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Lieutenant Gabriel Bray R.N. (1749 -1823)

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THE WEB FRESHFORD SITE

Lieutenant Gabriel Bray R.N. (1749-1823)



Charmouth's famous Naval Hero & Artist.

Amongst the many memorials and grave stones in and around St. Andrews Church in Charmouth are those residents who made their mark at a national level. This was the case with Gabriel Bray, who though he never succeeded above the rank of Lieutenant, left us with a unique record of life on board ships of the Royal Navy in Georgian times. The painting shown here is a self portrait of him at work filling his Album on board HMS Pallas in 1774.

A Selection of some of the paintings by Gabriel Bray used in Displays and Books

WATERCOLOURS OF NAVAL LIFE
BY GABRIEL BRAY, 1774-75 (MUSEUM, BATHON, FRANCE, FRANCE, FRANCE)

Born in 1749, Gabriel Bray was a naval officer with an extraordinary, and perhaps unappreciated, artistic gift for capturing the ordinary and everyday scenes of Royal Naval life during the eighteenth century. The four examples of his work shown here belong within a collection of more than seventy drawings, purchased for the National Maritime Museum by the Maritime Fund of the Society for Nautical Research in April 1982. The majority of these date from the period 1774-75, during which Bray served under Captain the Honorable William Cornwallis as second

lieutenant of the forty-four gun frigate Pallas. The watercolor depicts a sailor in a white uniform, carrying a large bundle on his back, walking towards the right. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.

a sailor bringing up his hammock from below decks to air, a man sharpening a fishing bar from the end of a cannon, a watchman duty on the ship's loft, and a group of sailors eating a meal while seated on their benches. Both dexterity and industry, Bray also learned the long on himself. One watercolour shows him dealing with the assistance of a travelling mirror, his crossed and tangled shirt testifying to the casual dress of an officer at sea. Another depicts the master's cabin of the Pallas receiving eight dispatches. It was the most formal any ship in service of destination, in the weeks before he set sail on the Pallas. Bray painted a range of scenes that place his naval work in a broader context, for example a blacksmith, a street vendor and a covey rooster with his wife and long of all. Once in Bathonsville, where the Pallas was fitting out, he also created a wonderful representation of

a grocer's shop, with various foodstuffs and barrels and bundles of clay pipes on a shelf. Perhaps lacking the necessary patron, Bray never advanced beyond the rank of lieutenant. He was given command of a number of cruises, the longest in 1776, the Amazon in 1782, and the first in the early 1790s. However, these were his last cruises, and he spent the rest of his life on half pay. Gabriel Bray died in 1823, aged seventy-three, at





It is this collection that has come down to us and is now treasured in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. If you visit the Museum today you will see that a number of the paintings are displayed in cabinets. The same images are continually being used in naval reference books due to their importance and rarity. I have used these throughout the Presentation and also additional paintings by him that have come to light.

Gabriel was to lead a very eventful life travelling to distant corners of the known world at that time in the Royal Navy and was later to have a further career in the Customs Service catching smugglers along the southern coast. Towards the end of his life he retired with his wife Mary to Charmouth, where again he was to make his mark as we shall see.

Gabriel and Mary Bray's Memorials in St. Andrews's Church Charmouth



How it would have looked!



We are fortunate in Charmouth in having a magnificent marble memorial above the Church entrance to the great man and his wife, which we show here. Their grave sadly is just a shadow of what it must have once been at the corner of the church yard. It would have been a Chest Tomb, with four sides which have since disappeared as has the iron railings that would have adorned it. These would no doubt have been cut off during the last war as part of a drive all over the country for the war effort. The inscription on the top of the tomb, which can still be seen, is the same as that as the memorial recording their deaths in 1823 and 1835, respectively.

St. Leonard's Church Upper Deal – where Gabriel Bray was baptised on 29th June 1749

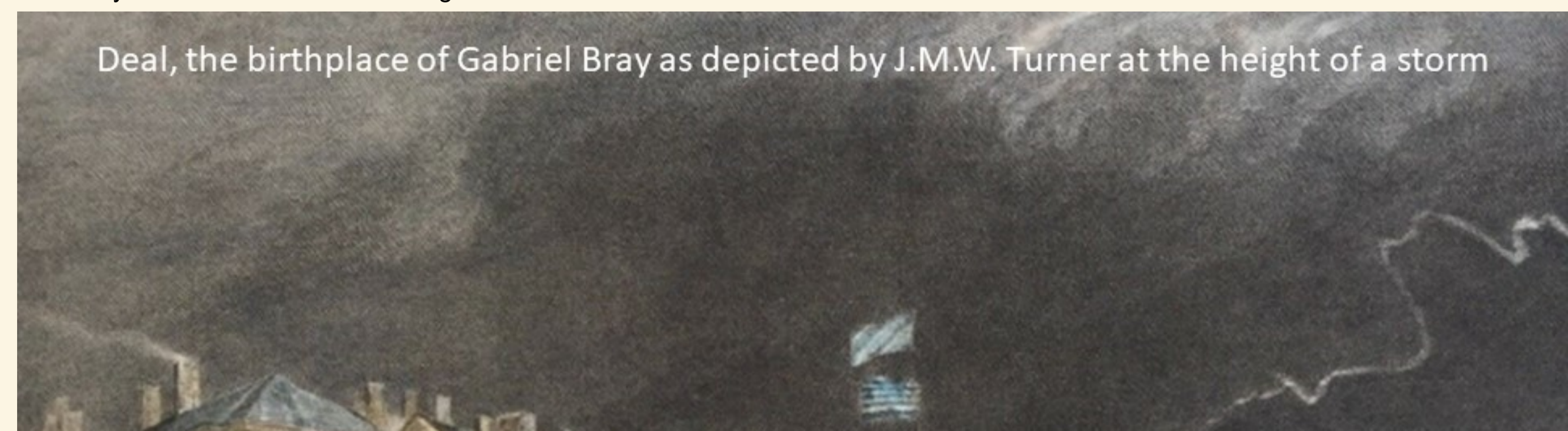


Gabriel Son of John Bray & Margaret his wife

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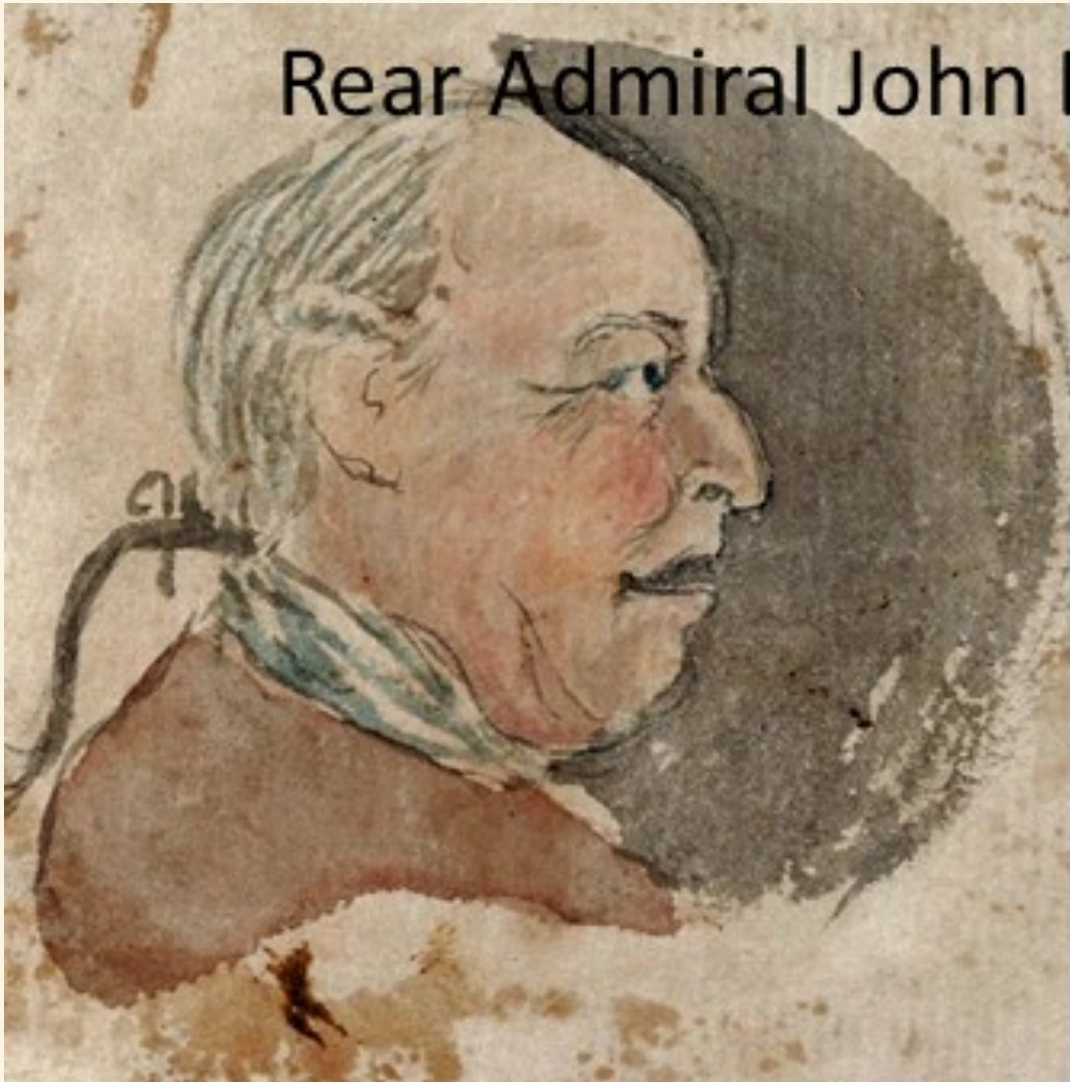
Gabriel Bray was baptised on the 29th June 1749 at St. Leonards Church in Upper Deal, which had formerly been the town's only church until St. Georges was built at the beginning of the 18th century. His father, John had himself been baptised in the same church in 1716. The building has changed very little as can be seen by the comparable print above, except that it is now next to a busy crossroads. The records for the church show his parents as John and Margaret Bray. His mother, Margaret Boughton had originated from the village of Sholden in East Kent and had married her husband in 1746. They had lost their first child, baptised as John Gabriel, within a year of his birth and were to go on to have four children.

Deal, the birthplace of Gabriel Bray as depicted by J.M.W. Turner at the height of a storm





The painting shown here by J.M.W. Turner depicts Deal during a raging storm . The town was to be Gabriel Brays family home until his marriage in 1780 aged 30. A Will of 1757 by his father, John, details the family living in a house in Lower Street. This was to stay in the family until the death of his daughter Mary in 1850, aged 96. Her Will records it as being no. 20 Lower Street, which is now the High Street.



Rear Admiral John Bray (1716-1795) – Father of Gabriel Bray.



The Princess Amelia at the Capture of Louisbourg in 1758

Among the many paintings that Gabriel produced was this one of his father which was sketched ashore in mid 1774, when he would have been aged 48.

John entered the Navy in 1735, rose from lieutenant in 1743 to captain in 1758 and his two commands in that rank were the 'Princess Amelia' from that year followed by the 'Newark' in 1761. He appears to have been a regulating captain, raising men at Dover, at the start of the French Revolutionary War and he was a superannuated rear-admiral at the time of his death at Deal, where he and his wife Margaret are buried. The painting is a scene from the Battle of Louisberg in America, where the "Princess Amelia" saw action.

The Naval career of Rear Admiral John Bray, father of Gabriel Bray



" Case of Captain BRAY, of the Navy, humbly submitted to the consideration of Parliament.

" Captain John Bray entered into the service in the year 1735; was a lieutenant twenty-two years, and, in 1757, was made master and commander of the Adventure armed ship, which was attacked on the 1st of January, 1758, by the Mashault privateer, of Dunkirk, carrying 14 nine-pounders, and 182 men; whereas the Adventure had only 16 six-pounders, and 98 men; but the French commander having given Captain Bray an opportunity of laying him athwart hawse, by this manoeuvre he took his superiority from him, and, after an action of one hour and twenty minutes, (during which the French attempted boarding him three times, and were as often repulsed) they were obliged to submit.—By the position the Adventure lay in, her men were so screened from the musketry of the enemy, that Captain Bray had the happiness to find that he had only one man killed, and two wounded; whereas the French had sixty-three killed and wounded.

" Such was the opinion entertained by Lord Anson of this action, that, without solicitation, he immediately gave Captain Bray the command of the Princess Amelia, of 80 guns, and he went out in her to North America, under the command of Admiral Boscawen, and was at the reduction of Louisbourg and Quebec, and other services, under the same gallant commander.

" In the beginning of the last war, Captain Bray attended at the Admiralty, and made an offer of his services, and was appointed to be regulating captain at Dover; where he raised upwards of 6000 men, of which number 5725 were seamen.

" When the combined fleets of France and Spain were in the Channel, he received an order from the Admiralty, to hold himself, his officers, and gangs, in readiness to embark at a moment's warning, and to repair to the Downs, or the Nore, as he should be directed.—And, as soon as he had despatched the orders to the lieutenants at their several departments, he went over to Deal to Rear-admiral Drake, to know if he had similar orders; and, being informed that he had, and if ordered should receive him into the Drumodary, he directed his trunks and bedding to be lashed up, and remained in daily expectation of another order to embark, but did not receive any.

" Having the mortification to find himself passed over in the late promotion of admirals, Captain Bray waited on Lord Howe, at the Admiralty, who, in different conversations, acknowledged his great merit and signal services; but gave it as his opinion, that at his time of life, seventy-one years of age, it was better to retire on the list of superannuated admirals; which, with some reluctance, as being ambitious to obtain the best honours of his profession, he assented to, after one day's consideration.

" But how great was his surprise and disappointment, when, after complying with his Lordship's wish and advice, Captain Bray received a letter from the Secretary of the Admiralty, informing him, " That he was not entitled to the superannuation of a rear-admiral " !

HMS Princess Amelia

Extract of a Letter from London, July 6, 1789.
 We hear from Deal that on Saturday last Captain John Bray was appointed, by the Lords' Commissioners of the Admiralty, to the rank of Rear Admiral on the list of superannuation.

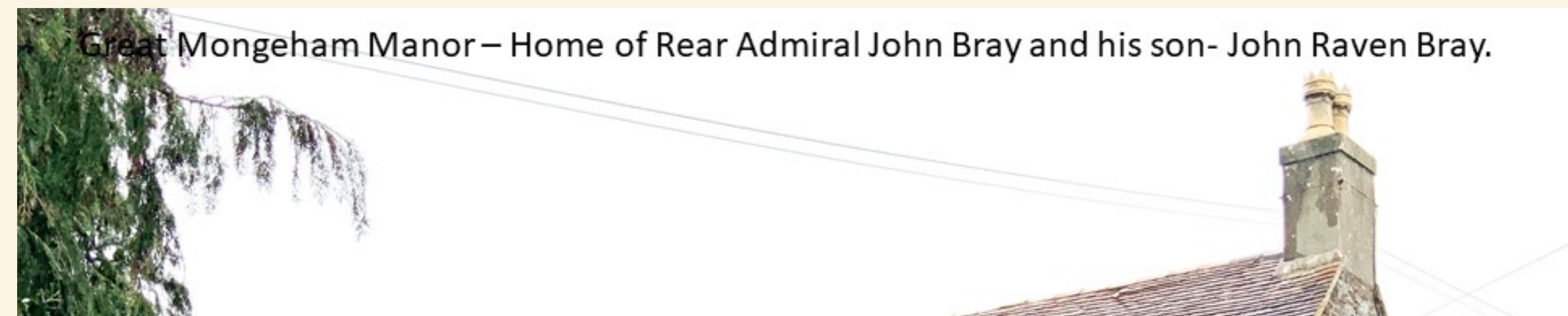
This fascinating account of the naval life of John Bray on the left and written out on the right gives us an insight into his rise through the ranks from Midshipman in 1735 to Rear Admiral in 1789.

It briefly records "Captain John Bray entered into the service in the year 1735, was a lieutenant twenty two years, and in 1757, was made master and commander of the "Adventure" armed ship, which was attacked on the 1st of January, 1758, by the "Mashault", Privateer, of Dunkirk, carrying 14 nine pounders, and 182 men, whereas the Adventure only had only 16 six pounders, and 98 men, but the French commander having given Captain Bray an opportunity of laying him athwart hawse, by this manoeuvre he took his superiority from him, and after an action of one hour and twenty minutes(during which the French attempted boarding him three times, and were as often repulsed) they were obliged to submit - by the position the Adventure Kay in, her men were so screened from the musketry of the enemy, that Captain Bray had the happiness to find that he had only one man killed, and two wounded, whereas the French had sixty three killed and wounded.

Such was the opinion entertained by Lord Anson, the Command of the Princess Amelia, of 80 guns, and he went out in her to North America, under the command of Admiral Boscawen, and was at the reduction of Louisburg and Quebec, and other services, under the same gallant commander.

Below it is an extract from a letter dated July 6th 1789 which announces his being appointed a Rear Admiral.

Great Mongeham Manor – Home of Rear Admiral John Bray and his son- John Raven Bray.





Gabriel Bray's father, John, was to spend his whole life, when not on board ships, living in Deal in Kent. Initially he had a house at 20 Lower Street in the centre of the town. He was to do well with Prize Money from his Naval actions and in 1775 moved with his family to the impressive mansion shown in this slide. It was the largest property in the nearby village of Great Mongeham and had formerly belonged to Samuel Shepherd, who after the sale moved to Faversham to found the brewery, Shepherd Neame, which is still operating today and famous for its "Master Brew" and "Spitfire" Ale. At the rear of the property was a Malthouse and Farm, still to be seen, which was later to be run by his son, John Raven Bray and then his granddaughter, Margaret, until her death in 1892, aged 95.

Rear Admiral John Bray (1716-1795) – Father of Gabriel Bray.

In the Name of God Amen
I John Bray of the town and Borough of Deal
in the County of Kent being conscious of
my Mortality do make and declare this my last will
and Testament in manner and form following that
I to my Executors and assigns all those my two Messuages
or Tenements with the Outhouses Buildings Yards
Gardens and Appurtenances thereto belonging
situate and being in the town of Deal
which I lately purchased to increase my Estate of
and from John Willer unto my well beloved wife
Margaret Bray and her assigns for and during the
term of her natural life and from and after her death
I give and devise the same premises unto my children
Gabriel Bray Margaret Bray John Raven Bray and
Mary Bray and all and every such other child
children of me the said John Bray whether born or
daughters as it shall happen to have living at the
time of my decease or which shall be afterwards
born alive equally to be divided between them the said
Gabriel Bray Margaret Bray John Raven Bray and
Mary Bray and such other child and children as
afterward and then to take as tenants in common
and not as joint tenants and to their several and
separate uses and assigns forever and as to all and
singular my goods chattels effects and personal estate
whenever and whatsoever and of what kind or
nature soever the same may be from and after
the payment of my debts the said John Bray
proving this my will and all other charges touching

Abstract of John Brays Will 1795

To be SOLD by PRIVATE CONTRACT,
THE following FREEHOLD and LEASE-
HOLD ESTATES, in KENT:
All that freehold Messuage or Tenement, with the barns, sta-
bles, buildings, yards, gardens, orchards, and twelve several pieces
or parcels of land, arable, meadow and pasture thereunto belong-
ing, containing in the whole by estimation forty-one acres, more
or less, with the appurtenances; situate, lying and being in the
several parishes of Great Mongeham and Sholden, in the occupa-
tion of John Bray, Esq.
Also all that freehold Messuage or Tenement, with the barns,
stables, buildings, courts, yards, garden, orchard, and several
pieces or parcels of land, arable and pasture, thereunto belonging,
containing in the whole by estimation twenty-one acres, more or
less, with the appurtenances; situate, lying and being in the pa-
rish of Great Mongeham, in the occupation of John Bray, Esq.
or his undertenants.
Also all those three several freehold pieces or parcels of Land,
arable and pasture, containing by estimation twenty-four acres and
an half, more or less, lying in the parish of Great Mongeham,
in the occupation of John Bray, Esq. or his undertenants.
Also all that freehold piece or parcel of Fresh Marshland, con-
taining by estimation twelve acres, more or less, lying in the pa-
rish of Ash next Sandwich, in the occupation of Mr. Joseph Child.
Also all that freehold piece or parcel of arable Land, containing
by estimation two acres, more or less, lying in the parish of Saint
Mary the Virgin in Sandwich, near Saint Bartholomew's Hospi-
tal, in the occupation of Mr. Charles Warman.
Also all those two freehold Messuages or Tenements, with the
storehouse, buildings, yards, garden and appurtenances thereunto
belonging, situate in Strand Street, in the parish of Saint Peter
the Apostle in Sandwich, in the occupation of Mr. Enston or his
undertenants.
Also all that leasehold Tenement or Dwelling-house, and the
yard and appurtenances thereunto belonging, in the occupation of
William Christian.
Also all that leasehold Tenement or Dwelling-house, and the
yard and appurtenances thereunto belonging, in the occupation of
Mr. John Marth.
All that leasehold Tenement or Dwelling-house, and the yard
and appurtenances thereunto belonging, in the occupation of Mr.
Thomas Shipden.
The three last-mentioned Tenements are situate in the town of
Deal, in the centre of the Beach Street.
For particulars apply to Mr. MAY, Attorney at Law Deal.

27 March 1795 - Advert in Kentish Gazette for Sale of some of John Brays properties in East Kent.

In the Name of God Amen
I Margaret Bray of the town and Borough of Deal in the County
of Kent being conscious of my Mortality do make and declare
this my last will and Testament in manner and form following
that I to my Executors and assigns all those my two Messuages
or Tenements with the Outhouses Buildings Yards Gardens
and Appurtenances thereto belonging situate and being in the
town of Deal which I lately purchased to increase my Estate
of and from John Willer unto my well beloved wife Margaret
Bray and her assigns for and during the term of her natural
life and from and after her death I give and devise the same
premises unto my children Gabriel Bray Margaret Bray John
Raven Bray and Mary Bray and all and every such other child
children of me the said John Bray whether born or daughters
as it shall happen to have living at the time of my decease
or which shall be afterwards born alive equally to be divided
between them the said Gabriel Bray Margaret Bray John
Raven Bray and Mary Bray and such other child and children
as afterward and then to take as tenants in common and not
as joint tenants and to their several and separate uses and
assigns forever and as to all and singular my goods chattels
effects and personal estate whenever and whatsoever and of
what kind or nature soever the same may be from and after
the payment of my debts the said Margaret Bray proving this
my will and all other charges touching

Margaret Bray

Abstract of Margaret Bray's Will 1805

An Extract from John Bray, father of Gabriel Bray, Will of 1796:

I John Bray of the Town and Borough of Deal in Kent, Gentleman give my two messuages or tenements in Lower Street in Deal which I lately purchased of John Webber to my wife, Margaret Bray for her natural life and then unto my children, Gabriel Bray, Margaret Bray, John Raven Bray and Mary Bray.

A Codicil to last Will. Where's my daughter, late Margaret Bray but now the wife of John Coles of the City of London, Malt factor. On the day of her marriage receive a £1000 instead of her forth part. I bequeath to my daughter, Mary, Spinster, the house now in the occupation of Lieutenant Thomas Levine.

Margaret Bray Will

Being almost blind make this my Will

I Give all my freehold farm situated at Smeeth called Stone and my third part or share of 13 acres of marshland at Dymchurch in the occupation of Jeremiah Wraight and many other fields to Gabriel Bray, John Raven Bray, and Mary Bray. My gold watch to son, Gabriel Bray, all other effects to daughter, Mary, dated 1801. The mark of Margaret Bray. Will proved in 1805.

John Bray died in 1795 he left his house in Lower Street to his daughter, Mary. His farm and Malthouse went to his son, John Raven Bray. The remainder seems to have been auctioned off in the same year and the advertisement for the sale is shown on the right. The proceeds no doubt were divided between his four surviving children, including Gabriel.

Freehold Estate 41 acres, more or less, with the appurtenances; situate, lying and being in the several parishes of Great Mongeham and Sholdon, in the occupation of John Bray, Esq. Also all that freehold Messuage or Tenement, with the barns, stables, buildings, courts, yards

27 March 1795 - Kentish Gazette - Canterbury, Kent, England

A Survey Of The County Of Kent, by William Mudge, 1801.



The Old Customs House

The map shown here was one of the first Ordnance Survey Maps which was published in 1801. It is helpful in placing the sites associated with the Brays. Gabriel's mother, Margaret Boughton originated from the village of Sholdon, to the north of Mongeham where she was later to live. The impressive Castles of Deal, Sandown and Walmer, built by King Henry VIII to defend the coast are still standing. When John Bray died in 1795 he left his house in Lower Street to his daughter, Mary. His farm and Malthouse went to his son, John Raven Bray. The remainder seems to have been auctioned off in the same year and the advertisement for the sale is shown on

the right. The proceeds no doubt were divided between his four surviving children, including Gabriel.

Deal at that time was a rapidly expanding new town, but the Customs were in Deal early enough to establish an office at the corner of Customs House Lane and Middle Street with up to 6 watch towers along the seafront, one being at the top of Customs House Lane.

This office was in use until 1814 when they moved to bigger premises in Lower Street.

1792 Directory

Here is a custom-house, consisting of a collector, comptroller, surveyor, land-waiter, 2 riding officers, 10 boatmen & 10 tide-waiters, with a naval storehouse under the direction of the store-keeper, who is clerk to the cheque.

Durban, John jnr Landing Waiter to the customs.

Ferrier, Soloman Surveyor of Customs

Lawrence, George Naval Storekeeper

Sayer, Benj. Collector of Customs

Friend, Jacob Comptroller of the Navy

Knocker, Richard Inn-Keeper & Excise Office Keeper

Sayer, Joshua Clerk to the Naval Store-keeper

In 1783 newspaper report (Morning Herald) says the Army was called in to help the Excise officers and in a battle at the north end of Deal, seven soldiers were killed and many wounded.

Gabriel Bray attended Kings School in Canterbury from 1759 to 1764



This early engraving is of Kings School in Canterbury, Kent, which accordingly the Guinness Book of Records is the oldest in the country. It's historic records are kept in the school Archives. The School entry book still exists and show Gabriel being admitted on the 23rd of November 1759. A later entry for 29th September, 1761 is for his brother, John Raven Bray. Of the 20 boys admitted to King's in 1759, it is astonishing that seven were from Deal and may well have been friends of Gabriel. The records are especially important as supplying both brothers date of birth and where they were baptised, which in both cases was St. Leonard's in Deal.

Gabriel Bray painted this view of Canterbury in 1774



Gabriel would have been just 10 years of age when he entered Kings School and was to be educated there until his departure in 1764, aged 15. It was no doubt where his talent for painting was encouraged. Just ten years later he was to return to the City and record the view from St. Augustine's Abbey with the Cathedral in the distance, where his old school stood in the precincts. It is a fascinating painting as he has depicted himself with his sketch pad in the foreground with a friend. The original painting is now in the British Museum. According to the long inscription attached to the original mount of this drawing, it was presented to the young writer George Monck Berkeley (1763-1793) by Miss Anson as a keepsake when he was about to leave Canterbury. This must have been in 1775 when he left Kings School for Eton.

