

Jewellery Studies

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2023/3
LESLIE SOUTHWICK

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HISTORIANS**

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James Morisset's City of London Freedom Boxes Awarded during the French Revolutionary War

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DR LESLIE SOUTHWICK is an independent scholar and consultant of the applied arts. He specialises in antique arms and armour, silver, military tokens of achievement and freedom boxes. Also, he writes on the London fine art trade and on the lives of notable craftsmen and retailers such as Thomas Gray of Sackville Street (*Jewellery Studies* 2022/2). He has published in a number of other academic journals and a major work is *London Silver-Hilted Swords, their Makers, Suppliers and Allied Traders, with Directory*, Royal Armouries, Leeds, 2001.



Front cover:

City of London Freedom Box of Vice Admiral Charles Thompson, London 1797-98,
James Morisset, commissioned from Gabriel Leekey. 110mm x 75mm x 30mm.
By courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (ZBA2976)

James Morisset's City of London Freedom Boxes Awarded during the French Revolutionary War

LESLIE SOUTHWICK

City of London Freedom Boxes were tokens awarded to contain the Corporation of London's highest honour - the Honorary Freedom of the City. On 2 February 1793, Revolutionary France declared war against Great Britain and Honorary Freedoms and their accompanying gifts began to be given to all the leading high-ranking British officers who achieved a notable success. Following the recent sale of the City of London Freedom Box awarded to Lieutenant General Sir Charles Grey, KB, in 1794 (fig. 1), with the maker's mark, **'IM' in a rectangle with angled corners** of James Morisset (see below), it is thought relevant to discuss this historic gift together with the nine other notable gold and enamel Freedom boxes made by Morisset for the Corporation of London during a turbulent decade in Britain's history.



Fig. 1.
Gold and enamel City of London Freedom Box of Lieut.-General Sir Charles Grey, KB, London 1794-95, James Morisset, commissioned from Gabriel Leekey. Length 102mm. © Christie's Images, 2023

James Morisset (14 June 1738 - 4 January 1815) was the most accomplished specialist London jeweller, goldsmith, enameller and manufacturer of presentation swords and freedom boxes of the late 18th century (cf. figs 1-18) (Blair 1972, Southwick 1997, 2001 and 2020). From the mid-1760s, but more particularly during the years of war with Revolutionary France (1793-1802), the workshop of Morisset and his various partners situated at 22 Denmark Street (north side) Soho, Parish of St Giles-in-the-Fields, Holborn, Westminster (figs 19-21) was commissioned to manufacture high-quality tokens of achievement by London's leading high-street retail goldsmiths and jewellers, such as Gabriel Leekey, Thomas Ayres, William Moore, William Hunter, John Lambe, Goodbehere & Wigan, Thomas Liddiard, Robert Makepeace, Rundell & Bridge, Gray & Constable and Jefferys & Jones.¹ In turn, these commissions were by order of the most prominent institutions and establishments of the day, such as the Corporation of the City of London (fig. 22), the Hon. East India Company, various Mercantile Societies and several Colonial Island Assemblies. The purpose of commissioning these fine tokens was to acknowledge, reward and applaud heroic achievement by the leading naval and military commanders of the hour, most notably those officers in high command who achieved outstanding victories, men like Lieut.-General Sir Charles Grey, Admiral Earl St Vincent, Earl Howe, Viscount Duncan, Lord Keith, General Sir Ralph Abercromby and Baron Nelson of the Nile (Southwick 1990 and 2020).



Fig. 2.
City of London Freedom Box of Vice Admiral Charles Thompson, London 1797-98, James Morisset, commissioned from Gabriel Leekey. 110mm x 75mm x 30mm. By courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (ZBA2976)

1 See Southwick 2001 'Directory'.

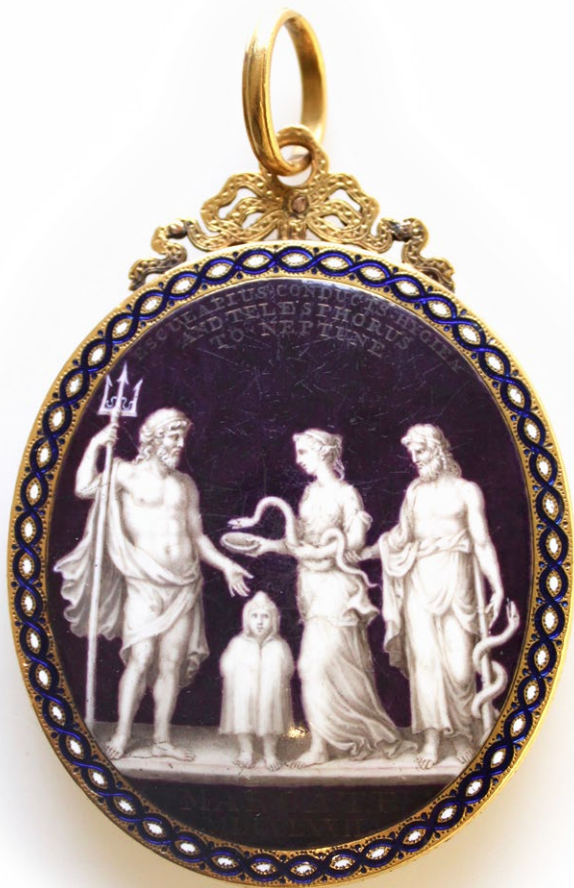


Fig. 3. (Left)

Gold and enamel pendant, London 1772, James Morisset.
82mm x 51mm x 10mm. By courtesy of The Royal Museum & Art Gallery,
Canterbury (Inv. Cancm:10105)

Fig. 4. (Below)

Morisset's first maker's mark on the suspension ring of pendant in fig. 3



Fig. 5. (Left)

Gold and enamel dress small-sword presented by the Hon. East India
Company to Lieut.-Colonel James Hartley, London, 1781-82, James
Morisset, commissioned from James Shrapnell. Victoria & Albert
Museum (M39-1960)

Fig. 6. (Below)

The oval gold and enamel shell-guard of the Hartley sword in fig. 5,
from above





Fig. 7.
Jewelled enamelled gold scent bottle, London 1787-88, James Morisset.
Height 76mm. © Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 8.
Side view of scent bottle, fig. 7. © Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 9. (Above)
Oval gold and enamel snuff-box by James Morisset, before 1789, later
presented by the Boys of Eton College to Their Majesties King George V
and Queen Mary on the occasion of the couple's Silver Jubilee, 6 May
1935. Dimensions 86mm x 70mm x 29mm. Royal Collection Trust
© His Majesty King Charles III 2023 (RCIN 19125)



Fig. 10. (Above right)
Lid of gold box with the figure of Minerva *en grisaille* on enamel (fig. 9)



Fig. 11. (Right)
First maker's mark of James Morisset and the London Lion Passant
Guardant mark on border of gold box (fig. 9)



Fig. 12.
Pearl-set gold and enamel snuff-box
embellished with a scene from Shakespeare's
Coriolanus (Act 5 scene 3) after Bartolozzi's
1785 engraving of Angelica Kauffman's
painting. James Morisset, before 1789.
Width 92mm. © Sotheby's Images 2022



Fig. 13.
Detail of scene from *Coriolanus* on cover of fig. 12



Fig. 14.
Side view of snuff-box, fig. 12



Fig. 15.
Underside of snuff-box, fig. 12



Fig. 16.
Gold and enamel presentation snuff-box
with miniature of King William Frederick II
of Prussia (1744-1797), James Morisset,
c.1794. The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert
Collection (Loan Met. Anon 9:1, 2-2012)



Fig. 17.
Gold, enamel, and formerly diamond-
embellished box presented by Tsar Alexander
I of Russia, to Henry Addington, Viscount
Sidmouth, c.1800, by James Morisset.
Length 88mm x width 60mm x depth 35mm.
Collection of Viscount Sidmouth on loan to
the Victoria and Albert Museum, London
(Loan Sidmouth, 1-2007)



Fig. 18.
Underside of Viscount Sidmouth's box, fig. 17

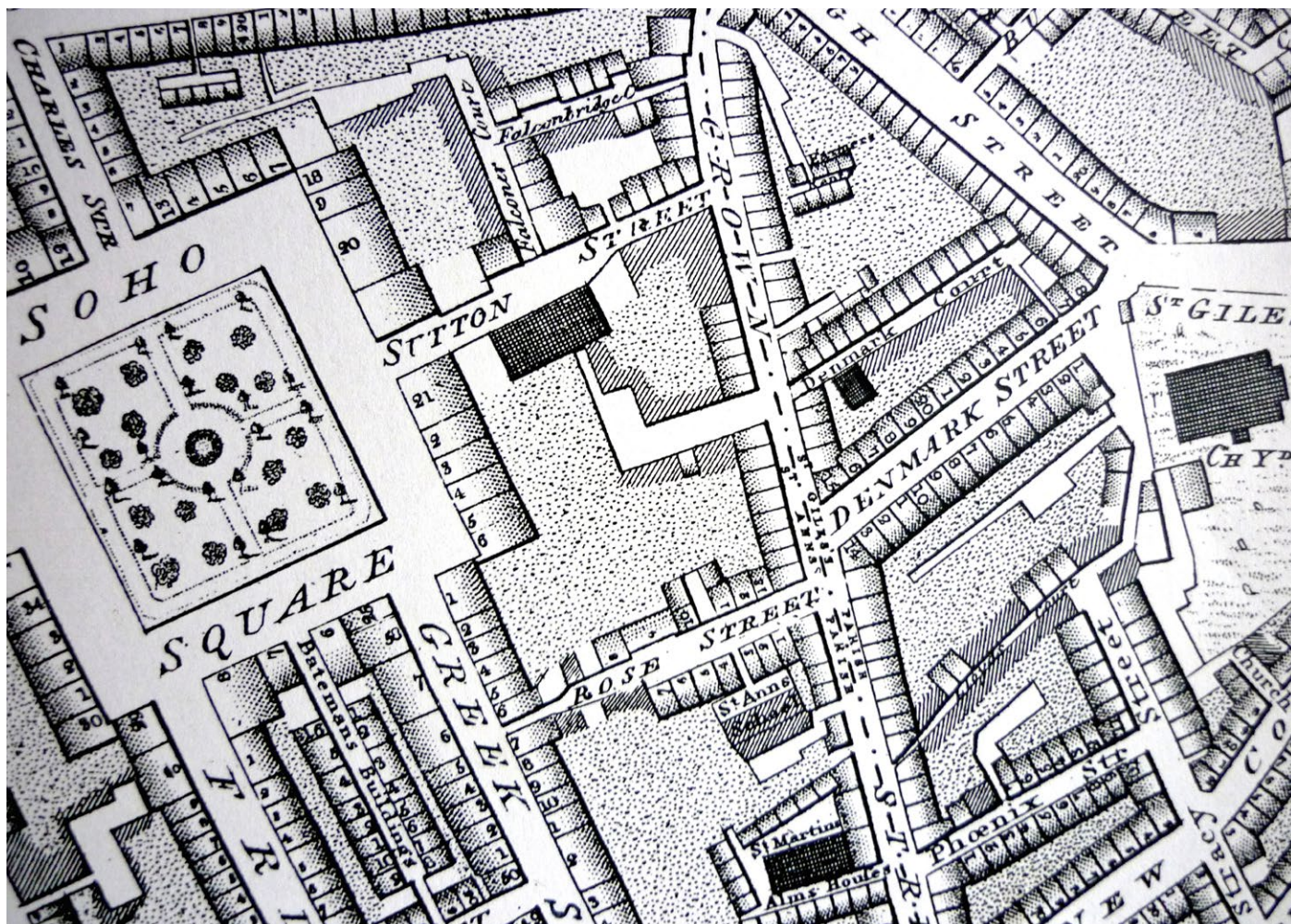


Fig. 19.

Denmark Street, Soho (Horwood's *Map of London* 1799 detail). The houses are numbered: 22 Denmark Street is on the north side, Morisset's private residence, No.10, on the south



Fig. 20.

