

VI - *HMS IMPLACABLE'S STERN GALLERY*

Just as Miguel de Alava was at Trafalgar on the other side, so was artefact no. 7

In the Neptune Court of the National Maritime Museum is the stern gallery of *HMS Implacable* which was at Trafalgar on 21st October 1805 – as a French ship, the *Duguay-Trouin*, one of the squadron of Admiral Pierre Dumanoir

The 4 ships of the French Van – *Formidable*, *Mont Blanc*, *Scipion*, *Duguay-Trouin* - escaped

The other 3 ships under his command - *San Agustin*, *Intrepide* and *Neptuno* – stayed on to fight, but all captured

But brought to battle by Commodore Sir Richard Strachan's 4 ships of the line and 4 frigates off Cape Ortegal on 4th November 1805 and all captured (he mounted 444 guns to their 287)

Captain Claude Touffet killed; Captain Gemähling of the 67th Regiment: "Our unhappy ship, totally disabled and making water, was crushed by the fire of two ships of the line and frigates. It was not war as one understands it; it was butchery, a fearful slaughter. Three-quarters of my men lay dead around me my poor lieutenant, Le Deyeux, lying there, a few feet off, and so many others"

All four brought into the Royal Navy, two under their own names; *Duguay-Trouin* renamed *HMS Implacable* and *Formidable* renamed *HMS Brave*

Antoine-Roux's *Mont Blanc*, her sister ship

As *HMS Implacable* went to the Baltic 1808: capture Russian ship *Vsevolod*

Service off France and Spain, Cuba and Mexico - bombardment of Acre 1840

Converted into a training ship for boys in 1860

After WWII, given the post-War austerity, the British decided against the cost of her restoration, which was estimated at £150,000 with another £50,000 for re-rigging (in today's terms, £4.58 million and £1.53 million for rigging)

Offered to France in 1947, but declined – capstan removed and taken to Naval Museum in Rochefort

2nd December 1949 towed out under British and French flags into the Channel, 5 miles off Ventnor and scuttled at 1.45 pm with 500 tons of pig iron in the hold as ballast – would not sink for 3 hours - finally sunk by the tug *Alligator* ramming her repeatedly – parts washed up at Dunkirk

Public reaction to the "criminal action against the maritime history of Britain" forced the government to support the preservation of the *Cutty Sark*

Of her captor Sir Richard Strachan, the last chief of Clan Strachan, and so a distant kinsman of Corpus's own Sir Hew Strachan; and known to his crew as either *Uncle Dicky* or *Mad Dick* (who used to live in Bryanston Square, in what is now the Swiss Embassy) ...

(1) Who would have thought that the coming out ball of eldest daughter (Mathilde Frances) would have been attended by Talleyrand?

(2) Who would have thought that his daughters would have ended up as the wives of

(i) Graf Anton Maria Berchtold, Freiherr von und zu Ungarschitz, Fratting und Pullitz (Mathilde Frances)

(ii) Graf Emanuel Zichy-Ferraris de Zich et Vasonkeo (the brother of Metternich's third wife and Chamberlain of the Austrian Empire) (Charlotte Leopoldina)

(iii) Don Vincenzo Ruffo, Principe di Antimo and Duca di Bagnara respectively (Sarah Louise)?

(3) Who would have thought that his mother-in-law, Marie-Françoise Laure de Girardin de Montgerald, was the second cousin of the Empress Josephine (and had herself been the mistress of Alexandre de Beauharnais, Josephine's first husband, by whom she had had an illegitimate son)?

(4) Who would have thought that his sister-in-law Fanny (Françoise-Elizabeth Dillon) was married to none other than General Henri Bertrand, Governor of Illyria and Grand Marshal of the Palace to one Napoleon Bonaparte? And who would have thought that the Bertrands went with him to St Helena (after Fanny had tried to commit suicide by throwing herself out of the cabin windows of *HMS Bellerophon* when she found out where they were going) - and were by his bed when he died?

(5) And who would have thought that his father-in-law, Arthur Dillon, was an Englishman born in Berkshire, who became a general in the French army and died on the guillotine crying "Vive le roi!"

(6) And who would have thought that Sir Richard Strachan is the only British admiral of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars whose father-in-law is commemorated on the Arc de Triomphe ...?

And when the research is completed, there will be even more astonishing revelations in a future edition of *The Trafalgar Chronicle* ...

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37 The figurehead of *HMS Implacable*

38 Admiral Pierre Dumanoir

39 The Battle of Cape Ortegal

40 The *Mont Blanc* by Antoine Roux

41 *HMS Implacable* in the mid-19th century

42 The capstan – now in the Naval Museum in Rochefort

43-47 The scuttling of *HMS Implacable*