Memorandum of the Services of Lieutenant Gabriel Bray RN - 1817

MEMORANDUM of the Services of Lieutenant Gabriel Bray R.N. -

Several Bearings or Ranks.	Names of the several Ships.	Names of the several Admirals, Captains, and Commanders.	Stations on which the Ship was chiefly employed.	Date of Entry.	Date of Discharge.
Volunteer	Aquilon	Honble P. J. Periwall	Shannell	can't tell ... 20 ... but a very short time	
A B	Launceston	Capt John Gill	North America		
Midshipman	Ditto	-- Ditto --	Ditto	Three years & nine months but he was not the entire period & discharge	
A B but did duty as Mate	Antelope	Commodore Byron	Newfoundland	Two years, entry & discharge unknown	
	Panther	Capt George Gayton			
Lieutenant	Augusta Yacht	Sir Richard Bickerton	King's first Review	June 1773	unknown
Lieutenant	Ditto	-- Ditto --	visiting several arrivals of	June 1774	
Lieutenant	Pallas	Honble W. Cornwallis Comd	Coast of Guinea & West Indies	1776-7	
Lieutenant	Pallas	Rowland Cotton Comd	Ditto	1778	1778

Year	Several Bearings or Ranks	Name of the several ships	Names of the several Admirals, Captains and Commanders	Stations on which the Ship was chiefly employed	Date of Entry	Date of Discharge
1763	Volunteer	Aquilon	Honorable P.T. Percival	Channel	Cant Tell but only a short time	Ditto
1766	Able body Midshipman	Launceston	Captain John Gill	North America	3 years 9 months	
1769	Able body Midshipman	Launceston	Captain John Gill	North America		
1770	Able body Midshipman	Antelope	Commodore Byron	Newfoundland	2 years	Discharge unknown
1771	but did Duty as Mate	Panther	Captain George Gayton	Newfoundland		
1773	Lieutenant	Augusta Yacht	Sir Richard Bickerton	King's First Review	June 1773	Unknown
1774	Lieutenant	Augusta Yacht	Sir Richard Bickerton	Visiting the naval arrivals, etc.	June 1774	Unknown
1776-7	Lieutenant	Pallas	Honorable William Cornwallis - Commodore	Coast of Guinea & West Indies	1776-7	
1778	Lieutenant	Pallas	Rowland Cotton - Commodore	Coast of Guinea & West Indies	1778	1778
1779	Lieutenant	Sprightly Cutter	Admiral F.S. Drake	Downs and North Sea	1779	1780
1780	Lieutenant	Nimble Cutter	Admiral Drake and Admiral Evans.	Downs and North Sea	1780	1783
1783-1787	Lieutenant	Nimble Cutter	In the Peace	Downs	1783	1787

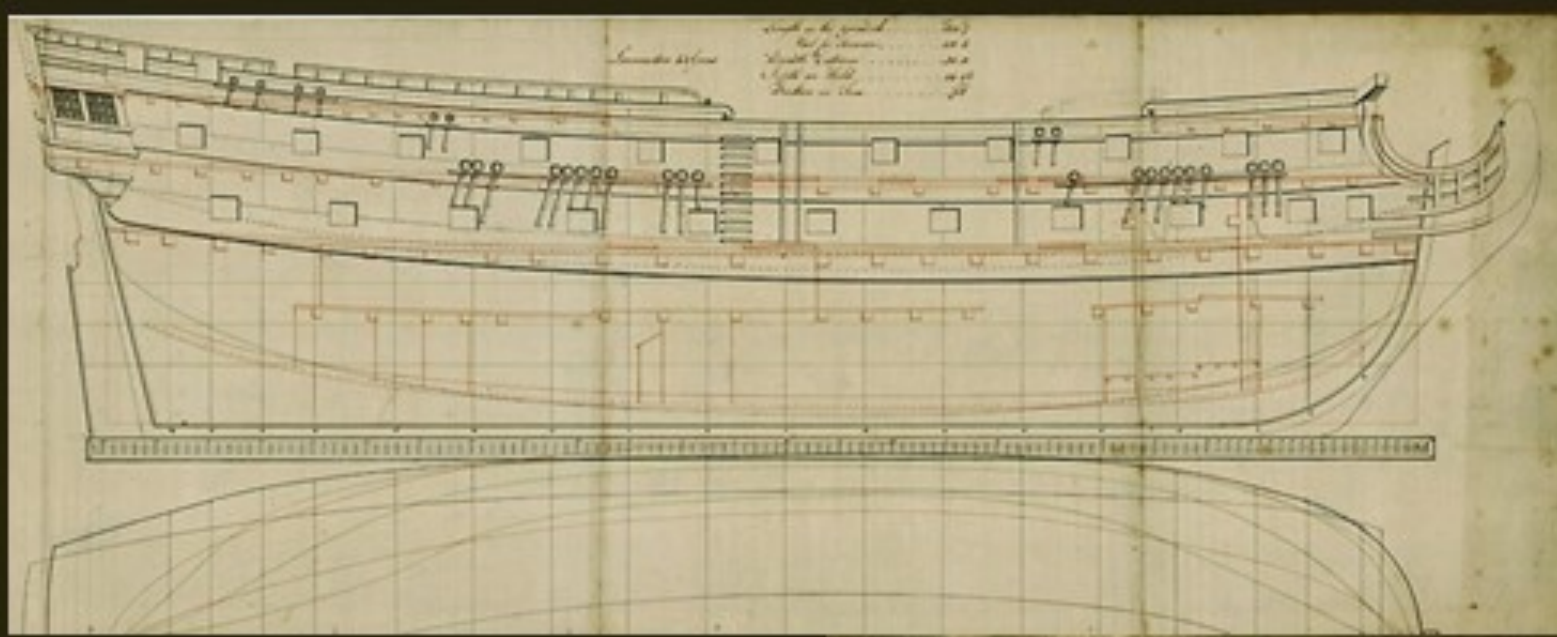
Lieutenant	Sprightly Cutter	Admiral F. S. Drake	Downes - North Sea -	1779	1781
Lieutenant	Nimble Cutter	Admiral F. S. Drake Admiral Boscawen -	Downes to North Sea	1780	1783 -
Lieutenant	Nimble Cutter -	In the Peace -	Downes	1783	1787 -
<i>Gabriel Bray Lieut. R.N. in 1777 Oct 18 1817.</i>					
<i>Being then allowed by the Lords of the Admiralty to go into the Service of the Revenue I was occasionally called under their orders & was</i>					
Lieut. Commr	Hind Cutter	Sir John Warner & Sir Edward Pellew	Landed with Arms Coast of La Vendee		
Ditto	Hind cutter	Sir Peter Parker	Spithead		
Ditto	Hind cutter	Admiral Mitchell	At the Holland		
<i>Gab Bray, Lieut. R.N. 1817</i>					

Being then allowed by the Lords of the Admiralty to go into the Service of the Revenue I was occasionally called under their orders and was					
1797	Lieutenant Commander	Hind Cutter	Sir John Warner & Sir Edward Pellew	Landed with Arms Coast of La Vendee	
	Lieutenant Commander	Hind Cutter	Sir Peter Parker	Spithead	
1799	Lieutenant Commander	Hind Cutter	Admiral Mitchell	At the Holland	
1800	had to abandon his career due to ill health			signed by Gabriel Bray Lieutenant. R.N. December 18th 1817	

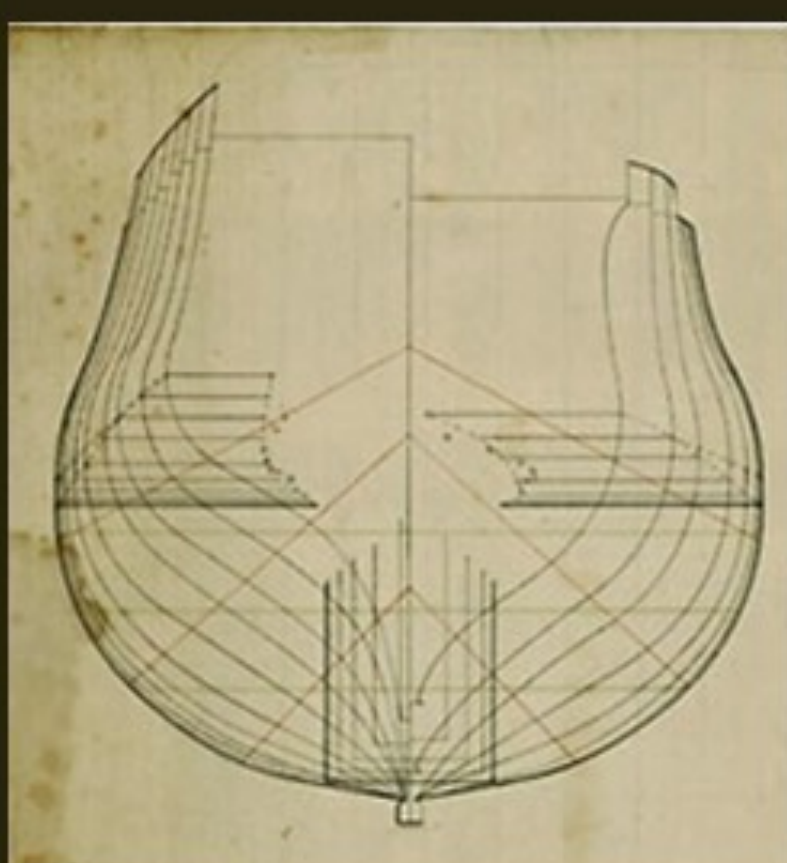
Whilst going through the extensive series of documents relating to both John and Gabriel Bray held in the Public Record Office at Kew I was very excited to find this sheet towards the end. It is described as a "Memorandum of the Services of Lieutenant Gabriel Bray". Up until then I was finding it difficult to complete the various ships and dates of service for him. This was to be a revelation for me as it actually written by him in 1817 and supplied all I wanted to know. There were a few dates missing that I was able to fill in and the updated sheet can be seen on the right. The first entry for 1763, is as a Volunteer on "HMS Aquilon" under Captain Philip Perceval as it patrolled the English Channel. It must have been the equivalent of a Summer job as he was still at school. Aged just 14 in that year. Official Naval Records have the following for Gabriel Bray :

- 25 June 1773 Lieutenant.
- September 1778 to 1780 "Sprightly"
- September 1780 to April 1781 "Sprightly"
- July 1781 to October 1786 "Nimble"

Gabriel Bray was a Midshipman on HMS Launceston under Captain John Gell from 1766 -1769



HMS Launceston



HMS Launceston



Captain John Gell

Again we have to look at his Memorandum to find his first posting after leaving school. This was to be as a sailor on HMS Launceston where he would hold the junior position of Midshipman. It is astonishing to think that at just 17 years of age he would be sailing to North America, where he would spend the next three years under the command of Captain John Gell, whose portrait and plans of the ship are shown in this slide.

Gabriel Bray Sailed to Newfoundland on HMS Antelope with Commodore John Byron in 1770.



Commodore John Byron



Gabriel's memorandum records that his next destination was to return to North America, this time he was to spend two years off Newfoundland. Initially under Commodore John Byron, shown here, on HMS Antelope and the following year on HMS Panther under Captain George Gaston. He notes that he took on the position of Mate on the latter. It is in the year 1770, aged 21, that he passes his Lieutenant exams and awaits promotion.

Gabriel Sailed to Newfoundland with Admiral Clark Gayton in 1771





This fine length portrait is of Admiral Clark Gayton, whom Gabriel Bray served under. In the background to the left, behind Gayton's right arm, is the 'Antelope'. Another indeterminate vessel flying a red ensign is on the right. Gayton's right hand holds a rolled up chart and rests on a table full of charts.

In June 1773, Gabriel Bray was on the "Royal Yacht Augusta" during the Spithead Review.



At the close In the year 1773 there was to be a Royal Fleet Review at Spithead off the coast of Portsmouth. King George III was to be on board the Royal Yacht Augusta” whilst the Fleet sailed by. Gabriel Bray was very fortunate to be a member of the crew for this historic event on June 22nd of that year. He showed tremendous foresight to paint the fleet from his vantage point on board the ship which is shown here with the King standing by the flag.

In June 1773, Gabriel Bray presents King George III a Painting of the Spithead Review..



Mr Bray, of Deal, Midshipman of the Augusta yacht, being ordered on duty at Portsmouth during the late review, made a draught of the whole fleet, with a prospect of the Isle of Wight; the Captain presented it to his Majesty, who ordered a copy of it to be drawn, with the Draughtsman's name affixed to it, which being executed, Mr Bray had the honour of being introduced to the Royal Presence, kissed his Majesty's hand, and was made a Lieutenant of the Augusta.



The following day, his Captain was so impressed with the painting that he showed it to the King. A newspaper report shortly afterwards informs its readers that “Mr. Bray of Deal, midshipman of the Augusta yacht, being ordered on duty at Portsmouth during the late review, made a draught of the whole fleet, with a prospect of the Isle of Wight. The Captain presented it to his Majesty, who ordered a copy of it to be drawn, with the Draughtsman's name affixed to it, which being executed, Mr Bray, had the honour of being introduced to the Royal Presence, kissed his Majesty's hand, and was made a Lieutenant of the Augusta”.

The original painting, which is shown at the top, which is 5 feet long, is still to be seen at Windsor Castle. The painting below depicts the crowds looking on to the Review from the shore at Portsmouth by John Cleveley .

Gabriel was to spend a further year on “HMS Princess Augusta”, under Sir Richard Bickerton where he records on his Memorandum that they “visited the Naval Arrivals”.

A small cottage at Middle Deal in Kent, June 1774





After his time at Sea on board Augusta, Gabriel returned back to his home town of Deal in June 1774 on half pay . It was here that he was to begin painting watercolours of what he saw around him in an Album which he was to add to over the next two years in what was to become an exiting and eventful period of his life. We are fortunate today that it has survived virtually complete and provides a window on his life. The majority of the paintings are dated and briefly described. I have as best as I can placed them in chronological order with further information where available. He was able to record what others ignored and possess the quality of snapshots of what he saw around him. The famous marine painters of the time ignored the everyday and depicted ships and battles instead which are relatively common. Many of the drawings were made directly and sometimes rapidly into Bray`s sketchbook, on board Pallas, or away on a mission.

This is the first one dated June of that year and is described as being “ a small cottage at Middle Deal in Kent” by him. Until their move to Great Mongeham in 1776, John Gabriel and his family are shown as living in Middle Street, which is now the High Street. His daughter, Mary was still living there until her death in 1850, aged 96. The Street runs inland parallel to the Beach and still contains a number of historic houses and shops.





Taking in New Hay & Stacking it



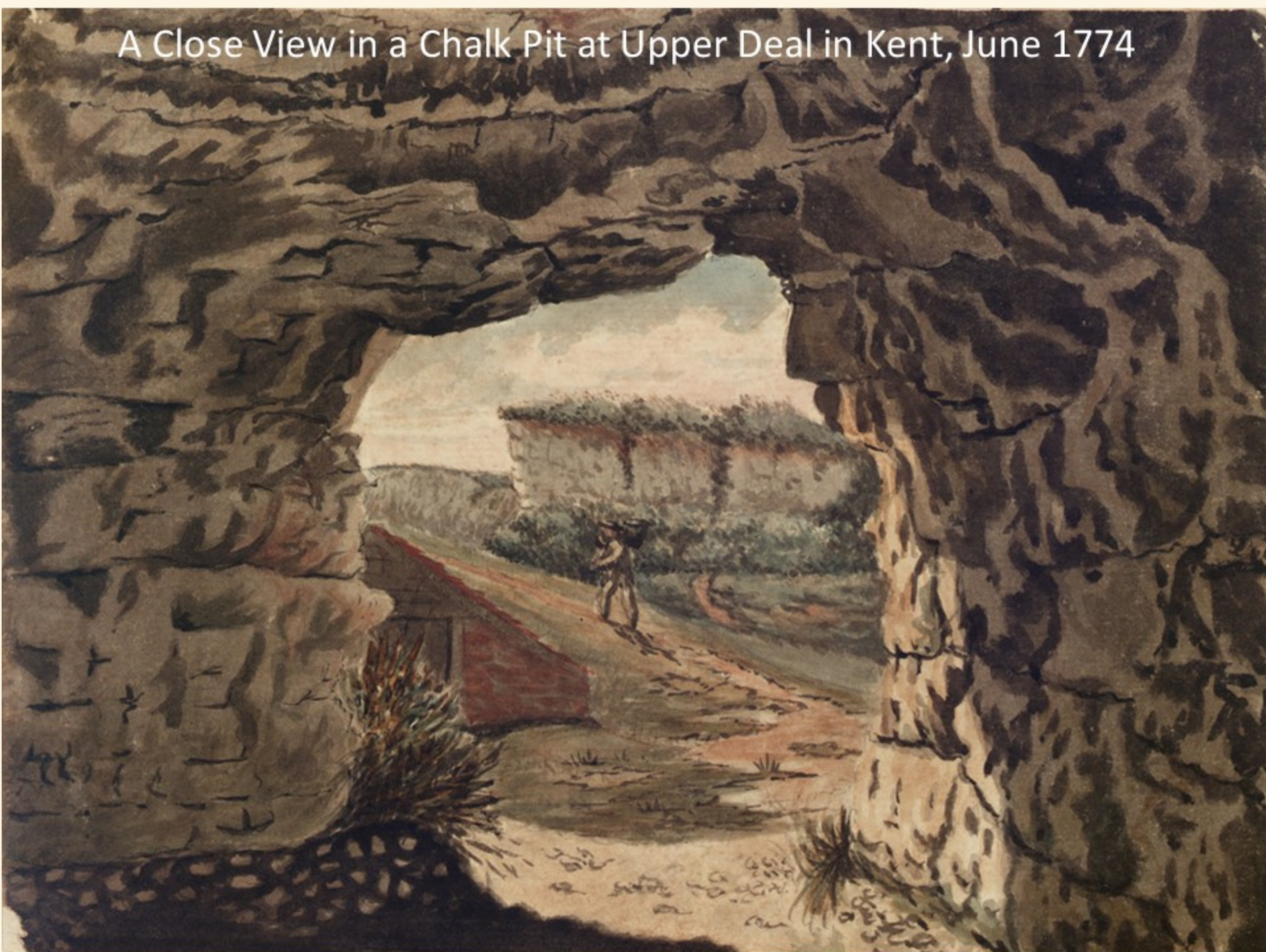
Gabriel's father, John, bought up a number of properties and farms from the Prize money he received from the Navy. This scene may well depict a harvesting scene on his farm which is described by him as "Taking in New Hay and stacking in June 1774". Alongside is another reminder of this with a characterful painting of a "Harvest Man" painted in August of that year. It shows the reaper with his sickle and a small keg, probably for ale as necessary refreshment in the hot and dusty work of summer harvesting. It is signed 'AdVprGB' (to the life by Gabriel Bray) as are many in the Album showing his skill at depicting a scene as he saw it straight onto the page.

View up a river with wooded banks August 1774



I have grouped these three paintings together. The large one is describes at as "a view up a river with wooded banks painted in August 1774". The other sketches are of a riding horse (from the docked tail) a long-horned cow resting by a bush was probably done near where he lived in Kent,

A Close View in a Chalk Pit at Upper Deal in Kent, June 1774



This interesting painting is described as "A Close View in a Chalk Pit as Upper Deal in Kent". Research has shown that there was a large field there on the Tithe Map called Chalk Pit Field with a Lime Kiln on it, which is probably what he has depicted here.

Anchored warship firing a salute, June 1774



Adm. V. G. June 74

The area of coast from Dover to the Thames estuary was known as "The Downs". Gabriel's drawing here shows a British naval two-decker of at least 64-guns, with a cutter to the left firing a salute off the coast of Deal in June 1774.

A military figure leaning on a pile of bales, with a seaman carrying kegs in the background 1774



This is another of the drawings that Gabriel was to add to his sketch book whilst in Deal. It depicts a military figure, possibly a sentry leaning on a pile of bales, with a seaman carrying kegs in the background. The main figure clearly belongs to a corps which remains to be identified and, given the beach location, it has been suggested he may be connected with anti-smuggling operations at that time, which Gabriel was later to be part of.

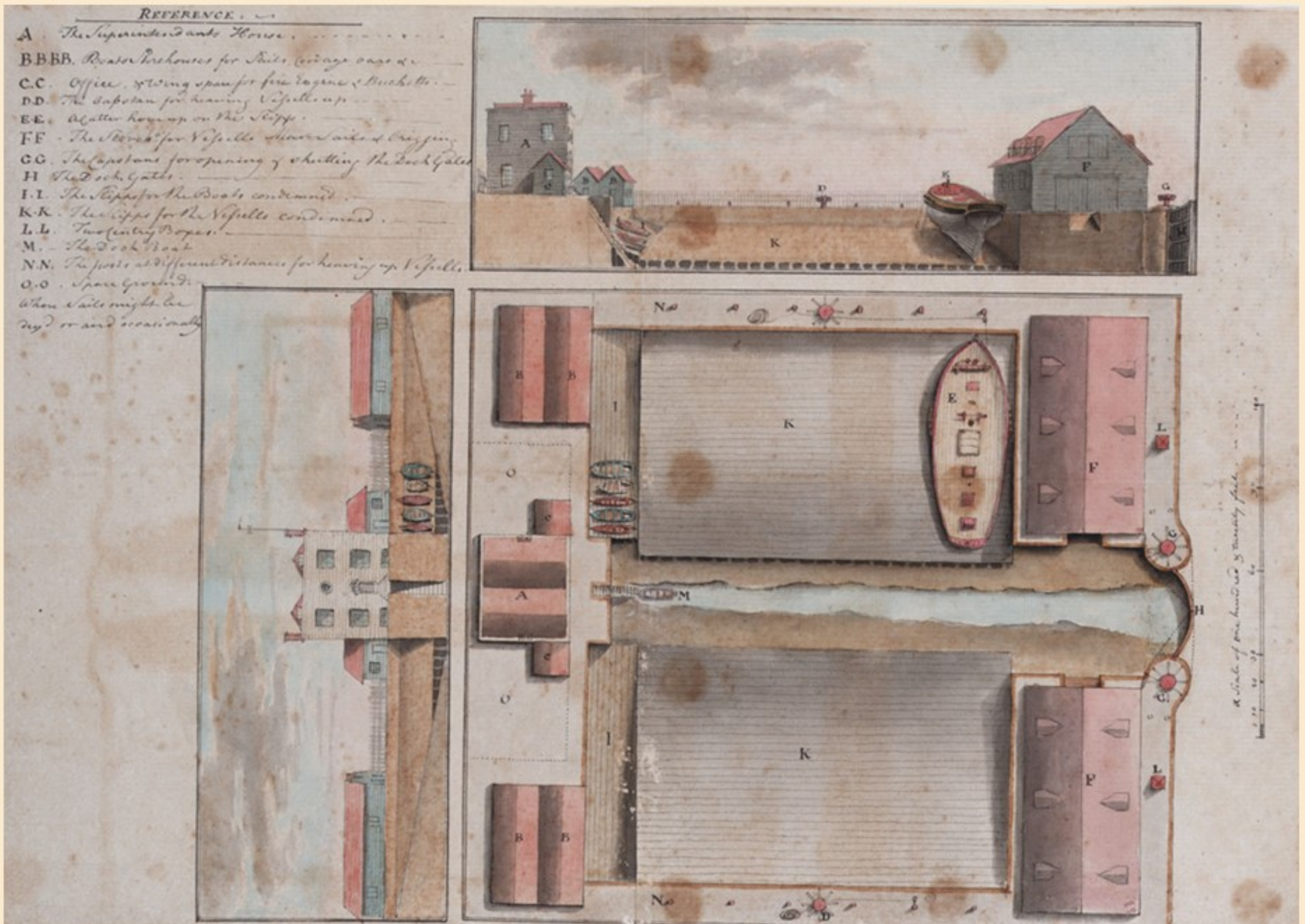
Seamen painting a jolly boat, July 1774



AdVprGB July 74

A drawing signed 'AdVprGB July 74' (to the life by Gabriel Bray) showing two men working on a jolly boat (the smallest boat warships generally carried), which has been propped up on its starboard gunwale for convenience. Many of the Navy's boats were built at Deal in Kent, where it had a boatyard for the purpose and where Bray and his family lived.

Plan and two sections of a proposed dockyard at Deal by Gabriel Bray in 1774



This is an extremely detailed proposal, to a scale measuring 120 feet and with a lettered key, for a small tidal dockyard in Deal. Its evident purpose is the maintenance and minor repair of small naval vessels on the two sloping 'slips' flanking the central channel that runs back from the dock gate. Two smaller slips for boats lie beneath the Superintendent's House at the landward end. The other two views are transverse sections at right angles, on the axis of the channel and across it. Deal already had a small yard where the Navy built and repaired ships' boats, of which his proposal is a logical development. Whether he ever submitted it to the Admiralty for consideration is not yet known.

Two views by Gabriel Bray of a proposed dockyard at Deal 1774



A close up of the previous slide to show the proposed buildings as Gabriel envisaged them if they were ever built against the Old Town of Deal today.

'A Sticker-up of Bills on Tower Hill at the Rendezvous at the King's Arms' October 1774



Man having his shoes polished October 1774





A Sticker-up of Bills on Tower Hill at the Rendezvous at the King's Arms.



By October of 1774, Gabriel had received a commission to sail on HMS Pallas and was to make his way from Deal to London and then to Portsmouth. He has left us with a number of Watercolours of what he saw en route.

The first of these is described as "A Sticker-up of Bills on Tower Hill at the Rendezvous at the King's Arms'. This was the City naval rendezvous, most significantly for the local impress service, which included both voluntary recruitment and the 'press gang' when emergency required this. He no doubt had the job of sticking up Royal Navy recruiting bills.

The other painting is of a Man having his shoes polished with the same date. An every day scene, which would have been so common that few would have bothered to paint it.

A Naval Press Gang on Tower Hill, London by Collins



“Manning the Navy” by Collins depicts a naval press gang rounding up men of pretty poor quality by the look of them on Tower Hill, London. Such methods were the only way to ensure that ships were adequately, if not well manned. Genuine volunteers accounted for as little as a quarter of the ships company. The Impress Service, which was the normal land-based naval recruitment arm usually just seeking volunteers, would in times of emergency organize gangs to roam the streets of towns and villages forcefully taking (pressing) men for the fleet. The London impress was based at Tower Hill, with the naval receiving ship into which men were first placed for taking out by river, moored close by off the Tower.

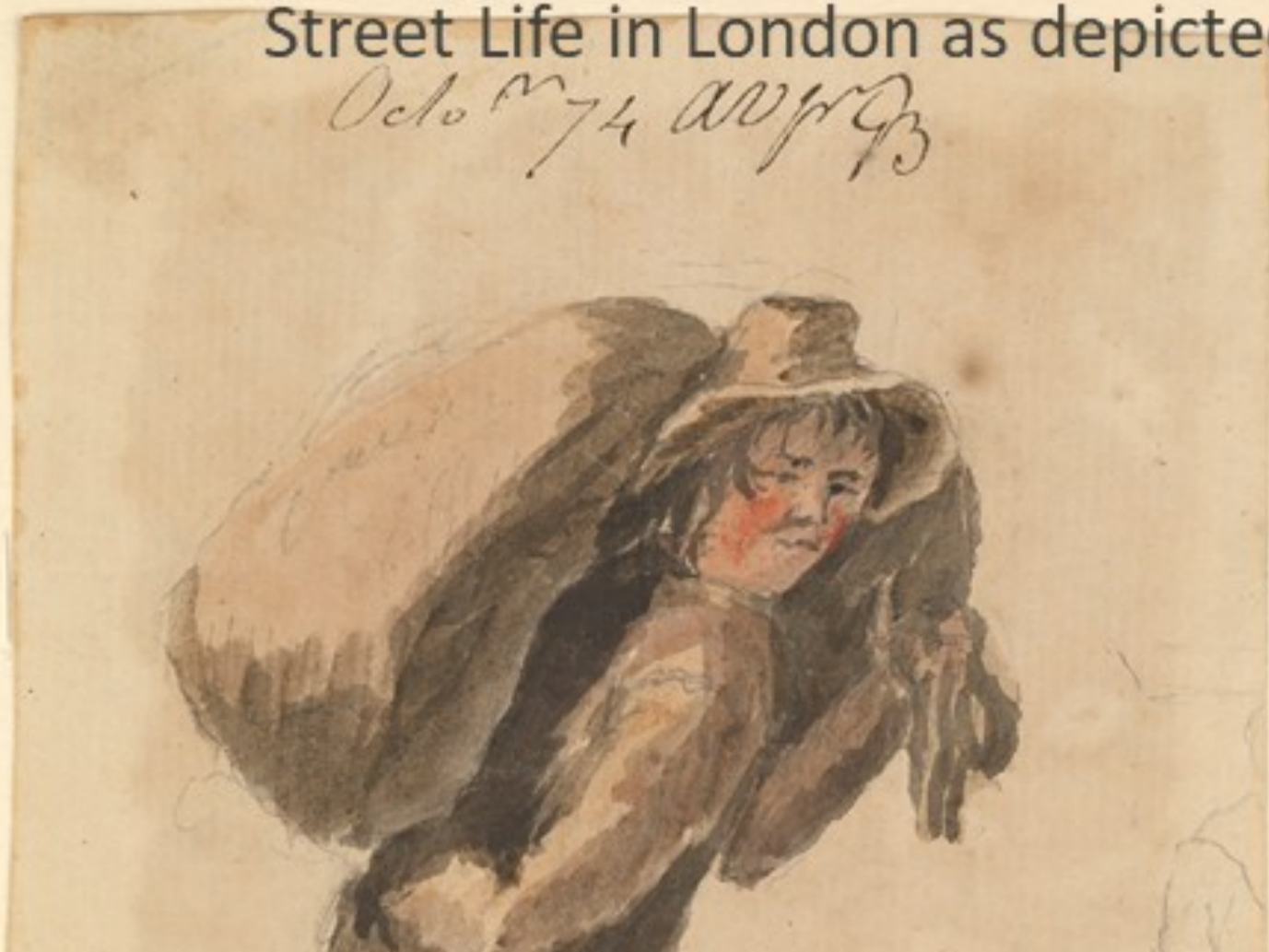
Two male figures, one with a large cocked hat and a quizzing glass in London 1774



A caricature drawing of two men, the dandified one in the hat apparently of higher social status than the other with his tongue partly out to the side of his mouth.