Denmark Street today. Author's Image



Fig. 21.

Church of St Giles-in-the-Fields today. Author's Image



Fig. 22.
The Guildhall, City of London,
today. Author's Image

Unlike the more universally known London gold and silver 'Largeworkers', such as Paul de Lamerie, Morisset did not run a large commercial workshop, nor was he a prominent high street merchant. On all official documents, he described himself as a 'jeweller' and was a manufacturer of exceptional 'small-ware'. His workshop account ledgers do not appear to have survived, nor do any existing receipts or trade cards, and only one known object from his workshop is signed.² In addition, the rather limited number of extant items made under his direction are known only by the identification of his registered maker's marks on specific high-quality work, marks incidentally, which have themselves only been recognized and acknowledged for just fifty-one years (Blair 1972).

Morisset's first maker's mark, '**I-M** in Roman capital letters with pellet between in a straight-sided rectangle', was registered as '*James Morisset in Denmark Stt, St Giles's*' in the Smallworkers' Book at Goldsmiths' Hall on 'August 31 1770' (fig. 23); a second similar mark (two punches) was entered as '*Jams Morisset, Goldworker, No. 22 Denmark Street, Soho*', on 'Novr 22 1787'; a third revised mark, '**IM** in a rectangle with angled corners, no pellet between the letters', on 'Novr. 6, 1789' (cf. figs 24, 36-37, 59);³ and a fourth very small version of the last mark (for jewellery purposes), '**IM in a rectangle**', six days later on 'Novr. 12, 1789' (fig. 24).

Morisset was not only active during the great Age of Neo-Classicism, but he also lived and worked in a period of historic conflict and turmoil, of colonial expansion and of great battles, wars and uprisings, such as the American War of Independence, the French Revolution, and colonial conflicts in the East and

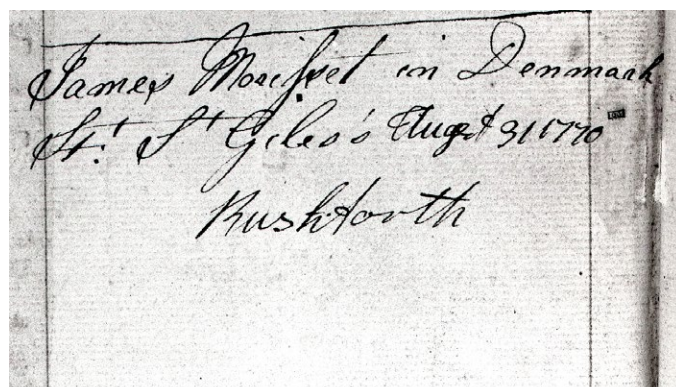


Fig. 23.
First maker's mark of James Morisset registered 'August 31st 1770'.
By courtesy of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, London

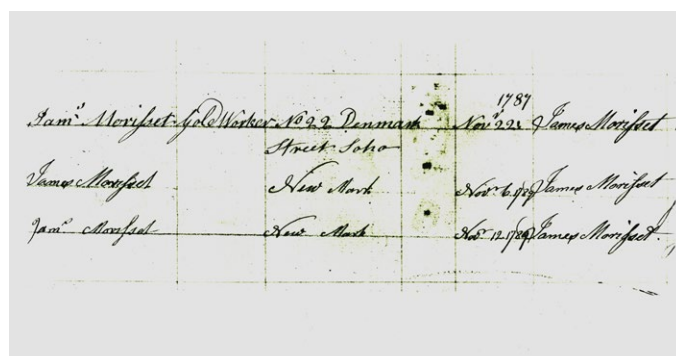


Fig. 24.
Morisset's later marks. The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths

² See Southwick 2020, p. 56, No. 52, Figs 50a-b.

³ It is Morisset's third mark of 1789 that is struck on all his freedom boxes discussed in this paper.

West Indies. He was born, trained, lived and worked in London, the capital of the burgeoning British Empire (where trade and sea routes were vital for national expansion). His clients were discriminating customers who recognized that a little known craftsman, who operated a small workshop in East Soho, London, was the most gifted small-ware manufacturer of the age. He was fortunate in being in the right place at the right time and, through his expertise and accomplishments, could provide what society demanded at the very highest level.

Freedom Boxes

City of London Freedom Boxes, a token awarded to contain the Honorary Freedom of the City, are known to have been given and recorded from 1674, when King Charles II (fig. 25) was presented with a very expensive '*large square Box of massy Gold embellished with diamonds*' during the Mayoralty of his banker, Sir Robert Viner, on 18 December 1674, a gift totalling £920 (the only British reigning monarch to be so honoured);⁴ and (in the following year and still in the Mayoralty of Viner) a '*Rich box Embroydred with gold and pearle, with his Royal Highness the Duke of Yorkes Arms, the Cittys Arms and the Merchant taylors Arms by Mr Charles Pinckney*', presented with the freedom to the King's younger brother, James, Duke of York (later James II) totalling £47.⁵

Following a gap of sixty-five years, other boxes began to be awarded, several to notable recipients in time of war. These particular tokens include the 100 guinea Gold Freedom Box awarded to Vice Admiral Edward Vernon, Commander-in-Chief Ships and Vessels in the West Indies, who with six ships and a small troop contingent, had successfully attacked and captured Porto Bello [Panama] on 22 November 1739 (awarded 25 March 1740) (figs 26-27) (Southwick 2018); the Gold Box 'costing £144-10-0' to the Duke of Cumberland for services in quelling the Jacobite rebellion and his victory at Culloden (20 April 1746) (admitted into the Freedom 6 August 1746); 'Box of heart of oak ornamented with chased gold & painted enamel plaques' costing £319. 1s. 6d (awarded 12 February 1779) to the Hon. Augustus Keppel, Admiral of the Blue and former Commander of the Western Squadron (Murdoch & Snodin 1993); the 100 guinea Gold Box to Rear Admiral Sir George Brydges Rodney, Bart, for the victory over a Spanish Squadron off Cape St Vincent (awarded 6 March 1780) (fig. 28); the 100 guinea Gold Boxes to Rear Admiral Lord Hood and Rear Admiral Sir Francis Samuel Drake for essential services in the West Indies (awarded 20 June 1782); and the 100 guinea Gold Box to General the Marquis Cornwallis, C-in-C HM Forces in the East Indies, for his gallant conduct and services in the war against Tippoo Sultan (Third Mysore Campaign, 1790-91) (awarded 4 October 1792).⁶

On 2 February 1793, Revolutionary France declared war against Great Britain and Honorary Freedoms and their accompanying



Fig. 25.
Charles II (1630-85) by John Michael Wright (1617-94) in full ceremonial robes, c.1676. Royal Collection Trust © His Majesty King Charles III 2023 (RCIN 404951)



Fig. 26.
City of London gold Freedom Box of Vice Admiral Edward Vernon, awarded 22 November 1739, maker's mark of Jasper Cunst, provided by Charles Gardner. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (PLT. 0187)

4 CLRO. MISC. MSS. 160/7 *Journal* 48, 13 November 1674, f. 122; LG, 19 December, 1674; Masters 1988, p.100

5 CLRO. MISC. MSS. 160/7, Invoice of Charles Pinckney paid 28 September 1676; Masters 1988, p. 100

6 CLRO records and journals under date



Fig. 27.
Marble bust of Vice Admiral Edward Vernon (1684-1757), c.1744, attributed to Louis Francois Roubiliac. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (SCU0057)



Fig. 28.
City of London gold Freedom Box of Rear Admiral Sir George Brydges Rodney, Bart, awarded 6 March 1780, by Gabriel Wirgman, commissioned from Gabriel Leekey. © Christie's Images, 2023

gifts began to be given to all the leading high-ranking British officers, who achieved a notable success. From 1793 to 1802 (when the Treaty of Amiens temporarily paused the war for one year before the Napoleonic conflict began in 1803), twelve gold City of London Freedom boxes were awarded by the Corporation, ten of which were made by Morisset, whose maker's mark is struck on more freedom boxes (and notable swords of honour) than by any other artisan in London's history.⁷ Morisset's ten distinctive 100 guinea gold and enamel boxes (the first three of rectangular form, the others of oval pattern), were awarded for distinguished service in the following actions.

Expedition in the West Indies, 1794

1. *Lieutenant General Sir Charles Grey, KB*

Rectangular 100 guinea gold and enamel City of London Freedom Box resolved to be awarded on Tuesday, 27 May 1794, at a Court of Common Council before the Lord Mayor, Paul Le Mesurier, to **Lieut.-General Sir Charles Grey, KB (later 1st Earl Grey) (1729-1807)** (fig. 29), Officer Commanding the joint Naval



Fig. 29.
General Sir Charles Grey, KB (later Earl Grey), miniature by Henry Bone, dated 'Augt 1794'. By courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, The Edward B. Greene Collection (1949.550)

⁷ The goldsmith, A. J. Strachan, is known to have made six London freedom boxes



Fig. 30.
'The Capture of Fort Louis,
Martinique, 20 March 1794',
by William Anderson, oil on
canvas, 1795. National Maritime
Museum, Greenwich, Caird
Collection (BHC 0468)

and Military Expedition to the Caribbean in 1794 and for the successful capture of Martinique (20 March 1794) (fig. 30), St Lucia (4 April 1794), The Saints (8 April 1794) and Guadeloupe (20 April 1794) (figs 1 and 31-38). Cast and finely chased, the cover set with an enamelled medallion depicting the arms of Grey with ribbon bearing the motto of the Order of the Bath 'TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO' and his family motto 'DE BON VOULOIR SERVIR LE ROY' (fig. 31), the arms framed within a chased

border of laurel surrounded by cast and chased trophies of arms, all within a border of oak leaves interspersed with shells and rosette; the arms of the City of London on the front (fig. 32), the recipient's interlaced initials 'CG' on the left side (fig. 33) and a defeated personification of a French Marianne on the back (fig. 34), all framed by cornucopia and military trophies of arms and engraved on the inside of the cover with the Court of Common Council's resolution (fig. 35):

Le Mesurier Mayor.

*A Common Council Holden in the
Chamber of the Guildhall
of the City of London on Tuesday
the 27th day of May 1794.*

*Resolved unanimously that the Freedom
of this City be presented to Sir Charles Grey, K.B.
in testimony of the high Esteem of the Citizens
of London for his gallant Conduct and essential
Service, whereby glorious and important advan-
tages have been obtained by his Majesty's
Military Forces under his Command in the West Indies. Rix.⁸*

8 'Rix': William Rix (1734-1801), Town Clerk of the City of London



Fig. 31.
Gold and enamel City of London Freedom Box
of Lieut.-General Sir Charles Grey, KB, London
1794-95, James Morisset, commissioned from
Gabriel Leekey. Length 102mm. © Christie's
Images, 2023



Fig. 32.
Grey's box with City of London arms on front.
© Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 33.
Side view of Grey's box with italic monogram 'CG'. © Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 34.
Rear of Grey's box with a defeated personification of a French Marianne.
© Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 35.
Court of Common Council's resolution of Grey's freedom engraved inside the cover of fig. 31 and mark of Morisset. © Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 36. (Left)
Third maker's mark of James Morisset, 'IM' in a rectangle, and Lion Passant Guardant mark on side of Grey's box. © Christie's Images 2023

Fig. 37. (Below left)
Morisset's third maker's mark and the Lion Passant Guardant inside the cover of Grey's box, fig 31. © Christie's Images 2023

Fig. 38. (Below)
Underside of Grey's Freedom Box, 1794. © Christie's Images 2023



Following being informed of being awarded the Freedom of the City on 3 June 1794, Sir Charles Grey replied to the Lord Mayor Le Mesurier from Martinique, where he was then stationed, a letter read before the Court at a meeting of 25 September 1794:⁹

Martinico, July 28th 1794

My Lord

I have received the Honour of your Lordship's letter of the 3d Ultimo, transmitting a Vote of Thanks to this Army from the City of London, and also a Vote of Freedom to me, of that great City, Testimonials so highly flattering and Honorable from our Fellow Subjects of London, cannot fail to claim our warmest gratitude, and on behalf of this Army as well as myself personally, I return the sincerest Thanks.

