

# Jewellery Studies

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LESLIE SOUTHWICK

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*The Society of*  
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## 2025/1

Editor: Susan La Niece

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# ***James Morisset's City of London Swords of Honour Awarded during the French Revolutionary War 1797-1799***

## KEYWORDS:

Morisset/jeweller/goldsmith/enameller/London/swords/  
French revolutionary war/military/naval/1790s

[https://www.societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk/JSO\\_2025\\_1.pdf](https://www.societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk/JSO_2025_1.pdf)

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**Front cover:**

The City of London dress small-sword of 200 guinea value awarded to Rear Admiral Horatio, Baron Nelson of the Nile, KB, London 1798-99. James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace. The London Museum (Inv.11952)

# James Morisset's City of London Swords of Honour Awarded during the French Revolutionary War 1797-1799

LESLIE SOUTHWICK

*Following the review of Morisset's ten City of London freedom boxes awarded to high-ranking British officers during the French Revolutionary War, 1793-1802 (Jewellery Studies 2023/3), it is thought appropriate to discuss the first historic swords of honour introduced by the Corporation of London in the late 1790s, swords also designed and made by Morisset. These were distinctive and expensive symbols of martial prowess, that began a tradition by the City of saluting great military heroes and British military achievement for over 185 years, starting with the naval victory off Cape St Vincent (14 February 1797) (fig. 3) and continuing until the Falkland Islands Campaign of 1982 (Southwick 1990).*

## Introduction

On 10 March 1797, after years of awarding high-ranking military and naval heroes with the City of London's highest honour - the Honorary Freedom of the City in a gold box - the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London (figs 1-2) resolved to award Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB, Commander-in-Chief Ships and Vessels Mediterranean, with its first sword of honour for his victory over the Spanish Grand Fleet off Cape St Vincent, Portugal, on 14 February 1797 (figs 3-4). The reason for this innovation was clear. Although Cape St Vincent was the second major naval victory of the Revolutionary War (after 'The Glorious First of June 1794') and one which resulted in many honours for the victor, Jervis had already been awarded the Freedom of the City of London in a gold box three years earlier for his command of naval forces in the joint naval and military expedition in the West Indies (Southwick 2023, No. 2) and the Common Council wished to reward him with another distinctive token of appreciation for a second notable service.

Another reason why Jervis was given a sword and not some other gift was that elaborate swords of honour (primarily made by Morisset in the 1790s) had become established as an appropriate military symbol to present to particular officers in wartime by various colonial institutions, island assemblies and trading organizations, such as the Hon. East India Company (figs 5-7) and the Committee of Merchants of London (Wood 2007) for



Fig. 1.  
Guildhall, City of London from King Street today. Author's Image



Fig. 2.  
Guildhall, City of London, today. Author's Image



Fig. 3.

City of London presentation sword of Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB, for his victory off Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797.

James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace, London 1797-97. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (WPN 1439)



Fig. 4.  
Admiral Sir John Jervis, Earl St Vincent, KB (1735-1823) by William Beechey, painted for the City of London, holding the sword presented to him by Prince William Henry, Duke of Clarence (later William IV) for his success at Cape St Vincent, early 19th century. Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London Corporation (acc. no. 58).



Fig. 5.  
Gold and enamel dress small-sword presented by the Hon. East India Company to Lieut.-Colonel James Hartley for services in the First Mahratta War 1779. James Morisset, commissioned from James Shrapnell, London 1781-82. Victoria & Albert Museum (M39-1960)



Fig. 6. (Left)  
Inside face of Hartley's sword hilt, fig. 5

Fig. 7. (Above)  
Above the oval gold and enamel shell-guard of Hartley's sword in fig. 5



Fig. 8.  
Gold-mounted hilt of sword awarded by the Hon. East India Company to Capt. Ashmead Pruen for his defence of the gun-brig *Ranger* against the Maratta Fleet, 8 April 1783. James Morisset, London 1789-90. By courtesy of Peter Finer



Fig. 9.  
Inside face of Pruen's gold hilt

distinguished service in defending British trade routes on the high seas (figs 8-9), for saving people's lives (fig. 10), for capturing enemy ships (figs 11-15), for protecting various colonial islands from French invasion (figs 16-17) and for opposing mutiny on British vessels at English naval stations (figs 18-28). Additionally it was thought appropriate that, as Jervis had already received the Freedom in a gold box in 1794, he should receive another gift, one symbolic of martial prowess to accompany officer dress, for his outstanding victory off Cape St Vincent, a success which greatly increased the morale of the country during wartime, and one which also made the public aware of one, Commodore Horatio Nelson, who had greatly distinguished himself in the battle (Southwick 2023, No. 7).

In this first period of awarding swords (tokens only ever given by the Corporation of London as a martial symbol to military or naval officers of high-rank or those of particular distinction), the City gave gold swords of 200 guinea value embellished with enamel and inset with diamonds to those officers in overall command during a major action or campaign, such as Jervis at Cape St Vincent, Admiral Duncan at Camperdown (No. 2 below), Nelson at the Nile (No. 4 below) and later Admiral Exmouth for his attack and bombardment upon Algiers and the freeing of Christian slaves (27 August 1816) (Southwick 1990 and 2014). Swords of 100 guineas were of gold and enamel (but without diamonds) and usually awarded with the Freedom of the City to those officers who acted as second-in-command during a major battle, such as Vice Admiral Onslow at Camperdown (No. 3 below) or to those in joint command such as Vice Admiral Mitchell and Lieut.-General Sir Ralph Abercromby in the military and naval expedition to the coast of Holland in 1799 (Nos 5-6 below) or given to those who distinguished themselves in a decisive action, such as Captain Sir William Sydney Smith for his defence of St Jean d'Acre in 1799 (No. 7 below) or Captain Philip de Vere Broke for the capture of the American frigate *Chesapeake* off Boston Harbour on 1 June 1813 in the War of 1812 (fig. 80). Moreover, if a recipient had not been given the Freedom of the City before, then that also was awarded with the sword (but *not* in a gold box). And lastly, sword recipients, from Jervis onwards, each received the Court of Common Council's resolution of the award in the form of an 'Illuminated Address' (addresses also given earlier to those who had received boxes) (cf. figs 41, 46, 50, 64, 68, 70 and 72).<sup>1</sup>

All the swords awarded by the City in the late 1790s were commissioned by the Court of Common Council from a small number of leading retailing goldsmiths or sword-cutlers (most notably, Robert Makepeace, figs 3, 29, 31, 42, 47, 54), but all were made and designed by Morisset at 22 Denmark Street, St Giles-in-the-Fields, Westminster, before his official retirement in 1800 (Southwick 1997). All Morisset's swords for the City of London were designed as 'Dress-Swords of Small-Sword Pattern', struck with London Assay marks and with Morisset's third maker's mark registered at Goldsmiths Hall on

<sup>1</sup> Two copies were made of these addresses, one given to the recipient at the time of presentation and the other to be placed in the Corporation of London archives (now held at The London Archives). Not all are known to have survived.

6 November 1789 – **IM** in Roman capital letters in a rectangle with angled corners (figs 30-32). This was a most appropriate and enviable design for wearing with dress uniform at civic or royal occasions, such as that recorded in *The St James's Chronicle* (no. 6693-4) on 12 November 1800, following Nelson's triumphant return to London from the Nile:

his Majesty held a levee at St James's Palace [at which] the gallant Lord Nelson appeared in his full naval uniform decorated with the Diamond Aigrette [*chelengk*] presented to him by the Grand Seignior [of Turkey], which he wore in his hat, besides the Medallions of the King and Queen of the Naples, the different Orders with which he has been invested [fig. 51], and the elegant sword presented to him by the City of London [two days before, No. 4, fig. 54].