Street Life in London as depicted by Gabriel Bray in October 1774

Octo^r 74 G.B.





Two further every day sketches of London Street Life observed by Gabriel.

Two men walking past a woman asleep beside a wheelbarrow of fruit, which is being stolen by two small boys in London in 1774



The woman is probably a street vendor. The two gentlemen strolling past on the left give the impression of being complicit in the urchins' pilfering of fruit from the barrow.

A shop on the Point at Portsmouth, November 1774



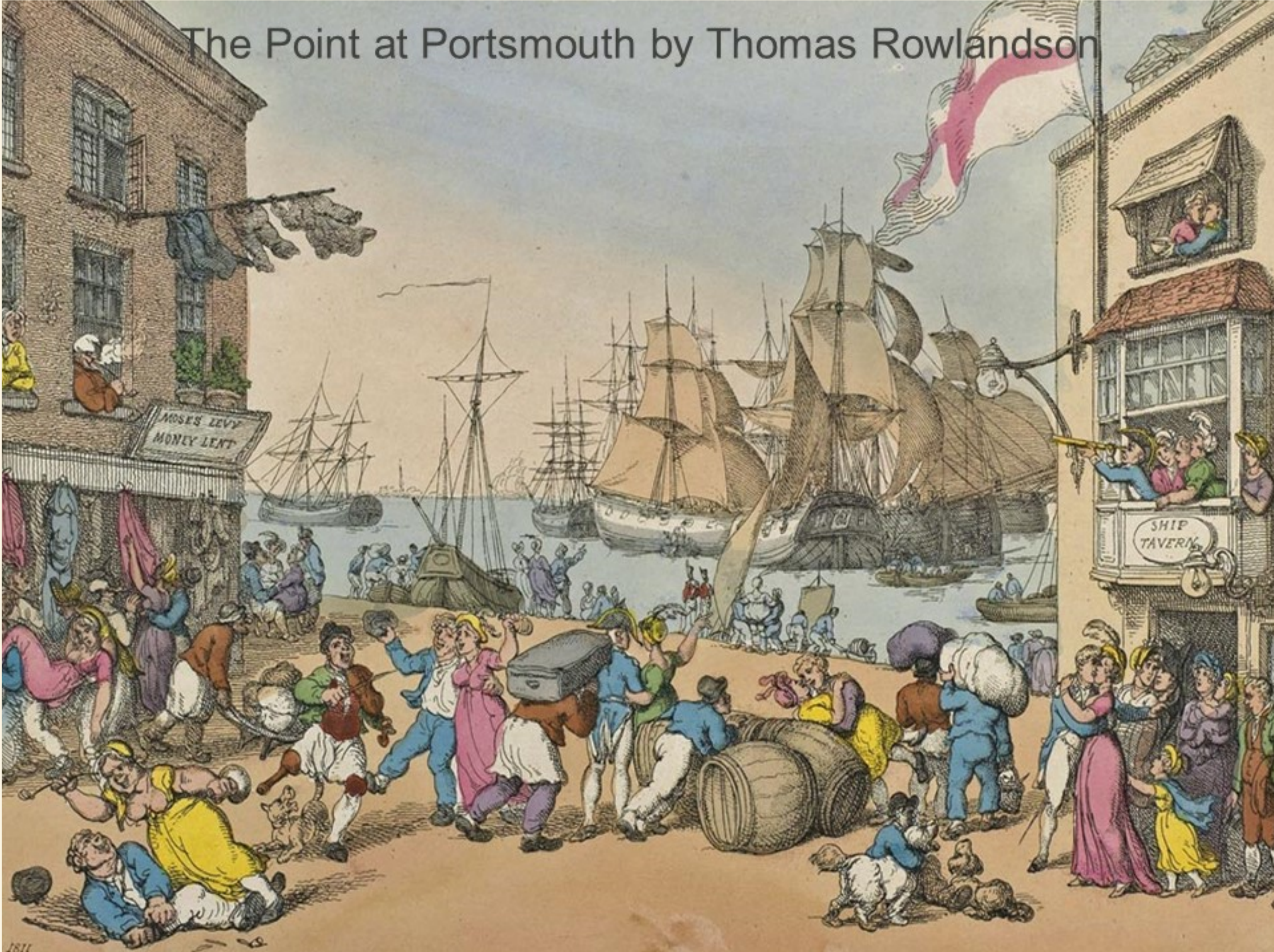
Gabriel appears to have arrived in Portsmouth in November of 1774 and has left us with some sketches of what he saw. This is a wonderfully well observed record of a greengrocer's shop on old Portsmouth Point, drawn while the 'Pallas' was fitting out to sail for Africa in December 1774. The neatly dressed female proprietor sits 'at the receipt of custom' inside the door. Autumn fruit is stacked in baskets outside an open casement window to the left, with baskets of vegetables on a bench below. Others lie to the right on a smaller bench below a bay display window. The shop also sells tobacco, since bundles of clay pipes lie on the top shelf in the window to the right.

A View of the Dock Gates, taken from the Navy Coffee house window, December 1774





The view appears to be along the Dockyard wall towards the Hard in Portsmouth, with one of the waterfront taverns on the left, stallholders selling produce and two men possibly playing knucklebones on the paved street surface in the foreground.



This is a famous engraving by Thomas Rowlandson of a similar view of the harbour at Portsmouth to that depicted by Bray. It shows an old clothes shop at left with a sign that reads, "Moses Levy Money Lent." At right is the "Ship Tavern." People are bustling to depart in the foreground: baggage is carried, casks are rolled, sailors and women embrace or fight.

Watermen at Portsmouth Point, November 1774



Gabriel would often paint characters he saw as he went along from life. Here are two paintings of Watermen in Portsmouth, before his departure.

HMS Pallas



Admiral William Cornwallis



The Painting on the right is of the forty four gun frigate "HMS Pallas". It was on board this ship that Gabriel Bray was to take up the position of second Lieutenant for the next two years, under Admiral William Cornwallis, shown here. In his Sketchbook he was to capture the ordinary and everyday moments of Royal Navy life during his time on board in a series of paintings. The voyage took him to Tenerife and a number of West African destinations - to support British commercial interests there, including the slave trade - before making for Barbados and finally Jamaica.

When duties permitted, Bray used these months to observe and record the people and circumstances that surrounded him. The results are remarkably unconfined by artistic convention, picturesque sensibility or indeed, by his own social position. He painted ordinary sailors, Royal Marines and servants as much as his brother officers.

The Sailmaker ticketing the Hammocks on board the Pallas, November 1774



Gabriel wasted no time in adding more watercolours of life on board HMS Pallas to his Album. This is the first, whilst still in Portsmouth and described by him as "The Sailmaker ticketing the Hammocks on board the Pallas, November 1774". Men were issued with hammocks which bore a number indicating their place in the ship. The head of the capstan indicates this is an upper-deck scene. The drawing also shows the working dress of a sailmaker. He was required to inspect all of the sails taken onboard ship and to attend all surveys and conversions of the sails and rigging and to keep all of the sails in good repair. He was also expected to assist with hammocks as depicted here by Bray.

Four Marines eating Pease on board the Pallas, November 1774





This is another scene painted in November before HMS Pallas sailed of four fully uniformed marines below an upper deck hatchway. The two visibly eating are seated on sea chests and the meal could be pease pottage (or pudding) - a porridge of dried split peas baked with water and seasoning.

Half length portrait of a young man, painted by Gabriel Bray in December 1774



A drawing of a young man, possibly one of the 'Pallas's' midshipmen or master's mates.

The Steward of the Pallas weighing a Piece of Beef, December 1774



A Sailor bringing up his hammock, Pallas, January 1775



The first drawing of a steward was probably done at Portsmouth when the 'Pallas' was on the point of sailing for Africa in December 1774 or at least early in the voyage, since the meat appears to be fresh rather than salted. Ships did carry livestock, but probably delayed slaughtering it until well into the voyage.

The other painting is probably a seaman bringing his hammock up to air from below on the 'Pallas' early in Bray's voyage to Africa. The hammock is clearly ticketed 'CD No. 4' referring to the man's place and number in the ship.

'A View of a Dutch Fort taken from the Pallas when passing it supposed to be Artez December 1774



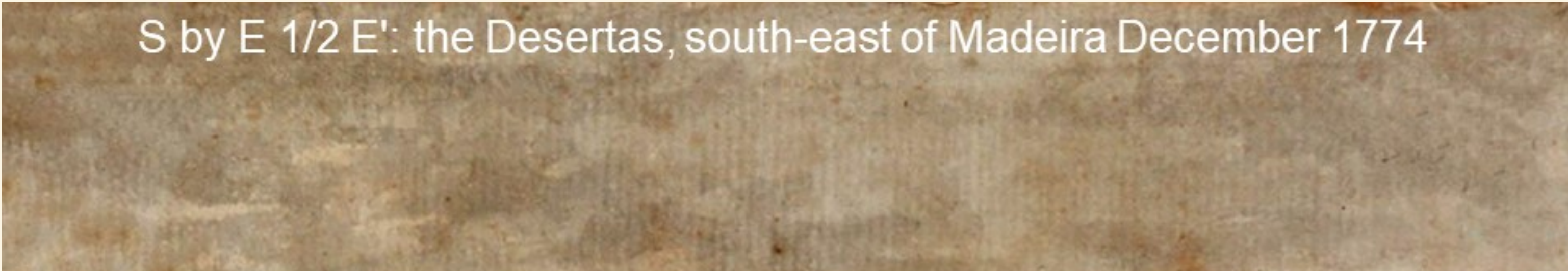


The scene is probably what the log of the 'Pallas' calls the Dutch fort of Anzer, one of at least three between Fort Appollonia and Cape Coast Castle - Like all such forts it would have been a trading (and slaving) station.

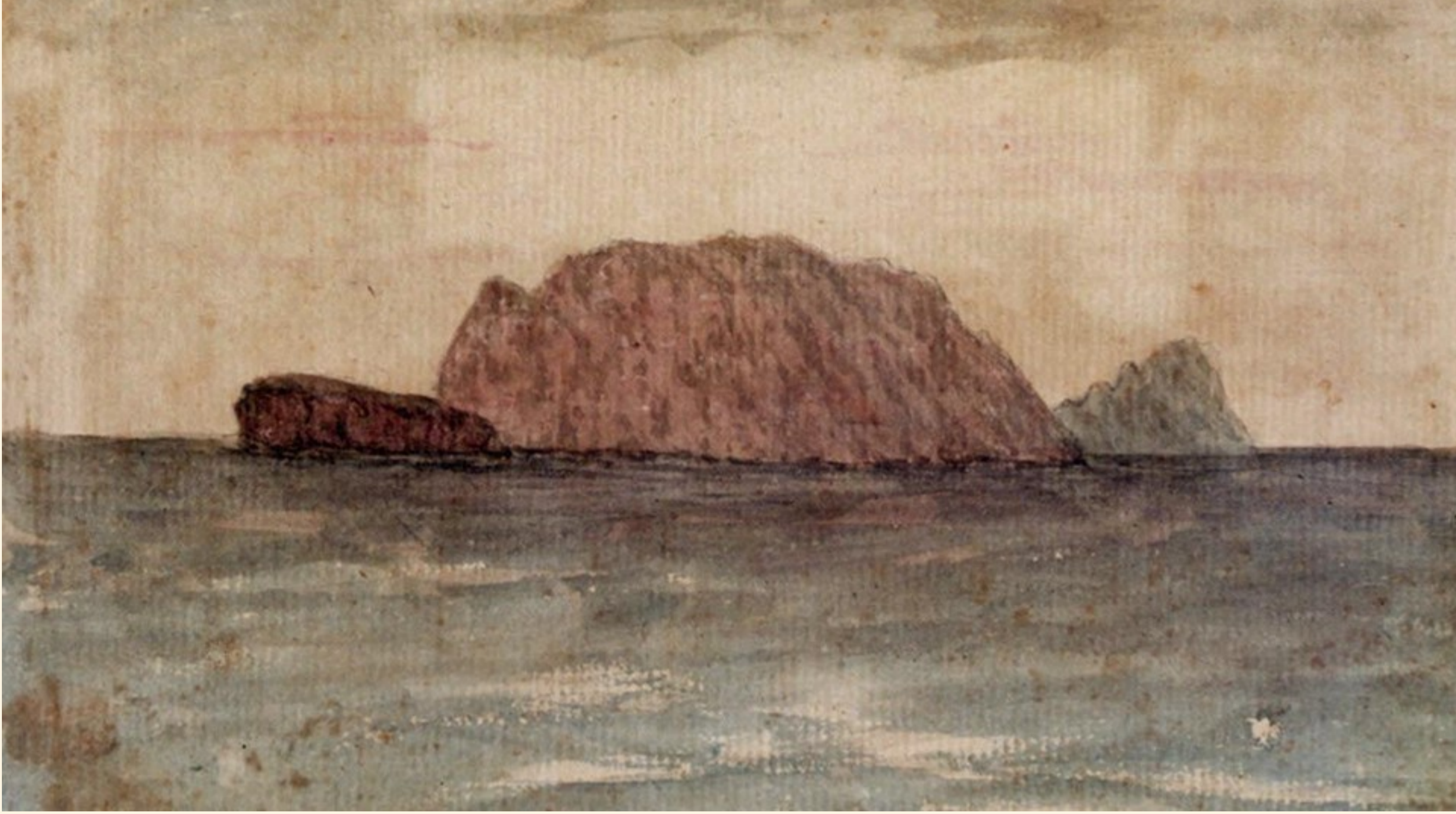


Deserters [Desertas] taken on the spot from the Pallas, December 1774

The Desertas are four small rocky islands in the Atlantic Ocean. They are situated S. E. of Madeira and are called Bugio, Chao, Deserta Grande and Sail Rock. Uninhabited, they are visited only by fishermen and herdsman.' Bray's view appears to be of most of Deserta Grande and the northern tip of Bugio, seen from the north-north-west looking down the chain. This is a very rare view of these remote islets, taken as the 'Pallas' sailed south from Funchal, Madeira, for West Africa in December 1774



S by E 1/2 E': the Desertas, south-east of Madeira December 1774



south-east of Madeira, as viewed by Bray from the 'Pallas', on a bearing of south by east and a half east. Today they are a restricted area of natural conservation interest.

The Expedition Brigg as she appeared wrecked on the Western Point of the island of Sta Cruz Teneriffe - December 1774



A drawing showing a British brig called 'Expedition' aground, with salvage in progress, on the western point of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Boats are in attendance and men on deck are apparently recovering cargo from the hold with a tackle rigged to the mainstay. The upper masts and yards have already been removed. It was presumably seen by Bray as his ship ran into the harbour at Santa Cruz.

Under the Pallas's half deck December 1774

Dec: 74 (det for 43)



View of the fountain &c at St Cruz in the Island of Teneriff, December 1774



This is a still-life study aft on the 'Pallas, with Marines' drums and leather buckets hoisted up out of the way and a gun and a water cask secured for sea.

The other watercolour shows a view of the fountain in front of the fortress at Tenerife, taken when the 'Pallas' called there en route for Africa, 6 - 18 January 1775. The discrepancy with Bray's inscribed date suggests he added it and the title later, from slightly inaccurate recollection. While Britain remained at peace with Spain, Santa Cruz was a regular supply point - for water and fresh provisions - to vessels sailing south and west on the transatlantic trade winds.

The Pike [Peak] of Teneriff bearing W 1/2 S 9 Lgs January 1775

W 1775





The drawing shows the Peak of Tenerife, bearing west and half a point south at a distance of nine leagues (nine sea-miles), probably as the 'Pallas' was approaching the island, where she called en route to Africa.

Two Marines on the Pallas's Gangway January 1775



Taken on board the Pallas at sea, January 1775



A drawing of two marines on the Pallas gangway. One of the Marines, is apparently trying to take something out of the other's eye, probably while the 'Pallas' was at Tenerife. A cutter is on the horizon to the left. The other watercolour shows a midshipman, apparently dozing in a slightly precarious position on the ship's taffrail. Her stern lantern and red ensign are seen behind. The discolouring is from a coat of varnish that was later applied to some of the paintings.

A Centinel on the Pallas's gangway, January 1775



Seaman leaning on a gun on the 'Pallas' 1775



A fully uniformed Marine on sentry duty while the 'Pallas' probably at Tenerife from the date. A cutter is on the horizon to the left. The other view on the 'Pallas's' fo'c'sle at sea, looking forward over one of her chase guns, with the starboard clew of her fore-course visible above her bowsprit. It is possible the seaman is a forward lookout. The name 'Pallas' is carved or painted on the gun.

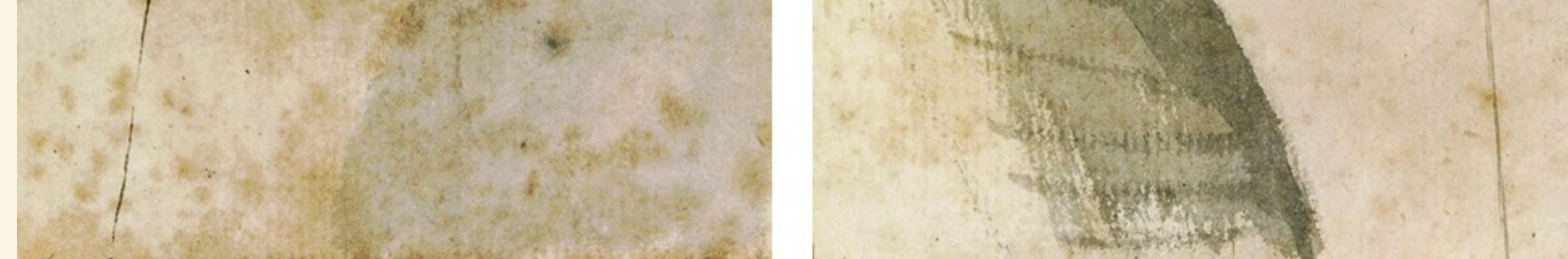
A Sailor fishing off a gun. January 1775

Jan 7. 75. 1775



A Seaman fishing off a gun. January 1775





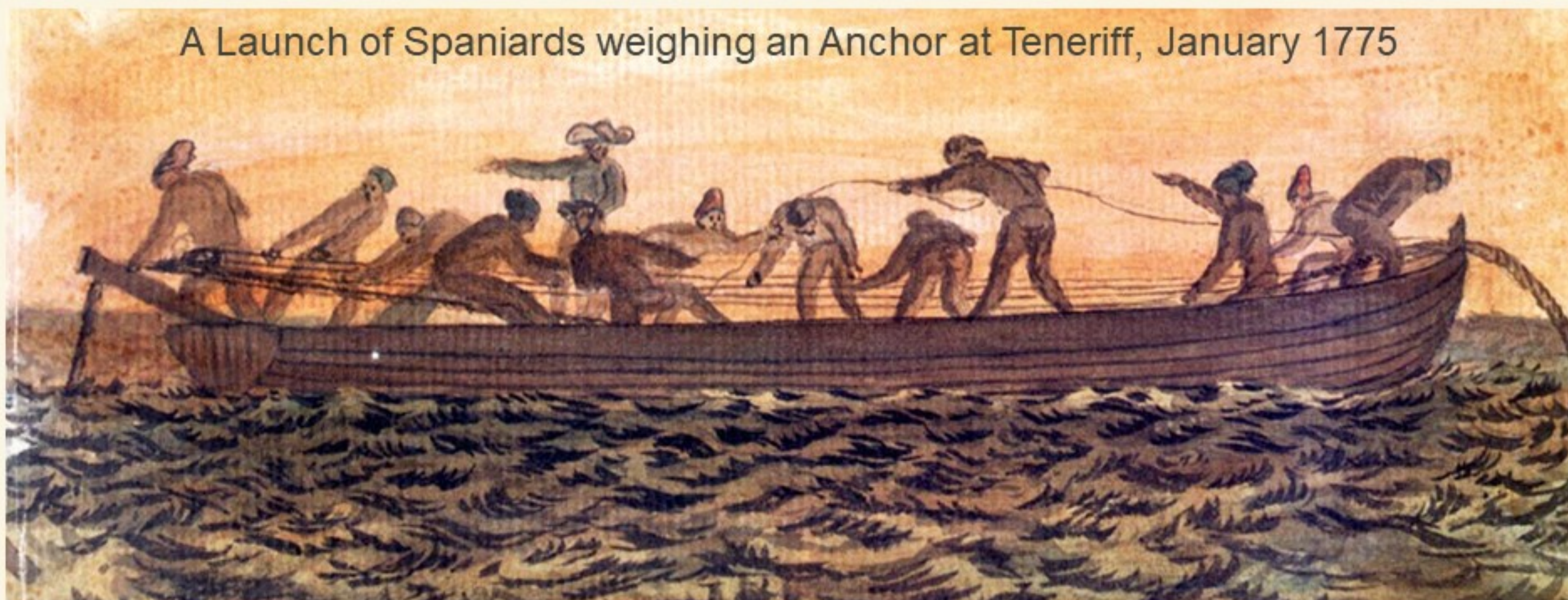
The two drawings are of a sailor fishing, possibly at anchor in Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

A Marine & Seaman fishing off the Anchor on board the Pallas in Senegal Road, January 1775



The date can be fairly closely identified as 29-30 January from the ship's log. The men are apparently sitting on the port anchor. There are in fact two anchors, a main bower with a smaller stream anchor on top of it, to which the buoy on which the seaman is sitting is probably attached. The ship is clearly lying off the mouth of the Senegal River, presumably only to single anchor using her starboard bower.

A Launch of Spaniards weighing an Anchor at Teneriff, January 1775



A View of the Fort at Senegal taken from the Road, February 1775



A view taken probably in the harbour at Santa Cruz de Tenerife. The men are using a launch, the largest boat ships normally carried, to recover a ship's bower or stream anchor - both large and heavy.

The view below is of the British fort at the mouth of the Senegal River was the first place of call specified in the ship's orders for the 'Pallas' voyage in 1775, and she arrived there on 28 January, sailing again on the 31st for the Gambia River: Bray's inscribed date is therefore slightly adrift, probably due to faulty memory. Three small vessels are present on the right, probably merchantmen or small slavers, or others attached to the fort. On the left behind the fort is another brig in seagoing condition, presumably the one which Captain Cornwallis's log noted as for the use of Governor O'Hara at the fort, at whose request he supplied her with a small consignment of gunpowder on 31 January, just before the 'Pallas' sailed.

Three Kroomen of Sierra Leone February 1775



A view taken probably in the harbour at Santa Cruz de Tenerife. The men are using a launch, the largest boat ships normally carried, to recover a ship's bower or stream anchor - both large and heavy.

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Heads of West African Natives painted by Gabriel Bray in March 1775



The Fantyman Head Dress, Gold Coast, March 1775



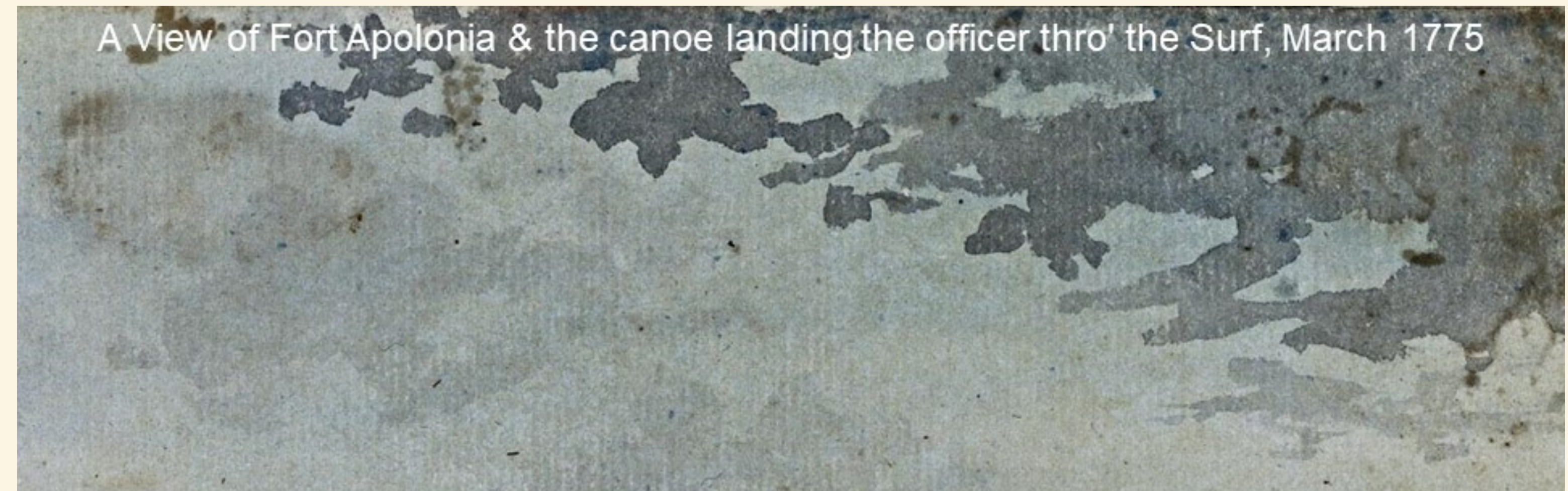
The Head-dress of the Jolliffes, Gum Coast, March 1775



These fascinating watercolours depict African native heads from tribes that Gabriel Bray saw when the "Pallas" called at Senegal on the way down the African coast in March 1775. They show the head dress of the Wappo negroes of the Ivory Coast, The Jolliffes of the Gum Coast and the Fantyman of the Gold Coast showing their tufted hair style.

Bray's ship, the 'Pallas', was running along the coast of Ghana from about 19 March 1775 and reached Accra on the 30th.

A View of Fort Apolonia & the canoe landing the officer thro' the Surf, March 1775





A drawing of Fort Apollonia, It shows a scene in West Africa, on Bray's first 'Pallas' voyage. Having first called at the River Senegal and River Gambia, the 'Pallas' was instructed to call at Cape Appollonia where the Africa Company were constructing this fort, 'consequent to an Act of Parliament', before continuing to Cape Coast Castle. The 'Pallas' in fact only sent a boat with an officer ashore here as they passed on 17 March 1775, while the ship stayed in the offing. The British fort - which was undoubtedly protecting traffic including, if not mainly, the slave trade - is in the centre, flanked on either side by stockades enclosing African huts under the shade of palm trees. The view is from the ship, showing the boat - a local canoe - carrying the officer ashore with a waving figure on the bow and others waving from the shore



Half-length portrait of an officer from the 'Pallas', possibly Alexander Agnew January 1775



Mr James Cornwallis, Pallas, March 1775

While the sitter is unidentified, he is clearly a lieutenant of the 'Pallas' and the drawing shows how officers must have looked much of the time in working 'undress' uniform.

The painting on the right is of James Cornwallis, who was probably a cousin of 'Pallas's' captain, the Hon. William Cornwallis. He was rated as a master's mate on this voyage on which two other aristocratic Cornwallis connections also served; the Hon. Thomas Pakenham, rated as able seaman, and Lord Charles Fitzgerald, a brother of the Duke of Leinster, who was rated midshipman. James Cornwallis became 'Pallas's' second lieutenant in 1776, a captain in 1781 and died in 1790 This drawing shows him looking at Bray's sketchbook, specifically at a drawing of a seaman carrying a hammock, which appears on an earlier slide, before watercolour was applied.