*I have the Honor to be, My Lord
Your Lordships Most Obedt & most Hum. Servt.
Charles Grey*

On 4 December 1794, Leekey's rare surviving handwritten invoice was read before the Common Council:

Dr to Gabriel Leekey

To Making a Gold Box, Voted by the Court of Common Council to the Honourable Sir Charles Grey K^t B., Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Forces in the West Indies

£105

To duty paid £3 - 7s- 0d

[Total] £108 -7s.-0d.

And the *City of London Cash Accounts for 1794* (2/63, f.385) read:

To Deputy Gabriel Leekey in full of his Bill for the Gold Box and duty provided to contain the Freedom voted the 27th of May last to be presented to Sir Charles Grey, K.B., Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in the West Indies, pr. Order do. do. 4th of December 1794.....£108. 7. 0.

Later Grey returned to England, but there is no apparent record of his having attended the Guildhall and being admitted into the Freedom of the City. Grey's rectangular gold and enamelled box is closely similar in design to that of his comrade Sir John Jervis (No. 2 below). They and the box presented to Admiral Earl Howe (No. 3) were resolved to be awarded in 1794 and made by Morisset in the same year.

The box has the Lion passant guardant mark, no date letter or sovereign's head, but was awarded on 27 May 1794 and made and delivered to the Corporation before 4 December 1794, so the assay must have been made in 1794. Maker's mark 'IM' for James Morisset (his third maker's mark above) (cf. figs 35-37).

⁹ CLRO *Journal* 74, 25 September 1794, f. 195v.

It was commissioned by the Corporation from the prominent Court of Common Councilman and retail goldsmith, Gabriel Leekey (c.1726-1802), active at 15 Basinghall Street, City, from 1748 until his death in 1802.¹⁰

2. Vice Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB

Gold and enamel rectangular box of 100 guinea value resolved to be awarded on Tuesday, 27 May 1794, by a Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London held before the Lord Mayor, Paul Le Mesurier, to contain the Freedom of the City to **Vice Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB (1735-1823)** (fig. 39), later Earl St Vincent, HMS *Boyne*, Officer Commanding-in-Chief HM Naval Forces, Leeward Islands, for his command of British Vessels in the joint Naval and Military Expedition (with Sir Charles Grey above) in the Caribbean in 1794, and for the capture of Martinique (fig. 30), St Lucia, The Saints and Guadaloupe (figs 40-41). Cast and finely chased, the lid bears an oval enamelled medallion with the arms of Jervis with ribbon bearing the motto of the Order of the Bath 'TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO' and his family motto 'THUS', the arms framed within a chased border of laurel with the naval crown above, and surrounded by cast and chased trophies of arms, all within a border of oak leaves and shells. The sides of the box are set with panels containing, on the front, the arms of the City of London with supporters, the sides with the recipient's initial's 'JJ' surmounted by naval crowns, and the rear with a plaque showing the weeping figure of a defeated France with captured French trophies. Inside the cover of the box is a full engraved inscription of presentation:



Fig. 39. Vice Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB (1735-1823) by William Beechey, oil on canvas, 1787-90. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC3001)

Le Mesurier, Mayor.
A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall
of the City of London on Tuesday the 27th day of May 1794
Resolved unanimously that the Freedom of this City be presented to
Sir John Jervis KB
in testimony of the high Esteem of the Citizens of London
for his gallant Conduct and essential Service, whereby glorious and important
advantages have been obtained by his Majesty's Naval Forces under his Command in
the West Indies.
Rix.

The box has London Assay Marks, date-letter 't' for 1794-95 and the third maker's mark of James Morisset. It was commissioned from the London retail goldsmith, William Hunter (died 1805).

¹⁰ City of London Common Council *Journal* 74 (ff. 156v-157, f. 195v), *Common Council Papers* (GCXM/270 Box 54, invoice), *City Cash Accounts* (2/63, f. 385); for the West Indies' dispatches recording the success of the joint military and naval expedition, see *The London Gazette Extraordinary* 16 March 1794, 22 April 1794, 16 May 1794, 20 May 1794; *The St James's Chronicle* from Tuesday May 27 to Thursday May 29 1794 (No. 5683); and *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) pp. 74-5; Christie's (1992) Lot 209a; Southwick (2001) pp. 164-5; Southwick (2020) p. 64; Christie's (2023) Lot 65.



Fig. 40.
City of London Freedom Box of Vice Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB,
London 1794-95, James Morisset, commissioned from William Hunter.
Length 103mm x width 72mm x depth 35mm. National Maritime
Museum, Greenwich (PLT.0075).



Fig. 41.
Jervis's Freedom Box from above, 1794

Hunter's invoice is not extant, but *The City of London Cash Accounts* for 1794 (2/63, f. 385) read:

To William Hunter the like [in full of his Bill for a Gold Box and duty provided to contain the Freedom voted the 27th of May 1794] to Sir John Jervis, K. B. Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Navy in the West Indies, pr Order do. do.....£108. 8. 0.

Following the dispatches sent by Lieut.-General Sir Charles Grey, KB, Officer Commanding British Expeditionary Troops in the Caribbean and from Vice Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB, Officer Commanding Naval Ships and Vessels, informing the War Office and the Admiralty of British success in capturing Martinique, St Lucia, The Saints and Guadeloupe in the spring of 1794, reports that immediately began to be published as soon as they arrived in *The London Gazette Extraordinary*. In turn, the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London was the first to acknowledge the officers' endeavours and those of British forces in the first year of the war. *The St James's Chronicle* reported that on Monday, 26th May 1794:

Mr Alderman Combe, in a concise speech drew the attention of the Court to the success in the West Indies, and moved the thanks of the Court to Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, the two Commanders, which were unanimously agreed to, and the Freedom of the City was also unanimously voted to be presented to them respectively in a gold box of 100 guineas value.

The next day, at a full Court of Common Council held before the Lord Mayor, Paul Le Mesurier, in the Chamber of the Guildhall,

City of London (fig. 22), on Tuesday, 27 May 1794, it was

Resolved unanimously that the Thanks of this Court be given to SIR JOHN JERVIS K.B. and the Officers & Sailors serving in the Fleet under his command for the signal Services they have rendered to their Country by their able, gallant and meritorious conduct in the West Indies. Resolved unanimously that the Freedom of this City be presented to SIR JOHN JERVIS K.B. in Testimony of the high esteem of the Citizens of London for his gallant Conduct and Essential Service whereby glorious and important Advantages have been obtained by HIS MAJESTY'S NAVAL FORCES, under his Command.

Following being informed of being awarded the Freedom of the City by the Lord Mayor on 3 June 1794, Sir John Jervis replied to his Lordship from Martinique, where he was then stationed, a letter read before the Court at a meeting of 25 September 1794:¹¹

'[HMS] Boyne off Martinico, 26 July 1794

My Lord

I am Honored with your Lordship's Letter of the 3d June by the Chesterfield Pacquet, enclosing the Resolutions of the Court of Common Council of the City of London, expressive of their approbation of my Services in these seas – I request you will make my acknowledgements to the Court of Common Council of the City of London for the testimony with which they have stamped my endeavours to serve my King and Country, which no Man can feel the value of more than I do.

I will not fail to communicate to the Officers Seamen and Marines in the Squadron under my Command the sense entertained by the Court of their gallant and meritorious Conduct during the late Campaign

*I have the Honor to be
Your Lordships Most Obedient
And most humble Servant
J. Jervis*

There is no record of Jervis attending the Guildhall and being admitted into the Freedom of the City of London in this period. However, five years later, on 14 December 1799, following his return to England after retiring from the Mediterranean Command, he did attend the Guildhall and there presented with the first City of London sword of honour for his success off Cape St Vincent (14 February 1797) below (fig. 49). If Jervis had not attended before this date, then all the gifts (Freedom, gold box and sword) awarded to him for outstanding services would have been given on this occasion.¹²

¹¹ CLRO *Journal* 74, 25 September 1794, f. 196v.

¹² City of London Common Council *Journal* 74 (ff. 156v-157, f. 196), Common Council Papers (GCXM/270 Box 54, invoice), City Cash Accounts (2/63, f. 385); for the various dispatches from the West Indies, see *The London Gazette Extraordinary* 16 March 1794, 22 April 1794, 16 May 1794 and 20 May 1794; *The St James's Chronicle from Tuesday May 27 to Thursday May 29 1794* (No. 5683); *London's Roll of Fame* 1884, pp. 74-5; Blair (1972) pp. 8-10, Plates 3-4, p. 46 No. 7; Southwick (1983) p. 35, fig. 9; Southwick (1993) p. 64; Southwick (1997) No. 6, p. 324; Southwick (2020) No. 16, p. 20. *National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (PLT. 0075).*

Naval actions on 28 and 29 May and 'The Glorious First of June 1794'

3. Admiral Earl Howe

Gold and enamel rectangular Box of 100 guinea value to contain the Freedom of the City of London resolved to be awarded at a Court of Common Council before the Lord Mayor, Paul Le Mesurier, on Wednesday, 18 June 1794, to **Admiral Earl Howe (1726-1799)** (fig. 42), HMS *Queen Charlotte* (100 guns), Commander-in-Chief Channel Forces, for actions with the French Fleet on 28 and 29 May 1794 and for the victory of 'The Glorious First of June 1794' (fig. 43). This very fine box is made of chased gold inset with rectangular enamel panels painted in proper colours (figs 44-46). The cover has the recipient's coat of arms with supporters beneath an Earl's coronet above the motto on scroll 'UTCUNQUE PLACUERIT DEO' and set within an ermine mantle held by the figure of Fame, together with the seated figure of London to left leaning on the City's shield and pointing to the arms of the victorious Howe (fig. 44). The sides are chased with military trophies and set with four enamelled plaques: on the front are the arms of the City of London with supporters and the motto 'DOMINE DIREGE NOS', the sides with the recipient's initial 'H' beneath an Earl's coronet and the back with the reclining figure of Neptune gesturing towards Howe's victorious fleet actions. The inside of the cover is engraved with a full inscription of presentation taken from the Court of Common Council's resolution, which took place at a Court held at the Guildhall on 18 June 1794, before the Lord Mayor, Paul Le Mesurier, where it was

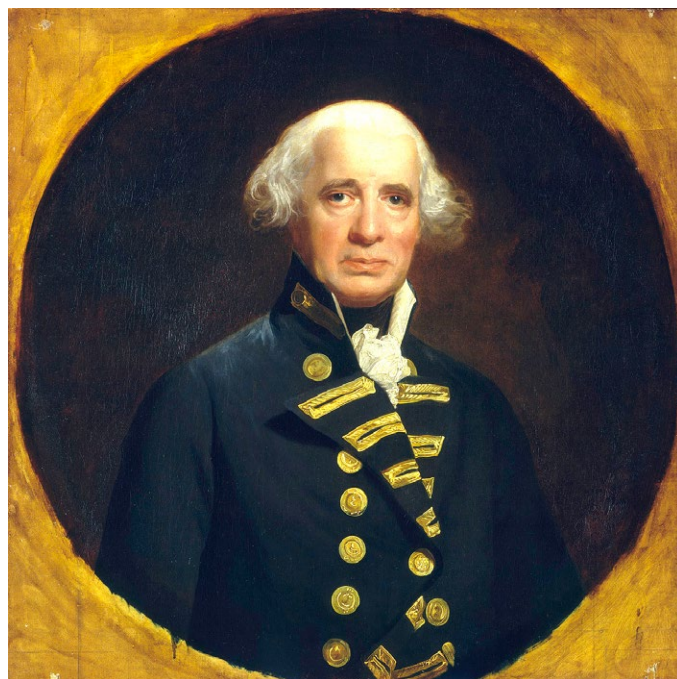


Fig. 42. Admiral Richard, Earl Howe (1726-1799) by John Singleton Copley, oil on canvas, 1794. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, Caird Collection (BHC2790)

Resolved unanimously that the Thanks of this Court be given to the Right Honorable Earl Howe. Admiral of the White, Vice Admiral of England and Commander of His Majesty's Fleet in the Channel and the Officers and Sailors under his Command for the Glorious and Important Victory obtained by them over the French Fleet, on the twenty eight and Twenty Ninth of May and the first of this Month. Resolved unanimously that the Freedom of this City be presented to the Right Honorable Earl Howe, Admiral of the White, Vice Admiral of England and Commander of His Majesty's Fleet in the Channel in testimony of the grateful sense this Court entertain of the signal and important Victory obtained by him on the 28th and 29th of May and first of this instant June over the French Fleet wherein a great part of their Squadron were either taken or destroyed. Resolved unanimously that the said Freedom of this City be presented to the Right Honorable Earl Howe in a Gold Box of the Value of One Hundred Guineas and that the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor be requested to provide the Gold Box on this occasion.¹³

¹³ Court of Common Council *Journal* 74, ff 172-172v.