## Naval Victory off Cape St Vincent, Portugal, 14 February 1797

### 1. *Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB, C-in-C Ships & Vessels Mediterranean*

Gold, enamel and diamond-set 200-guinea Dress Small-Sword (figs 3 and 34-35) resolved unanimously to be awarded by a Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London held before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, Esq., on 10 March 1797, to **Admiral of the Blue Sir John Jervis KB (1735-1823) (later Admiral of the Fleet, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl St Vincent)** (figs 4 and 33), HMS *Victory* (100 guns), Commander-in-Chief Ships and Vessels Mediterranean, for his success over the Spanish Grand Fleet off Cape St Vincent, Portugal, on 14 February 1797 (figs 36-38). The gold hilt is delicately cast and chased with floral sprays of acorns and oak leaves and laurel and ornamented with enamelled escutcheons. On the ovoid pommel are painted, on the outside face, the arms of the City of London with supporters and the motto 'DOMINE DIREGE NOS', and, on the inside, the arms of Jervis with supporters with ribbon bearing the motto of the Order of the Bath 'TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO' and his family motto 'THUS'. The grip is overlaid with translucent blue enamel and has gold ferrules chased with formal swags. On each side of the grip is an applied gold wreath of laurel encircling a scene of a British man-of-war at sea with below, the name of Jervis's flag-ship, 'VICTORY'. The escutcheons are further embellished by a border of thirty-eight cut diamonds (three missing on each side). The knuckle-guard and the quillon-block are also inlaid with enamel plaques painted with trophies of arms, the decoration on the quillon-block incorporating a coronet. The arms of the hilt are in the form of fouled anchors. The gold oval shell is set, on the side nearer the hand, with enamelled plaques finely painted in natural colours with naval battle scenes, representing two stages of the battle off Cape St Vincent; and on the polished face of the gold shell towards the blade is engraved a full inscription of presentation taken from



Fig. 10.

Gold-mounted dress sword presented by the Senate and People of Jamaica to Captain Samuel Hood, RN, for saving the lives of three citizens in 1791. James Morisset, commissioned from Jefferys & Jones, London. Collection of the Hood Ackland Family on loan to the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (WPN 1549)



Fig. 11.

Gold mounted dress sword of military pattern presented to Captain the Hon. Alexander Forrester Cochrane, RN, for the capture of French ships of war off the coast of America, 17 May 1795. James Morisset, commissioned from Gray & Constable, London 1796-97. Russell Barnett Aitkin and Irene Roosevelt Aitkin Collection, Promised Gift of Irene Roosevelt Aitkin, in celebration of the Museum's 150th Anniversary. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (acc. no. L.2020.12.2a,b)



Fig. 12.  
Inside face of hilt in fig. 11



Fig. 13.  
Above the outside shell-guard nearer the hilt on fig. 11



Fig. 14.  
Above the inside shell-guard nearer the hand on fig. 11



Fig. 15.  
Engraved inscription of presentation on the underside of the shell-guard nearer the blade on fig. 11



Fig. 16.  
Silver-gilt and enamel presentation dress small-sword, James Morisset,  
London 1797-98. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (acc. no.  
42.50.36.AB)



Fig. 17.  
Shell-guard of presentation small-sword from above, fig. 16

the resolution of the Court of Common Council held before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, on 10 March 1797, and reads:

WATSON MAYOR

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

*That the Thanks of this Court be presented to  
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JERVIS, K.B.*

*for the very Important splendid & unparalleled Victory obtain'd  
by the Squadron under his Command over the Spanish Fleet  
on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February last tending to the Security of  
GREAT BRITAIN by the defeat of the JUNCTION  
of two powerful armaments [sic] destined for its Invasion  
at a most critical conjecture, & adorning, in a most luminous degree  
the page of our naval history with an event which will  
proudly display to posterity the nautical science & resistless bravery  
of BRITISH SEAMEN:*

*And that a Sword, be presented to the Admiral by this  
Court, as a testimony of the high esteem  
they entertain of His eminent publick  
services.*

The top-locket is signed on the inside with the name of the retailer commissioned to provide the gift

R  
Makepeace  
LONDON

*Length overall 39 3/8 in. (100cm) Blade length 31 15/16 in. (81cm)  
London Assay Marks and date-letter 'A' for 1796-97  
Maker's mark of James Morisset  
Commissioned from and signed 'R. Makepeace, LONDON'.*



Fig. 18.  
Silver-gilt and enamel dress small-sword awarded to 1st Lieut. John Burn, HMS *Beaulieu*, 'for his active and spirited conduct during the Mutiny at the Nore, 1797'. James Morisset, commissioned from Rundell & Bridge, London 1798-99. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (acc. no. 26.145.315a,b)



Fig. 19.  
Inside face of grip on fig. 18



Fig. 20.  
Detail of quillon-block and arms of the hilt in the form of anchors on fig. 18



Fig. 21.  
Above the shell-guard nearer the hand of fig. 18

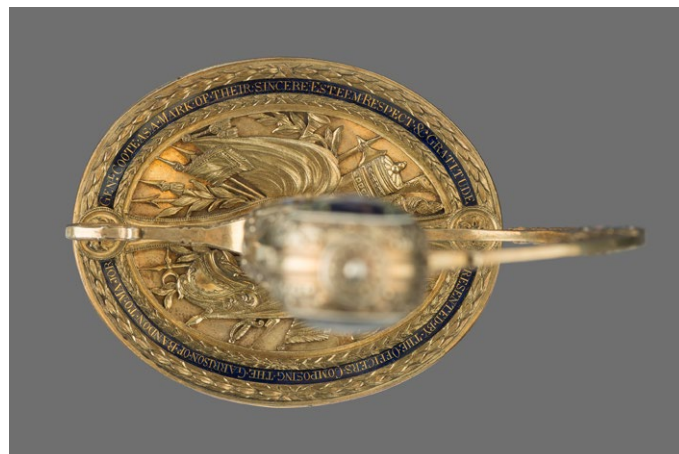


Fig. 22. (Left)  
Silver-gilt and enamel dress small-sword presented to Major General Eyre Coote (1762-1823) by Regiments comprising the Garrison of Banda, Ireland. James Morisset, commissioned from Rundell & Bridge, London 1797-98. By courtesy of Peter Finer

Fig. 23. (Above)  
Inscription of presentation to Eyre Coote on the underside of the shell-guard nearer the hand, fig. 22



Fig. 24. (Left)  
Silver-gilt dress sword awarded to Captain William Daniel, RN, 'for his great & unremitting exertions in the performance of his duty' at the Nore Mutiny, 1797. James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace, London 1798-99. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (WPN 1553)

Fig. 25. (Above)  
Underside of shell-guard of Daniel's sword fig. 24 engraved with inscription of presentation



Fig. 26.  
Silver-gilt dress sword presented to 1st Lieutenant Francis Douglas,  
HMS *Repulse*, 'for his Spirited & active conduct during the Mutiny at  
the Nore, 1797'. James Morisset, commissioned from Green & Ward,  
London. Victoria & Albert Museum, London (acc. no. 274-1869)