Oriental seaman with his left leg tucked behind his head March 1775



Man in a red frogged coat and tassled cocked hat

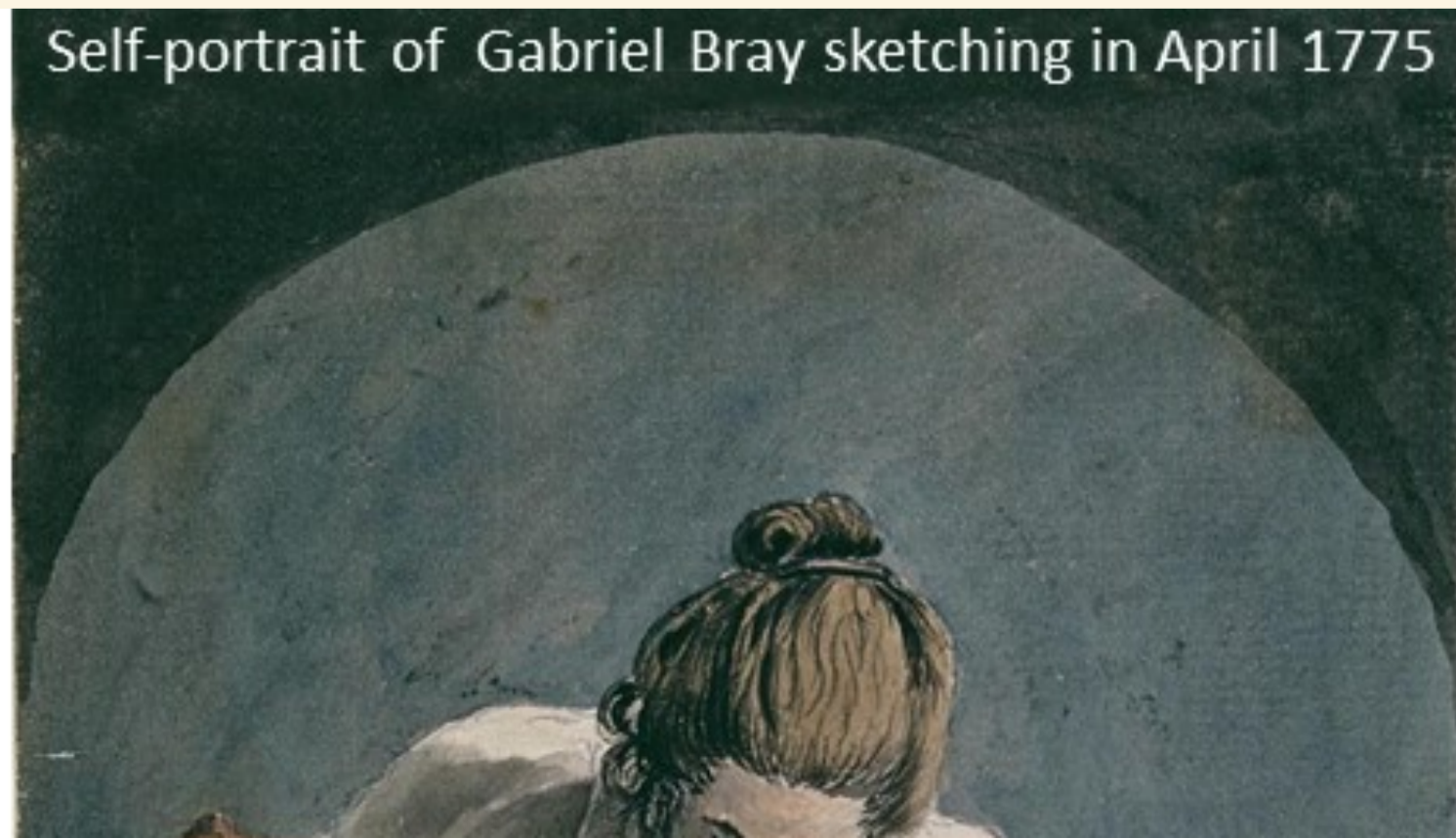


This drawing presumably shows a young seaman of the 'Pallas' practising contortion, his left leg raised behind his head. The other drawing of a slightly caricatured figure must be someone seen on Bray's first African voyage. The dress is not that of an officer of the Marines, or necessarily military. The tasselled cocked hat and rather theatrical 'hand to heart' gesture suggest it may be a Portuguese official from some point along the 'slave coast'.

Self-portrait of Gabriel Bray shaving March 1775



Self-portrait of Gabriel Bray sketching in April 1775





These are two self-portraits in the Bray album, probably using the same folded mirror. Both also show the long hair which men of the time could favour, usually tied back into a pigtail with ribbon among sailors (and soldiers) and powdered white in formal circumstances. The one on the right is a good illustration of the equipment of a watercolourist of the period, with its box of pigments and ceramic palettes, which may well be those introduced by Reeves at that time. The scene of both is likely to be the ship's wardroom.

Two small Royal Navy frigates in April 1775



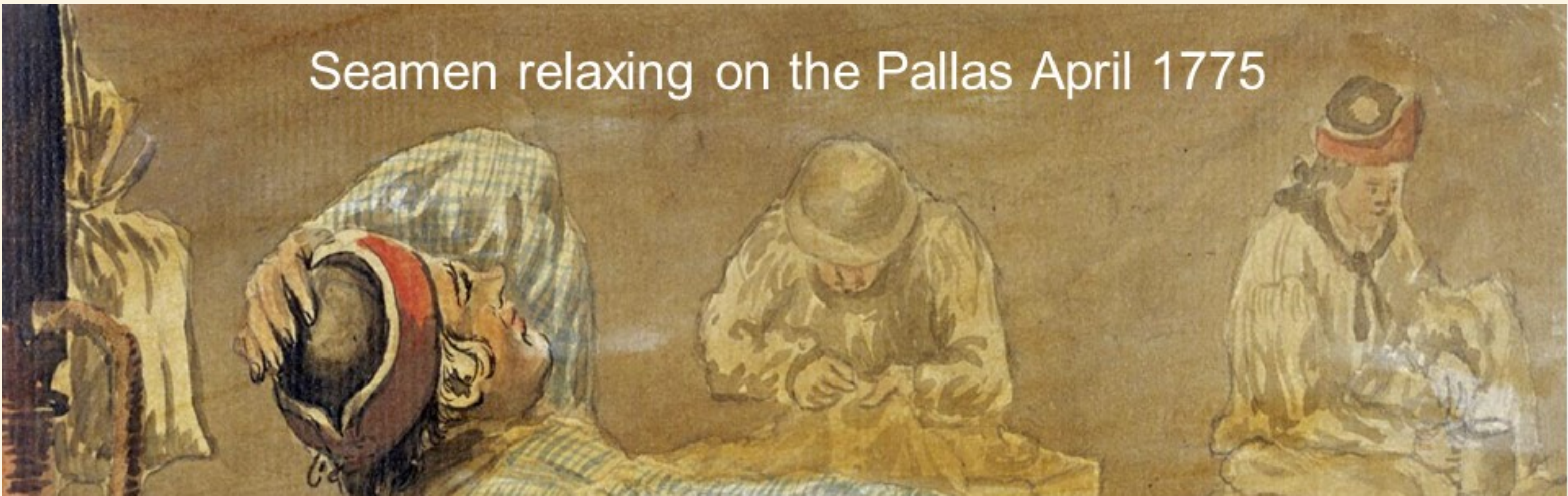
The ships are small frigates of about 26-28 guns.. A naval longboat is in the foreground. It may be a scene Bray observed off Africa during the 'Pallas' voyage. The ship on the left flies the red ensign often signifying one on independent commission, while the white one suggests the frigate on the right is from a command under a flag officer of the white squadron.

African canoe paddling through surf April 1775



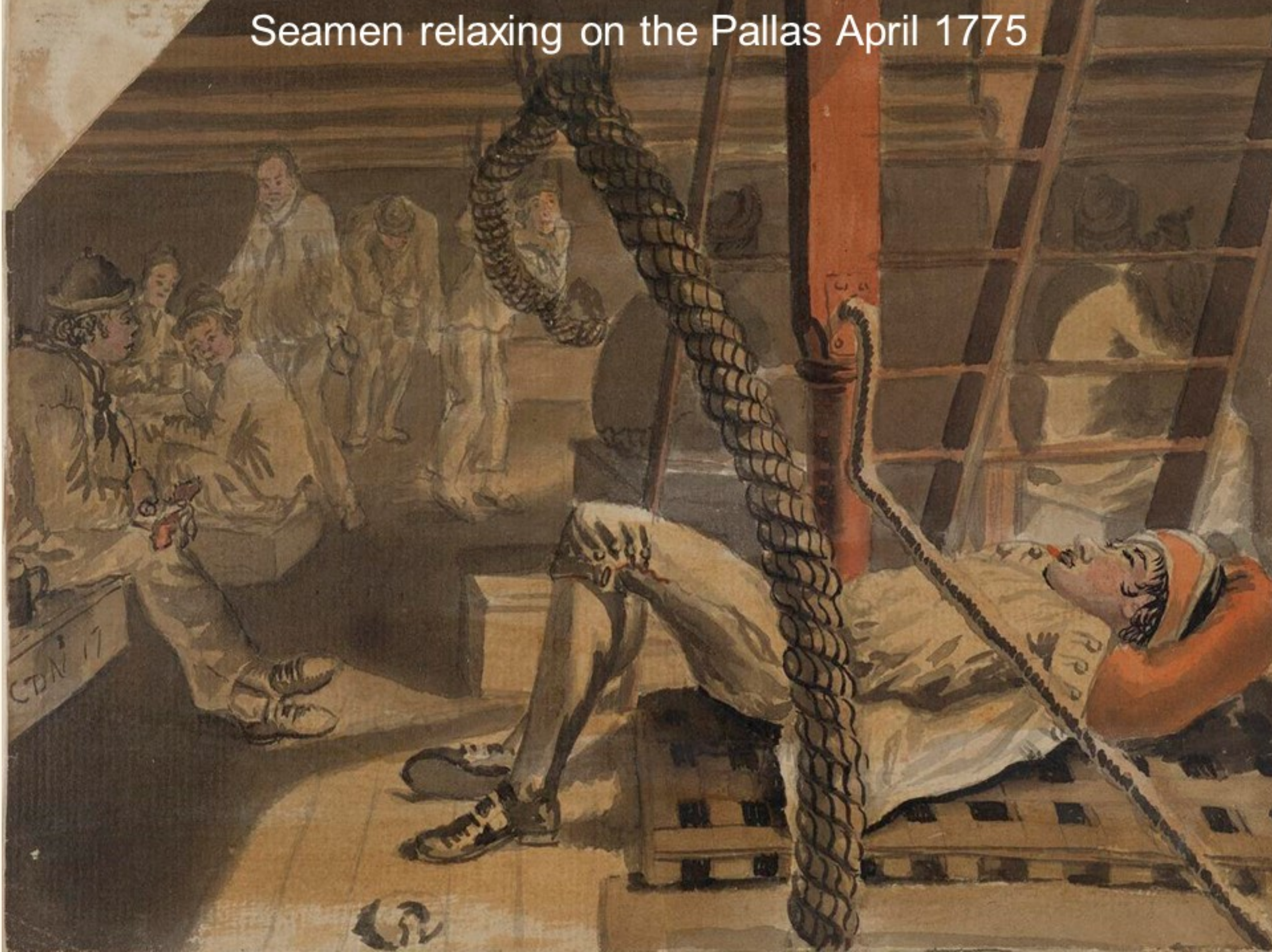
The Africans are likely to be Fante or Krumen, depending on the exact location. Landing at points on the Africa coast could be dangerous because of the surf: an early attempt by the 'Pallas' to send a boat ashore resulted in the boat being overset on reaching it and several men drowning. Local canoes such as this were more skilled and suited to the conditions. On 3 April 1775 while anchored off Whydah, the 'Pallas' sent a seine net for fishing ashore in a canoe and it was lost when the canoe capsized in the surf.

Seamen relaxing on the Pallas April 1775





This may have been drawn on the 'Pallas's transatlantic leg from Africa (whence they sailed on 4 April 1775) to Barbados. The view is almost certainly on the starboard side of the main-deck forward hatch, under the companionway, with the starboard anchor cable going down to the tier below. From his apparent headgear the seaman shown and the man seated on a sea chest with a tankard in his hand, far right, are probably Marines. The man in the centre is sewing an item of clothing.



This was probably sketched on the 'Pallas's' transatlantic passage from Africa to Barbados, from 4 April to 31 May 1775. The location in the ship is probably on the port side of the main gundeck forward hatch, looking forward, with the port anchor cable snaking out of the lower foreground and temporarily hoisted overhead, out of the way while making passage. The forward companionway rises to the deck above on the right. The seamen on the left is sitting in a sea chest marked 'CDN 17' (probably CD No. 17), his number and place in the ship.

Sketch between Decks, May 1775



This drawing was done on the 'Pallas's' transatlantic crossing from Africa to Barbados, 4 April - 31 May 1775. The scene is likely to be in the ship's cockpit - a lower-deck space, with little natural light, that was the home of midshipmen and master's mates. There they slept, ate and - as shown here - relaxed and studied by candlelight. One of their hanging cots, with a draw-string bag for personal items suspended at its head, can be seen in the top right corner, hanging parallel to the ship's side, as indicated by the positions of the hanging knee and deck beam, top centre. These were the living conditions that 'young gentlemen' first met when they went to sea and it is likely that one or more of those shown are either the Hon. Thomas Pakenham, or Lord Charles Fitzgerald, two of the aristocratic protégés of the ship's captain, the Hon. William Cornwallis.

Gabriel Bray, in the centre, relaxing over a cup of tea with his fellow officers.





I thought I had seen all the wonderful watercolours that Gabriel Bray had produced on HMS Pallas, when I tracked down this additional picture, which is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. It is a superb informal scene below deck of the Officers enjoying a pot of tea. The young boys in the background appear in an earlier sketch by Gabriel. I feel quite confident, judging from his self portraits, that he included himself sitting in the centre foreground.

Three Drawings in the Victoria & Albert Museum Collection signed by Gabriel Bray which are contemporary with the Tea Party scene below decks on HMS Pallas in 1774



These are three further Drawings in the Victoria & Albert Museum Collection which are signed by Gabriel Bray and contemporary with the Tea Party scene below decks on HMS Pallas in 1774. They depict every day scenes that he would have seen on shore.

A Ship Hove Down and Burning Off as painted by Gabriel Bray.



The National Maritime Museum has separate from the Album, this oil painting described as “ A ship Hove Down and Burning off” by Gabriel Bray. The vessel is probably naval, since a number of guns have been landed on the quay prior to her being hove down for breaming, which is what is being shown. A small naval sloop appears to the right, with a further vessel beyond with only lower masts standing. This therefore appears to be a fairly substantial repair facility and it may be a scene in the West Indies, to which Bray made two voyages via the West African coast when second lieutenant of HMS ‘Pallas’ in 1774 and 1775.

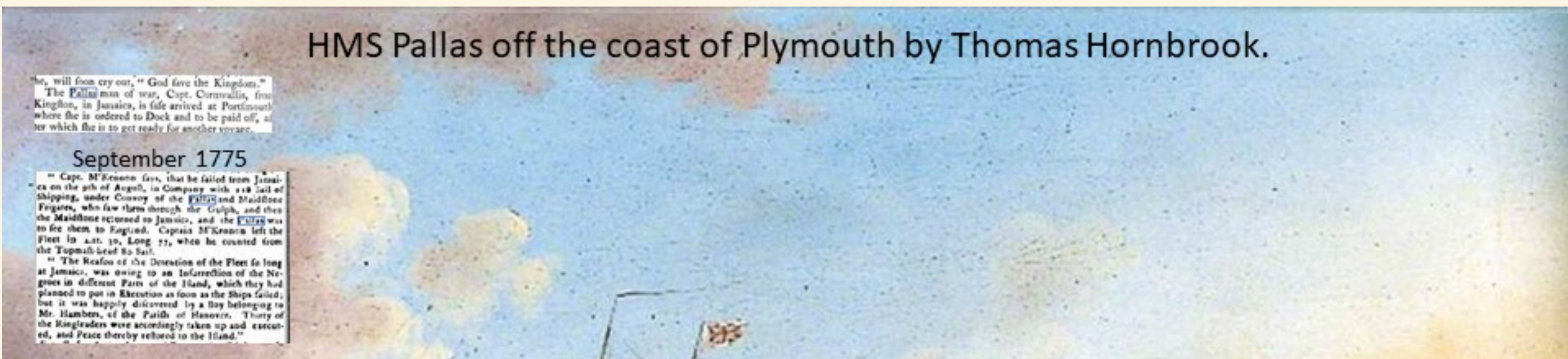
HMS Pallas off the coast of Plymouth by Thomas Hornbrook.

“he, will soon cry out, “ God save the Kingdom.”
 The Pallas man of war, Capt. Cornwallis, from
 Kingston, in Jamaica, is safe arrived at Portsmouth
 where she is ordered to Dock and to be paid off, af-
 ter which she is to get ready for another voyage.

September 1775

“ Capt. M’Kerrow’s Fleet, that he failed from Jama-
 ica on the 9th of August, in Company with a 18 Sail of
 Shipping, under Convoy of the FRENCH and Middlesex
 Frigates, who saw them through the Gulph, and then
 the Middlesex returned to Jamaica, and the PALLAS was
 to see them to England. Captain M’Kerrow left the
 Fleet in Lat. 30, Long 77, when he counted from
 the Topmasts 80 Sail.”

“ The Reason of the Detention of the Fleet so long
 at Jamaica, was owing to an Insurrection of the Ne-
 groes in different Parts of the Island, which they had
 planned to put in Execution as soon as the Ships failed;
 but it was happily discovered by a Boy belonging to
 Mr. Hambers, of the Faith of Hanover. Thirty of
 the Ringleaders were accordingly taken up and execut-
 ed, and Peace thereby restored to the Island.”



October 1776.

L O N D O N. Nov. 29.
The *Pallas* man of war, which is arrived at Spithead from Jamaica, has brought over 300,000*l.* in specie, being a larger sum of money than has been imported by any one Ship for many years.
The *Sarah* and *Elizabeth*, *Foot*, from Jamaica for London, being one of the Fleet which sailed under convoy of the *Pallas* man of war the 9th of August last, was taken by a Provincial privateer of 12 guns and 50 men, on the 23d of October.
The *Polly*, *Thompson*, from the Bay of Honduras for London, is arrived in the Downs, after being boarded by a Provincial privateer, which soon recaptured her, as she was chiefly laden with Mahogany.
This morning the *Manning*, *Beewer*, and *Suannah*, *Eves*, both from Jamaica, which sailed under convoy of the *Pallas* man of war the 9th of August last, arrived in the River.
A Ship from Newfoundland (name not mentioned) taken by the Provincial, is retaken by the *Milford* and carried into Halifax.

26th November 1776



Alongside this painting of HMS Pallas are various newspaper reports of some of the actions she was involved with in the years 1775 and 1776 in which Gabriel Bray would have participated.

It was only slightly more than a year before the need to protect England's commercial interests abroad compelled Pallas' return to service. The frigate was re-commissioned on October 5th 1774 and spent the next five weeks moored in Portsmouth harbor working up, where a new captain, William Cornwallis, took command.⁴⁰ It is also worth noting that Gabriel Bray, the new senior Lieutenant joined Pallas' crew at this time. Over the course of the next several voyages, Bray would create a series of amazing and useful watercolours of life aboard Pallas. On December 12, 1774 she sailed in company with Weasel sloop with orders to patrol down the Atlantic coast of West Africa. Presumably, the British government intended to prevent American colonial smugglers from doing business with, and acquiring arms from, sympathetic European nations through West African trading posts. Pallas worked down the coasts of Portugal and Morocco, passing the island of Palma in the Canaries on New Year's Day 1775, and arriving at Santa Cruz Bay in the Canaries on January 6th. On January 18th Pallas and Weasel sailed south from Tenerife, running down the Senegal Bar. On January 28th the two vessels anchored off the Senegal fort and Pallas sent 25 half barrels of powder ashore to the fort at the request of the Governor there. The following day Pallas and Weasel continued south, taking two French prizes before coming to anchor on February 4th in the Gambia River off James Island where they delivered 15 half barrels of powder to Fort James. On February 10th they ran down the Gambia River and continued south down the West African coast. On February 17th they moored in Frenchman's Bay on the Sierra Leone River and on March 2nd continued south arriving at the English fort at Whydah on April 3rd. There they found numerous ships of all nationalities.

On April 5, 1775, Pallas parted company with Weasel and began her first trans-Atlantic crossing and on April 18th she passed south of the equator for the first time in her career. She remained in the southern hemisphere for the next two weeks as she sailed west but at no point did she venture more than two degrees south. On May 31st, 55 days after sailing from Whydah, Pallas arrived at Barbados and dropped anchor in Carlisle Bay the following day. There are few comments in the logbooks regarding this passage other than the decks were washed regularly with vinegar and the guns were exercised more frequently than usual. However, it is known that the crew was suffering from scurvy upon Pallas' arrival in the Caribbean. On June 1, 1775 Pallas sailed from Barbados for Port Royal, Jamaica. She spent several weeks at Port Royal taking on provisions and undergoing a general overhaul. It was probably there that the crew of Pallas learned that war had broken out with the American colonies. On July 13th she sailed from Port Royal, patrolled around Jamaica and the Caribbean and then returned to England arriving at Spithead on August 28th. During the next two months, Pallas took on provisions, had her rigging overhauled, received a new bowsprit, new gammoning, and new shrouds and spent two and a half weeks in dry dock. On November 16, 1775, she sailed with orders to once again patrol down the Atlantic coast of Africa supporting England's commercial interests and suppressing smuggling and gunrunning ventures by the American rebels. Pallas called at Madeira and Santa Cruz Bay in the Canary Islands before arriving at Goree on January 8, 1776. The following day she continued south past the mouth of the Gambia River and down the African coast, arriving at Whydah on March 31st. Between January 22nd and 30th, Pallas was in Frenchman's Bay at the mouth of the Sierra Leone River investigating rumours of an American ships hiding up the river. Unable to take Pallas into the shallow river, Captain Cornwallis exceeded his authority by acquiring the St. John sloop from the local proprietors of the Bence Island plantation. The St. John was fitted out and armed with eight guns and small contingent of officers and men were transferred from Pallas under the overall command of Lieutenant Alexander Agnew. Cornwallis ordered Agnew to patrol around Cape Coast interdicting American ships attempting to buy arms and ammunition. Agnew was immediately successful, taking a schooner belonging to South Carolina. Also during this period Weasel sloop captured an American brig with the assistance of First Lieutenant Gabriel Bray of Pallas who had taken command of a prize ship, presumably the schooner captured by St. John. Bray was then ordered

to sail the prize to Antigua in the Caribbean.

On May 3, 1776 Pallas began her second transatlantic crossing, arriving at Port Royal, Jamaica on June 21st without notable incident. She remained moored in Port Royal harbour until July 6th when she sailed with the frigate Maidstone, and 22 sail of merchant vessels bound north up the American coast but the convoy was forced to return to Port Royal. By July 10th, the fleet had grown to include Pallas, Maidstone, the West Florida packet, and 105 merchant vessels. Further delayed by a shortage of water, the convoy did not sail until late September. On October 1st Pallas liberated the Anne, an English vessel bound from Dominica to London that had been taken by an American privateer. On October 3rd Pallas and Maidstone chased off what appeared to be an American privateer and on October 12th the convoy entered St. Lawrence harbour, Newfoundland, and came to anchor. On October 29th they sailed with a convoy bound for England arriving at Spithead on November 17th without any notable incidents being recorded in the logbooks. However, other documents make it clear that the crossing was anything but uneventful. They were plagued by poor weather, hounded by American privateers and Captain Cornwallis complained bitterly of the poor discipline of the convoy. Only 44 of the merchantmen arrived in England in convoy with Pallas.

There is a gap in the logbooks from November 17th until December 28, 1776 but it is reasonable to assume that Pallas remained moored at Spithead for that period. On December 28th, Pallas was moved into Portsmouth harbour where she remained for a month receiving a refit, general maintenance, and provisioning. At some point during this layover, Captain Cornwallis was reassigned and Captain Rowland Cotton took command of Pallas. On January 24, 1777, Pallas was moved back to Spithead where she remained moored through the following month. March 1st Pallas sailed with orders to escort a convoy to Tenerife and Grand Canary. They arrived at Tenerife on March 20th and patrolled the African coast until June 2nd when she again headed across the Atlantic arriving at Carlisle Bay, Barbados, without incident on July 26th. On November 10th Pallas, the hired armed ship Bute, and Nancy sloop, with a convoy of 17 merchant vessels, sailed north up the American coast. The following week Pallas and Bute liberated an unidentified schooner that had been taken by an American privateer. On November 29th, Bute started taking on water and a carpenter from Pallas was sent aboard to assist. By December 3rd Bute was determined to be beyond saving and was scuttled by her captain. There is no record of the Atlantic crossing, but Pallas came to anchor at Spithead on January 14, 1778 without apparent incident.

Gabriel Bray's painting of the capture of Privateers in May 1779

Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of His Majesty's Cutter, Sprightly; Gabriel Bray, Esq; Commander, and Flying Fish, John M'Dougal, Esq; Commander, (in Company with His Majesty's Ship Amphitrite, and Fairy Sloop; and Griffin and Wells Cutters) who were actually on Board on the 24th of May, 1779, at taking the Dunkerque and Prince de Robeque, Two French Privateers with Eight Ransomers on Board, that they will be paid their respective Shares of the Produce of the said Privateers, and Head Money, together with Salvage for the Eight Ransomers, on Board the Sprightly and Flying Fish, at Deal, on Saturday the 22d of April instant, or so soon as they come into Port; and such Shares as are not then demanded will be recalled the First Thursday in every Month for Three Years to come, at the House of Albert Innes, Crutchfield-friars, London.
Albert Innes, of London, Agent.



After Gabriel's adventures in west Africa and the West Indies he returned home to Deal in 1778 and may well have stayed with his father at his magnificent new house and farm in Great Mongeham which he had recently bought. In September of that year he received his next commission nearer home on HMS Sprightly patrolling the Downs for the Customs service in pursuit of smugglers.

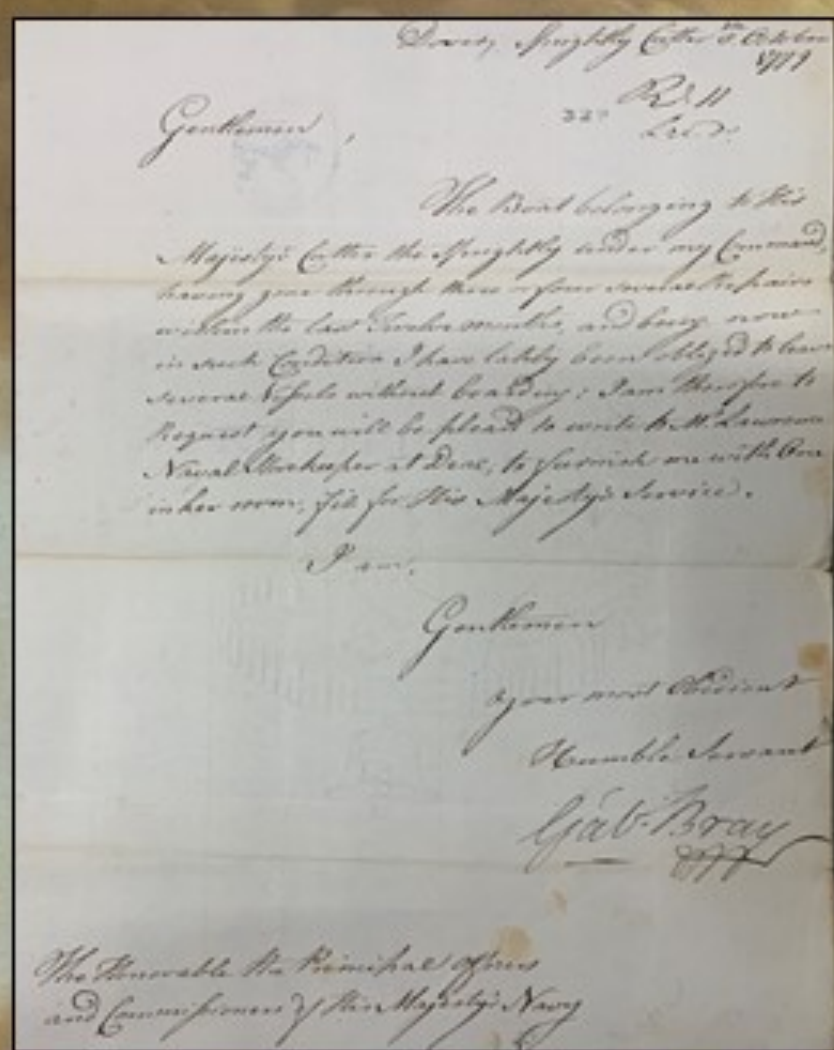
We are fortunate again that Gabriel recorded first hand one of the many events he was witness too. Two paintings by him came up for auction in 2018, described as "G BRAY The Charlotte off Dunkirk & 'Le Prince de Habengen Taken by His Majesty's Cutter the Griffon..." A pair of naval action oils"

With some detective work I was able to tie the paintings in with two separate newspaper reports. The first painting shown here relates to an incident in May 1779, which Gabriel must have witnessed. It announces:

Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of his Majesty's Cutters, Sprightly, Gabriel Bray, Esq, Commander and flying Fifth, John McDougal, Esq, Commander, (In Company with his Majesty's ship, Amphitrite, and Fairy Sloop, and Griffin and Wells Cutter) who were actually on Board on the 24th My 1779, at taking the Dunkerque and Prince de Robecque, Two French Privateers with Eight Ransomers on board, that they will be paid their respective Shares of the Produce of the said Privateers, and head Money, together with Salvage for the eight Ransomers, on board the Sprightly and Flying Fifth, at Deal, on Saturday the 22nd of April instant, or so soon as they come into Port, and such shares as are not then demanded will be recalled the first Thursday in every Month for Three Years to come, at the House of Albert Innes, Crutched-friars, London. Albert Innes of London, Agent.