Fig. 43.
'Earl Howe's victory over the French Fleet at the Glorious First of June 1794', by Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg (1740-1812), oil on canvas, c.1795. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC 0470)

The engraved inscription of presentation inside the cover (fig. 46) reads:

*Le Mesurier Mayor. A Common Council holden in
the Chamber of the Guildhall of
the City of London on Wednesday
the 18th day of June 1794
Resolved Unanimously the Freedom
of this City be presented to the Right Honourable
Earl Howe, Admiral of the White, Vice Admiral
of England and Commander of his Majesty's
Fleet in the Channel, in the testimony of the
grateful Sense this Court entertains of the
signal and important Victory obtained by
him on the 28th and 29th of May and first
of this instant June, over the French Fleet
wherein a great part of their Squadron were
either taken or destroyed.*

Rix



Fig. 44.
City of London Freedom Box of Admiral Earl Howe, London, 1794-95, James Morisset, commissioned from John Lambe. 103mm x 71mm x 30mm. By courtesy of The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection on loan to the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (Loan: Gilbert. 387-2008)

The box has London Assay Marks and date-letter 't' for 1794-95 with the third maker's mark of James Morisset. It was commissioned from the London retail goldsmith, John Lambe. Lambe's invoice is not extant, but the *City of London Cash Accounts* for 1794 (2/63, f.385) read:

To John Lambe, the like [in full of his Bill for the Gold Box and duty provided to contain the Freedom] to the Right Honble Earl Howe, Admiral of the White, Vice Admiral of England and Commander of His Majesty's Fleet in the Channel, per Order do, 11th Decr 1794.....£108. 8. 0.



Fig. 45.
Earl Howe's Freedom Box from the side



Fig. 46.
Earl Howe's Box with cover open engraved inside with the Common Council's resolution of the Freedom to the recipient, 18 June 1794

Following the publication of this victorious report, the Court of Common Council resolved, a week later, on 18 June, for the gifts above to be awarded to Howe. Immediately, the Lord Mayor informed the Admiral of the Court's decision and two days later Howe replied to the Lord Mayor from his flag-ship now at Spithead.¹⁴

The CHARLOTTE, at SPITHEAD, 20th June 1794.

My Lord,

The favorable impression the Court of Common Council of the City of London hath been induced to entertain of my endeavors of the discharge of my professional Duties, and the distinguished testimony of those sentiments expressed in the Resolutions enclosed with the Letter I have had the honor to receive from your Lordship are too flattering [sic] to desire I can never fail to retain of becoming worthy of it, not to accept the Freedom of the City of London by which I am proposed to be Honored with the liveliest sensation of pleasure and acknowledgement.

The Resolutions will be immediately made known as they respect the Officers and Seamen of the Fleet the Spirit of benevolence and liberality in favour of the wounded Petty officers and Seamen and Soldiers serving therein, and of the Widows and Children of those Slain in Battle, testified on the same occasion, are too peculiarly Characteristic of the Court of Common Council of the City of London to require other observation at this time from me but of the effect it will naturally produce as an Encouragement to the Seamen of the Fleet in the proposed extent.

The personal satisfaction your Lordship has had the goodness to declare, in your appointment to communicate those Resolutions, claims a special assurance of my gratitude, and the respect with which I have the Honor to be

*Your Lordships, most obedient
humble Servant.
Howe*



Fig. 47.
Flag-Officer's Large Naval Gold Medal and chain of Admiral Sir Alexander Hood, Third in Command at The Glorious First of June 1794, the first medal of which was awarded to Earl Howe, designed by Lewis Pingo (1743-1830). Height 70mm. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (MED0149_2)



Fig. 48.
Reverse of Hood's Large Naval Gold Medal

¹⁴ CLRO Journal 74, 15 July 1794, ff. 174v and 175

Also, for his services off Brest and for achieving the first outstanding British success by land or sea in the Revolutionary War, George III and Queen Charlotte visited Howe at Portsmouth on 26 June 1794. There, aboard the flag-ship, HMS *Queen Charlotte* and before the victorious fleet, the monarch presented Howe with a diamond-embellished Dress Sword for his services, a token said to be worth 3,000 guineas (Southwick 1994). Two years later, on 6 May 1796, Howe was admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his gold Freedom Box containing his Freedom scroll. He also became the first recipient of a Flag-Officer's Large Naval Gold Medal for this first major naval success of the war (cf. figs 47-48).¹⁵

Naval victory off Cape St Vincent, Portugal, 14 February 1797

For his part in the West Indian Campaign above, Sir John Jervis was made an Honorary Freeman of the City and awarded a 100 guinea gold Freedom Box above. However, for his victory over the Spanish Grand Fleet off Cape St Vincent, Portugal, three years later on 14 February 1797, Jervis (now C-in-C British Mediterranean Naval Forces) (fig. 39) was created Earl St Vincent and Baron Jervis of Meaford, Co. Staffordshire [his birthplace] by George III, received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, provided with a pension of £3,000 a year, awarded a Large Naval Gold Medal and presented with a second gift by the City – the first 200 guinea gold, enamelled and diamond-set dress sword of honour commissioned from Robert Makepeace and made by Morisset (fig. 49). In addition to this gift, five freedom boxes were awarded by the Corporation of London to high-ranking officers in the fleet under Jervis (the highest number of boxes ever awarded for one action) and these were presented to the following naval personnel:

4. Vice Admiral Charles Thompson

Gold and enamel oval box of 100 guinea value to contain the Freedom of the City of London resolved to be awarded at a Court of Common Council before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, on Friday, 10 March 1797 to **Vice Admiral Charles Thompson (later Sir Charles Thompson, Bart, c.1740-died 1799)** (fig. 50), HMS *Britannia* (100 guns), Second-in-Command to Admiral Jervis at the victory over the Spanish Grand Fleet off Cape St Vincent,



Fig. 49.

City of London presentation dress small-sword of Admiral Sir John Jervis, K.B., awarded for the Cape St Vincent action, London 1796-97, James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (WPN 1439)



Fig. 50.

Vice Admiral Sir Charles Thompson, Bart (c.1740-1799) mezzotint on paper by Richard Earlom (1744-1822) after Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788). By courtesy of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (acc. no. EPIV 356.1), given by J. Kent Richardson 1952

¹⁵ Corporation of London records including *Journal* 74, 18 June 1794 (ff.172, 172v, 174v, 175); action reports *The London Gazette* 11 June 1794 (first brief report of the battle); *The London Gazette Extraordinary* of 11 June 1794, dated Saturday 14 June 1794; *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, Saturday 21 June 1794, pp. 593-5; *The St James's Chronicle*, June 11, 1794, p. 5693, and June 26 1794 (No. 5201); *London's Roll of Fame* (1884), pp.77-79; Blair (1972), No. 8, p. 46; Southwick (1993) p. 64; Southwick (1994); Southwick (1997) No. 7, p. 324; Truman (1999) No. 38, pp. 64-65; Southwick (2020) No. 17, pp. 20-21. *The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London* (Loan: Gilbert. 387-2008)



Fig. 51.
City of London Freedom Box of Vice Admiral Charles Thompson.
London 1797-98, with the battle off Cape St Vincent, James Morisset,
commissioned from Gabriel Leekey. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich
(ZBA2976)



Fig. 52.
Inside the cover of Thompson's Box engraved with the Common
Council's resolution of Freedom to the recipient, 10 March 1797

Portugal, 14 February 1797 (figs 2, 51-52). This fine gift (one of a group of distinct, originally designed oval boxes made by Morisset to commemorate this action, cf. Nos. 4-8) is cast and chased with borders of swags, laurel and oak and set with vividly painted enamel plaques (fig. 2). On the cover is an oval medallion showing Thompson's flag-ship, *Britannia*, in action in the battle (fig. 51), a scene modelled after a watercolour by Robert Clevely, now in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (PAF5854). The sides are set with rectangular panels bearing the arms of the City of London, the arms, crest and initials 'CT' of the recipient, and an assortment of naval trophies of arms. The inside of the cover is engraved with a full inscription of presentation taken from the resolution of the Court of Common Council (fig. 52):

WATSON MAYOR
A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the
GUILDHALL of the CITY of LONDON,
on Friday the 10th day of March 1797
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,
That the Thanks of THIS COURT be given to
Vice Admiral Thompson, Vice Admiral the Hon. Wilm Waldegrave,
Rear Admiral Parker and Commodore Nelson,
for their gallant behaviour on the 14th of February last
in defeating the Spanish Fleet,
and that they be presented severally with the
FREEDOM of this CITY, in a GOLD BOX
NOTE Sir Robt. Calder omitted by mistake,
afterwards rectified by a like
Vote

The box has London Assay Marks and date-letter 'B' for 1797-98 with the third maker's mark of James Morisset. It was commissioned from Gabriel Leekey, Basinghall Street, City of London (see below).

Following news of the victory of Cape St Vincent arriving in London on 3 March 1797, a Court of Common Council of the Corporation of the City of London held on Friday 10 March 1797, held before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, it was

Resolved unanimously That the thanks of this Court be given to Vice-Admiral Thompson, Vice-Admiral the Honorable William Waldegrave, Rear-Admiral Parker, and Commodore Nelson, for their gallant behaviour on the 14th of February last in defeating the Spanish Fleet; and that they be presented severally with the Freedom of this City, in a Gold Box of One Hundred Guineas.

Vice Admiral Thompson's Freedom Box was commissioned from Alderman and Common Councilman, Gabriel Leekey (c.1726-1802) (a London retail goldsmith at 15 Basinghall Street, City, from 1748 until his death in 1802). His rare handwritten invoice, now in *Common Council Papers* dated 29 November 1797 records:

The Honourable Corporation of London

Dr to Gabriel Leekey

To making a Gold Box to contain the Freedom of the City of London, Voted by the Court of Common Council to Vice Admiral Charles Thompson.

£105.

Both the *City Cash Accounts* for 1797 (2/66, f 373) and the *Common Council Papers* above confirm that Leekey was ordered to be paid for supplying the Gold Box on 29 November 1797.