Fig. 27.  
The inside face of the Douglas hilt, fig. 26



Fig. 28.  
The Douglas shell-guard from above, fig. 26

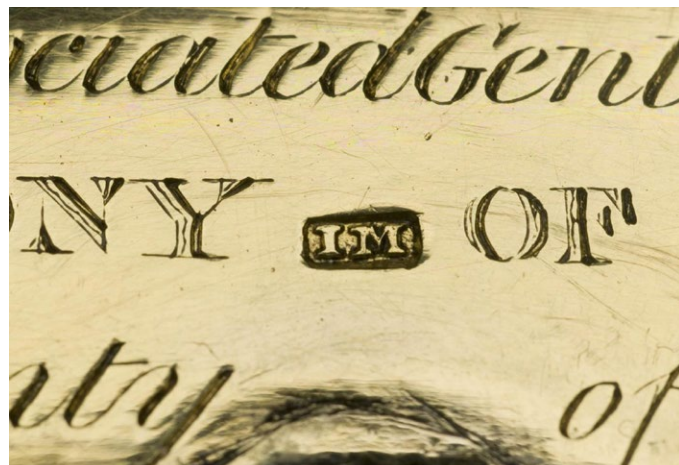


Fig. 29.  
Silver-gilt and enamel hilted dress small-sword presented to Major General Henry Johnson (1748-1835) for services during the Irish Rebellion at the Battle of Ross, 5 June 1795. James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace, London 1798-99. Kretschmar von Kienbusch Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art (1977-167-648)

Fig. 30.  
Maker's mark of James Morisset on shell-guard of Major General Johnson's sword, 1798-99, fig. 29



Fig. 31.  
Inside of top-locket of Johnson's scabbard, fig. 29, signed 'R. Makepeace, London' and struck with London Assay marks and Morisset's maker's mark

Fig. 32.  
Maker's mark of James Morisset on shell-guard of Lieut. John Burn's hilt, fig. 18



Fig. 33.  
Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB, 1st Earl St Vincent (1735-1823) by John Hoppner, c. 1799. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC3002)



Fig. 34.  
The inside face of the hilt of the City of London dress small-sword of Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB, for his victory off Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797, cf. fig. 3



Fig. 35.  
The City of London 200 guinea presentation dress small-sword and scabbard of Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB, for his victory off Cape St Vincent. James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace, London 1796-97. By courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (WPN 1439), cf. fig. 3



Fig. 36.  
'Nelson's ship, HMS *Captain* (74 guns), captures the San Nicolas (80 guns) and the San Josef (112 guns) at the Battle off Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797', by Nicholas Pocock, early 19th century. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC0487)

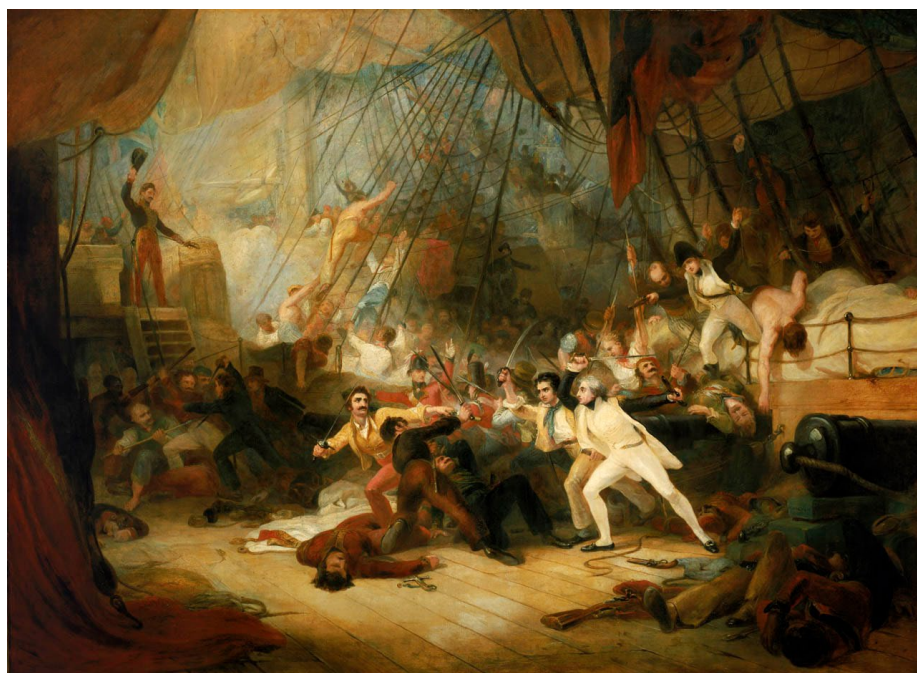


Fig. 37.  
'Nelson boarding the San Josef at the Battle off Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797', by George Jones, 1829. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC0492)

## Action Report and the Sword Awarded

Jervis's report of his success was written two days after the action, from HMS *Victory* in Lagos Bay on 16 February 1797 and addressed to the Secretary of the Lords of the Admiralty in London. It was carried to England in the frigate HMS *Lively* by First Captain Robert Calder, Flag-Officer to Jervis, who arrived in England seventeen days later and who delivered it to the Admiralty Office in Whitehall, on Friday, 3 March 1797 (Southwick 2023 No. 8). Copies of the dispatches were published immediately in *The London Gazette Extraordinary* on the same day, news that announced and recorded a long-awaited major British success. Seven days later, at a Court of Common Council held at the Guildhall on 10 March 1797, the Court's resolution awarding Jervis a valuable Sword of Honour was announced in the manner engraved on the hilt above. On the 11 March, the Lord Mayor wrote to Jervis informing him of the Common Council's resolution, to which Jervis replied seventeen days later:

[HMS] *VICTORY*, in the *Tagus*, 28th March 1797,

MY LORD,

*I am honored with your Lordship's letter of the 11th instant, enclosing the unanimous Resolutions of the Common Council of the City of London, so honorable to myself, the flag officers, captains, officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers, present in the action with the Fleet of Spain on the 14th of February; and I desire you will convey the just sense we all feel on receiving such high marks of approbation from that respectable body. The Sword they intend to honor me with I shall prize beyond expression, and be at all times ready to draw in defence of the rights and privileges of my fellow Citizens, in the list of whom the flag officers, under my command are proud to be enrolled.*

*I have the honor to be, with great esteem,  
Your Lordship's most obedient and humble servant,  
J. JERVIS.*

The record of payment to the prominent retail goldsmith and jeweller, Robert Makepeace, 6 Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn Field, for Jervis's sword, is found first in Makepeace's surviving invoice, dated 2 November 1797 (the date the sword was delivered) (Southwick 1990, plate LXV, A):

*The Rt. Honble The Lord Mayor  
Corporation of the City of London*

*London, 2<sup>nd</sup> Novr 1797*

### *Bought of Robt. Makepeace*

*GOLDSMITH and JEWELLER,  
Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields*

*A rich Chased & enameld Gold Sword Ornamented with Diamonds} £210. 0. 0*

secondly in the Corporation of London's Common Council  
*Journal* (No. 77, p. 306), for 29 November 1797:

*Ordered that Mr Chamberlain do pay unto Mr Robert Makepeace the sum of two hundred and ten pounds in full for his Bill for providing a rich Chased and enamelled Gold Sword ornamented with Diamonds presented to the Right Honourable the Earl of Saint Vincent*

and thirdly in the *City Cash Accounts for 1797* (2/66, p. 373):

*To Robert Makepeace in full of this Bill for providing the Sword to be presented to the Earl of Saint Vincent, Admiral of the Blue, voted by this Court the 10th March last and for Order do [ditto] 29 November 1797*

.....£210. 0s. 0d.