Obviously the inscription on the back of the paintings needs correcting in that "Le Prince de Habengen" should have read " Le Prince de Robecque" and Dunkirk was the name of the French Privateer "Dunkerque" If you look carefully you can see name" Griffin" on the bow of nearest ship, which had previously been the captured French "Le Griffon".

Gabriel Bray commanded HMS Sprightly from 1779 until 1780



Lieutenant Gabriel Bray's Letter to the Admiralty from HMS Sprightly in October 1779



Gabriel Bray commanded HMS Sprightly from 1779 until 1780. The letter is one of many that was sent by him to the Commissioner of the Royal Navy whilst in Dover on the 8th October 1779 "His boat has had several repairs in the last year and has had to avoid boarding several vessels because of her condition. Asks for Mr. Lawrence, Naval Storekeeper at Deal, to be ordered to supply another boat".

Another letter dated Oct 18 informs them that he has drawn a bill, payable to Lewis Miol, for carrying on the impress service under his regulation. Lieutenant Lawrie has returned from duty on the impress service in the Downs, having one of the boats with him that are employed on that service but she was lost in a gale. Impress Service was better known as the notorious Press Gang, used to recruit sailors.

Gabriel Bray's Painting of the capture of "Le Charlotte" 15th September 1780

Admiralty Office, Sept. 18, 1780.
 Captain Fortescue, of his Majesty's sloop Scourge, in the Downs, in his letter to Mr Stephens of the 16th inst. gives an account, that on the 15th, at ten in the morning, he discovered a sail bearing down upon him; that at four o'clock, being within hail, and received no answer, he concluded her to be an enemy, therefore fired a broadside into her, when she hoisted French colours, and returned the fire. After an engagement of half an hour, she struck and proved to be the Charlotte privateer of Dunkirk, of 16 six pounders and 120 men, commanded by Monsieur Du Casso, who was dangerously wounded in the action. The first Lieutenant and ten men were also wounded and four killed. She is a new ship, having been only three months off the stocks, and eighteen hours from Dunkirk, from whence she had sailed to intercept the trade bound to Ostend and Flushing.
 N. B. The Scourge carries 16 guns and 80 men. It does not appear she had any men killed or wounded.



The companion to the earlier painting by Gabriel Bray is described as "The Charlotte off Dunkirk". Again a little research shows this to be the French Privateer "Le Charlotte" which was captured on the 15th September 1780 and later renamed "Royal Charlotte" and served in the British Navy for another 3 years. The "Scourge" is seen here commanded by Captain Chichester Fortescue. Gabriel Bray must have witnessed this event on board "HMS Sprightly" at the time. The report of the action appeared in the Newcastle Courant on the 23 September 1780. as follows:

Admiralty Office, September 18th 1780
 Captain Fortescue of his Majesty's Sloop Scourge, in the Downs, in his letter to Mr. Stephens of the 16th instant, gives an account, that on the 15th, at ten in the morning, he discovered a sail bearing down upon him, that at four o'clock, being within hail, and received no answer, he concluded her to be an enemy, therefore fired a broadside into her, when she hoisted French colours, and returned the fire. After an engagement of half and hour, she struck and proved to be the Charlotte privateer of Dunkirk, of 16 six pounders and 120 men, commanded by Monsieur Du Casso, who was dangerously wounded in the action. The First Lieutenant and ten men were also wounded and four killed. She is a new ship having been only three months off the stocks, and eighteen hours from Dunkirk, from whence she had sailed to intercept trade blind to Ostend and Flushing.
 N.B. The Scourge carries 16 guns and 80 men. It does not appear she had any men killed or wounded.

Gabriel Bray marries Mary Cartwright in St. Andrews Church in Holborn in London in 1780

1762		Baptisms	
Apr	24	Leanna of John and Ann Thompson	
Oct	1	Charles of Charles and Elizabeth Adams	
	14	Thomas of William and Ann Longton	
	8	Isaac of William and Mary Humphrey	
	17	Ann & twins of John and Mary Cartwright	

Mary Cartwright is baptised with her twin sister Ann, in Islington in 1762

Gabriel Bray of the Parish of Deal in the County of Kent Bachelor, and Mary Cartwright of the Parish of Saint Andrews Holborn London Spinster, were married in this church by Licence on the Twenty Ninth Day of November in the Year One Thousand seven hundred and Eighty, before Mr. Robert Perry, Minister of this church. This marriage was solemnized between Mr. Gabriel Bray and Mary Cartwright in the presence of Mr. Robert Perry.

Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of His Majesty's Cutters Sprightly, Gabriel Bray, Esq. Commander, and Flying Fish, John M'Dougal, Esq. Commander, (in Company with His Majesty's Ship Amphitrite, and Fairy Sloop, and Griffin and Wells Cutters) who were actually on Board on the 24th of May, 1779, at taking the Dunkerque and Prince de Rebecque, Two French Privateers with Eight Ransomers on Board, that they will be paid their respective Shares of the Produce of the said Privateers, and Head Money, together with Salvage for the Eight Ransomers, on Board the Sprightly and Flying Fish, at Deal, on Saturday the 22d of April instant, or so soon as they come into Port; and such Shares as are not then de-

mandated will be recalled the First Thursday in every Month for Three Years to come, at the House of Albert Innes, Crutched-friars, London.
 Albert Innes, of London, Agent.

Gabriel Bray of the Parish of Deal marries Mary Cartwright in St. Andrews Church in Holborn in London on the 29th November 1780 witnessed by Robert Perry and Albert Innes.

Albert Innes – London Agent

To be Sold to the HIGHEST BIDDER,
 At Mrs. BELCHER'S COFFEE-HOUSE in DOVER
 On Monday the 13th of November—
 At Two o'Clock in the Afternoon,
THAT famous sailing
 French Lugger Privateer, called the
 JUSTITI, captured by His Majesty's Cutter
 the FLYING FISH, JOHN M'DOUGALL,
 Esq. on the 19th of September last, about 65
 Tons Burthen, 56 Feet long on the Deck, 23 Feet one half
 broad, and Five Feet four Inches in the Hold, Clinch-work
 built, mounts eight Carriage Guns, is a complete Vessel for a
 Cruiser, or any Purpose, where great Dispatch is required,
 now in Dover Pier, where she is to be delivered.
 Catalogues thereof to be had at the above Coffee-house; the
 New Inn, at Sandwich; Three Kings, at Deal; Marquis of
 Granby, Folkestone; Swan, at Hythe; and New Inn, at
 New Romney.
 The Vessel and Furniture to be viewed two Days before
 Sale, and the Conditions of Sale will be seen at the above
 Coffee-house.
 Agents } Mr. ALBERT INNES, Crutched Friars, London.
 } Mr. GEORGE LAWRENCE, Deal.



Navy Office in Crutched Friars

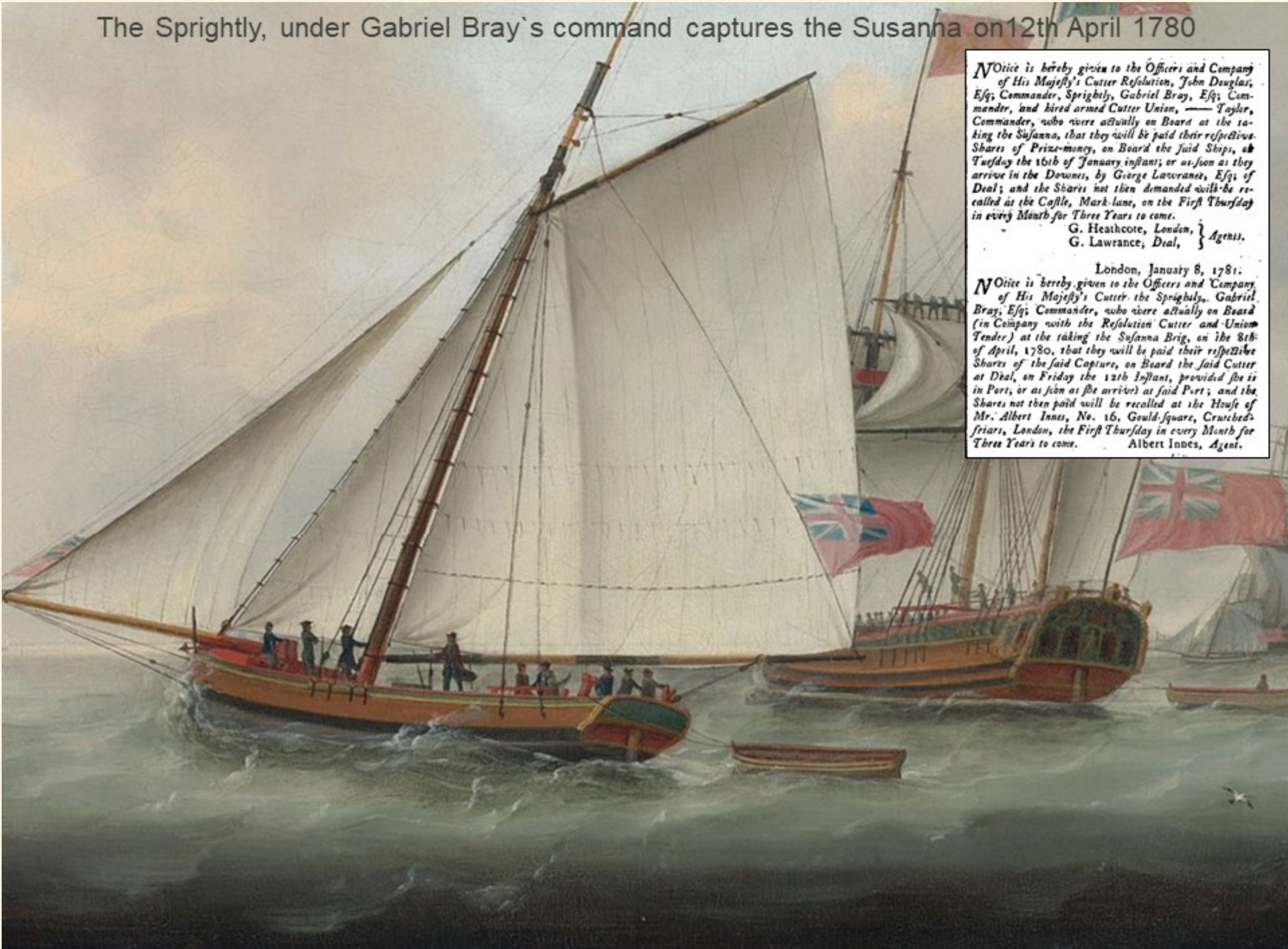


St. Andrews, Holborn in London.

Albert Innes – London Agent

In 1780 Gabriel Bray of the parish of Deal married Mary Cartwright of the parish of St. Andrews, Holborn in London, a record of which is shown here. Mary would have been just 18 and Gabriel 31 years of age. The Witnesses are Robert Perry and Albert Innes, who appears as his agent in London in contemporary adverts as below. His address was Crutched Friars, the site of The Navy Office which was where the Government office was charged with responsibility for the day-to-day civil administration of the British Royal Navy from (1576-1832). It contained all the members of the Navy Board and various other departments and offices. Little is known about his wife's family apart from the fact she was baptised with a twin sister, Ann, in Islington in 1762 which would have been rare in those days.

The Sprightly, under Gabriel Bray's command captures the Susanna on 12th April 1780



Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of His Majesty's Cutter Resolution, John Douglas, Esq; Commander, Sprightly, Gabriel Bray, Esq; Commander, and hired armed Cutter Union, — Taylor, Commander, who were actually on Board at the taking the Susanna, that they will be paid their respective Shares of Prize-money, on Board the said Ships, on Tuesday the 16th of January instant; or as soon as they arrive in the Downs, by George Lawrence, Esq; of Deal; and the Shares not then demanded will be recalled at the Castle, Mark-lane, on the First Thursday in every Month for Three Years to come.
 G. Heathcote, London, } Agents.
 G. Lawrence, Deal, }

London, January 8, 1781.
 Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of His Majesty's Cutter the Sprightly, Gabriel Bray, Esq; Commander, who were actually on Board (in Company with the Resolution Cutter and Union Tender) at the taking the Susanna Brig, on the 8th of April, 1780, that they will be paid their respective Shares of the said Capture, on Board the said Cutter at Deal, on Friday the 12th Instant, provided she is in Port; or as soon as she arrives at said Port; and the Shares not then paid will be recalled at the House of Mr. Albert Innes, No. 16, Gould-square, Crutched-friars, London, the First Thursday in every Month for Three Years to come. Albert Innes, Agent.

The 'Sprightly', built in 1778, was a typical rigged revenue cutter with 12 guns and 60 men. It was commissioned in September under Lieutenant Gabriel Bray for the Downs until 1780. It was then recommissioned under Bray in September of that year. In April 1781 under Lieutenant Swan paid off 1783 recommissioned May 1782 for Mounts Bay. Still under Swan until 1785.

The 18th and early 19th century were the heyday of smuggling. At sea the revenue cutter was the first line of defence against the smuggler. With their vast sail area and long bow spit, they were built for speed, strength and fire power.

Cutters were heavily armed, as they often encountered violent opposition from smugglers. Guns were placed along the sides of the deck. Swivel guns were found on the bow and stern. Muskets, bayonets, cutlasses, tuck sticks and small hatchets were issued to the crew.

The Contemporary Newspaper cuttings are some of the many relating to the capture of French Privateers by Gabriel.

"Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of His Majesty's Cutter Resolution, John Douglas, Esq, Commander, Sprightly, Gabriel Bray, Esq, Commander, and hired armed Cutter Union, ... Taylor, Commander, who were actually on board at the taking of the Susanna that they will be paid their respective Shares of Prize-money, on board the said ships, on Tuesday the 16th January, instant, or as soon as they arrive in the Downs, by George Lawrence, Esq, of Deal, and the shares not then demanded will be recalled at the Castle, Mark Lane, on the first Thursday in every Month for Three Years, on the first Thursday in every Month for three years to come. G. Heath Ltd, London Agent, G. Lawrence, Deal, Agent. London, January 8, 1781".

"Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of his Majesty's Cutter the Sprightly, Gabriel Bray, Esq, Commander, who were actually on Board (in Company with the Resolution Cutter and Union Tender) at the taking the Susanna Brig, on the 8th of April, 1780, that they will be paid their respective Shares of the said Capture, on Board the said Cutter at Deal, on Friday the 12th Instant, provided she is in Port, or as soon as she arrives at said Port, and the Shares, not then paid will be recalled at the House of Mr. Albert Innes, no.16 Gould Square, Crutched-friars, London, the first Thursday in every month for three years to come. Albert Innes, Agent".

The Sprightly was commissioned September under Lieutenant Gabriel Bray for the Downs paid off 1780 recommissioned under Bray September 1780. April 1781 under Lieutenant Swan paid off 1783 recommissioned May 1782 for Mounts Bay. Still under Swan until 1785. It had 12 guns and 60 men.

Sprightly December 1780

London, February 11, 1783.

Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of His Majesty's Sloop Fortune, John Breton, Esq, Commander, who were actually on Board at the taking the Noord Star, on the 25th of December, 1780, (in Company with His Majesty's Cutter Sprightly, Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, Commander) that they will be paid their respective Shares of the Hull and Cargo, on Board the Fortune, at Plymouth, on the 18th Instant; and the Shares not then demanded will be recalled, the 2d of April next, and on the First Wednesday in every Month for Three Years to come, at No. 31, Crutched-fryers, London.

James Sykes, Agent.

London, August 6, 1781.

Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of His Majesty's Cutter the Sprightly, Lieutenant Gabriel Bray Commander, who were actually on Board at the taking of the Princess Carolina, a Dutch Ship of War, (in Company with several other Ships) on the 30th of December, 1780, that they will be paid their respective Shares of the Produce of the said Ship's Hull and Stores, on Board the said Cutter, so soon as she arrives at Deal; and the Shares not then demanded will be recalled at the French Horn, Crutched-friars, the First Thursday in every Month for Three Years to come.

Albert Innes, of London, Agent.



London February 11, 1783

Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of his Majesty's Sloop Fortune, John Breton Esq, Commander, who were actually on Board at the taking of the Nordic Star, on the 25th December 1780, (in Company with his Majesty's Cutter Sprightly, Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, Commander) that they will be paid their respective Shares of the Hull and Cargo, on Board the Fortune, at Plymouth, on the 18th Instant, and the Shares not then demanded will be recalled, the 2nd April next, and on the first Wednesday in every Month for three years to come at no. 31 Crutched-fryers, London. James Sykes, Agent

London, August 6, 1781

Notice is hereby given to the Officers and Company of his Majesty's Cutter the Sprightly, Lieutenant Bray, Commander, who were actually on Board at the taking of the Princess Carolina, a Dutch Ship of War, (in Company with several other ships) on the 30th of December, 1780, that they will be paid their respective Shares of the Produce of the said Ship's Hull and Stores, on Board the said Cutter, so soon as she arrives at Deal, and the Shares not then demanded will be recalled at the French Horn, Crutched-friars, the First Thursday in every Month for three years to come. Albert Innes, of London, Agent.

Later in the year on the 25th December 1780, Sprightly was in company with the sloop "Fortune" and shared in the proceeds of the capture on that day of "Noord Star". Just 5 days after it shared in the proceeds of the capture of the Dutch warship "Princess Caroline" on 30 December.

Gabriel Bray shoots deserter on board Sprightly on 17th April 1781

Since, as the Sprightly cutter, commanded by Lieutenant Bray, was sailing out of that harbour, one of the crew jumped overboard, with intention, as it was presumed, to desert; but he was immediately fired at by order of the commanding officer, shot through the body, and died in a few seconds.

It is positively asserted, that on the arrival of the above cutter in the Downs, the Lords of the Admiralty sent orders to have the commander of the vessel suspended, till the unfortunate matter is investigated.

Lieutenant Swan, of the Advice cutter, stationed at Lynn, is appointed to the command of the Sprightly cutter, in the room of Lieutenant Bray.



April 17th 1781 London Gazette.

By authentic letters from Ostend, we learn, that a few days since, as the "Sprightly" Cutter, commanded by Lieutenant Bray, was sailing out of that harbour, one of the crew jumped overboard, with intention, as it was presumed, to desert, but he was immediately fired at by order of the commanding officer, shot through the body, and died in a few seconds.

It is positively asserted, that on arrival of the above Cutter in the Downs, the Lords of the Admiralty sent orders to have the commander of the vessel, suspended, till the unfortunate matter is investigated.

Lieutenant Swan, of the Advice Cutter, stationed at Lynn is appointed to the command of the "Sprightly" Cutter, in the room of Lieutenant Bray.

This awful incident involving the killing of a presumed deserter resulted in Gabriel foregoing his commission to Swan, who was to remain in command of the "Sprightly" until 1785.

Gabriel Bray commanded HMS Nimble from 1780 until 1786



The Nimble Cutter, in Chace of an Enemy.

Although Gabriel was to lose his command of the Sprightly in July 1781, he soon gained a new one as Lieutenant in Command of HMS Nimble where he was to remain until October 1786. She was sent to the Downs off Deal to patrol the English Channel to protect British shipping against attacks by Dutch and French privateers. This contemporary engraving has the Nimble Cutter in Chace of an Enemy. After she was launched at Folkestone, she was taken to the Royal Dockyard at Sheerness and was coppered as well as being fitted with her guns, her single mast and associated rigging. On completion, HMS Nimble was a tiny vessel of 168 tons. She was 57ft 4in long on her main deck and 27ft 4in wide across her beam. She was armed with 10 4pdr guns on her main deck and 12 half-pounder swivel guns dotted around her bulwarks and in her fighting top. She was manned by a crew of 55 men and boys.

Lieutenant Bray would have been the only commissioned officer aboard and he would have been assisted by a Midshipman and a Warrant Officer in the position of Clerk-in-Charge. The Clerk-in-Charge combined the role of Purser with that of Commanding Officers Clerk. She would have carried a Masters Mate to assist the officer commanding the vessel in the day to day navigation and sailing of the vessel and a Surgeon's Mate to look after the day to day healthcare needs of the crew.

In May 1783, HMS Nimble underwent a short refit at Sheerness. During this, her firepower was increased by an order of magnitude with the replacement of her 4pdr guns with 10 18pdr carronades. This would have had no effect on her performance since an 18pdr carronade weighed about the same as a 4pdr long gun and could hurl a ball over a similar distance. With her new guns, she was capable on paper at least, of taking on and defeating enemy vessels much larger than herself.

The war was ended by the Treaty of Paris (1783) on 3rd September. With large numbers of the great ships of the line and frigates being paid off into the Ordinary and with many smaller vessels being sold into merchant service, thousands of sailors of all ranks found themselves out of work. HMS Nimble escaped the post-war drawdown of the fleet and was engaged in the years after the war in supporting the Revenue Service in hunting down smugglers and pirates operating in British coastal waters.

Gabriel Bray issues a Notice to Deal Smugglers on 27th September 1783

To the INHABITANTS of DEAL,
Whom it may concern.
Lieutenant GABRIEL BRAY, Com-
mander of his Majesty's Cutter the NIMBLE, being or-
dered on the Downs Station by the Lords Commissioners of the
Admiralty, to suppress the illicit Business of running uncustomed
Goods into this Kingdom, acquaints that Part of the Town to
whom this is addressed, that, when he took the Galley with five
Chests of Tea, on the Evening of the 22d last, observing a Num-
ber of Gallies immediately launched by a Set of vain, unthink-
ing People, whom he finds thought of rescuing the Galley and
Goods again, he now thinks proper in this public Manner to
caution them against the like Proceedings, as he is determined

in future not to let them go back again unmolested, if ever they a second Time attempt to impede him, or his Officers and Crew, when doing the King's Duty; And further more he most seriously recommends it to their Consideration not to attempt ever firing on his Boats from the Town, as has been done to several King's Boats very lately, as in such Cases he shall not consider the Town but as in a State of Rebellion, and will support his Officers and Men in his Majesty's Boats under his Command, by instantly commencing a Cannonading on that Part of the Town from whence his Boats are fired on; and that Threats or Bribes are equally despised by him.

Being therefore determined ever to do his Duty, and support his Officers and Men, who have entered to serve under his Command, he takes this Method of acquainting the Inhabitants of DEAL, whom it may concern, with this particular Part of his Intentions, that they may not ignorantly run into Danger, doubts not but some of the quiet Inhabitants of Property will soon detect and bring to Punishment such Violators of the Laws of their Country, for the future Welfare and Peace of the Town.

GABRIEL BRAY



To the inhabitants of Deal

Whom it may concern

Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, Commander of his Majesty's Cutter, the Nimble, being ordered on the Downs Station by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to suppress the illicit Business of running in customer Goods into this kingdom, acquaints the Part of the Town to whom this is addressed, that, when he took the Galley with five chests of Tea, on the Evening of the 22nd past, observing a Number of Galleys, immediately launched by a Set of vain, unthinking people, whom he finds thought of rescuing the Galley and Goods again, he now thinks proper in this public manner to caution them against the like Proceedings, as he is determined in future not to let them go back again unmolested, if ever they a Second time attempt to impede him, or his Officers and Crew, when doing the Kings duty, and further more he most seriously recommends it to their consideration not to attempt ever firing on his Boats from the Town, as has been done to several Kings Boats very lately, as is such cases he shall not consider the Town but in a State of Rebellion, and will support his Officers and Men in his Majesty's Boats under his Command, by instantly commencing a Cannonading on that Part of the Town from which his Boats are fired on, and that Threats or Bribes are equally despised by him.

Being therefore determined every to do his Duty, and support his Officers and Men, who have entered to serve under his command, he takes this Method of acquainting the Inhabitants of Deal, whom it may concern, with this particular Part of his Intentions, that they may not ignorantly run into danger, doubts not but some of the quiet Inhabitants of property will soon detect and bring to Punishment such Violators of the Laws of the Country, for the future Welfare and Peace of the Town.

Signed Gabriel Bray.

Gabriel Bray's skirmish with Smugglers in April 1784





The water guard cutters were particularly disliked among the smuggling community. One of these vessels successfully chased a smuggling galley into the Deal beach in August 1771, but as soon as two of the revenue men went on shore to examine the vessel, "they were respectively stoned, beat, bruised and much hurt by the people on Shore". The rest of the crew on the cruiser came ashore to help, but were greeted "by the Mob with Cricket bats, stones and Staves", while a further three men were abducted away. According to the commander of the Nimble, it was not infrequent for smugglers to fire upon the revenue boats. Meanwhile, in Deal, shore-based artillery was used to defend smuggling runs. These carriage guns were strategically placed in the avenues and streets of the town within easy range of the beach. The parliamentary report of 1783 investigating illicit activities highlighted Deal as an "emporium" of duty free goods, with the whole of its population, including the mayor, seemingly aiding smugglers with their work. In April 1784 a number of lives were lost when a galley and two other boats from the Nimble encountered a large Luger near the Deal coast. The crew of the Luger opened fire with Muskets and Blunderbusses. The air became rich with the smell of gunpowder and the sound of men shouting and screaming. The revenue vessels eventually reached their target and attempted to board. In the violent frenzy that followed, two smugglers and one revenue officer were killed, and a further two were so badly injured that the captain of the revenue cruisers did not expect them to live. The Luger had a cargo of 419 casks of Geneva(Gin) and Brandy. The revenue commissioners awarded Captain Bray and his men £200.

The notorious Smuggler, Thomas Brown is killed by Bray in May 1784



Extract of a letter from Deal, May 2.
 " A desperate contest took place on Friday evening last, between Captain Bray, of one of his Majesty's cutters stationed here to watch the smugglers, and the noted Brown, who committed so many depredations during the late war, and had been outlawed. He being a native of Deal, there was not one who would be bold enough to attempt to apprehend him. Since the war he had carried on the practice of smuggling, and on Friday morning last he sailed out of Dunkirk with a cargo of contraband goods. Captain Bray had watched him very narrowly, and about ten o'clock on Friday evening a terrible firing was heard in the Downs, which was occasioned by an attack made by Captain Bray in a row-boat on Brown, who was also in a row-boat; Captain Bray boarded him, and though Brown presented a blunderbuss, both of them not being half a yard distance from each other, the Captain was not daunted; one of his men seeing his brave master in this situation, with a cutlass cut Brown's cheek clean off; Bray seconded the stroke, and with his cutlass nearly severed his head from his body, and put a period to this pirate's life. Bray lost one man, and had one wounded; Brown had, with himself, three killed, two wounded, and two taken prisoners. Too much praise cannot be given to Captain Bray for his spirited behaviour, not only on this, but every other occasion in his Majesty's service: and were another cutter or two stationed in the Downs, commanded by officers as spirited as himself, there is no doubt but the swarms of smugglers at Deal would be soon extirpated."

07 May 1784 - Chelmsford Chronicle

THE SMUGGLERS DEFEATED.

Thomas Brown, a local smuggler, assaulted the Deal Customs officers three times in the space of eighteen months, either resisting seizures or rescuing contraband. Richard Baxter was lucky to escape serious injury when Brown tried to brain him with a tiller. The next year, when Baxter was shot dead in the course of a pursuit after a smuggling boat, Brown was named as the murderer and a £200 reward was offered for information leading to his capture. Brown was later reported operating as a privateer, accompanying Daniel Faux in his cruises off the east coast, but he remained at liberty. In fact he was never tried for the murder; Brown was killed when a boarding party from Gabriel Bray's cutter, Nimble captured the Juliet Luggur in 1784.

Hereford Journal 13 May 1784. Extract of a letter from Deal May 2nd

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A £200 reward offered for capture of Deal Smugglers in August 21st 1784

By the KING.
A P R O C L A M A T I O N.
For Discovering and Apprehending any of the Persons, who, on the Sixteenth Day of July last, and on the Second of this instant August, were concerned in unlawfully Opposing, Resisting, and Firing at the Officers employed in His Majesty's Revenue, whilst in the Execution of their Duty, at Deal in the County of Kent.

G E O R G E R.

