld's 'Life of a Sea Officer' was apparently still considered 'de rigueur' reading matter for young sea officers in the 20th century. In his 'preface', Raigersfeld offers observations which may still ring true today:

'To an active mind the advantages derived from observing the daily page of indulgent Nature as it is presented to us all, appears so evidently intended for man's improvement, that I am frequently at a loss to account for the general supineness apparently so inseparable from man in most things he undertakes'. ... 'During my career and close observation of things in general, I am led to believe that all the difficulties man encounters in this life, originate principally from the general supineness of those placed over him, and I cannot help remarking that I have seldom seen what is denominated accident occur, which would not, if impartially investigated, prove such accident to have originated from ignorance, neglect, or design'.

References and acknowledgements:

'The Life of a Sea Officer' by Baron Jeffrey de Raigersfeld, reprinted 1929 by Cassell
'Victorian Professions' project website
<https://victorianprofessions.wordpress.com/tag/jeffrey-baron-raigersfeld/>
Bonhams
The National Maritime Museum

TENERIFE UNDER SIEGE – PART 2

(Tenerife News No 566, 23 December 2016 - 12 January 2017)

Alastair Robertson

Continued from Part I which appeared in *The Nelson Dispatch* Vol 13 Part 11

After the Battle of Santa Cruz on 25 July 1797, in which Nelson lost not only the battle, but also his right arm, he sailed away from Tenerife physically maimed and mentally broken; he believed his naval career was finished. Nelson was an egotist, but one of his endearing characteristics was to recognise the qualities of other men, so he unashamedly and generously took the news of his own defeat to mainland Spain. In Don Antonio Gutierrez, Captain General of the Canary Islands, Nelson had encountered a man of true military ability and valour, and a worthy foe. Although the two men never met, they agreed in their exchange of letters that when peace came they looked forward to that occasion.

Nelson's physical mutilation was permanent, but his optimistic personality soon bounced back, and as we all know he went on to greater things, but back in