Jervis was the first of only seven men in the Corporation's history to be awarded the Freedom of the City in a Gold Box and also a Sword of Honour for two outstanding and distinctive services months or years apart. The seven men are Jervis, Nelson (No. 4 below), General Sir William Carr Beresford, the Duke of Wellington, Sir Thomas Graham (later Lord Lynedoch), Viscount Wolseley and Earl Roberts of Khandahar.

For his victory off Cape St Vincent, Sir John Jervis, KB, was created 1st 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 for life, awarded a Large Naval Gold Medal (cf. figs 39-40),



Fig. 38.  
'Spanish officers surrender their swords to Nelson on board the *San Nicolas* at Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797'. By Richard Westall, c.1797. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC 2909)



Fig. 39.  
Obverse of Flag-Officer's Large Naval Gold Medal awarded to Rear Admiral William Waldegrave for services at Cape St Vincent, similar to that given to Admiral Jervis, 1797. © Christies Images 2023

and an Illuminated Address from the City of London for his services (fig. 41), an address which reads:

WATSON Mayor

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

*RESOLVED Unanimously that the Thanks of this Court*

*Be presented to ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JERVIS, K.B. for the very Important, Splendid and unparalleled Victory obtained by the Squadron under his Command over the / Spanish Fleet on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February last tending to the Security of GREAT BRITAIN by the Defeat / Of the Junction of two powerful Armaments destined for its invasion at a most Critical Con / juncture and adorning in a most luminous degree the page of our Naval History with an / event that will proudly display to Posterity the Nautical Science and Resistless Bravery of*

BRITISH SEAMEN

*Resolved Unanimously that a SWORD of the value of two  
hundred Guineas be presented to Vice [sic] Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB. and  
Baronet [sic], by this Court, as a Testimony of the high Esteem they Entertain of  
His public Services and of the Eminent advantages he had rendered to his Country.*

On 14 February 1799, two years after his victory, St Vincent was made Admiral of the White but, due to ill health, relinquished his Mediterranean command and returned to England, where he was presented with his sword and other gifts at a special banquet held in his honour at the Guildhall on 14 December 1799. Soon afterwards, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief Channel 'or Home' Fleet, had his portrait painted by the Corporation to hang in the Guildhall (fig. 4). Later, he was appointed a First Lord of the Admiralty (1801-4), an Admiral of the Red (9 November 1805), General of Marines (7 May 1814), GCB (2 January 1815) and, on 19 July 1821, an Admiral of the Fleet.<sup>2</sup>



Fig. 40.  
Reverse of Large Naval Gold Medal fig. 39

<sup>2</sup> *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 3 March 1797, pp. 211-213; The Corporation of London Records above; *The St James's Chronicle* Saturday March 11, 1797 (No. 6119); *The Gentleman's Magazine* (No. 69, Pt. 2) December 1799, pp. 1081-2; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) pp. 75-6; *The Royal Naval Exhibition 1891*, no. 2775; May & Annis (1970) I, frontispiece and p. 55; Blair (1972) p. 13 & 46 No. 11 (Plate 5); Spalding (1979) pp. 419-420; Southwick (1983), pp. 32-35 (ill); Southwick (1990) pp. 173, 175-6, No. 1, Pl. LXIV; Southwick (1997) No. 11, p. 326; Southwick (2001) colour plate 13; Southwick (2020) No. 24, p. 26-27; Southwick (2023) fig. 49. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (WPN. 1439).



Fig. 41.

The Court of Common Council's Illuminated Address awarded with the sword of honour to Admiral Sir John Jervis, KB, Earl St Vincent, dated 10 May 1797. © The London Archives (COL/CHD/FR/08/01/007)

## Victory of the Battle off Camperdown, Holland, 11 October 1797

### 2. Admiral Adam Duncan, KB, C-in-C North Sea Station

Gold, enamel and diamond-set 200-guinea Dress Small-Sword (fig. 42) resolved unanimously to be awarded with the Freedom of the City by a Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London, held before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, on 19 October 1797, to **Admiral of the Blue Adam Duncan, 1st Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, KB (1731-1804)** (fig. 43), HMS *Venerable*, Commander-in-Chief Ships and Vessels North Sea Station, in honour of his victory over the Dutch Fleet off Camperdown on 11 October 1797 (figs 44-45). The hilt with a chased ovoid pommel set with enamelled plaques painted on the outside with the arms and supporters of Admiral Duncan and on the inside with those of the City of London. The gold grip is overlaid with translucent dark-blue enamel and has ferrules ornamented with swags and husks. On each side of the grip is an oval enamelled medallion painted with Duncan's flag-ship 'HMS VENERABLE' under sail. The escutcheons are embellished by a border of thirty-three cut diamonds and framed by applied gold wreaths of laurel. The knuckle-guard is mounted with a long dark-blue enamelled panel inscribed with gold lettering:



Fig. 42.  
City of London dress sword of 200-guinea value awarded to Admiral Viscount Duncan, for his victory off Camperdown, 11 October 1797. James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace, London 1797-98. National War Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (M.1996.98.2)



Fig. 43.  
Admiral Adam, 1st Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, KB (1731-1804) portrayed wearing his London sword of honour and Large Naval Gold Medal, by John Hoppner, c.1798. Guildhall Museum and Art Gallery, City of London.



Fig. 44.  
The Battle off Camperdown by Philipp-Jacques de Loutherbourg, 1801. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC0504)

CLARVM ET VENERABILE NOMEN GENTIBVS ET MVLTVM  
 NOSTRE QVOD PROPERAT VRBI [A name famous and revered  
 among nations and one which brought great renown to our City].  
 The quillon-block is inlaid with enamelled plaques on each side  
 painted with trophies and nautical instruments; and the arms of the  
 hilt are formed as fouled anchors. The gold oval shell is ornamented  
 on the side nearer the hand with acanthus and a border of guilloche  
 and is applied with a gold wreath of oak and another of laurel, both  
 of which frame an oval enamelled medallion painted with a different  
 stage of the naval action off Camperdown. The polished face of the  
 shell towards the blade is engraved with the resolution of the Court  
 of Common Council as an inscription of presentation:

WATSON MAYOR  
*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the*  
 GUILDHALL of the CITY of LONDON  
*on Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup> day of Octr. 1797*  
 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY  
*That the Thanks of the Court be given to*  
 Adam Duncan Esq., now Lord Vist. Duncan  
 ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE  
*for his most gallant conduct on the Memorable*  
 Eleventh day of October  
*when the British Fleet under his Command most gloriously*  
*defeated that of the Dutch,*  
 And that He be presented as a Token of their Sense of  
*the important Services He thereby rendered to his Country*  
*the FREEDOM of this CITY & a SWORD*  
*of the value of Two Hund.d Guineas.*

The inside of the top-locket is signed with the name of the  
 retailer commissioned to provide the token

R  
 Makepeace  
 LONDON

*Length overall 40 1/10in. (101.8cm) Blade length 33in. (83.8cm)*  
*London Assay Marks and date-letter 'B' for 1797-98*  
*Maker's mark of James Morisset*  
*Commissioned from and signed, 'R. Makepeace, London' (see below)*

### Action Reports and Presentation Proceedings

Duncan's dispatches recording his outstanding success over  
 the Dutch Fleet off Camperdown on 11 October 1797 (the  
 third major naval victory of the French Revolutionary War and  
 second only to Nelson's success at the Nile a year later, see  
 No. 4 below), were written aboard the *Venerable* on 12th and  
 13th October 1797 and addressed to Evan Nepean, Secretary to  
 the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. They were carried to  
 England by Duncan's flag-officer, Captain Fairfax, and published  
 soon afterwards in *The London Gazette Extraordinary* of Friday  
 13 October 1797 (p. 975) and more fully in a second *London*  
*Gazette Extraordinary* on Monday 16 October 1797. Three days  
 after their publication, on 19 October, the Court of Common  
 Council of the Corporation resolved unanimously:

*That the thanks of this Court be given to Lord Viscount Duncan, Admiral of the Blue, for the most gallant conduct on the memorable 11<sup>th</sup> day of October, when the British Fleet under his command, most gloriously defeated that of the Dutch; and that he be presented, as a token of their sense of the important services he thereby rendered to his country, the Freedom of the City, and a Sword of the value of Two Hundred Guineas.*

Following the Court's resolution, the Lord Mayor wrote to Duncan on 19 October to inform him of the Common Council's decision. A month later at a Court of Common Council held on 29 November 1797, the new Lord Mayor, John William Anderson, laid before the Court Admiral Duncan's reply for being awarded the Freedom of the City and a sword of honour:

WALMER CASTLE, 22nd November 1797,

MY LORD,

*I am this moment honored with your Lordship's letter of the 19th, inclosing the Resolutions of the Common Council of the City of London of the same date. In answer I am to acknowledge the sense I have of the high honor they have been pleased to bestow on me, which I receive with the greatest respect, regard, and gratitude. To you, my Lord, my best thanks are due for the very gracious manner you have been pleased to communicate those Resolutions to me, and for which I am to beg you will have the goodness to communicate my answer to the Common Council. I have also to thank you for your kind congratulations, and have the honor to be, with respect and esteem,*

*Your Lordship's most obedient and obliged humble servant,*  
DUNCAN.

The Corporation of London *Journal* 77 (p. 388) for 27 March 1798, the *City Cash Accounts for 1798*, and Robert Makepeace's invoice dated 9 February 1798, all record that the sum of

*Three hundred and twenty two pounds thirteen [sic.] shillings in full of his Bill for two chased Gold Enamelled Swords and the additional Duty thereon, Voted by this Court the 19th of October last to be presented to Lord Viscount Duncan, Admiral of the Blue and Sir Richard Onslow Baronet, Vice Admiral of the Red [see No. 3 below]'.*

This gift was ready fifteen weeks after it was resolved to be given. Makepeace, who had been commissioned to provide both Duncan's and Onslow's swords for Camperdown, delivered the tokens to the Guildhall on the same day, 9 February 1798, and placed both gifts on the same invoice for payment.

For his outstanding victory off Camperdown (an action greatly admired by Nelson among others), Duncan was created 1st Viscount Duncan of Camperdown and Baron Duncan of Lundie in the Shire of Perth by King George III on 30 October 1797, thanked by both Houses of Parliament, received a pension of £3,000 a year for life and awarded the Large Naval Gold Medal (fig. 43). George III went on board his flag-ship and congratulated him personally and ordered a day of national rejoicing with a procession through London and a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral. Seven months after the action, Duncan was admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his sword and his Illuminated Address at a special ceremony held at the Guildhall on 22 May 1798; and had his portrait painted by John Hoppner to hang in the Guildhall, a portrait that includes his sword of honour by Morisset (fig. 43). The address (fig. 46) reads:

Watson Mayor

*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall  
Of the City of London on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> day of October 1797*

*Resolved unanimously that the Thanks of this Court be given*

*To Adam Duncan Esqr; now LORD VISCOUNT DUNCAN, Admiral of the Blue  
for his most gallant Conduct on the memorable eleventh day of October, when the British  
Fleet / under his Command most gloriously Defeated that of the Dutch, And that he be presented  
/ as a Token of their Sense of the Important Services thereby rendered to his Country the  
Freedom of this CITY and a Sword of the Value of Two Hundred Guineas*

This second City of London sword of honour was later exhibited in *The Royal Naval Exhibition* 1891 (no. 2801) and was, for many years, on loan to the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich [Inv. no. 91.0], before being removed to the National War Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (M.1996.98.2) in 1996.<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 45.

The Dutch Admiral de Winter surrenders his sword to his victor, Admiral Adam Duncan, following the British naval success off Camperdown, 11 October 1797, by Samuel Drummond, 1827, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC0506)

<sup>3</sup> *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 13 October, 1797, p. 975 and *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 16 October 1797, pp. 985-87; The Corporation of London Records above; *The St James's Chronicle* (October 1797); *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) pp. 85-6; *The Royal Naval Exhibition* 1891 No. 2801; May & Annis (1970) I, pp. 54-5, colour plate 1; Blair (1972) p. 47 No. 16, and p. 12 Plate 6; Spalding (1979) pp. 420-1; Southwick (1990), No. 2, pp. 176-7; Southwick (1997) No. 19, p. 327; Swinfen (1997); Southwick (2020) No. 33 (ill), pp. 38-39. National War Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (M.1996. 98. 2).



Fig. 46.

The Court of Common Council's Illuminated Address awarded with the sword of honour to Admiral Adam, 1st Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, dated 19 October 1797. © The London Archives (COL/CHD/FR/08/01/012)

### 3. Vice Admiral Sir Richard Onslow, Bart

Gold and enamel 100-guinea Dress Small-Sword (fig. 47) resolved unanimously to be awarded with the Freedom of the City by a Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London before the Lord Mayor, Brook Watson, on 19 October 1797, to **Vice Admiral of the Red, Sir Richard Onslow, Bart (1741-1817)** (fig. 48), HMS *Monarch*, for his part as Second-in-Command to Admiral Duncan in the naval victory over the Dutch Fleet off Camperdown on 11 October 1797 (fig. 44). The gold hilt is elegantly cast and chased with pendant swags, husk and sprays of laurel and oak. The ovoid pommel is chased with leaves and is set on each side with a painted enamel medallion, bearing (on the outside) the arms of the City of London and (on the inside) with those of Vice Admiral Onslow. Above the pommel is a flat disc-shaped tang button. The grip is chased with swags, pendants and trophies and, on each face, a laurel wreath within which is set an enamelled plaque painted with an illustration of Onslow's flag-ship, HMS *MONARCH* under sail. The arms of the hilt are formed as fouled anchors. The oval shell is ornamented on the side nearer the hand with an applied border of laurel (around the inside edge) and an applied border of oak (around the outside), both of which frame enamelled plaques painted with naval battle scenes representing the action off Camperdown. On the polished side of the shell towards the blade is engraved a full inscription of presentation taken from the Common Council's resolution (fig. 49):

WATSON MAYOR

*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the  
GUILDHALL of the CITY OF LONDON  
on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> day of Octr. 1797*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

*That the Thanks of this Court be given to  
Sr. RICHD. ONSLOW BART. VICE ADML. Of the RED  
for his eminent Services on the Eleventh day of Octr.  
when the British Fleet under the Command of  
Admiral Duncan now Lord Visct. Duncan  
most gloriously defeated that of the Dutch*

*And that HE be presented as a token of their Sense of  
the Important Services HE thereby rendered to his Country  
the FREEDOM of this CITY & a SWORD  
of the Value of One hundr. Guineas.*

Straight blade of hollow-ground, triangular section, etched, gilt and blued throughout its length with scrolls, foliage and trophies and, on the inside with the figure of Justice. Wooden scabbard covered in black fish-skin and mounted with gold top- and mid-locket and chape ornamented with husks, pendants, and with two-loose rings for suspension. The top-locket is a contemporary replacement and is engraved on the inside 'RUNDELL & BRIDGE LONDON' (see below).