WHEREAS it has been represented to Us, That on the Sixteenth Day of July last, a great Number of disorderly Persons, armed with Fire Arms, assembled themselves at the North End of Deal in Our County of Kent, and being so assembled and armed, forcibly obstructed, resisted, and fired upon the Crews of the Boats acting under the Orders of Lieutenant Bray, in Pursuit of a Galley rowed with Six Oars, contrary to the Statute in that Case made and provided: And whereas it has also been represented to Us, that on the Second Day of August last, a great Number of disorderly Persons, armed with Fire Arms, assembled themselves at Deal aforesaid, and forcibly obstructed the Officers and Men of the Boats belonging to the Ship Scout, acting under the Orders of Captain Lindley, and endeavouring to seize a Luggur, suspected of carrying on illicit Trade; and that William Ruffel, a Seaman belonging to the Scout, was, by some Person or Persons so armed and assembled, shot in the Execution of his Duty: We therefore, being deeply sensible of the many mischievous Consequences that must inevitably ensue to the Peace of Our Kingdom, the Collection of the Publick Revenue, and the Lives of Our loving Subjects, from such wicked and daring Outrages, if they shall go unpunished, and in order to deter all others from committing the like for the future, have thought fit, by and with the Advice of Our Privy Council, to issue this Our Royal Proclamation; and We do hereby strictly charge and command all Magistrates, and other Civil Officers whatsoever, and all other Our Subjects, to be aiding and assisting, to the utmost of their Power, in suppressing such illegal and tumultuous Assemblies; and in detecting, apprehending, and bringing to Justice, the Persons concerned in infiguring the same, and guilty of any of the Violences before mentioned:

And We do hereby promise and declare, That if any Person or Persons concerned in tumultuously and forcibly resisting and obstructing the Officers and Men acting under the Orders of Lieutenant Bray, or Captain Lindley, on the Sixteenth Day of July, or Second Day of August last, shall, on or before the Twentieth Day of October next, and before such Person or Persons shall be in Custody for the same, discover and apprehend, or cause to be discovered and apprehended, any other Person or Persons who hath or have, or shall have been concerned in any of the said heinous Offences, so that he, she, or they may be convicted thereof, such Discoverer or Discoverers shall have Our most Gracious Pardon for the said Offences; and, as a further Encouragement to such as shall discover the said Offenders, We do hereby further promise and declare, That any Person or Persons set in Custody as aforesaid, who shall, on or before the said Twentieth Day of October next, discover and apprehend, or cause to be discovered and apprehended, any of the Persons concerned in the aforesaid tumultuous Assemblies, and forcible Resistance, so as he, she, or they, may be convicted thereof, shall have and receive, for every Person so discovered, apprehended, and convicted, the Sum of TWO HUNDRED POUNDS Sterling; which said Sum of Two Hundred Pounds Sterling, for every such Offender so discovered and convicted, the Lords Commissioners of Our Treasury for the Time being are hereby directed and required to pay: And lastly, We do hereby strictly charge and command all Our loving Subjects, that they do use their utmost Diligence and Endeavours, in their several Places and Stations, to find out, discover, and apprehend all such Offenders as aforesaid, upon Pain of Our highest Displeasure.

Given at Our Court at James's, the Thirteenth Day of August, One thousand seven hundred and eighty-four, in the Twenty fourth Year of Our Reign.

G O D Save the KING.

St. James's, August 21.



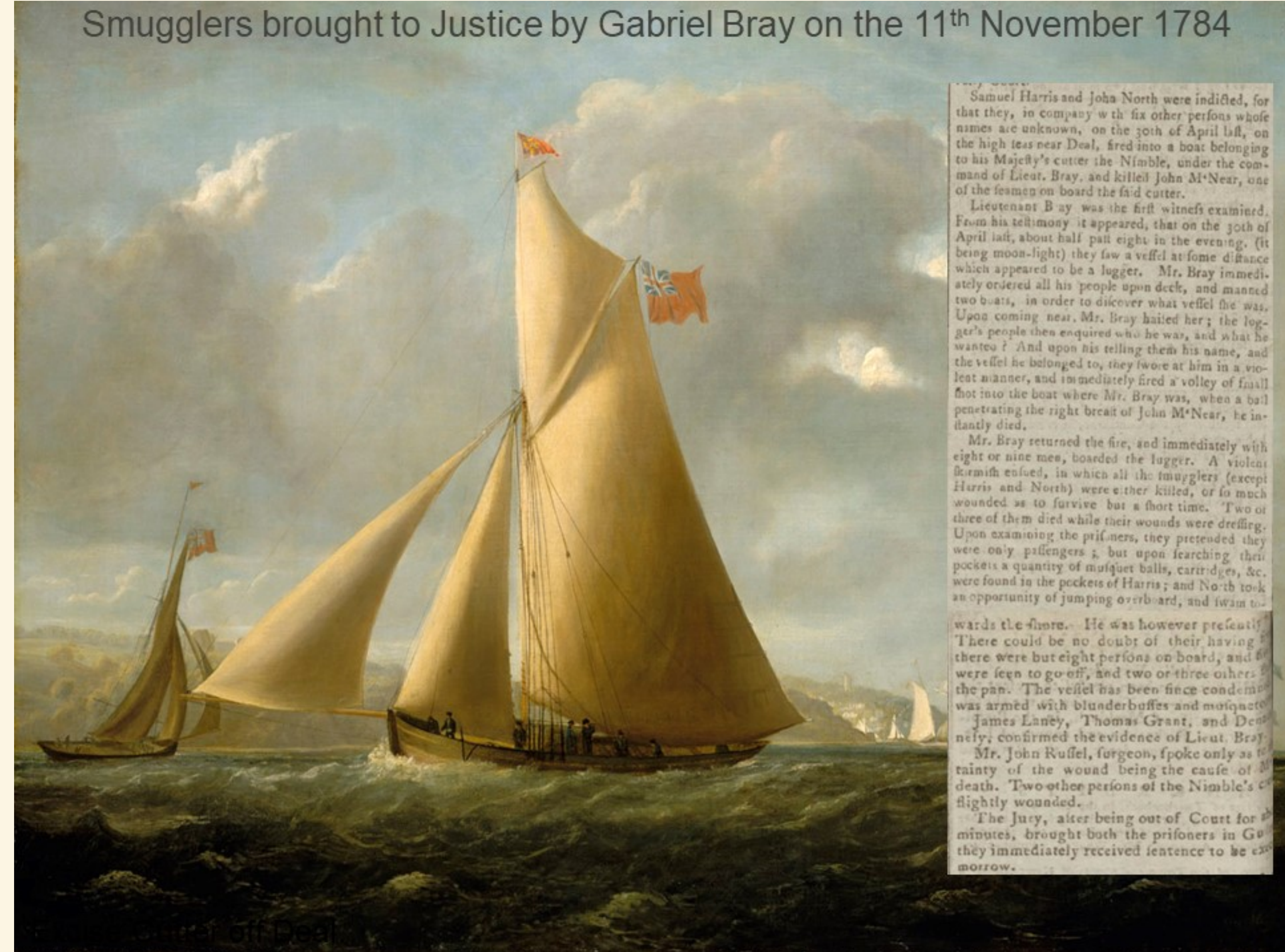
By the King
A Proclamation for Discovering and apprehending any of the Persons who on the 16th July last, and on the 2nd of August were concerned in unlawfully opposing, resisting, and firing at the Officers employed in his Majesty’s Revenue, whilst in the execution of their Duty, at Deal, in the county of Kent. George R.

Whereas it has been represented to us, that on the 17th July last, a great number of disorderly persons, armed with firearms, assembled themselves in the North End of Deal in our county of Kent, and being so assembled and armed, forcibly obstructed, resisted, and fired upon the Crews of the Boats acting under the Orders of Lieutenant Bray, in pursuit of a Galley rowed with 6 oars, contrary to the Statute in That case made and provided. Whereas it has also been represented to us, that on the 2nd August last, a

great number of disorderly persons, armed with Fire arms, assembled themselves at Deal aforesaid, and forcibly obstructed the Officers and men of the Boats belonging to the Ship Scout, acting under the orders of Captain Lindsay, and endeavouring to seize a Luggier, suspected of carrying on illicit trade, and that William Russell, a seaman belonging to the Scout, was, by some person or persons shot in the execution of his duty.

We hereby promise and declare that if any person or persons concerned in tumultuously and forcibly resisting and obstructing the Officers and men acting under the orders of Lieutenant Bray, or Captain Lindsay on the 16th July or 2nd August shall be in custody for the same. For every person discovered, the Lord Commissioners of our treasury will pay the sum of £200. Given at the court at St. James 13th August 1784 God save the King.

Smugglers brought to Justice by Gabriel Bray on the 11th November 1784



Samuel Harris and John North were indicted, for that they, in company with six other persons whose names are unknown, on the 30th of April last, on the high seas near Deal, fired into a boat belonging to his Majesty's cutter the Nimble, under the command of Lieut. Bray, and killed John M'Near, one of the seamen on board the said cutter.

Lieutenant Bray was the first witness examined. From his testimony it appeared, that on the 30th of April last, about half past eight in the evening. (It being moon-light) they saw a vessel at some distance which appeared to be a lugger. Mr. Bray immediately ordered all his people upon deck, and manned two boats, in order to discover what vessel she was. Upon coming near, Mr. Bray hailed her; the lugger's people then enquired who he was, and what he wanted? And upon his telling them his name, and the vessel he belonged to, they swore at him in a violent manner, and immediately fired a volley of small shot into the boat where Mr. Bray was, when a ball penetrating the right breast of John M'Near, he instantly died.

Mr. Bray returned the fire, and immediately with eight or nine men, boarded the lugger. A violent skirmish ensued, in which all the smugglers (except Harris and North) were either killed, or so much wounded as to survive but a short time. Two or three of them died while their wounds were dressing. Upon examining the prisoners, they pretended they were only passengers; but upon searching their pockets a quantity of musket balls, cartridges, &c. were found in the pockets of Harris; and North took an opportunity of jumping overboard, and swam to-

wards the shore. He was however presently caught. There could be no doubt of their having been involved. The vessel had since been condemned. It was armed with blunderbusses and muskets.

James Lane, Thomas Grant, and Deane, confirmed the evidence of Lieut. Bray.

Mr. John Russel, surgeon, spoke only as to the certainty of the wound being the cause of McNear's death. Two other persons of the Nimble's crew were slightly wounded.

The Jury, after being out of Court for about ten minutes, brought both the prisoners in Guilty and they immediately received sentence to be executed tomorrow.

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Gabriel Bray presented with a Silver Cup by the Revenue in 23 December 1784



Neil Mattingly by the magnificent showcase which now houses the Silver Cup and many other items concerning both Gabriel Bray and Smuggling. This is part of a permanent exhibition devoted to the Customs Service at the Naval Museum in Liverpool.

*"For Mr Gabriel Bray
Commander of the Nimble
Admiralty Cutter.
Presented by order of the
Commissioners of his
Majesty's Customs
in testimony of their
approbation of an important
service
rendered by him to the
Revenue under their
management
on 25 December 1784."*



This silver cup was presented to Commander Gabriel Bray, from the cutter 'Nimble' in 1784. It rewarded his efforts in protecting the revenue against smugglers. The inscription on the cup reads:

For Mr Gabriel Bray
Commander of the Nimble Admiralty Cutter.
Presented by order of the
Commissioners of his Majesty's Customs
in testimony of their approbation of an important service
rendered by him to the Revenue under their management
on 25 December 1784."

GABRIEL BRAY ATTACKS TOWN OF DEAL IN KENT ON THE 7TH JANUARY 1785



The following facts, says a daily paper, relative to the seizing and burning of the smugglers boats, may be depended on. Advice was sent to Mr. Pitt, that the severity of the season had occasioned the smugglers to lay up their craft, and that a fine opportunity offered for the destroying them, if sufficient force could be procured to intimidate the smugglers from attempting a rescue. Mr. Pitt sent to the War Office, and required a regiment of soldiers to be at Deal on a certain day. He was told it could not well be complied with. His answer was, it must; and a regiment was immediately marched. But the commanding officer found, on his arrival, that the Mayor of the town, having some intimation of the business, had advised the publicans to pull down their signs, in order that the soldiers might have no quarters. They took the advice, and no quarters were to be had. A large barn at a small distance presented itself as an eligible place, and the quarter-master rode off to the landlord, who refused to let it on any other terms than for two years certain. The officer took it, marched the men in, and then with much difficulty procured them some provisions. The next day Lieutenant Bray received orders to prepare some cutters to hover off the beach, and the soldiers were all drawn out. The inhabitants not imagining what was going to be done, thought the cutters were to embark the soldiers in; but to their surprize, orders were given to the men to burn the boats, and the force being so great, the inhabitants were obliged to remain silent spectators, and dared not attempt a rescue.



On Friday, Jan. 7, the Wind being N. N. W. very moderate, and the sky clear, Mr. Blanchard, accompanied by Dr. Jefferies, took his departure for the Continent, in his balloon, from the Castle at Dover. Three guns were fired from the Castle at nine in the morning, and the flag was hoisted upon the firing of the first gun, as a signal that the Aeronauts were preparing to fill the balloon. About ten minutes before its ascension, a fourth gun was fired, as a signal that the aerial vessel and voyagers were about to depart. The balloon was completely filled by one o'clock; the vessel which ascended with it, in the five former voyages, was affixed; the courageous and intrepid voyagers took their seats; the oars and Fly used in the last voyage were placed in the boat. Nine bags of ballast, the French edition of Mr. Blanchard's voyage with Mr. Sheldon; a large inflated bladder, containing a number of letters from people of the first distinction in this country to several of the French nobility; a compass, and some philosophical instruments;

Report on Blanchard's Balloon Flight the same day.

London, Saturday, January 8th 1785.

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Blanchard's First Balloon Flight across Channel witnessed and painted by Bray in 1785.

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in the horizon far beyond them. The balloon reached the Continent between Calais and Boulogne; was seen by glasses from the English shore till ten minutes after three, far over the land; and an account was brought by a King's cutter, at five o'clock, that the balloon descended at 25 minutes past three, at Blanai. Mr. Blanchard was in the highest spirits at his departure. It was exceeding cold. He wore his great coat. Dr. Jefferies was in a light sailor's dress.

250	Portrait of a lady	M. Brown
251	Portrait of a lady	M. Brown
252	Portrait of himself, crayons	Hugnier
253	Portrait of a gentleman, small oval	T. Beach
254	Portrait of a gentleman	F. Renaldi
255	Basilias's dream (Vide Diodorus Siculus)	Maria Coffroy
256	The visit to the grandmother	J. Naribcote
257	View of the Jungle Ferry in Bengal, the animals painted by Mr. Gilpin	Hodges
258	Dead birds	R. Child
259*	A representation of Mons. Blanchard's balloon off Dover castle	G. Bray, H.

A report about Blanchard's flight in a Balloon across the Channel to Dover. At the end there is a reference to a King's Cutter being in the vicinity. This must have been Gabriel Bray's Cutter and ties in with the painting he later that year exhibited at the Royal Academy (1785). The seventeenth., 1785 no. 259 "A representation of Mons. Blanchard's balloon off Dover)..



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A Still Life Painting signed by Gabriel Bray.



A Still Life Painting signed by Gabriel Bray which came up for auction recently.

A Selection of the many letters from Gabriel Bray on HMS NIMBLE from 1781 until 1786

Nimble Cutter through June 2nd 1783
 R²³ Janry
 Gentlemen
 In your letter of the 21st ult. you seem to have any objection to the Nimble's having two more ports open for the Reasons before stated, only say that the Extra Work of that kind cannot be undertaken owing to the work in hand; my answer is acquiescent if you will permit that I will not think of joining the other two ourselves
 Am Gentlemen
 Your most obed^t serv^t
 Humble Servant
 (Gab^l Bray)

2nd January 1783

Nimble Cutter through June 4th 1783
 R²⁵
 Gentlemen
 As I know not yet of any Person appointed as Master who's Majesty's Cutter Nimble under my command, and Mr. Pleasant late Master of the same built (especially desirous of sailing with me as I am of having her under my command) would be happy to hear that Station, whose merit in saving the Pullman letter is well known to you.
 I would wish to recommend him as Master to the Command if no other person is appointed if he is one of those on your list to be employed, the favor will ever be most gratefully acknowledged by
 Gentlemen
 your very humble
 Servant
 Gabriel Bray

4th June 1783

Nimble Cutter through Aug 16th 1784
 R¹⁷
 L¹⁰
 Hon^{ble} Gentlemen
 Being inform'd by my Agent that some other belonging to His Majesty's Cutter Nimble under my command, which was sent to be sent on the 16th of August last, in May 1783, by leave to report you, that the Drive of it was unfortunately lost by the Violence of the ship or the Drift, and those Men nearly lost in attempting to recover her, & another remained from the ship upon it that the same Morning in about the 17th of June which was partly lost on 7th of June 1783 was entirely lost by the ship breaking when underway with out a Showers, in a Gale of Wind in the North Sea and that the Drive being washed on shore in the Bay of Biscay, by the Ship's breaking when making the Signal, approved by the Council, for a suspicious Paper being in sight of the Ship of War in the Downs - I am very glad that a more satisfactory account was not

16th August 1784?

Nimble Cutter through Sept 14th 1784
 R²⁶
 L¹¹
 Hon^{ble} Gentlemen
 His Majesty's Cutter Nimble under my command being returned from sailing to her Station again, in consequence of your own degrading my Request of a further extension of the 16th of August last, obliged to report to you that the Service cannot be carried on here without either a transfer of the Cutter's command or the Loss of the Officers crew in safety without one, for should any accident happen in a place of this nature that we must be obliged to withdraw the latter, if we could not get more help.
 I have thought it proper to acquaint you of this, as a matter of great consequence to the safety of the Cutter's crew and must wish to please for your answer
 Am Hon^{ble} Gentlemen
 Your most obed^t serv^t
 Humble Servant
 (Gab^l Bray)

14th September 1784

18th August 1781

2nd June 1783

7th September 1784

8th November 1786

1778 Oct 19 Lieutenant G. Bray, the Sprightly cutter, Deptford. Asks to be supplied with 3 months Surgeon's necessaries for 50 men.

1778 Nov 14 Lieutenant G. Bray, the Sprightly cutter, Galleons. Asks for a Pilot to take him to the Nore and asks for Mr. Slaney.

1779 Mar 22 Philip Stephens. Lieutenant Bray of the Sprightly cutter has asked for 2 more short 3-pounders. Opine the number allowed her is sufficient

1779 June 4 Captain Bray, Regulating Captain at Dover, has presented imprest accounts but we are unsure if he is to be allowed money for the Rendezvous and lodgings. He wants the same allowances as Lieutenants, who have Captains, are allowed.

1779 Oct 2 Lieutenant John Bray, Dover. Today, he has drawn bill, payable to Lewis Miol, for carrying on the impress service under his regulation.

1779 Oct 8 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, Sprightly cutter, Dover. His boat has had several repairs in the last year and has had to avoid boarding several vessels because of her condition. Asks for Mr. Lawrence, Naval Storekeeper at Deal, to be ordered to supply another.

1779 Oct 18 Captain John Bray, Dover. Today, has drawn a bill, payable to Lewis Miol, for carrying on the impress service under his regulation. Lieutenant Lawrie has returned from duty on the impress service in the Downs, having one of the boats with him that are employed on that service but she was lost in a gale.

1780 Oct 21 Lieutenant Bray, Dover. Has drawn a bill in favour of Lewis Miol, for the impressment services.

1780 Nov 11 Lieutenant John Bray, Dover. Has drawn a bill in favour of Louis Nicol for carrying out the press.

1781 July 25 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Asks for the appointment of Walter Kitchen as the ship's Surgeon.

1781 Aug 9 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. The magazine of the cutter was severely affected by damp and asks for it to be made tight to avoid this problem.

1781 Aug 11 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Asks for a supply of Surgeon's necessaries.

1781 Sept 22 Lieutenant Bray, Dover. Has drawn a bill in favour of Mr. Milton for the imprest service.

1781 Dec 3 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Asks for a supply of Surgeon's necessaries.

1783 Jan 2 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Request for permission to cut two further ports.

1783 Jan 12 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Gives reasons for the cutting of further ports in the ship's sides.

1783 Jan 26 Captain John Bray, Dover. Request for authority to issue a certificate to Lieutenant John Turner of the Rendezvous at Folkestone following the apprehension of seven men cast ashore from a French privateer.

1783 June 2 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Request for the ship to be slipped following her grounding on Northsands Head.

1783 June 4 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Request for Mr. Oliphant to be appointed the ship's Master.

1783 June 16 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Request for a direction to Sheerness Yard to make alterations to the ship to avoid the damage to the copper on the bows caused by the anchor being fished.

1784 Aug 16 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Asks for certain accounts to be dispensed with following the loss of stores and equipment in bad weather in the North Sea.

1784 Aug 18 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Asks for a Pilot to assist the docking of the ship.

1784 Sept 7 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Sheerness. Asks for the appointment of John Lambert as the ship's Cook, on his being injured in a fight with smugglers at Deal.

1784 Sept 14 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, Margate Roads. Asks for a Pilot.

1784 Sept 28 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, the Downs. Asks again for a Pilot to assist in tracking down smugglers.

1784 Sept 29 Lieutenant Bray, the Nimble, the Downs. Asks for directions to be given to the Storekeeper at the Downs to supply a new topmast for the ship.

1785 Mar 20 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, the Nimble cutter, Margate Road. Thomas Cribben has superseded James Alexander Murray as Master of the Nimble and he is not yet acquainted with this station and asks for a Pilot

1785 July 8 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, Nimble cutter, Downes. He was refused an eight inch stream cable instead of a six inch one by Mr. Lawrence, Naval officer at Deal, and asks for an order

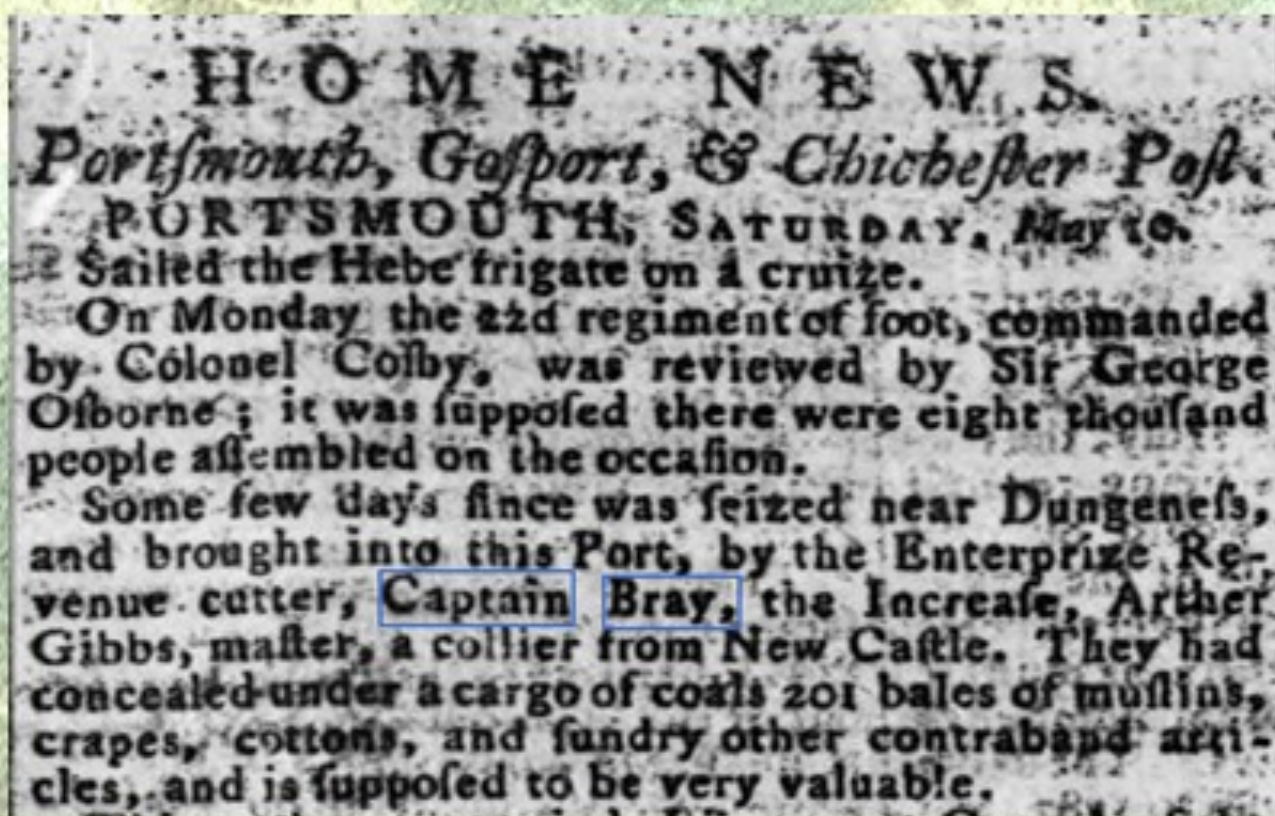
1786 John Jenkins, boatswain; Paul Hughes, boatswain; Martin Allen, boatswain; Abraham Cressey, carpenter; Charles Morice Pole, Captain; Skeffington Lutwidge, Captain; The Hon. Jonathan Whitmore Chetwynd, Captain; Gabriel Bray, 1st Lieutenant; Robert Pringle, 3rd Lieutenant; Edward Eilbech, purser; Angel Triggs, purser. Warrants or commissions for service at this rank in the Royal Navy

1786 Jan 20 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, the Nimble cutter, East Swale, Faversham. Lost one of the Cutter's boats last month and has not been able to take on water, as there is only one boat in the port. Asks for a boat to be supplied from either Chatham or Sheerness.

1786 Feb 21 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, the Nimble cutter, East Swale. Has no objection to Mr. Cribbens going to sick quarters, but he is sorry to lose a good Officer. Mr. Cribben's letter to you was only to inform on the matter as he understands that it is the responsibility of the Commander and Surgeon to make this decision.

1786 Nov 8 Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, Oase near Faversham. Writes in support of John Lambert who, whilst serving with him, lost an arm. He was made Cook on the Nimble cutter, which he had commanded, until she was paid off. He is a young man and asks for a position to be found for him.

Gabriel Bray based at Lymington in 1788



H O M E N E W S.
Portsmouth, Gosport, & Chichester Post.
PORTSMOUTH, SATURDAY, May 10.
Sailed the Hebe frigate on a cruize.
On Monday the 22d regiment of foot, commanded by Colonel Colby, was reviewed by Sir George Osborne; it was supposed there were eight thousand people assembled on the occasion.
Some few days since was seized near Dungeness, and brought into this Port, by the Enterprize Revenue cutter, **Captain Bray**, the Increase, Arther Gibbs, master, a collier from New Castle. They had concealed under a cargo of coals 201 bales of muslins, crapes, cottons, and sundry other contraband articles, and is supposed to be very valuable.



Hampshire Chronicle reports from Portsmouth on the 10th May 1788.

Some few days since was seized near Dungeness, and bought into this Port, by the "Enterprise" Revenue Cutter, Captain Bray, the "Increase", Arthur Gibbs, Master, a Collier from Newcastle. They had concealed under a cargo of coals, 20 bales of Muslins, Crapes, Cottons, and sundry other contraband articles and is supposed to be very valuable.

After commanding the Nimble Cutter we next find Gabriel Bray, based at Lymington, Hampshire, shown here as commander of "The Enterprise", a Revenue cutter with 18 men. This is only briefly before he embarks on a new chapter in his life when he moves to Fowey in Cornwall the following year.

Gabriel Bray's Time in Fowey from 1789 until 1807

The following is a list of the principal inhabitants:

GENTRY, &c.	Pengelley Lieutenant John, <i>Navy</i>
Barlow Captain Robert, <i>Navy</i>	Prideaux Lieutenant Bayntum, <i>Navy</i>
Bloomfield James, Esq. <i>Alderman</i>	Price Mr. Thomas, <i>Master in the Navy</i>
Bray Lieutenant Gabriel, <i>Navy</i>	Rawe Captain Thomas, <i>Navy</i>
Cotton William, <i>Surveyor of the Customs, and Alderman</i>	Smith Joseph, <i>Gent.</i>
Couche H. <i>Comptroller of the Customs</i>	Walker Mr. W. <i>Master in the Navy</i>
Courts John, Esq. <i>Collector of the Customs, and Alderman</i>	CLERGY.
Dickenson Mr. William, <i>Navy</i>	Benoetto Rev. James, <i>Vicar</i>
Dorner Thomas, Esq. <i>Place House</i>	Cory Rev. Wymond, <i>Vicar of Tywardreth and Golant</i>
Flinn Lieutenant John, <i>Navy</i>	PHYSIC.
Graham Thomas, Esq.	Mein Thomas, <i>Surgeon, Navy</i>
Hemsworth D. A. <i>Purser in the Navy</i>	Stephens Robert, <i>Surgeon, &c. and Alderman</i>
Lampert Mr. James, <i>Navy</i>	Ward Joseph, <i>Surgeon, &c.</i>
Lanyon Lieutenant William, <i>Navy</i>	LAW.
Orchard Thomas, Esq.	Brown William, <i>Attorney</i>

1792 List of principal Inhabitants



Old Customs House



The Old Customs House

Gabriel Bray and his wife, Mary were to spend almost 20 years of their lives in the pretty Cornish Port of Fowey, where they built a fine house overlooking the beautiful Quay. The slide is of the Esplanade, where they lived and the Old Customs House which still stands, that played such an important part in Gabriel's life. The Directory Listing for Fowey in 1791 shows Gabriel Bray as well as a number of other Gentry, nearly all associated with the Navy.