For his services at Cape St Vincent, Vice Admiral Thompson was created a Baronet, awarded the Large Naval Gold Medal and posted to the Brest Command. He died at Fareham, near Portsmouth, on 17 March 1799 before he could be admitted into the Freedom. Two months later, on 23 May 1799, a Court of Common Council resolved to give the Freedom and the box to his widow in honour of her husband's services.¹⁶

¹⁶ *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 3 March 1797, pp. 211-213; Corporation of London Common Council *Journal* 77, 10 March 1797 and other records above; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) p. 81; Southwick (1993) p. 39; Southwick (2020) No. 25, pp. 28-29. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (ZBA 2976)



Fig. 53.
Admiral Sir William Waldegrave, KB, 1st Baron Radstock (1753-1825) wearing his Large Naval Gold Medal for Cape St Vincent, oil by James Northcote. © Sotheby's Images 2007

5. Vice Admiral the Hon. William Waldegrave

Gold and enamel oval box of 100 guinea value to contain the Freedom of the City of London to **Vice Admiral the Hon. William Waldegrave, later 1st Baron Radstock (1753-1825)** (fig. 53), HMS *Barfleur*, Third-in-Command at the victory over the Spanish Grand Fleet off Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797 (figs 54-59). Awarded at a Court of Common Council held before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, on Friday, 10 March 1797, the cover is chased with an outer border of oak leaves and acorns and an inner border of laurel framing a brightly painted enamel plaque, painted in natural colours with a scene representing Waldegrave's flag-ship, the *Barfleur* in the action off Cape St Vincent (fig. 54). The walls are mounted with rectangular plaques painted with the arms of the City of London, the arms of Waldegrave, the monogram of the recipient, 'WW', and with others showing naval trophies of arms, all divided by gold pilasters and surmounted by a frieze of gold swags and oak. The base is engraved with the *Barfleur* under sail within a border of palm and oak (fig. 58) and, above the ship, a banner with the name *Barfleur* wrapped around the trumpet of Fame. Inside the



Fig. 54.
City of London Freedom Box of Admiral Waldegrave, London 1797-98, James Morisset, commissioned from William Moore. 107mm x 74mm x 30mm. © Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 55.
Front of Waldegrave's Freedom Box. © Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 56.
Waldegrave's Freedom Box from the rear. © Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 57. (Above)

Inside the cover of Waldegrave's box engraved with the Court of Common Council's resolution of Freedom to the recipient, 10 March 1797.

© Christie's Images 2023



Fig. 58. (Above right)

Underside of Waldegrave's box with his flag-ship, HMS *Barfleur*, under sail enclosed within a border of oak and palm. © Christie's Images 2023

Fig. 59. (Right)

Full London Assay Marks on Waldegrave's Freedom Box with date-letter B for 1797-98 and maker's mark 'IM' of James Morisset.

© Christie's Images 2023



cover is a full inscription of presentation (taken from the Court of Common Council's resolution) (fig. 57):

WATSON MAYOR
*A Common Council holden, in the Chamber of the
 GUILDHALL of the CITY of LONDON
 on Friday, the 10th day of March, 1797.
 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,
 That the Thanks of THIS COURT be given to
 Vice Admiral Thompson, Vice Admiral the Hone. Willm Waldegrave,
 Rear Admiral Parker, & Commodore Nelson,
 for their gallant behaviour on the 14th of February last,
 in defeating the Spanish Fleet
 and that they be presented, severally with the
 FREEDOM of this CITY in a GOLD BOX.
 NOTE: Sir Robt. Calder omitted by mistake,
 afterwards rectified by a like
 Vote*

The box has London Assay Marks and date-letter 'B' for 1797-98, with the third maker's mark of James Morisset (fig. 59). It was commissioned from William Moore, Paternoster Row, City of London (see below), and is complete with its original silk-lined red leather case.

Following news of the victory off Cape St Vincent arriving in London on 3 March 1797 (see above), Waldegrave was awarded the Freedom of the City in a 100 guinea Gold Box, a token commissioned from the prominent London goldsmith, jeweller and sword retailer, William Moore (c.1744-1818) (active at 55 Pater Noster Row, Cheapside, from 1775 until 1789, when he moved to 5 Ludgate Street, until his death in 1818). Moore's rare surviving invoice for the token, dated 19 August 1797 (the date the box was delivered, five months after it was resolved to be given) reads:¹⁷

*The Corporation of the
City of London*

London Augst 19th 1797

*Bought of Willm Moore
GOLDSMITH and JEWELLER,
No. 5 Ludgate Street*

Gold, Silver and Metal Watches, sold and carefully mended.

An elegant oval gold box for Vice Admiral the Honble Willm Waldegrave, with a medalion [sic] in the centre finely painted in Enamel, representing the Admiral's Ship in the action of the 14th Febry, last, encircled with laurel and oak, the City Arms, the Admiral's Arms, and fancy Trophies &c painted in Enamel on the front & sides – at the bottom an exact figure of Barfleur finely engraved, & encircled with a pierced & chased border of oak & palm - A Copy of the Vote on the occasion engd inside, in a neat red case, Weight of the Box Oz 9:9:15 Duty & fashion included.....£105 - -.

The *Common Council Papers* and the *City of London Cash Accounts for 1797* (2/66, f 373) record that William Moore was paid for Waldegrave's Freedom Box on 29 November 1797. Six days later, Waldegrave was admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his gold Box at the Guildhall on 5 December 1797. He also received a Flag-Officer's Large Gold Naval Medal for his decisive part in this action (figs 60-61).¹⁸



¹⁷ CLRO. *Common Council Papers*, 29 November 1797

¹⁸ *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 3 March 1797, pp. 211-213 (action reports); *Corporation of London Common Council Journal* 77, 10 March 1797 and other records above; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884), p. 81; Christie's (1991), Lot 109; Southwick (1993), pp. 36-7, 39 and 64, col. figs 1 and 3; and Southwick (1997) p. 326, No. 12; Southwick (2001) p. 181; Southwick (2020) No. 26, p. 30; Christie's (2023) Lot 64.

Fig. 60. (Top)
Obverse of a Flag-Officers's Large Naval Gold Medal awarded to Admiral Waldegrave for Cape St Vincent. Height 70mm. © Christie's Images 2023

Fig. 61. (Bottom)
Reverse of Waldegrave's Large Naval Gold Medal. © Christie's Images 2023

6. Rear Admiral William Parker

Gold and enamel oval box of 100 guinea value to contain the Freedom of the City of London resolved to be awarded at a Court of Common Council before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, on Friday, 10 March 1797, to **Rear Admiral William Parker (later Baronet, 1743-1802)** (fig. 62), HMS *Prince George*, Fourth-in-Command at the victory over the Spanish Grand Fleet off Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797. Of fine chased gold mounted with painted enamel plaques similar to the boxes above, the lid with the *Prince George* in action off Cape St Vincent, the walls with the arms of the City of London, the arms of Parker and nautical trophies, and the base engraved with the *Prince George*. Inside the cover, an engraved inscription of presentation recounts the Court's resolution:

WATSON MAYOR

*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the
GUILDHALL of the CITY of LONDON
on Friday the 10th day of March 1797*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

That the Thanks of THIS COURT be given to

Vice Admiral Thompson,

Vice Admiral the Hon. Willm. Waldegrave

Rear Admiral Parker & Commodore Nelson,

for their gallant behaviour on the

14th of February last

in defeating the Spanish Fleet

and that they be presented severally with the

FREEDOM of this CITY in a GOLD BOX.

The box (length 11.5cm) has London Assay Marks and date-letter 'B' for 1797-98 and is struck with the third maker's mark of James Morisset. It was commissioned by the Corporation from the retail goldsmith, jeweller and silversmith, Thomas Liddiard (active at Gutter Lane, Farringdon Within, from 1765, before moving to 54 St Paul's Churchyard, City of London, from 1772 until 1798). Liddiard's undated, handwritten invoice reads:

The Honourable the Corporation of London

To Tho^s Liddiard

To making a Gold Box to Contain the freedom of the City of London

Voted

by the Court of Common Council to Admiral Parker.....£105-0-0.

Both the *Common Council Papers* and the *City Cash Accounts* record that Liddiard was paid for providing Admiral Parker's gold Box on 29 November 1797. (All the boxes for this action are similar; see Thompson, Waldegrave, Nelson and Calder, see headings 4-8).

Moreover, for his services at Cape St Vincent, Parker was created a Baronet and awarded a Flag-Officer's Large Naval Gold Medal (cf. figs 60-62), although there is no apparent record of the recipient having been admitted into the Freedom at the Guildhall.¹⁹



Fig. 62.

Rear Admiral Sir William Parker (1743-1802) wearing his Large Naval Gold Medal for Cape St Vincent. By courtesy of Doug Robinson

¹⁹ *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 3 March 1797, pp. 211-213 (action report); The Corporation of London Records above; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) p. 81; *Rule Britannia* (1986) No. 138, p. 106; Southwick (1993) pp. 39 and 64; Southwick (1997) p. 326, No. 13; Southwick (2001), p. 166; Southwick (2020) No. 27, p. 31. *Private Collection*

7. *Commodore Horatio Nelson*

Gold and enamel oval box of 100 guinea value to contain the Freedom of the City of London resolved to be awarded at a Court of Common Council before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, on Friday, 10 March 1797, to **Commodore Horatio Nelson** (created a Knight of the Bath for Cape St Vincent and promoted Rear Admiral, later Vice Admiral Lord Viscount (1758-1805) (fig. 63), HMS *Captain* (74 guns) Fifth-in-Command at the naval victory over the Spanish Grand Fleet off Cape St Vincent, Portugal, 14 February 1797, described on the retailer's invoice below as 'a Gold Box ornamented with enamid. Paintings - on the Top a View of the Action of the 14th Feby. between the English & Spanish Fleets in which Captain Commodore Nelson is engaged with the St Joseph & St Nicholas. On the front the City Arms, the Ends the Arms & Cypher of Commodore Nelson embellished with Naval Trophies &c &c' (see below) (figs 64 and 66).

Nelson's Freedom in a Gold Box was unanimously awarded (together with those to his comrades above) at a Court of Common Council on 10 March 1797. Although the Box was stolen with other valuable items from the Painted Hall at Greenwich on the night of 8-9 December 1900 and has never been recovered, photographic and documentary evidence confirm that Nelson's Box was comparable to those above and was, without doubt, made in Morisset's workshop. The evidence in support of this firm attribution includes *City of London Records*, the description and illustrations in *Christie's Bridport Sale Catalogue* of 12 July 1895 Lot 169 (fig. 65-66), as well as the detailed entry for Lot 169, which reads:

OVAL GOLD BOX, presented to Lord [*sic*] Nelson with the Freedom of the City of London: An oval gold box, the borders chased with wreaths of oak and laurel foliage, the bottom engraved with a view of the 'Captain' [Nelson's ship]; the lid inlaid with a large oval enamel painted with the naval engagement, and with eleven smaller enamels round the side, with the arms of the City of London, naval trophies, and monogram H.N., inscribed inside the lid, *Watson – Mayor. – A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall, in the City of London, on Friday, the 10th day of March 1797, resolved unanimously that the thanks of this Court be given to Vice-Admiral Thompson, Vice-Admiral the Hon. William Waldegrave, Rear-Admiral Parker and Commodore Nelson, for their gallant behaviour on the 14th February last in defeating the Spanish Fleet, and that they be presented severally with the Freedom of this City in a gold box. Note.- Sir Robert Calder omitted by mistake, afterwards rectified by a like vote.*

The successful bidder for this item, 'J. A. Mullens, Esq., of Fir Grove, Weybridge', presented Nelson's box to Greenwich Hospital, where it was exhibited in the Upper Gallery of the Painted Hall. Five years later, the Collection was catalogued (fig. 67) and Nelson's Box was recorded on page 46 as:



Fig. 63.
'Spanish officers surrender their swords to Nelson on board the *San Nicolas* at Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797', Richard Westall. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC 2909)

'Oval Gold Box presented to Commodore Nelson with the Freedom of the City of London in 1797. Inscribed

Watson- Mayor.

*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall
of the City of London on Friday the 10th day of March 1797*

Resolved unanimously

*That the thanks of this Court be given to Vice-Admiral
Thompson, Vice-Admiral the Hon. William Waldegrave, Rear-
Admiral Parker, and Commodore Nelson, for their gallant
behaviour on the 14th of February last in defeating the Spanish
Fleet, and that they be presented severally with the Freedom of
This City in a Gold Box*

*Note.- Sir Robert Calder omitted by mistake afterwards
rectified by a like vote.*

Presented by J. A. Mullens, Esq., of Fir Grove, Weybridge, 1895'²⁰



*Orders, Medals & Relics
as arranged for
Viscount Bridport, Duke of Bronte.*

Fig. 64.