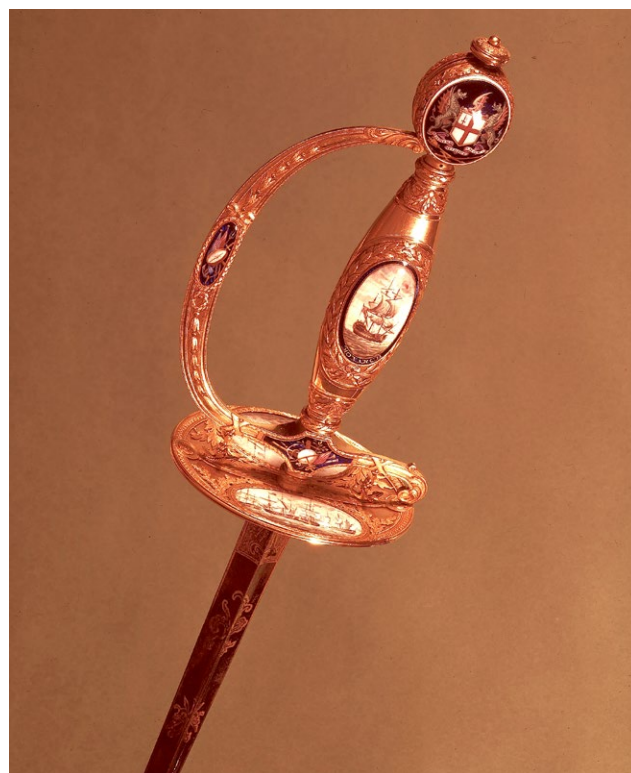


Fig. 47.

City of London gold dress sword of 100-guinea value of Sir Richard Onslow, Bart, James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace, London 1797-98. Robin Dale Collection



Fig. 48.

Vice Admiral Sir Richard Onslow, Bart (1741-1817) wearing his Large Naval Gold Medal for Camperdown by Thomas Phillips, early 19th century. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC2922)

*Length overall 41¾ in. (106cm) Blade length 34in (86.3cm)*  
*London Assay Marks and date-letter 'B' for 1797-98*  
*Maker's mark of James Morisset*  
*Originally commissioned from R. Makepeace, London, now signed 'Rundell & Bridge, London'*  
 (see below).

### Presentation Proceedings

Following the arrival of Admiral Duncan's victory dispatches at the Admiralty Office in London on 13th and 16th October 1797 above, reports in which Onslow was greatly praised for his gallant services at Camperdown by his commanding officer, the Court of Common Council resolved unanimously on 19th October 1797

*That the thanks of this Court be given to Sir Richard Onslow, Bart, Vice Admiral of the Red, for his eminent services on the eleventh of the month, when the British Fleet, under the command of Admiral Lord Viscount Duncan, most gloriously defeated that of the Dutch; and that he be presented, as a token of their sense of the important services thereby rendered to his country, the Freedom of the City and a Sword of the value of One Hundred Guineas.*

Following being informed by the Lord Mayor of the Court of Common Council's decision, Onslow replied to the Lord Mayor only two days after the resolution:

[HMS] *Monarch*, Little Nore, 21st October 1797.

MY LORD,

*I am to return you my best thanks for the handsome manner you have conveyed to me the Resolutions of the Corporation of the loyal City of London. I beg you will please to return them my thanks for this public mark of their approbation of my conduct on the 11th of October, when the victory was obtained over the Dutch Fleet by that of Great Britain.*

*I have the honor to be, my lord,*

*Your Lordships' most obedient and very humble servant,*  
*Rd. Onslow.*

This sword, the third to be awarded by the City and the first of 100 guinea value, was (like Duncan's token) commissioned from Robert Makepeace, Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, and delivered to the Corporation on 9 February 1798, fifteen weeks after it was resolved to be given (see payment details above, No. 2). However, the wooden scabbard covered in black fish-skin has a replaced top-locket engraved 'RUNDELL / & BRIDGE / LONDON' (suggesting that damage had occurred sometime in the early nineteenth century and the top-locket replaced by one from another retailer).

Sir Richard Onslow, created a Baronet by George III for Camperdown and thanked by both Houses of Parliament for his services, was admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his sword, freedom and Illuminated Address (fig. 50) at a special ceremony at the Guildhall on 11 December 1798. The address reads:



Fig. 49.  
 Engraved inscription of presentation on the Onslow shell-guard nearer the blade, fig. 47

## WATSON MAYOR

*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the  
Guildhall of the City of London*

*On Thursday the nineteenth day of October 1797*

*Resolved Unanimously that the Thanks of this*

*Court be given to SIR RICHARD ONSLOW BAR<sup>T</sup>. Vice Admiral of the RED*

*For his eminent Services on the Eleventh of this Month, when the BRITISH FLEET under the  
command of Admiral Duncan now Lord Viscount Duncan, most gloriously defeated that of the  
DUTCH, and that he be presented as a Token of their sense of the important services thereby  
Rendered to his Country, the Freedom of this City and a Sword of the Value of one hundred Guineas*

The *City Cash Accounts for 1798* (3/67, p. 383) (together with the retailer's original invoice) record Onslow's sword on the same invoice with that of Admiral Duncan's gift, revealing a total amount for the two swords of £322 14s. Od. paid to the original commissioned retailer, Robert Makepeace, above.<sup>4</sup>

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4 *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 13 October, 1797, p. 975 and *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 16 October 1797, pp. 985-87; The Corporation of London's Records above; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) pp. 85-6; *The Royal Naval Exhibition* 1891, no. 2808; Blair (1972) p.47 no. 16 (listed with Duncan's sword above); Spalding (1979) pp. 421-2; Southwick (1983) p. 34, Fig. 7; Southwick (1990) p.177 no. 3; Southwick (1997) pp. 327-8 no. 20; Southwick (2012), p. 24, Fig. 6; Southwick (2020) No. 34 (ill), pp. 40-41. Collection of Robin Dale. On loan to the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth.



Fig. 50.

The Illuminated Address of a Court of Common Council of the City of London resolving unanimously to thank Vice Admiral Sir Richard Onslow Bart, for his services under Admiral Duncan at the victory over the Dutch Fleet at Camperdown and awarding him the Freedom of the City and a Sword of 100-guinea value, date 19 October 1797. © The London Archives (COL/CHD/FR/08/01/013)