Smuggling in Cornwall had been going on almost with impunity throughout the 7 years of war with France. But in 1799 Napoleon seized power, and would soon be preparing to invade Britain. The government would need all the money it could muster to stop him. Two hundred years ago Fowey was the frontline in the government's fight back against Cornish smugglers. As war against Napoleon raged the smugglers were trading with the French on a huge scale. It was time for the revenue to act. They sent their best man, Gabriel Bray to Fowey to wage war on the smugglers. Bray had already earned a fearsome reputation fighting smugglers elsewhere. Heavily armed and well provisioned with the fastest ships, this new and improved revenue service was a force to be reckoned with. In just five months three smuggling vessels were captured, along with their most successful smuggling ship - The Lottery. The days of smuggling openly with no fear of reprisal were gone forever.

Gabriel Bray is Commander of HMS Hind from 1789 until 1800

LIEUTENANT GABRIEL BRAY, COMMANDER
of the **HIND REVENUE SCHOONER**, in the service of his Majesty's Customs, now repaired and ready for sea, takes this method of acquainting the public, that his station extends from Portland to St. Ives Bay, and that he is desirous for the good of the revenue, to enter into a correspondence with any person or persons, who will give him information of goods about to be illegally landed, or where sunk ready for landing; and will, if the said goods are taken by him, give to the person or persons who informed him thereof, one third of his share of seizure money, besides a present over and above out of his own pocket. Likewise he promises to conceal all such persons who shall give informations, and that they shall never appear in case of law suits in any court. The port he uses chiefly is Fowey, in Cornwall, and should any person residing near there, who cannot write, wish to give him regular informations, **Lieutenant Bray** can shew such person a method of corresponding with him just as clear and intelligible as writing, if the person will only wait on **Lieutenant Bray**, at his house in Fowey, for a few minutes.

N. B. Correspondents are desired to pay the postage of all letters, otherwise no attention will be paid them.

Hind Schooner, June 15, 1789. 809



A watercolour drawing of HMS Canopus and Hind cutter

The Hind was one of the newest and largest cutters in service, carrying a crew of 41 men, was stationed in the Channel Between Portland and Lands End. Like other Revenue cutters in service at the time, the Hind was a former smuggling lugger seized off Plymouth in January 1789 and judged too useful to suffer the usual fate and broken up. Instead, she was converted into a cutter and taken into service.

Her commander was Gabriel Bray, who had served aboard Revenue Cutters since 1779 with a zeal and determination that won the admiration of his superiors and gained him a reputation for dealing ruthlessly with smugglers, while in command of the Revenue cutter Scourge off the Kent coast, it was not long before Gabriel Bray made his presence felt in Cornwall where the Revenue officials at Fowey were quick to enlist his help in putting an end to the trade so openly carried on by smugglers. In the summer of 1789, he announced his appointment to command The Hind by placing a notice in the Sherborne Mercury for five successive weeks.

"Lieutenant Gabriel Bray, Commander of the Hind Revenue Schooner, in the service of his Majesty's Customs, now repaired and ready for sea, takes this method of acquainting the public, that his station extends from Portland to St. Ives Bay, and that he is desirous for the good of the revenue, to enter into a correspondence with any person or persons, who will give him information of goods about to be illegally landed, or where sunk ready for landing, and will, if the said goods are taken by him, give to the person or persons who informed him thereof, one third of his share of seizure money, besides a present over and above out of his own pocket.

Likewise he promises to conceal all such persons who shall give information, and that they shall never appear in case of law suits in any court. The port he uses chiefly is Fowey, in Cornwall, and should any person residing near there, who cannot write, wish to give him regular information, Lieutenant Bray can shew such person a method of corresponding with him just as clear and intelligible as writing, if the person will only wait on Lieutenant Bray, at his house in Fowey, for a few minutes.

N.B. Correspondents are desired to pay the postage of all letters otherwise no attention will be paid them.

Hind Schooner, June 15th, 1789.

HM brig 'Scourge' capturing the 'Sans Culotte', 13 March 1793

seizure of by the people of the Falcon.

PLYMOUTH, March 15. This morning arrived a large ship from Marseilles bound to Havre-de-Grace, a prize to the *Druid* of 32 guns, Capt. Ellison, and the *Circe* of 21 guns, Capt. J. S. Yorke. The ship's cargo consists of brandy, wines and silks.

Also a brig from Cette, bound to Havre-de grace, laden with brandy, a prize to the above frigates. The cargoes of both were valued at their respective ports at 22,000l. The prize-master reports, that when he left the *Druid*, she was in chase of three other vessels.



The Scourge, Capt. Brissac, has brought in a French National Sloop of war, called La Sans Culotte, of 10 twelve pounders, and 100 men, after a smart engagement of three hours and a half. The French ship had eight men killed and 26 wounded. The Scourge of 14 six pounders, Capt. Brissac, had only one man wounded. The Frenchman is terribly mauled.

Also a French brig from Marseilles, laden with wine and brandy, about 160 tons, the Scourge's prize.

Also a large French ship, with brandy, wines, and cotton, a prize to the Edgar.

Also a brig called the Oughton, Andrew Lyne, master, sent in by the Hinde, Capt. Bray. She was bound to Dunkirk, laden with brandy and wines, from Salo.

15th March 1793 - Oxford Journal

Plymouth, Aug. 14. Sailed last evening at 8 o'clock, the Lapwing frigate, of 28 guns, the Hon. H. Curzon, to join Lord Howe's Fleet in Torbay.

Arrived the Hind cutter, in the service of the Customs at Falmouth, Gabriel Bray, from a cruise.

17 August 1793 - Oxford Journal



The dramatic painting shown here is of HM brig 'Scourge' capturing the 'Sans Culotte', 13 March 1793 which would have been witnessed by Gabriel Bray, who was among the ships that captured a number of French ships that day.

Admiralty Office, September 18th 1780

Plymouth, March 15.

The Scourge, Captain Brissac, has bought in a French National Sloop of war, called La Dans Culottes, of ten twelve pounders, and 100 men, after a smart engagement of three hours and a half. The French ship had eight men killed and 26 wounded. The Scourge of 14 six pounders, Captain Brissac, had only one man wounded. The Frenchman is terribly mauled.

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Also a brig called the Oughton, Andre Lyne, master, sent in by the Hinde, Captain Bray. She was bound to Dunkirk, laden with brandy and wines, from Salo.

Plymouth, August 14.

Arrived the Hind Cutter, in the services of the Customs at Falmouth, Gabriel Bray, from a cruise.

Captain Fortescue of his Majesty's Sloop Scourge, in the Downs, in his letter to Mr. Stephens of the 16th instant, gives an account, that on the 15th, at ten in the morning, he discovered a sail bearing down upon him, that at four o'clock, being within hail, and received no answer, he concluded her to be an enemy, therefore fired a broadside into her, when she hoisted French colours, and returned the fire. After an engagement of half and hour, she struck and proved to be the Charlotte privateer of Dunkirk, of 16 six pounders and 120 men, commanded by Monsieur Du Casso, who was dangerously wounded in the action. The First Lieutenant and ten men were also wounded and four killed. She is a new ship having been only three months off the stocks, and eighteen hours from Dunkirk, from whence she had sailed to intercept trade blind to Ostend and Flushing.

N.B. The Scourge carries 16 guns and 80 men. It does not appear she had any men killed or wounded.

HM brig 'Scourge' capturing the 'Sans Culotte', 13 March 1793

On 1 February 1793 France declared war on Britain and Holland and by 11 February Britain had also declared war on France. On 9 March, the 16-gun naval brig 'Scourge' sailed from Spithead under the command of George Brissac to cruise for a month in the Channel. Having been dispatched in a great hurry, after receiving somewhat extensive repairs at the dockyard, she was not fully prepared. Not all her guns were mounted, she did not have her full complement of crew and some of those she did have were inexperienced; but in the circumstances captains were glad to get hold of almost any class of men for their ships, provided that they were strong and able-bodied. On 13 March 1793, west of Scilly, and with a crew of only 70 men and boys instead the usual 90, 'Scourge' fell in with the French privateer 'Sans Culotte', which had considerably more guns and a larger crew. After a fight that lasted three hours and in which the French boarded the 'Scourge' but were repelled, the English ship was victorious and captured the privateer. The French lost nine men with 20 wounded but the 'Scourge' lost only one man with one wounded. 'Scourge' took her prize into Plymouth the following day. The painting shows the action between the two ships. The 'Sans Culotte' is shown firing into the 'Scourge' and flying the early naval ensign of the French Revolution, in use from 1790 to May 1794 (after which the standard French tricolore took over). The painting is shown from the perspective of the 'Scourge' by concentrating on her struggle over the larger and more powerful French ship.

Gabriel Bray in the pursuit of Smugglers.

Plymouth, June 20. Came in the following ships of war from the eastward: the *Seafower*, of 16 guns; **Captain Murray**; *Childers*, of 16 guns; *Favourite*, of 16 guns, **Captain White**, and several coasting vessels under their convoy.
Came in the *Hind*, **Captain Bray**, from a cruise the *Betsy*, of Jersey, **Captain Townsend**, from Guernsey, with wine for the use of the Navy.
Admiral Sir Richard King's flag was hoisted this day on board his Majesty's ship *Cambridge*, of 84 guns, in Hamoaze, in consequence of his resuming the chief command at this port again.

Plymouth 20th June 1795

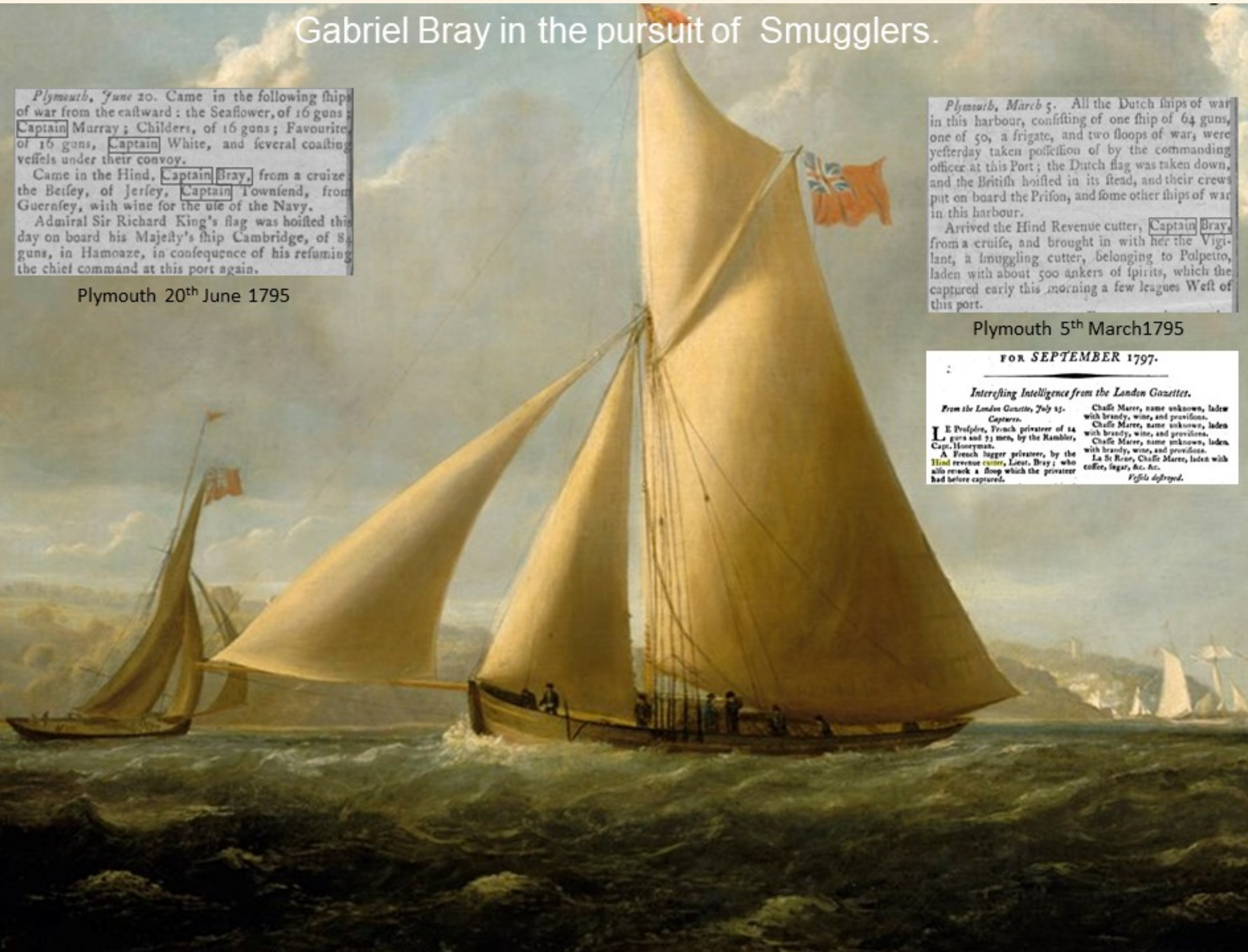
Plymouth, March 5. All the Dutch ships of war in this harbour, consisting of one ship of 64 guns, one of 50, a frigate, and two sloops of war, were yesterday taken possession of by the commanding officer at this Port; the Dutch flag was taken down, and the British hoisted in its stead, and their crews put on board the *Prison*, and some other ships of war in this harbour.
Arrived the *Hind Revenue cutter*, **Captain Bray**, from a cruise, and brought in with her the *Vigilant*, a smuggling cutter, belonging to Polperro, laden with about 500 ankers of spirits, which she captured early this morning a few leagues West of this port.

Plymouth 5th March 1795

FOR SEPTEMBER 1797.

Interesting Intelligence from the London Gazette.

From the London Gazette, July 25.
Captures.
L E *Prospère*, French privateer of 14 guns and 73 men, by the *Rambler*, Capt. Honeyman.
A French lugger privateer, by the *Hind revenue cutter*, Lieut. Bray; who also retook a sloop which the privateer had before captured.
Chiffre Marie, name unknown, laden with brandy, wine, and provisions.
Chiffre Marie, name unknown, laden with brandy, wine, and provisions.
Chiffre Marie, name unknown, laden with brandy, wine, and provisions.
La St Remy, *Chiffre Marie*, laden with coffee, sugar, &c. &c.
Vigilant destroyed.



Letter from Lt. Gabriel Bray to Evan Nepean request instructions about what was to be done with the arms and powder which he had remaining, and also the pilot for the French coast. 26/1-2. 1794, September 9. ...

September 9th 1794

Letter from Lt. Gabriel Bray to Evan Nepean request instructions about what was to be done with the arms and powder which he had remaining, and also the pilot for the French coast

29th November 1794

Gabriel Bray writes to Nepean on the French Royal Officers and Mariners, French Master and their mariners of two small crafts taken and scuttled on the coast of La Vindii and worked on the HIND. Gabriel included a table of payment for the sailors. (letter in National Maritime Museum).

Plymouth June 20th 1795

Came in the *Hind*, Captain Bray, from a cruise the *Betsy* of Jersey, Captain Townsend, from Guernsey, with wine for use of the Navy

Plymouth March 5th 1796

Arrived the *Hind Revenue Cutter*, Captain Bray, from a cruise, and brought in with her the *Vigilant*, a smuggler Cutter, belonging to Polperro, laden with about 500 ankers of spirits, which she captured early this morning a few leagues west of this port.

July 25th 1797

A French Lugger privateer, by the *Hind Revenue Cutter*, Lieutenant Bray, who also retook a Sloop which the privateer had before captured.

September 1797 Dispatch from John Warren to Lord Bridport. L' Incroyable French Privateer, mounting 2 carriage guns and 21 men, by the *Hind revenue cutter*, Mr Murray acting Commander.

Type: Revenue Cruiser ; Armament 14

BM: 60 tons

Notes:

Jul 1797 captured the French privateer *Incroyable* in the Channel.

A report also appeared in the *London Gazette* :

Copy of a Letter from S. Pellew, Esq; Collector of HM Customs at Falmouth, to Evan Nepean, Esq; dated Falmouth, July 24, 1797. Sir, I Have the Honor to acquaint you, for the Information of their Lordships, that the *Hind Revenue Cutter*, stationed at this Port, Mr. Murray, acting Commander, has captured and sent into this Port L'Incroyable French Privateer, mounting Two Carriage Guns and Twenty-one Men, out Four Days from St. Maloes; also retaken the Sloop *Three Brothers*, John Collison, Master, from Neath, laden with Coals, Prize to the said Privateer, the only Capture she had made since she left St. Maloes. I am, &c. S. Pellew.

Jul 1797 captured a French privateer, Name unknown, in the Channel.

The following appeared in the London Gazette :

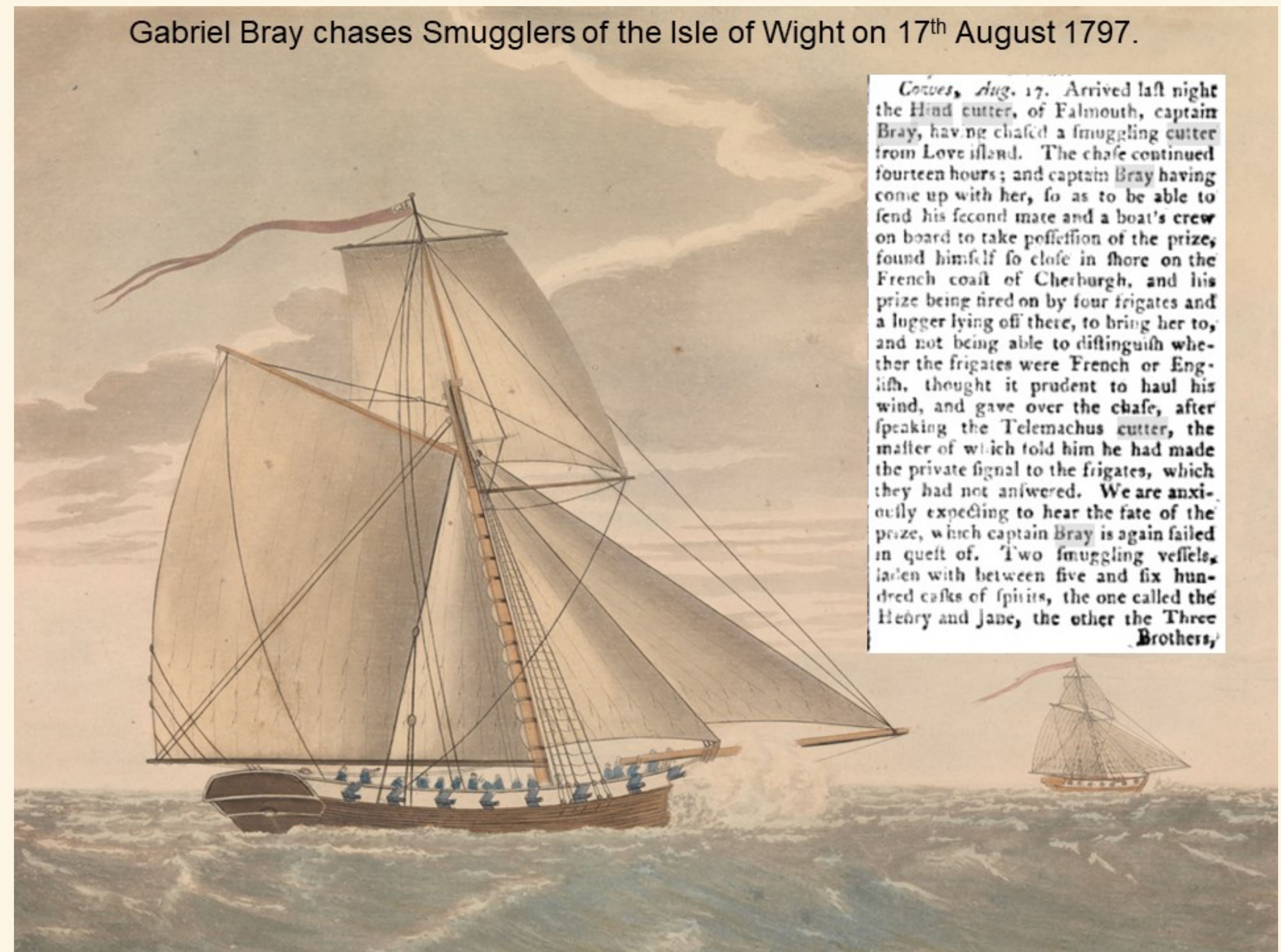
Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Pellew, Bart. Captain of HM Ship Indefatigable, to Mr. Nepean, dated Falmouth, 22 July 1797. Sir, you will be pleased to inform their Lordships, that the Duke of York Lugger returned last Night. She fell in with a French Lugger Privateer, and chased her off the Land into the Hands of Lieutenant Bray, commanding the Hind Revenue Cutter, who also retook a Sloop, which the Privateer had before captured : The Lugger mounts 2 Guns, with 25 Men. I have the Honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient humble Servant, Ed. Pellew.

5 Apr 1799 Plymouth, Captain J. Still, late of the Hiram American ship lately retaken and brought in here by one of the cruisers, came passenger in La Fortune French brig, carried into Fowey by the Hind Revenue cutter, Lieutenant Bray.

18 May 1799 Plymouth, arrived, the Hind Revenue Cutter, Lieutenant Bray, with the Dottery, smuggler, having on board 400 ankers of spirits. She threw overboard 200 ankers in the chace.

2 Apr 1800 Plymouth, arrived from a cruise.

Gabriel Bray chases Smugglers of the Isle of Wight on 17th August 1797.



Cowes, Aug. 17. Arrived last night the Hind cutter, of Falmouth, captain Bray, having chased a smuggling cutter from Love island. The chase continued fourteen hours; and captain Bray having come up with her, so as to be able to send his second mate and a boat's crew on board to take possession of the prize, found himself so close in shore on the French coast of Cherburgh, and his prize being fired on by four frigates and a lugger lying off there, to bring her to, and not being able to distinguish whether the frigates were French or English, thought it prudent to haul his wind, and gave over the chase, after speaking the Telemachus cutter, the master of which told him he had made the private signal to the frigates, which they had not answered. We are anxiously expecting to hear the fate of the prize, which captain Bray is again failed in quest of. Two smuggling vessels, laden with between five and six hundred casks of spirits, the one called the Henry and Jane, the other the Three Brothers,

Cowes, August 17 1797

Arrived late last night the "Hind" Cutter, of Falmouth, Captain Bray, having chased a smuggling Cutter from Love Island. The chase continued fourteen hours, and Captain Bray having come up with her, so as to be able to send his second mate, and a boats crew on board to take possession of the prize, found himself to close in shore on the French coast of Cherbourg, and his prize being fired on by four frigates and a Lugger off there, to bring her to, and not being able to distinguish whether the frigates were French or English, thought it prudent to haul his wind, and have over the chase, after speaking the "Telemachus" Cutter, the Master of which told him he had made the private signal to the frigates, which they had not answered. We are anxiously expecting to hear the fate of the prize, which Captain Bray is again sailed in quest of. Two smuggling vessels laden with between five and six hundred casks of spirits, the one called the Henry and Jane the other the Three Brothers.

Sir Edward Pellew reports on Gabriel Bray's capturing a French Privateer in July 1797

Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Pellew, Bart. Captain of His Majesty's Ship Indefatigable, to Mr. Nepean, dated Falmouth, July 22, 1797.

S I R,

YOU will be pleased to inform their Lordships, that the Duke of York Lugger returned last Night. She fell in with a French Lugger Privateer, and chased her off the Land into the Hands of Lieutenant Bray, commanding the Hind Revenue Cutter, who also retook a Sloop, which the Privateer had before captured : The Lugger mounts 2 Guns, with 25 Men.

I have the Honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient humble Servant,
ED. PELLEW.




Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Pellew, Bart. Captain of His Majesty's Ship Indefatigable, to Mr. Nepean, dated Falmouth, July 11, 1797. SIR, "you will be pleased to inform their Lordships, * that the Duke of York Luggier returned last Night. She fell in with a French Luggier Privateer, and chased her off the Land into the Hands of Lieutenant Bray, commanding the Hind Revenue Cutter, who also retook a Sloop, which the Privateer had before captured : The Luggier mounts 2 Guns, with 25 Men. I have the Honour to be, Sir, Your most obedient humble Servant, ED. PELLEW.

Gabriel Bray sells the French Prize – "Somner" at Plymouth in December 1799

Plymouth, April 1.—On the 25th ult. was carried into Fowey by the crew, and taken possession of by Captain Bray, of the Hind cutter, in the service of the Customs, the French brig Fortuac, of and from Bourdeaux, bound to Dunkirk, laden with wine and oil. By this vessel came passenger Captain James Stitt, late of the American ship Hiram, who had been captured by a French privateer, and his vessel afterwards retaken and brought into this port. This Gentleman brings an account that eighteen American vessels have been captured by French cruisers, and carried into Bourdeaux: the greater part of them have been condemned, and the remainder are now under trial.

Captain Bray, of the Hind cutter, has carried a smuggling vessel, laden with 120 ankers of spirits, into Falmouth.

Extract of a private letter received late last night.
Dial, Sept. 10. The Hinde Revenue cutter, Captain Bray, is just arrived in the Downs from Holland. This vessel left the Texel yesterday morning, and Captain Bray supposes that a severe action had taken place previous to his departure, having heard a heavy and constant fire of artillery and musquetry for 9 hours before he started, and which he continued to hear four leagues at sea, but knows not the issue.

 FOR SALE, at Brewer's, the London Inn, Plymouth, on Wednesday the 11th of December next, after the sale of the St. Jacques and cargo,

The good Dogger SOMNER.

DIMENSIONS.		Ft.	In.
Length on deck,	- -	51	0
Extreme breadth,	- -	16	6

Admeasures 60 77-94 tons.
French built, takes the ground well, and of an easy draft of water: she would make an excellent timber hoy, or for the purpose of carrying beer to the fleet when at Torbay. A prize taken by his Majesty's revenue cutter Hind, Gabriel Bray, Esq. Commander: now lies in Sutton Pool, and will be there delivered.

And after will be Sold, the Entire CARGO of the said dogger, consisting of

About 1200 Bushels of FRENCH SALT.

For inventories and catalogues, application to be made to the said Mr. Bray, at Fowey; or at the office of **THOMAS LOCKYER**, Sworn Broker. Plymouth, November 19, 1799.



Plymouth, April 1 1799

On the 26th Ult. was carried into Fowey by the crew, and taken possession of by Captain Bray, of the Hind Cutter, in the service of the Customs, the French Brig, Fortune, of and from Bordeaux, bound to Dunkirk, laden with wine and oil. By the vessel came passenger, Captain James Stitt, late of the American ship, Hiram, who had been captured by a French privateer, and his vessel afterwards retaken and bought into this point. This gentleman brings an account that eighteen American vessels had been captured by the French cruisers and carried into Bordeaux. The greater part of them condemned, and the remainder are now under trial.

Falmouth, June 12 1799

Captain Bray, of the Hind Cutter, has carried a smuggling vessel laden with 120 ankers of Spirits, into Falmouth.

Deal, September 10th 1799

The Hind Revenue Cutter, Captain Bray, is just arrived in the Downs from Holland. This vessel left the Texel yesterday morning, and Captain Bray supposes that a severe action has taken place previous to his departure, having heard a heavy and constant fire of artillery and musket try for 9 hours before he started, and which he continued to hear four leagues at sea, but knows not the issue. For Sale at Brewer's, the London Inn, Plymouth, on Wednesday the 11th of December next, after the sale of the St. Jacques and cargo.

The good Dogger Somner

Dimensions- length on deck - 51 feet, extreme breadth - 16ft 6ins

admeasures - 60 77-94 tons

French built, takes the ground well, and of an easy draft of water: she would make an excellent timber Hoy, or for the purpose of carrying Beer to the fleet when at Torbay. A prize taken by his Majesty's Revenue Cutter, Hind, Gabriel Bray, Esq. Commander: now lies in Sutton Pool, and will be there delivered.

And after will be sold, the entire Cargo of the said dogger, consisting of About 1200 Bushels of French Salt.