Nelson's surviving 'Orders, Medals & Relics as arranged for Viscount Bridport, Duke of Bronte' by 'F. Higgins & Son, Photographers, Chard', said to have been photographed in 1889

CATALOGUE
OF
Old English Silver & Silver-gilt
PRESENTATION PLATE,
ENAMELLED GOLD BOXES,
GOLD SWORD HILTS, MEDALS, ORDERS,
And other Highly Interesting Objects,
FORMERLY IN THE POSSESSION OF
ADMIRAL VISCOUNT NELSON;
AND OTHER
Old English & Foreign Silver Plate,
THE PROPERTY OF
THE RIGHT HON.
VISCOUNT BRIDPORT:

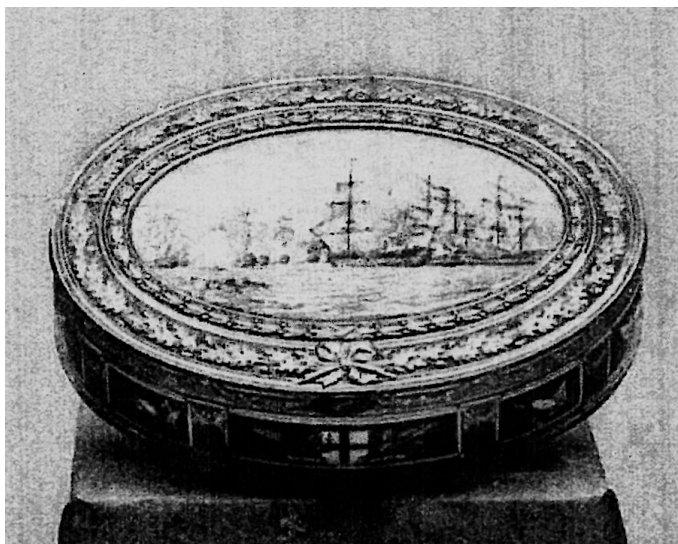
WHICH
Will be Sold by Auction by
MESSRS. CHRISTIE, MANSON & WOODS,
AT THEIR GREAT ROOMS,
8 KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE,
On FRIDAY, JULY 12, 1895.
AT ONE O'CLOCK PRECISELY.

May be viewed Two Days preceding, and Catalogues had,
at Messrs. CHRISTIE, MANSON and WOODS' Offices, 8 King Street,
St. James's Square, S.W.

Fig. 65.

Frontispiece of Christie's *Bridport Sale Catalogue*, 12 July 1895.
© Christie's Images 1895

²⁰ Only a few copies of this very rare catalogue appear to survive. My thanks to
The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (shelfmark O80 TRA (38));
and British Library, General Reference Shelf-Mark 7858. p. 25



The inscription of presentation recorded in Nelson's Box above is precisely the same as that found in Admirals Thompson's, Waldegrave's and Parker's boxes for the same naval victory (cf. 4-6 above) and the engraving of Nelson's ship, the *Vanguard*, under sail on the base is comparable to those on other boxes listed here (cf. 4-6, 8-10). The only differences between the boxes are the variant paintings of the recipients' ships in action on the cover and their monogrammed initials on the sides. And the only details missing from these important catalogue entries are the London Assay Marks and the maker's mark, although these were not normally included in catalogue descriptions in this period. However, as it is known that the box was awarded on 10 March 1797, made and delivered to the Corporation by the retailer on 21 October 1797 and presented to Nelson on 27 November 1797 (below), the assay marks would have been for London, the date-letter would have been 'B' for 1797-98 and the maker's mark would have certainly been 'IM' for James Morisset. And the size of the box would have been similar to those others given for the same action above.

The City of London retail company of goldsmiths and jewellers commissioned to provide Nelson's Freedom Box was Goodbehere, Wigan & Co, of 86 Cheapside (a partnership in operation from 1786 until 1800, when the firm became Goodbehere, Wigan & Bult). The company's rare surviving dated handwritten invoice for Nelson's token addressed to the Office of the Lord Mayor was submitted on 21 October 1797, when the box was delivered and reads:

Goodbehere Wigan & Co. 1797 Octor. 21
To a Gold Box ornamented with enamld. Paintings - on the Top a View of
the Action of the 14th Feby. between the English & Spanish Fleets in which
Captain Commodore Nelson is engaged with the St Joseph & St Nicholas. On
the front the City Arms, the Ends the Arms & Cypher of Commodore Nelson
embellished with Naval Trophies &c &c.....£105

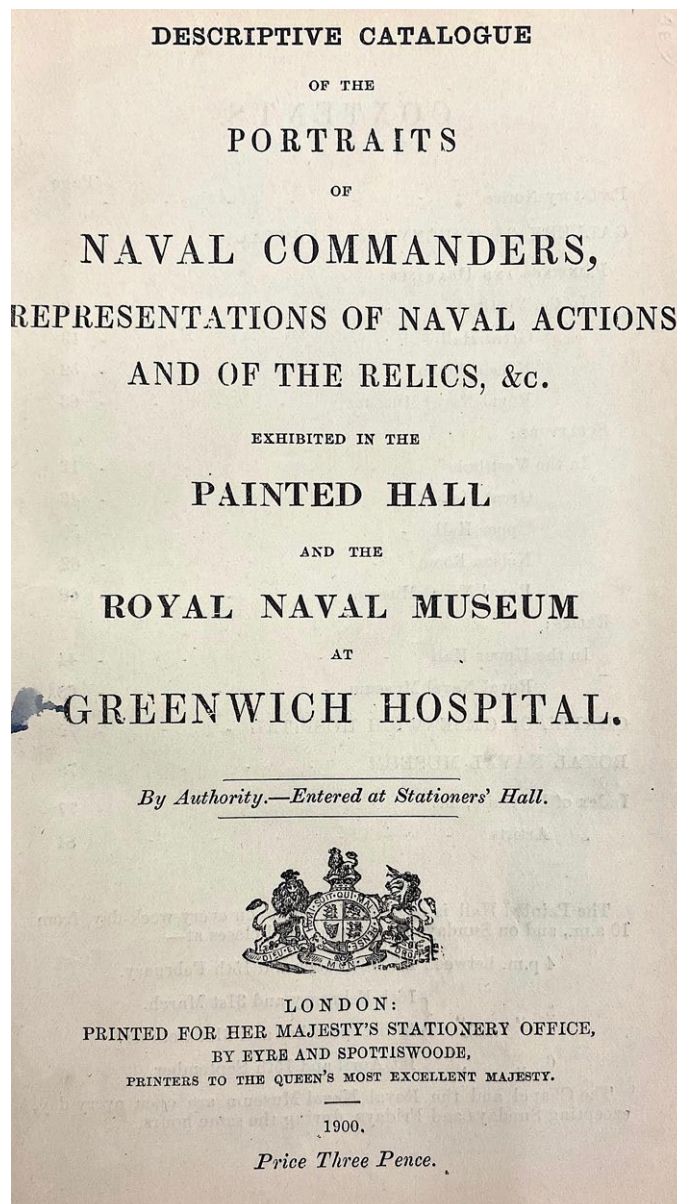


Fig. 66. (Above left)

Nelson's City of London Freedom Box, Lot 169, from Christie's *Bridport Sale Catalogue*, 12 July 1895, bought by J.A. Mullens and stolen from the Painted Hall, Greenwich, in 1900. © Christie's Images 1895

Fig. 67. (Above right)

Descriptive Catalogue of items exhibited in the Painted Hall and Royal Naval Museum, at Greenwich Hospital, 1900

Payment for providing the Box was made to Goodbehere, Wigan & Co by the Corporation on 29 November 1797.

All the City of London Freedom Boxes awarded for the action off Cape St Vincent on 14 February 1797 are very similar in design, shape, castings, ornamentation and imagery, and compare with those given later to Captain Edward Berry, RN and Commodore Borlase Warren (Nos. 9 and 10 below). They are all of distinctive oval form, made of fine gold and superbly chased and embellished in enamel with painted naval imagery, coats of arms, recipients' initials and battle scenes relevant to the engagement in which the recipients were involved. In Nelson's case, the cover (recorded on the supplier's invoice above) was ornamented with his well-known and publicly admired capture of the Spanish flagships, the *San Josef* and the *San Nicolas*, actions which turned the tide in Britain's favour and made Nelson a national hero (figs 63, 64 and 66). Nelson later recorded 'There is a saying in the Fleet too flattering for me to omit telling – viz. "Nelson's Patent Bridge for boarding first-rates", alluding to my passing over an enemy eighty-gun ship; and another of a sailor's taking me by the hand on board the *San Josef*, saying he might not soon have another place to do it in and assuring me he was heartily glad to see me.' (Pocock 1994:128).

Nelson was also awarded a Large Gold Naval Medal for Cape St Vincent (similar to figs 60-61) and admitted into the Freedom of the City of London and presented with his Gold Box at the Guildhall on 28 November 1797 (fig. 22). Receiving this honour, Nelson replied:

SIR,

Nothing could be more satisfying to me (as it must be to every sea officer) than receiving the high honor this day conferred upon me in becoming a Freeman of the great City of London, and I beg you to believe and to assure my fellow Citizens that my hand and head shall ever be exerted with all my heart in defence of my KING, the laws, and the just liberty's of my country, in which are included everything which can be beneficial to the capital of the Empire. I beg leave to return you, Sir, my sincere thanks for the very flattering expressions you have honored me with on this occasion.

Nelson (fig. 68) bequeathed this valuable gift in his Will to his older brother and heir, William, 1st Earl Nelson of Trafalgar and of Merton in Co. Surrey, etc. (1757-1835) and this was passed later by William to his daughter, Charlotte Mary (1787-1873, Nelson's niece), who married Samuel Hood, 2nd Baron Bridport. Hence, Nelson's box, with other of the Admiral's heirlooms, passed down the Bridport family line until the sale at Christie's in 1895 (fig. 65) and its theft from The Painted Hall, Greenwich, on the night of 8-9 December 1900. Its present whereabouts are unknown.²¹



Fig. 68.

Rear Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, KB, wearing his Large Naval Gold Medal for Cape St Vincent and revealing the loss of his right arm following Tenerife, by Lemuel Francis Abbott, late 1797-98

²¹ Corporation of London Common Council *Journal* 77, 10 March 1797, Common Council *Papers*, 29 November 1797 (invoice and date of payment) and *City Cash Accounts; London's Roll of Fame* (1884), pp. 81-2; Christie's (1895), Lot 169 (ill); Greenwich Hospital (1900) p. 46; Blair (1972) p. 36, note 34; Christie's (1991), p. 31; Southwick (1993) p. 64; Southwick (2001) pp. 121-3 (for Goodbehere Wigan & Co); Southwick (2020), No. 28, pp. 32-33 note 34.

8. First Captain Sir Robert Calder, RN

Gold and enamel oval Box of 100 guinea value to contain the Freedom of the City of London resolved to be awarded by a Court of Common Council held before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, on 'Friday, 10 March 1797' [sic. 19 May 1797 below] to **First or Senior Captain Sir Robert Calder, RN (1745-1818)** (fig. 69), Captain of the Fleet and Flag-Officer to Admiral Jervis in HMS *Victory* (100-guns) at the Battle off Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797 (fig. 70). The inscription of presentation engraved on the inside of the cover reads:

WATSON MAYOR
A Common Council holden, in the Chamber of the
 GUILDHALL of the CITY OF LONDON
 On Friday, the 10th day of March, 1797 [sic],
 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,
That the Thanks of THIS COURT be given to
 Sir Rob^t Calder, first Captain of the Fleet
 under the command of Admiral Sir John Jervis
 for his gallant behaviour on the 14th of February last,
 in defeating the Spanish Fleet,
 and that he be PRESENTED with the FREEDOM of this CITY in a Gold Box.

The box has London Assay Marks and date-letter 'B' for 1797-98, with the third maker's mark of James Morisset. It was commissioned from the prominent retail goldsmith, jeweller and Senior Common Councilman, Thomas Ayres, 160 Fenchurch Street, City of London (see below).