## Naval Victory of the Battle of the Nile, 1-3 August 1798

### 4. Rear Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, KB, Naval Squadron Commander

Gold, enamel and diamond-set 200 guinea Dress Small-Sword resolved unanimously to be awarded by a Court of Common Council of the Corporation of the City of London, held before the Lord Mayor, Sir John William Anderson, Bart, on 16 October 1798, to **Sir Horatio Nelson, KB, Rear Admiral of the Blue, now Lord Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe, Co. Norfolk, and Duke of Bronte, Sicily (1758-1805)** (fig. 51) HMS *Vanguard*, in honour of his victory over the French Egyptian Fleet at the Battle of the Nile, 1-3 August 1798 (figs 52-53). The gold hilt is chased with wreaths of oak on the ovoid pommel and inlaid with a painted enamel plaque on each face (figs 54-55): on the outside of the pommel, Britannia stands in a field strewn with trophies and behind her rise the pyramids (fig. 56); on the inside face, the British Lion tramples on a French ensign (fig. 57). The grip is overlaid with dark-blue enamel painted with trophies, flags, nautical instruments and the blue and red ensigns and, is applied on each side, with an enamelled medallion framed with a border containing thirty-eight faceted diamonds inset in silver. The medallion on the outside is painted with the arms of the City of London in proper colours (fig. 58), and that on the inside with the newly-devised arms of Baron Nelson of the Nile (created by George III on 6 November 1798) (fig. 59). At each end of the grip, the ferrules are chased with bands of acanthus and husks. On either side of the knuckle-guard are enamel plaques painted with crocodiles (figs 54 and 60) and further ornamented with medallions carrying the name and date of battle: 'Nile 1798' the letters and numbers of the honour being picked out with cut diamonds (figs 54-55). The quillon-block is of triangular form and rests on a circular base. On the outside of the block is a shaped enamel plaque painted with a personification of the source of the Nile (modelled on the statue in the Vatican Museums) (fig. 61) and, on the inside, a plaque painted with trophies of arms. The rear-quillon has a finial formed as a scrolled acanthus leaf, which inclines towards and rests upon the oval shell. The arms of the hilt are formed as fouled anchors, of which one is missing. The side of the shell nearer the hand is ornamented with two gold-framed enamelled escutcheons. The outside escutcheon, flanked by oak and palm, depicts a triumphant Britannia, accompanied by the British lion, Hercules and Minerva, admiring a bust-portrait of Lord Nelson (fig. 62). The inside cartouche is flanked by palm and laurel and illustrates a two-deck 74-gun ship under sail (the ship of the line of which Nelson's Nile squadron was mainly composed) (fig. 63). The face of the shell towards the blade is polished bright and decorated with a chased border of husks around the outside edge. Within this border is engraved a full inscription of presentation taken from the resolution of the Court of Common Council:



Fig. 51.

Rear Admiral Baron Nelson of the Nile, KB, portrayed on his return from the Nile wearing the many honours and gifts he was awarded following his outstanding victory, by Lemuel Abbott, c.1800. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC 2889)

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 a Sword of the Value of  
Two Hundred Guineas be presented to  
REAR ADMIRAL LORD NELSON  
OF THE NILE  
by this Court as a testimony of the High Esteem  
they entertain of his Public Services  
and of the eminent advantages he has  
RENDERED HIS COUNTRY

Straight, slender blade of hollow-ground triangular section, etched, blued and gilt. Wooden scabbard covered with fish-skin, mounted with gold lockets and chape decorated with festoons and acanthus, and with two loose-rings for suspension. The inside of the top-locket is signed with the name of the retailer commissioned to provide the sword

R  
Makepeace  
LONDON.

*Length overall 39½ in. (100.4cm) Blade length 32¼ in. (81.9cm)  
London Assay Marks and date-letter 'C' for 1798-99  
Maker's mark of James Morisset  
Commissioned from and signed 'R. Makepeace, London'  
(see below).*



Fig. 52.  
The start of the Battle of the Nile, 1 August 1798, by Nicholas Pocock, 1808. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC0513)



Fig. 53.  
The French battle-ship, L'Orient, explodes at 10.05 PM, 1 August 1798 lighting up the night sky by George Arnald, c.1825. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (BHC0509)



Fig. 54.  
City of London dress small-sword of 200 guinea value awarded to Rear Admiral Horatio, Baron Nelson of the Nile, KB, London 1798-99. James Morisset, commissioned from Robert Makepeace. The London Museum (Inv.11, 952).



Fig. 55.  
Inside face of Nelson's sword hilt, fig. 54



Fig. 56.  
Outside face of Nelson's sword pommel with Britannia against the Nile background, fig. 54



Fig. 57.  
Inside face of pommel with the British Lion trampling on a French ensign, fig. 55



Fig. 58.  
Outside face of Nelson's sword grip with the arms of the City of London  
with supporters framed by cut 'brilliants' (diamonds), fig. 54



Fig. 59.  
Inside face of Nelson's sword grip with the recipient's newly devised  
coat of arms framed by cut 'brilliants' (diamonds), fig. 55



Fig. 60.  
Outside lower part of Nelson's knuckle-guard  
painted with a Nile crocodile



Fig. 61.  
Outside face of Nelson's sword quillon-block  
painted on enamel with the God of the source  
of the Nile, fig. 54



Fig. 62.  
Nelson's sword shell nearer the hand with  
Hercules, Minerva and Britannia crowning  
a bust portrait of Nelson



Fig. 63.  
Nelson's sword shell nearer the hand with  
his flag-ship HMS *Vanguard* under sail

## Action Report and Presentation Proceedings

Nelson's victory dispatch, addressed to his fleet commander in the Mediterranean, Admiral Earl St Vincent (fig. 33), was composed aboard the *Vanguard* off the Nile on 3 August 1798 and finally arrived, after some major delays, at the Office of the Lords of the Admiralty in London on the morning of Tuesday 2 October 1798. The reason for the delays was that Nelson's original dispatch written on 3 August 1798 and intended to be carried to England by Captain Edward Berry in HMS *Leander* (Capt. T. B. Thompson) was lost when the *Leander* was captured south of Crete by the French 74 gun *Genereux* on 18 August 1798. Berry and Thompson were captured and all documents thrown overboard. However, rumours had spread throughout Europe of Nelson's victory, but could not be confirmed until official original dispatches were received at the Admiralty in London confirming such a success. The long-awaited news of the successful engagement was published in *The London Gazette Extraordinary* later that same day.

Another letter, which Nelson wrote after the victory of the Nile and was carried to London overland together with duplicates of his Admiralty dispatches by the Hon. Thomas Bladon Capel, Nelson's Flag-Lieutenant, was addressed to the Lord Mayor of the City of London, together with the relinquished sword of the defeated French admiral, Monsieur Blanquet.<sup>5</sup> This letter is dated August 8th 1798, Vanguard, Mouth of the Nile and reads:

My Lord

Having the honor of being a Freeman of the City of London, I take the liberty of sending to your Lordship the sword of the commanding French Admiral, Monsieur Blanquet, who survived, after the battle of the 1st off the Nile, and request that the City of London will honor me by the acceptance of it as a remembrance that Britannia still rules the waves; which that she may for ever do is the fervent prayer of your Lordship's most obedient servant,  
Horatio Nelson

The *St James's Chronicle* (No. 6370) recorded that on 16 October 1798:

The Committee [of the Common Council] met yesterday at Guildhall to consider the most honourable method of placing the Sword presented to the City by Admiral NELSON, which was surrendered to him by the French Admiral BLANQUETT. After an interesting conversation, it was agreed to be placed in an elegant glass case in the Council Chamber, with a suitable inscription; that a superb sword should be presented by the LORD MAYOR to the Admiral; and that the Freedom of the City of London be presented to Capt. BERRY in a Gold Box – These several resolutions will be reported to the Court this day.