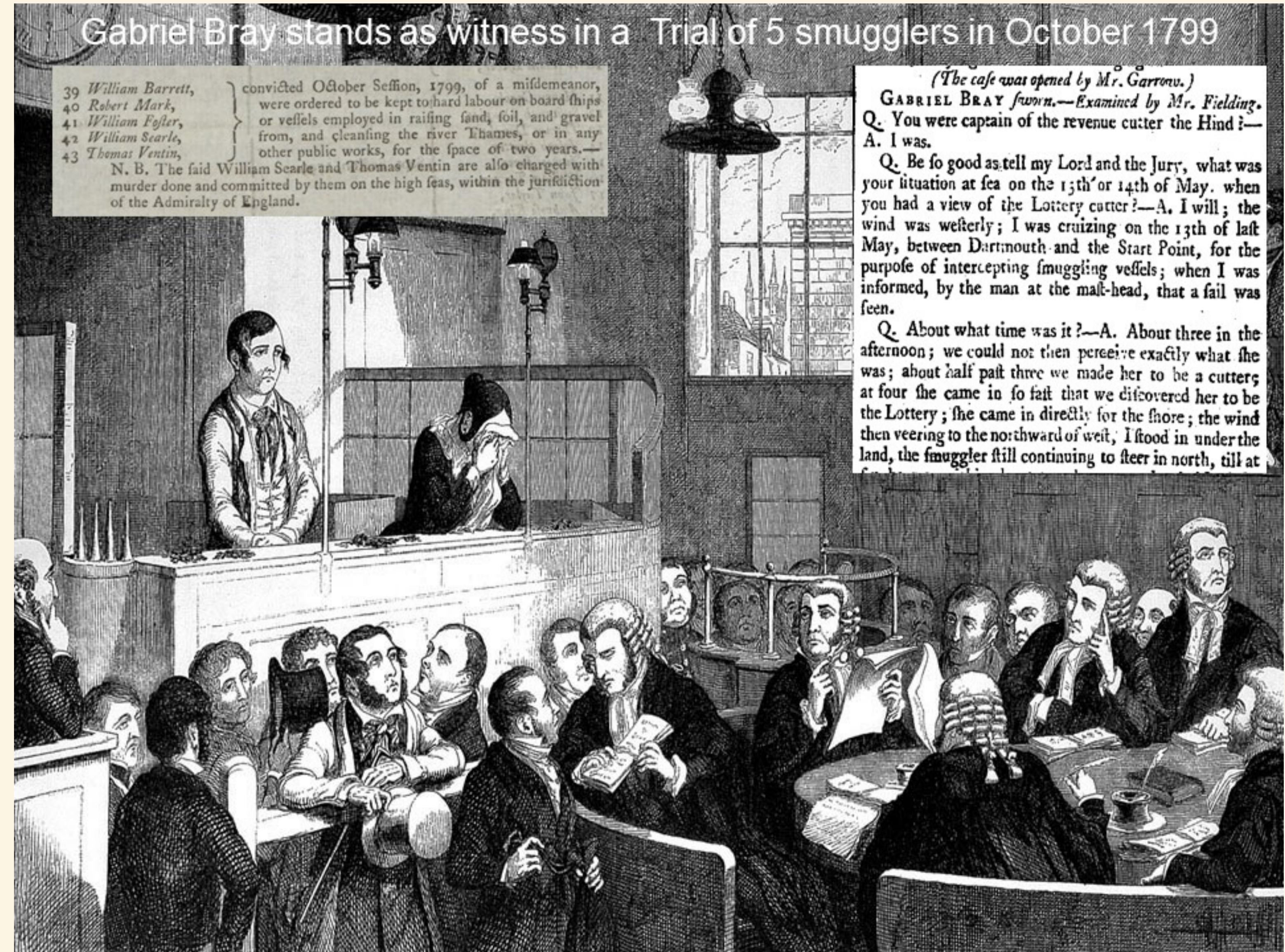
For inventories and catalogues, application to be made to the said Mr. Bray, at Fowey, or at the office of Thomas Lockyer, Sworn Broker, Plymouth, November 19, 1799.

Gabriel Bray stands as witness in a Trial of 5 smugglers in October 1799

39 William Barrett,
 40 Robert Mark,
 41 William Foster,
 42 William Searle,
 43 Thomas Ventin,

convicted October Session, 1799, of a misdemeanor, were ordered to be kept to hard labour on board ships or vessels employed in raising sand, foil, and gravel from, and cleaning the river Thames, or in any other public works, for the space of two years.—
 N. B. The said William Searle and Thomas Ventin are also charged with murder done and committed by them on the high seas, within the jurisdiction of the Admiralty of England.

(The case was opened by Mr. Garrow.)
GABRIEL BRAY sworn.—Examined by Mr. Fielding.
 Q. You were captain of the revenue cutter the Hind?—
 A. I was.
 Q. Be so good as tell my Lord and the Jury, what was your situation at sea on the 13th or 14th of May, when you had a view of the Lottery cutter?—A. I will; the wind was westerly; I was cruising on the 13th of last May, between Dartmouth and the Start Point, for the purpose of intercepting smuggling vessels; when I was informed, by the man at the malt-head, that a sail was seen.
 Q. About what time was it?—A. About three in the afternoon; we could not then perceive exactly what she was; about half past three we made her to be a cutter; at four she came in so fast that we discovered her to be the Lottery; she came in directly for the shore; the wind then veering to the northward of west, I stood in under the land, the smuggler still continuing to steer in north, till at



592. WILLIAM BARRETT , ROBERT MARK , WILLIAM FOSTER , WILLIAM SEARLE , and THOMAS VENTIN were indicted, for that they, on the 14th of May , within four leagues of the coast of this kingdom, that is, within three leagues of the county of Cornwall, by firing a certain gun or swivel, and directing certain other fire-arms, did obstruct Hugh Pearce and Philip Pill , being officers in the service of the Customs ; Hugh Pearce being on board of a certain boat, and Philip Pill being on board of another boat, each in the execution of his duty, in endeavouring to get on board a certain cutter called the Lottery, in order to seize, for our Lord the King, 500 gallons of geneva, and 500 gallons of brandy, by which means the said officers were prevented from seizing the same .

They stood charged, in a second count, with the like offence, varying the manner of charging it.

(The case was opened by Mr. Garrow.)

GABRIEL BRAY sworn. - Examined by Mr. Fielding.

Q. You were captain of the revenue cutter the Hind? - A. I was.

Q. Be so good as tell my Lord and the Jury, what was your situation at sea on the 15th or 14th of May. when you had a view of the Lottery cutter? - A. I will; the wind was westerly; I was cruising on the 13th of last May, between Dartmouth and the Start Point, for the purpose of intercepting smuggling vessels; when I was informed, by the man at the mast-head, that a sail was seen.

Q. About what time was it? - A. About three in the afternoon; we could not then perceive exactly what she was; about half past three we made her to be a cutter; at four she came in so fast that we discovered her to be the Lottery; she came in directly for the shore; the wind then veering to the northward of west, I stood in under the land, the smuggler still continuing to steer in north, till at six he was within about two leagues and a half of the land called the Bolt, when finding the wind come to the northward, he tacked; the Hind immediately tacked after him, made fail, and chased him all the night, without ever losing sight of him; on the 14th, at five in the morning, we were becalmed, at about the distance of five miles from the smuggling cutter; when I ordered both the Hind's boats to be manned and armed, with an officer in each, to proceed towards that cutter, and take possession of her.

Gabriel Bray captures the "Lottery" smuggling Cutter in 1798

PLYMOUTH, May 24. The capture of the Lottery (smuggling cutter) is likely to be the means of bringing to justice the murderers of Glynn, the Custom house boatman, off Penlee Point, at Christmas last. One of the crew of the Lottery has offered to turn evidence, and from his information Thomas Potter, of Polperro, in Cornwall, has been apprehended there, and examined at the Guildhall here. The crew of the Lottery, eighteen in number, are in close confinement, and it is supposed that many of them are implicated in the crime. The Lottery had upwards of 700 casks of spirits on board when taken; and within the last 15 months, she is supposed to have run into the country near 30,000 eight-gallon casks of spirits,—an immense injury to the revenue, from one bottom only!

WHEREAS it has been humbly represented to the King, that RICHARD OLIVER, the Younger, RICHARD BARRETT, the Younger, WILLIAM SWARTMAN, the Younger, PHILIP LIBBY, the Younger, THOMAS GEORGE, and ROBERT TOMS, of Polperro, in the county of Cornwall, mariners, and lately belonging to a smuggling vessel called the Lottery, stand charged upon oath with being concerned in the WILFUL MURDER of HUMPHRY GLINN, late a boatman belonging to the six-oared boat in the service of the Customs, stationed at Cawland, on the 10th of December last, between the hours of ten and eleven at night, off Penlee Point, on the coast of Cornwall, by firing from on board the said vessel called the Lottery with muskets at the said boat.

His Majesty, for the better discovering and bringing to justice the above-named persons, is hereby pleased to promise his most gracious pardon to any one of the said offenders, (except Richard Oliver, the younger, the master of the said vessel, and Richard Barrett, the younger, one of the owners thereof, and the persons who actually fired) who shall discover his accomplice or accomplices, or be the means of any one or more of them being apprehended and committed to prison for the said offence.

PORTLAND.

And as a further encouragement, the Commissioners of his Majesty's Customs do hereby offer a Reward of Two Hundred Pounds to any one of the said offenders, (except as before excepted) or to any other person or persons who shall apprehend, or cause to be apprehended, any one or more of them, the said Richard Oliver, the younger, Richard Barrett, the younger, William Swartman, the younger, Philip Libby, the younger, Thomas George, and Roger Toms, whose descriptions are hereinafter mentioned; which said reward will be paid by the Receiver-General of the Customs, upon the said persons, or either of them, being apprehended and committed to prison.

By order of the Commissioners,
J. HUME, Secretary.

from Im information Thomas Potter, of Polperro, Cornwall, has been apprehended there, and examined at the Guildhall here. The crew of the Lottery, eighteen number, are in clofe confinement, and it is fupposed that many of them are implicated in the crime

27 May 1799 - Salisbury and Winchester Journal - Salisbury, Wiltshire, England

Customers Commiusioners Notice 1799

Possibly the most infamous smuggling incident ever in Cornwall happened on Boxing Day 1799, late in the evening a Customs preventative boat from Cassandra near Plymouth was on patrol near Penter Point, when the sifter, Ambrose Bowden sighted a large vessel in the process of landing goods on the beach. Getting to within hailing distance of the vessel shouted that he was a revenue officer. The reply from the smugglers was that the boat should keep away or else she would be fired on. Undeterred the revenue boat went closer, almost to within twenty five yards whereupon the smugglers opened fire and one of the boatman, Humphrey Glynn, was killed instantaneously, the fore part of his skull being shot away. The smuggling vessel slipped its cable and disappeared into the night. The name of the vessel was known, the Lottery of Polperro, and a reward of £200 was offered for any information of the offenders. So

determined were the Customs to find the culprits that members of the Lottery's crew were forced to disappear, some out of the county and others to the Channel Islands. One of the sadder aspects of the incident was that Glynn left a son aged ten years, who according to the Collector, "had a great impediment in his speech and appears to be of tender constitution". The Customs Board agreed to pay for the boy to attend a special school at St. Germaine, at a cost of £25 per annum and till he could be apprenticed as a tailor.

Perhaps it is not surprising that a very close community like Polperro, where virtually everybody including the women and children were involved in the smuggling trade, no information was forthcoming on the whereabouts of the Lottery or her crew. However patience was rewarded in May of the following years when the revenue cutter, Hinde, under the command of the redoubtable Gabriel Bray sighted the Lottery off Start Point. The Hinde gave chase which lasted through the night and the morning found both vessels becalmed off the Lizard. The revenue boats under the command of Hugh Pearce, the mate were dispatched and as they drew near a virtual repeat of the previous incident seemed likely to occur with the smugglers threatening to blow the boats out of the water. Pearce feeling that discretion was the better part of valour, returned to the Cutter. Fortunately at this precise moment a slight breeze sprang up which enabled the Hinde to get into close quarters with the Lottery. The Hinde was one of the newest and largest cutters then in service, she carried sixteen guns and over forty men and obviously the smaller Lottery was no match for her. Seeing all was lost the smugglers struck their colours and attempted to escape by boat. However all were caught and as an added bonus the vessel contained 716 ankers of brandy besides tea and tobacco.

All the crew were arraigned on smuggling charge except for one, Roger Toms, who in an attempt to obtain a pardon for himself, agreed to give evidence on the men responsible for Glynn's murder. He named three men, two were already in custody and a third man, Tom Potter, who Toms claimed had fired the fatal shot, was still at large. Toms was allowed to go free whilst the Customs searches for Potter and although they attempted to keep their prize witness safe he was spirited away to Guernsey by a band of Polperro men. What is certainly strange is that the smugglers went to this length to hide Toms, they were not normally so circumspect with informers and they usually silenced them forever.

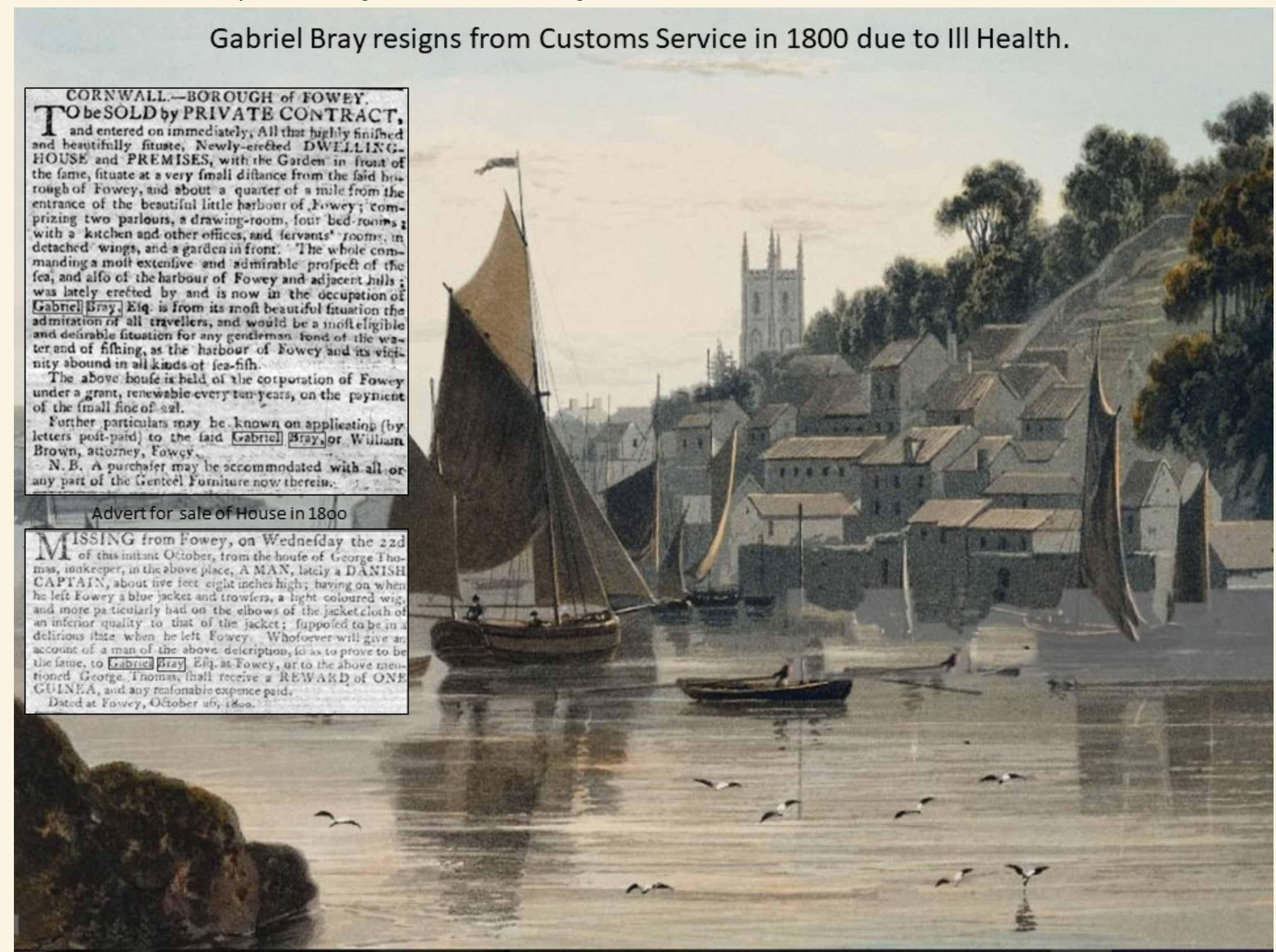
Potter was subsequently caught in his own home in Polperro- he. O doubt felt secure as there was no witness to indict him. However , the arm of the revenue is long. Toms was recaptured just as he was being shipped on a vessel bound for America. The trial finally took place at the Old Bailey in December 1800, almost two years to the day of Glynn's death. Only Potter was found guilty of the murder, the other two were released and Potter was sentenced to death. The informer Toms was never able to return to Cornwall, thus leaving his wife and family forever. His name for many years was synonymous with informer and traitor. The Lottery was taken into Customs service and served at Plymouth during the absence of the regular cutter.

Gabriel Bray resigns from Customs Service in 1800 due to Ill Health.

CORNWALL.—BOROUGH of FOWEY.
TO be SOLD by PRIVATE CONTRACT,
and entered on immediately, All that highly finished and beautifully situate, Newly-erected **DWELLING-HOUSE** and **PREMISES**, with the Garden in front of the same, situate at a very small distance from the said borough of Fowey, and about a quarter of a mile from the entrance of the beautiful little harbour of Fowey; comprising two parlours, a drawing-room, four bed-rooms; with a kitchen and other offices, and servants' rooms, in detached wings, and a garden in front. The whole commanding a most extensive and admirable prospect of the sea, and also of the harbour of Fowey and adjacent hills; was lately erected by and is now in the occupation of **Gabriel Bray, Esq.** is from its most beautiful situation the admiration of all travellers, and would be a most eligible and desirable situation for any gentleman fond of the water and of fishing, as the harbour of Fowey and its vicinity abound in all kinds of sea-fish.
The above house is held of the corporation of Fowey under a grant, renewable every ten years, on the payment of the small fine of 2s.
Further particulars may be known on application (by letters post-paid) to the said **Gabriel Bray**, or **William Brown**, attorney, Fowey.
N. B. A purchaser may be accommodated with all or any part of the Gentle Furniture now therein.

Advert for sale of House in 1800

MISSING from Fowey, on Wednesday the 22d of this instant October, from the house of George Thomas, innkeeper, in the above place, A MAN, lately a **DANISH CAPTAIN**, about five feet eight inches high; having on when he left Fowey a blue jacket and trowsers, a light coloured wig, and more particularly had on the elbows of the jacket cloth of an inferior quality to that of the jacket; supposed to be in a delirious state when he left Fowey. Whoever will give an account of a man of the above description, so as to prove to be the same, to **Gabriel Bray, Esq.** at Fowey, or to the above mentioned **George Thomas**, shall receive a **REWARD** of **ONE GUINEA**, and any reasonable expence paid.
Dated at Fowey, October 26, 1800.



Cornwall - Borough of Fowey.

To be sold by Private Contract and entered on immediately, All that highly finished and beautifully situate, Newly erected Dwelling House and Premises, with the Garden in front of the same situate a very small distance from the said borough of Fowey and about a quarter of a miles from the entrance of the beautiful little harbour of Fowey, comprising two parlours, a drawing room, four bedrooms, with a kitchen and other offices, and servants rooms in detached wings, and a garden in front.

The whole commanding a most extensive and admirable prospect of the sea, and also the harbour of Fowey and adjacent hills was lately erected by and is now in the occupation of Gabriel Bray, Esq. is from its most beautiful situation the admiration of all travellers, and would be a most eligible and desirable situation for any gentleman fond of the water and of fishing, as the harbour of Fowey and its vicinity abound with all kinds of sea fish.

The above house is held of the corporation of Fowey under a grant, renewable every ten years on the payment of the small fine of £22. Further particulars may be known on application(by letter post-paid) to the said Gabriel Bray, or William Brown, Attorney, Fowey.

N.B. A purchaser may be accommodated with all or any part of the Genteel Furniture now therein.

Missing from Fowey, on Wednesday the 22nd of this instant October, from house of George Thomas, innkeeper, in the above place, a Man, lately a Danish Captain, about five feet eight inches high, having on when he left Fowey a blue jacket and trousers, a light coloured wig, and more particularly had on the elbows of the jacket cloth of an inferior quality to that of the jacket, supposed to be in a delirious state when he left Fowey. Whosoever will give an account of a man of the above description

, so as to prove to be the same, to Gabriel Bray Esq. at Fowey, or to the above mentioned George Thomas, shall receive a reward of one guinea, and any reasonable expense paid.

Dated at Fowey, October 26, 1800.

Gabriel Bray moves from Fowey to London in 1807.

LIST of GAME CERTIFICATES is-
sued within the said County, from the First of July, 1806, to the Fourth day of September following, inclusive,

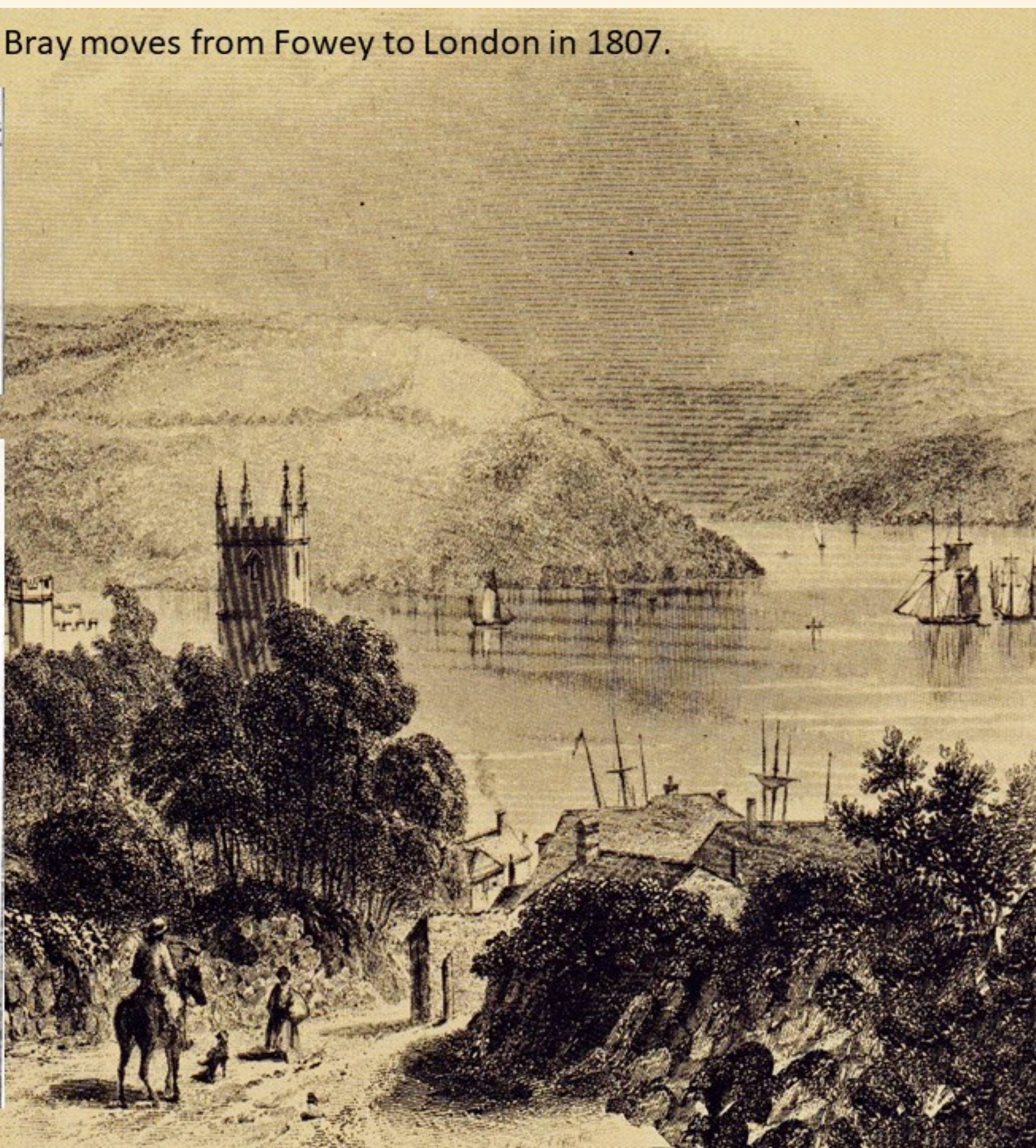
Andrew, Zaccheus, gent. Polsue
Andrew, James, gent. Redruth
Andrew, Charles Foss, esq. Ladock
Andrew, Richard Hanley, esq. St. Mabyn
Bray, John, gent. Poughill
Bickle, John, huntsman, Launceston
Baker, William, clerk, Gerrans
Bennett, William, gent. Saltash
Brown, William, gent. Fowey
Bray, Gabriel, esq. same

FOWEY.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
BY T. OLVER, AUCTIONEER,
On **TUESDAY** the 23d of this instant **June**, and following days until all are sold.

ALL the Neat and Genuine **HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE**, belonging to **GABRIEL BRAY, Esq.** at his Dwelling-house in the borough of Fowey, in the county of Cornwall; comprising handsome fancy-painted and other chairs, sofas, mahogany circular and other Dining Tables, Card, Pembroke, and Tea ditto, Pier and Swing Glasses, Floor and Bed Carpets, neat mahogany and other Bedsteads with handsome Furniture, Feather Beds, mahogany commode Chests of Drawers, ditto Wardrobes, Receptacles, and Wash-stands, Rounford and other Stove Grates, commode Fenders and Fire-irons, useful and ornamental China and Glass Wares, Tea and Table sets, handsome plated Candlesticks, Snuffers, Stands, &c. &c. a large quantity of Kitchen Utensils, a choice collection of valuable Paintings, of the Venetian, Flemish, and French Masters, a brilliant-toned Piano-Forte, a Patent Mangle, with a variety of other articles, too tedious to mention, as Stacks of Hay, &c. &c. the whole comprising six hundred lots.

N. B. Each days sale to begin precisely at ten o'clock in the forenoon, end at one, begin again at half past two o'clock, and end at eight in the evening.

Catalogues may be had, five days before the sale, at the King's Arms, Bodmin, Talbot Inn, Lostwithiel, White Hart, St. Austle, Ship Inn, Fowey, on the premises, and of T. OLVER, Auctioneer, Fowey, at 6d each. **June 10, 1807.**



Gabriel Bray moves to Newington in 1807

London, England, Land Tax Records, 1692-1932 for Gabriel Bray

Southwark > Newington > 1809

John Priddy	10	9	
Newington Place	Edmund Brick	50	1
	P. Garden	1	3
	Gabriel Bray	50	15

Town and Port 1810 March Poll then taken at the election of one Baron to Hythe in Kent serve in Parliament for the said Town and Port in the room of Thomas Godfrey Esquire deceased -

Candidates
 John Millar Head Brydges Esquire
 Sir John Perring Baronet
 William Bush Esquire

	Brydges	Perring	Bush
S: Philip Hales Bart Brymore Somersetshire			
John Mason Hythe			
Gabriel Bray No 10 Newington Place Surrey			
John Raven Bray Mongeham Kent			



Newington 1. division. freeholders

John Mason - Brazier	Garden place
Gabriel Bray	Newington place
Edmund Brick	
William Williams	South place
Thomas Conroy	

Oval Cricket Ground today

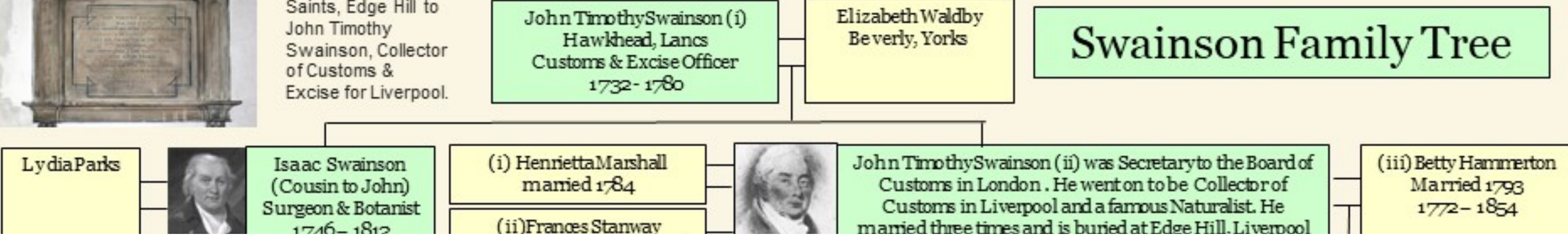
It is difficult to track Gabriel Brays movements after 1800. He is definitely in London in 1809 when he is shown as living at 10 Newington Place, Newington and in the 1812 appears in a Poll Book for Hythe In Kent as living at this address and his brother, John Raven Bray in Great Mongeham. It is reported that he leaves the Royal Navy in 1800 as a result of his bad health, when he would have been just over 50. The album of paintings that he gave as a present to his godson, Isaac Swanson, whose images I have used on the earlier slides may give us a clue to his occupation during these missing years.

9TH February 1809 receives a Naval Pension.

Gabriel Bray's friendship with the Swainson Family



Memorial in the Lady Chapel of All Saints, Edge Hill to John Timothy Swainson, Collector of Customs & Excise for Liverpool.



Swainson Family Tree