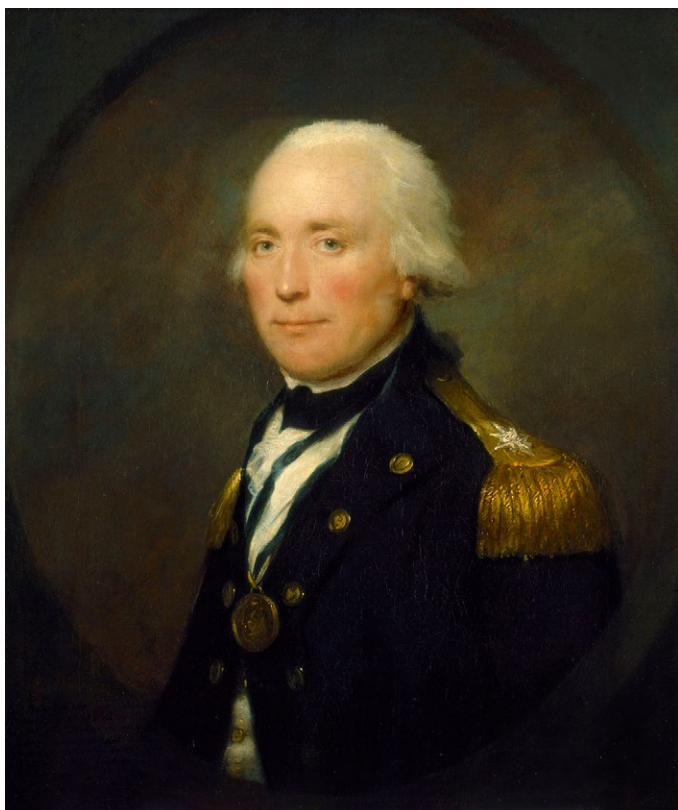


Fig. 69. (Left)
 Rear Admiral Sir Robert Calder, Bart, wearing his Large Naval Gold Medal for Cape St Vincent, by Lemuel Francis Abbott, 1797.
 The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC2593)

Fig. 70. (Below)
 City of London Freedom Box of First Captain Sir Robert Calder, London 1797-98, James Morisset, commissioned from Thomas Ayres.
 By courtesy of Portsmouth City Council (1977/438)



As the inscriptions on Boxes 4, 5, 6 and 7 above (and in the Common Council's *Journal*) show, Calder's name was omitted 'by mistake' from the original list of men to be awarded with the Freedom in a Gold Box on 10 March 1797, an unusual error given that Calder was not only Flag-Captain to Admiral Jervis aboard the *Victory*, but also Senior Captain of the Fleet and the man who brought Jervis's dispatches home to the Admiralty in London announcing the major success and knighted by the King on 3 March 1797. However, there were four Admirals and a Commodore in Jervis's fleet at Cape St Vincent and no other action was so rewarded by the City in this period. The omission was rectified two months after the first resolution at a Court of Common Council on 19 May 1797. This later resolution reads:

That the thanks of this Court be given to Sir Robert Calder, First Captain of the Fleet under command of Admiral Sir John Jervis, for his gallant behavior on the 14th February last, in defeating the Spanish Fleet, and that he be presented with the Freedom of this City in a Gold Box of the value of One Hundred Guineas.

However, the inscription engraved on Calder's Box above does not mention the omission, but groups his Freedom presentation with those other recipients named on 10 March 1797 (the officers above).

Calder's Box was delivered to the Guildhall by the retail goldsmith and Senior Common Councilman, Thomas Ayres (1751-1831), on 19 October 1797 and was paid for, like the others, on 29 November 1797. The goldsmith's handwritten invoice gives the correct date of the vote and the cost of the gift (undoubtedly, Senior Councilman Ayres would have attended these Courts and voted for the Freedoms and Boxes for these prominent sailors). The invoice reads:²²

London. 19th Oct^r 1797

The City of London

of Thomas Ayres

Goldsmith No. 160 Fenchurch St^r.

A Gold Oval Box, as Order'd by the Right Honble
the Lord Mayor, Voted by the Court of Common
Council the 19th May last, for S^r Rob^t Calder

£105 - -

Sir Robert Calder was awarded a Large Naval Gold Medal (as Senior Captain of the Fleet) for Cape St Vincent (fig. 69), created Baronet (22 August 1798) and admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his Gold Box at the Guildhall on 2 May 1799.²³

²² *City Cash Accounts 1797* (2/66, f. 373)

²³ *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 3 March 1797, pp. 211-213 (action report); Corporation of London Records above; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) p. 84; Southwick (1997) p. 326 No. 14; Southwick (2001) p. 34 (for Thomas Ayres); Southwick (2020), No. 29, pp. 34-35. *Portsmouth City Council (1977/438) displayed in the City's Guildhall*

The Battle of the Nile, 1-3 August 1798

For his part in the victory off Cape St Vincent on 14 February 1797 above, Nelson was awarded the Freedom of the City of London in a gold box, created a Knight of the Bath (KB) and received the Large Naval Gold Medal (cf. figs 64 and 66). However, for his victory at the Battle of the Nile a year later (the finest naval victory of the Revolutionary War), Nelson, now Rear Admiral, received many honours and gifts including being created Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe, Co. Norfolk [his birthplace], by King George III (fig. 71), the thanks of both Houses of Parliament and a pension of £2,000 a year, awarded a second Large Naval Gold Medal (figs 71 and 64) and a further gift from the Corporation of the City of London - a 200 guinea gold, enamelled and diamond-set dress sword of honour commissioned from Robert Makepeace and made by Morisset (fig. 72). In addition to Nelson's sword, another gift was awarded by the City for this action – the 100 guinea gold and enamelled Freedom Box to Nelson's captain aboard the flag-ship HMS *Vanguard* at the Nile, Edward (later Sir Edward) Berry, the ninth known City of London freedom box by Morisset.



Fig. 71. (Left)
Vice Admiral Horatio, Viscount Nelson (created 19 May 1801), in full dress uniform with two Large Naval Gold Medals for Cape St Vincent and the Nile, by John Hoppner, oil on canvas, 1801-2. Royal Collection Trust © His Majesty King Charles III 2023 (RCIN 405901)

Fig. 72. (Above)
City of London presentation dress small-sword of Rear Admiral Horatio, Baron Nelson of the Nile, KB, London 1798-99, James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace. The Museum of London (Inv. no. 11,952).

9. Captain Edward Berry, RN

Gold and enamel oval box of 100 guinea value to contain the Freedom of the City of London awarded by a Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London held before the Lord Mayor, Sir John William Anderson, Bart, on Tuesday, 16 October 1798, to **Captain Edward Berry, RN (1768-1831)** (figs 73-74), Flag-Captain to Rear Admiral Nelson in HMS *Vanguard* at the victory at the Nile, 1-3 August 1798 (fig. 75). This fine box is mounted on the cover with a framed vivid enamelled illustration of the famous moment in the Nile action when the French flagship L'Orient exploded at 10.05pm, lighting up the night sky (figs 76-77). The walls of the box are set with enamelled panels painted with the coat of arms of the City of London, the monogram of Edward Berry, a pyramid, a crocodile and a lion, all insignia and symbols of the presenting body, the recipient and the place of battle (fig. 78). On the base is an engraving of HMS *Vanguard* under sail (fig. 79). The inside of the cover is engraved in tiny letters with a full inscription of presentation taken from the Court of Common Council's resolution:

ANDERSON MAYOR

*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the
GUILDHALL of the CITY of LONDON
on Tuesday the 16 day of October 1798.*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

*that the THANKS of THIS COURT be given to CAPTN EDWD BERRY
CAPTAIN OF THE ADMIRAL'S SHIP & the rest of the
Captains Officers Seamen and Marines of His Majesty's Fleet serving under
REAR ADMIRAL SIR HORATIO NELSON, now LORD NELSON
for their gallant services in obtaining the glorious Victory
over the FRENCH FLEET off the NILE on the FIRST DAY of AUGUST last
thereby manifesting to the World an additional instance of the
superior Discipline & irresistible Bravery of British Seamen.*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

*that the Freedom of this City be presented to
CAPTAIN EDWARD BERRY IN A GOLD BOX
as a Testimony of the high Sense this Court
Entertain of his gallant behaviour
on the first day of August last. RIX*

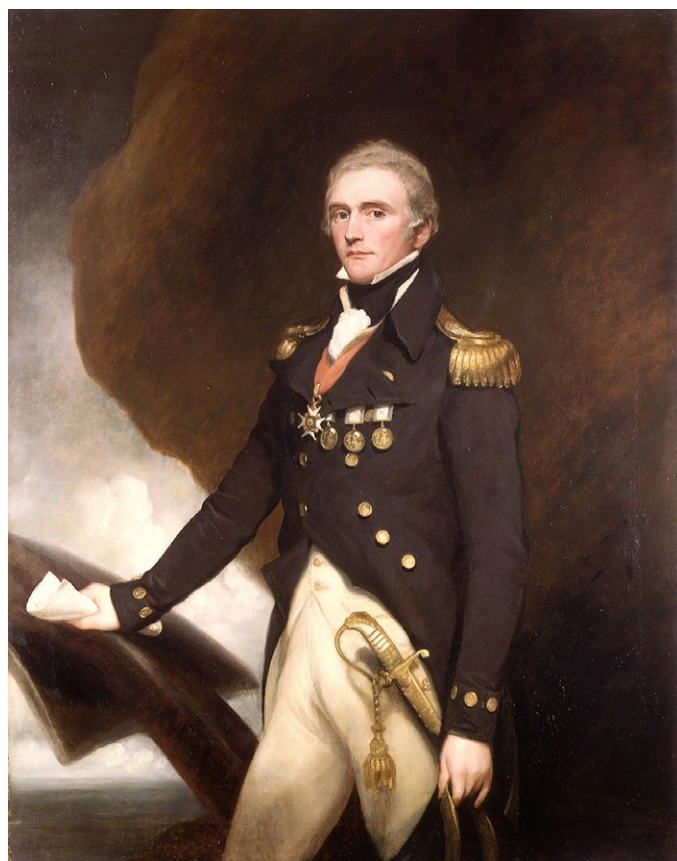


Fig. 73.

Rear Admiral Sir Edward Berry, Bart. KCB (1768-1831) by John Singleton Copley, oil on canvas. By courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC2554)

Fig. 74.

Original City of London Freedom scroll of Captain Sir Edward Berry (knighted 12 Dec. 1798), admitted into the Freedom 8 August 1799. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (PLT0023.2)

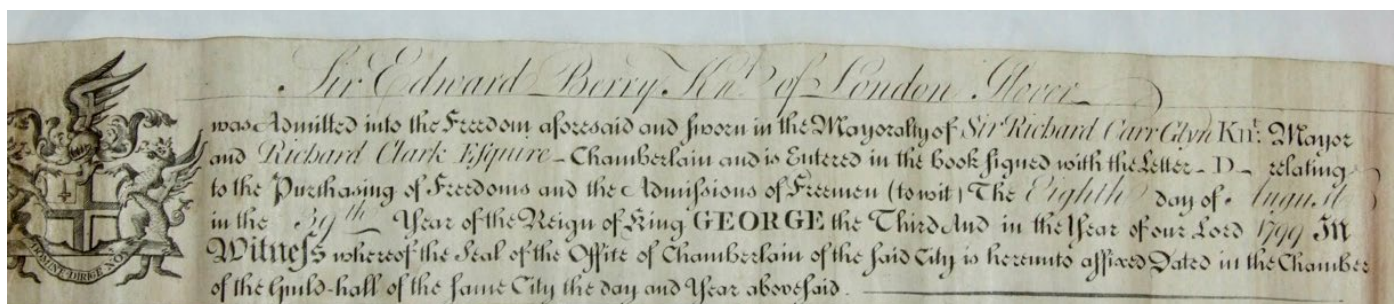




Fig. 75.
City of London Freedom Box of Capt. Edward Berry, RN, London 1798-99, James Morisset, commissioned from Rundell & Bridge. 100mm x 73mm x 30mm. By courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (PLT. 0023)



Fig. 76.
Cover of Berry's Box illustrating the French flag-ship *L'Orient* exploding at 10.05pm, on the night of 1st August 1798



Fig. 77.
'The Battle of the Nile, 1 August 1798, 10.05pm, the *L'Orient* explodes', by Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg (1740-1812). By courtesy of the Tate Gallery, London (TO 1452)



Fig. 78.
Berry's City of London Freedom Box from the rear



Fig. 79.
Underside of Berry's box engraved with Nelson's flag-ship, *HMS Vanguard* under sail at the Nile enclosed within a border of oak, laurel and palm



Fig. 80.
Berry's red-leather-covered, silk-lined oval wood box to contain his gold Freedom gift, 1798. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (PLT0023.1)

The box has London Assay Marks and date-letter 'C' for 1798-99, with the third maker's mark of James Morisset. It is complete with original Freedom scroll (fig. 74) and red-leather storage case (figs 80 and 81). The box was commissioned from Rundell & Bridge, London (see below).

Nelson's victory dispatch, dated 3 August 1798, recording the success at the Nile, arrived at the Office of the Lords of the Admiralty in London after some delays on 2 October 1798 and immediately published in *The London Gazette Extraordinary* on the same day. Fourteen days later, and following high praise from his commander, Berry was granted the Freedom of the City in a Gold Box at a Court of Common Council held on 16 October 1798.

The box was ordered and commissioned from Rundell & Bridge, 32 Ludgate Hill, City (established December 1787, appointed Goldsmiths and Jewellers to George III and the royal family on 15 March 1797). On 29 November 1798 (only four months after the battle and only seven weeks after Nelson's dispatch had reached London and only six weeks after the Court's resolution), the company delivered the box to the office of the Lord Mayor and submitted their invoice of the same date:

Rundell & Bridge,

Jewellers and Goldsmiths to their Majesties

No. 32 Ludgate Hill, London

29 November 1798

A large Gold enamel'd Snuff Box for Captain Berry with fine enameld painting on cover of the Action of the Nile on the Glorious first of August 1798, the Arms of the City of London in front & Capt. Berry's Arms & crest at the ends with Devices, Trophies, &c.....£105 - -.

The *City Cash Accounts for 1799* (3/68, f.291) record that the Box was paid for on 7 March 1799.



Fig. 81.
Silk-lining of Berry's leather-covered box to contain his London gifts

Although all the officers presented with valuable tokens of honour from the City of London thanked the Lord Mayor and the Corporation (see above), the actual letter from Edward Berry appears to be the only one surviving from this period, a response now in the Archives of the Corporation of London. It is addressed to 'Sir John Wm Anderson, Bart, late Lord Mayor [past Lord Mayor, 1797-8, who had originally written to Berry]' and reads:

Kensington 23d Apl 1799

Sir

I have this instant had the honor of receiving your favor of the 16th Octr last, which I conclude has been travelling in quest of me since that period.

Permit me Sir to return you, and the Court of Common Council of the City of London my warmest thanks and most grateful acknowledgements for the very high compliment I am honor'd with; believe me Sir – I esteem it, as the highest mark of my Country's approbation, to gain which, is most gratifying – at the same time I have to assure you that under the Flag of Rear Adml. Lord Nelson I only obeyed his lordships commands.

*I have the honor to be Sir
Your very faithful & obedt Svt
E. Berry*

The letter was read in Common Council on 3 May 1799. For his services at the Nile, Berry was made a Knight Bachelor, received the Small Naval Gold Medal (fig. 73) and was admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his Gold Box on 8 August 1799, a year after the battle.²⁴

Victory over a French Squadron off the Rosses (or Tory Island) 1798

10. Commodore Sir John Borlase Warren, KB

Gold and enamel oval box of 100 guinea value to contain the Freedom of the City of London awarded at a Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London held before the Lord Mayor, Sir Richard Carr Glyn, on Thursday, 6 December 1798, to **Commodore Sir John Borlase Warren, Bart. KB (1753-1822)** (fig. 82) HMS *Canada*, for his victory over a French squadron carrying troops for an invasion of Ireland, off the Rosses, on 12 October 1798. Of fine chased gold and similar in design to those above, the lid is set with an enamelled plaque painted with Borlase Warren's squadron in action off the east coast of Ireland framed by a pierced gold border of oak with the naval crown above and trophies of arms below over translucent blue enamel. The sides set with rectangular plaques bearing the arms of the City of London and the arms and initials of Borlase Warren between pilasters and chased shells and swags; the base engraved



Fig. 82. Commodore (later Admiral) Sir John Borlase Warren, Bart, KB (1753-1822), after John Opie, RA (1761-1807) oil on canvas. Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire (NT 653173)

²⁴ *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 2 October 1798, pp. 915-917; Corporation of London Records above; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) p. 89; Snowman (1996) fig. 485; Blair (1972) pp. 15-16, p. 48. No. 21, plates 8-9; Southwick (1993) p. 64; Southwick (1997) No. 30, p. 330; Southwick (2001) pp. 212-3; Southwick (2020) No. 45, pp. 52-53. *National Maritime Museum, Greenwich* (PLT.0023).

with Warren's flagship, the *Canada*, under sail framed by oak and laurel. The inside of the lid is engraved with an inscription of presentation taken from the Court of Common Council's resolution:

GLYN MAYOR
*A Common Council holden in the Chamber
 of the GUILDHALL of the CITY of LONDON
 on Thursday the 6 Day of December, 1798.*
 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY
*that the Thanks of this Court be given to
 SIR JOHN BORLASE WARREN BART. KB.
 for the very active vigilance he has shewn during the present War
 & especially for the Victory obtained by a Squadron of His Majesty's Fleet
 UNDER HIS COMMAND OFF THE COAST OF IRELAND
 over a French Fleet with Troops destined to that Kingdom
 to aid the spirit of Rebellion unhappily existing there*
 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY
*that the FREEDOM of this CITY be presented to
 Sir John Borlase Warren Bart. KB. in a Gold Box
 as a testimony of his very gallant Conduct
 DURING THE PRESENT WAR
 RIX.*

The box has London Assay Marks and date-letter 'C' for 1798-99, with the third maker's mark of James Morisset. It was commissioned from Rundell & Bridge, London (see below).

News of Warren's successful attack and defeat of a French Squadron intent on invading and establishing a base on the west coast of Ireland in support of the Irish Rebellion off the Rosses on 12 October 1798, arrived at the Admiralty Office in London late in the evening of 20 October 1798 and published in a *London Gazette Extraordinary* the following day. The Common Council resolutions were made on 6 December 1798.

Following being informed of his Freedom in a Gold Box for his outstanding service by the Lord Mayor of London on 8 December 1798, Commodore Borlase Warren replied from

[HMS] *Canada*, Barn Pool, 12th December 1798.

MY LORD,

I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter to me of the 8th instant, together with the Resolutions from the Court of Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London in Common Council assembled, and which I have this day communicated to the several ships that composed the Squadron acting under my orders on the coast of Ireland upon the 12th of October last, and which they have received with heartfelt testimony of respect and regard.

The distinguished mark of approbation conferred upon me by the representatives of the first City of Europe, in granting me their Freedom will be ever remembered by me with the greatest gratitude.

I have many acknowledgments to return to your Lordship for the very polite and kind manner in which you have communicated to me an event so flattering to my feelings; and trust I may ever, by zealous discharge of my duty to the KING and country, preserve your Lordship's good opinion.

*I have the honor to remain, with the greatest respect,
 Your Lordship's most obedient and humble servant,
 John Borlase Warren.*

Borlase Warren's Freedom Box was commissioned from the royal goldsmiths and jewellers, Rundell & Bridge, 32 Ludgate Hill, City of London. They delivered the token on 9 May 1799 and were paid on 23rd of that month. Rundell's invoice of 9 May reads:

Rundell & Bridge,

Jewellers and Goldsmiths to their Majesties

No. 32 Ludgate Hill, London

9 May 1799

A large elegant oval Gold Snuff box with rich chas'd Borders of oak leaves &c with a view of the Action of Tory Island finely painted & enamel'd on the top; the City Arms in front & Arms & Cypher of Sir John Borlase Warren KB at the ends, with an allegorical subject at the back.....£105 - -

Both the Common Council Papers and the *City Cash Accounts* (3/68, f. 292) confirm that Messrs Rundell & Bridge were paid for the Box on 23 May 1799. Sir John Borlase Warren was admitted into the Freedom and presented with his Gold Box at the Guildhall on 27 May 1799.²⁵

Conclusion

The ten City of London Freedom Boxes to mark distinguished service designed and made by Morisset in the 1790s are the highest number recorded fashioned by one individual specialist goldsmith and his workshop. However, to complete the picture, two more City freedom boxes (as well as swords of honour) were awarded during the early years of the long French Wars.²⁶ The remaining two boxes of the Revolutionary War provided by the City of London were the 100 guinea gold Freedom Box awarded to Admiral Sir Alexander Hood, Lord Bridport, KB, HMS *Royal George*, for his defeat of a French Squadron off Ile de Grois, 23 June 1795, a gift awarded on 8 October 1795, commissioned from and struck with the maker's mark of Samuel Goodbehere and Edward Wigan (fig. 83);²⁷ and the rare 50 guinea gold and engraved Freedom Box commissioned from and made by Charles Aldridge awarded on 6 March 1800 to Captain Edward Hamilton, RN (later Admiral Sir Edward, 1st Bart, KCB, 1772-1851) of the frigate HMS *Surprise* (32 guns) 'for his spirited undaunted and most unparalleled Bravery, in attacking, cutting out, and recapturing His Majesty's late Ship *Hermione*, then mounting 44 Guns, manned with 392 Men belonging to the Enemy and in the face of and under the Fort of Porto Cavallo mounted with near 200 pieces of Cannon



Fig. 83.

Gold 100 guinea City of London Freedom Box of Admiral Alexander Hood, Baron Bridport, KB, made and commissioned from Goodbehere & Wigan, awarded 8 October 1795. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (PLT0024)

²⁵ *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, October 21st 1798, No. 15072; *The London Gazette*, November 20 1798, No. 15081, pp. 1100-1101; Corporation of London Records above; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) p. 90; *Rule Britannia* (1986) No. 140, p. 106-107; Southwick (1993) p. 64; Southwick (1997) No. 32, p. 330; Southwick (2020) No. 47, p. 54. *Private Collection*

²⁶ For all City of London swords of honour, see Southwick 1990; and those by Morisset, Southwick 2020.

²⁷ CLRO. *Journal* 79, f. 79, 6 March 1800; *Common Council Papers* G.CXM/282.

which incessantly fired upon him and his brave crew' [on 25 October 1799] 'An Enterprise surpassed by none in this Glorious War' (fig. 84).²⁸

Acknowledgements

I should especially like to thank HM King Charles III and the Royal Collection Trust for permission to publish items in the Royal Collection; also to Craig Bowen, Collections and Learning Manager, Canterbury Museums and Galleries, Canterbury, Kent; Richard Edgcumbe, Lord Shelburne, Ms Rosalinda M. C. Hardiman, Collections Manager, Portsmouth Museum and Visitor Services; Alasdair Park-Young, Senior Sales Co-Ordinator, Decorative Arts, Christie's London; Ms Alexandra Charlotte Starp, Head of Vertu & Gold Boxes, Sotheby's London; Ms Tamsin Bapty, Library Co-Ordinator Great North Museum, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums; Wallace Kwong, Rare Books & Music Reference Team, The British Library; The Corporation of the City of London, Guildhall; The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection, on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum; Christie's, King Street, London; Sotheby's, New Bond Street, London; The Museum of London; The National Archives; The London Metropolitan Archives; and the Westminster Archives Centre.

Abbreviations

CLRO Corporation of London Record Office (records formerly held at the Guildhall, Aldermanbury, now deposited at London Metropolitan Archives)

LG The London Gazette



Fig. 84.

Gold City of London Freedom Box of 50 guinea value awarded to Captain Edward Hamilton, RN, for the recapture of His Majesty's late ship, *Hermione*, on 25 October 1799, awarded 6 March 1800, made and commissioned from Charles Aldridge, London 1800. Private collection

²⁸ CLRO. *Journal* 79, 6 March 1800, f. 79; Common Council Papers G.CXM/282.

Also awarded a fine sword by the House Assembly of Jamaica (Southwick, 2014, No. 2, pp. 101-2).

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