Following this meeting, 'A Court of Common Council was held at Guildhall, at which the Lord Mayor, seven Aldermen, and a great number of the Commoners were present. The Committee appointed to consider the best mode to be adopted for disposing of the Sword presented to the Court by Admiral Lord Nelson, adopted the following resolutions, which were unanimously agreed to with applause:

'That the Sword delivered up to our gallant hero, Lord NELSON, by the French Admiral Mons. BLANQUETT, be put up in the most conspicuous place in the Common Council Chamber, with the following inscription engraved on a marble tablet:

The Sword of Mons. BLANQUETT  
The Commanding French Admiral  
In the Glorious Engagement off the Nile,  
On the 1st of August, 1798,  
Presented to this Court  
By the Right Hon. Rear-Admiral Lord NELSON

The Lord Mayor was requested to communicate to Lord Nelson the high sense which the Court entertains of the invaluable present of the Sword. Thereupon it was resolved unanimously:

*That the thanks of this Court be presented to Rear-Admiral LORD NELSON of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe in the County of Norfolk, for the very important victory obtained by a Squadron of His MAJESTY'S ships, under his command, over a superior French Fleet, off the NILE, on the 1st of August last; a victory splendid and decisive, unexampled in naval history, and reflecting the highest honor on the courage and abilities of the gallant Admiral and his officers, and the discipline and irresistible bravery of British seamen, and which must be productive of the greatest advantages to this country and every port of the civilised world. By tending to frustrate the designs of an implacable enemy, and rousing other Nations to unite and resist their unprincipled ambition.*

*That a Sword of the value of Two Hundred Guineas be presented to Rear-Admiral LORD NELSON of the NILE, by this Court, as a testimony of the high esteem they entertain of his public services, and of the eminent advantages he had rendered his country.*

The Lord Mayor wrote to Nelson on 16 October 1798, informing him of the Court's decision, a letter he received on 31 January 1799. Nelson replied to the Lord Mayor on that same day from Palermo, Sicily, where he was a guest of King Ferdinand III. Four months later, at a Court of Common Council held at the Guildhall on 3 May 1799, Sir John William Anderson, Bart, late Lord Mayor, laid before the Court a letter he had received from the admiral:

<sup>5</sup> The duplicate dispatches (and other letters) carried overland from Naples to London by Bladon Capel, were the reports that actually brought the news of Nelson's Nile victory to London at 11.15 am, 2 October 1798 and published the same day in *The London Gazette Extraordinary*.

*Vanguard, Palermo, 31 January 1799*

Sir,

*I have only this day received your letter of the 16th October, and I beg that you will convey to the Court of Common Council my sincere gratitude for all their goodness to me, and assure them that it shall be the business of my life to act in the manner most conducive to the prosperity of the City of London, on which depends that of our country.*

*I am truly sensible of your politeness in desiring in me to say what particular devices I should wish on the sword which is to be presented to me by the City of London, but I beg to leave that to the better judgment of my fellow citizens. Believe me when I assure you that I feel myself your most faithful and obliged servant,*

Nelson

Robert Makepeace's invoice for Nelson's sword appears not to have survived, but the Court of Common Council's *Journal*, No. 78 (for 1798-9, p. 303) records:

*Ordered that Mr Chamberlain do pay unto Mr Robert Makepeace the sum of Two Hundred and ten Pounds in full for his Bill for a rich chased Gold Sword with painted enamelled medallions and ornamented with Brilliants voted by this Court the 16th of October 1798 to be presented to Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson of the Nile.*

And the *City Cash Accounts for 1799* (3/68, p 292) state

*Paid Robert Makepeace in full of his Bill for a rich chased Gold Sword with painted enamelled Medallions and Ornamented with Brilliants voted by this Court the 16th October 1798 to be presented to Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson of the Nile, Order Co. Co. 19 July 1799.....£210. 0s. 0d.*

For his great success at the Nile – the most devastating naval victory of the French Revolutionary War – Nelson was created Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe, Co. Norfolk [his birthplace] by George III on 6 November 1798; received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament and a pension of £2,000 a year for life; awarded a second Large Naval Gold Medal (following that for Cape St Vincent); received a 'Gold Davison Nile Medal' personally-funded by his agent, Alexander Davison (1750-1829), a medal designed by the medallist, Conrad Heinrich Kuchler, and minted at Matthew Boulton's Soho Manufactory, Birmingham (cf. figs 65-66), together with many gifts and honours from foreign rulers and major trading companies. These included being created Duke of Bronte in the province of Catania, Sicily, by King Ferdinand III together with a diamond-hilted sword (said to have belonged to Louis XIV of France); the diamond aigrette (or 'plume of triumph'), known as the *chelengk* from the Grand Signior [Selim III, Sultan of Turkey] (fig. 51); a silver dinner service from Lloyd's of London; and a gift of £10,000 from the Hon. East India Company for protecting trade routes in the Near East and for preventing a planned invasion by France of EIC holdings in India.<sup>6</sup> He also received an Illuminated Address from the City to accompany his sword, which reads (fig. 64):

<sup>6</sup> Nelson was very particular about listing all the valuable awards, honours, medals, gifts and tokens of achievement he received during his career and was specific about who was to receive such gifts after his death in his Will. Following the Nile action and not returning to England until 1800, he recorded a list of many of these gifts (not all) as 'Presents to Lord Nelson, for the Services in the Mediterranean, between October the First, 1798 and October the First, 1799', an account published in *The Naval Chronicle*, Vol. III (January-July MDCCC), pp. 187-8.



Fig. 64.

The Court of Common Council's Illuminated Address awarded with the sword of honour to Rear Admiral Lord Nelson of the Nile on 16 October 1798.

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## ANDERSON MAYOR

A Common Council holden in the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday the 16th day of  
October 1798

Resolved UNANIMOUSLY that the Thanks of this Court be presented  
To SIR HORATIO NELSON, Knt of the Bath, REAR ADMIRAL *of the BLUE*, now  
Lord Nelson *of the NILE and of Burnham Thorpe*

*in the County of Norfolk, for the important Victory obtained by a Squadron of his Majesty's Ships  
under his command over a / superior French Fleet off the Nile on the first of August last, a Victory  
splendid and decisive, unexampled in Naval / History and reflecting the highest honor on the  
courage and abilities of the gallant Admiral and his Officers and the / discipline and irresistible  
Bravery of British Seamen, and which must be productive of the greatest advantages to this Country  
and every part of the civilized World, by tending to frustrate the designs of an implacable / Enemy  
and rousing other Nations to unite and resist their unprincipled Ambition.*

Resolved

THAT a SWORD of the value of two hundred Guineas be presented  
To REAR ADMIRAL LORD NELSON of the NILE, by this  
Court as a Testimony of the high Esteem they Entertain of his  
Public services and of the Eminent advantages he has  
Rendered his Country'



Fig. 65.  
Obverse of Davison's Gold Medal for the Nile presented to Nelson's  
Flag-Captain, Edward Berry, designed by Conrad Heinrich Kuchler,  
minted at Matthew Boulton's Soho works, Birmingham, inscribed  
'REAR-ADMIRAL LORD NELSON OF THE NILE. EUROPE'S HOPE  
AND BRITAIN'S GLORY'. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich  
(MED.0971)



Fig. 66.  
Reverse of 65 inscribed 'ALMIGHTY GOD HAS BLESSED HIS  
MAJESTY'S ARMS. VICTORY OF THE NILE AUGUST 1, 1798'.

Nelson's City of London sword (the most original design of the first three 200-guinea swords imbued with personal iconography and images of the site of battle) was presented at a special banquet in Nelson's honour at the Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day, 10 November 1800 (figs 1-2), following the hero's return to England, after a triumphal European tour overland from Naples, via Vienna, Prague and Hamburg, accompanied by Sir William Hamilton and his wife, Emma.

After the Nile, Nelson went on to greater glory. He was appointed Vice Admiral of the Blue (1 January 1801), achieved a fine victory at Copenhagen (2 April 1801), advanced to Viscount (22 May 1801), Vice Admiral of the White (23 April 1804) and Commander-in-Chief Ships and Vessels Mediterranean (1803-1805).

Following his death in action at Trafalgar (21 October 1805), Nelson's London sword was bequeathed in his Will, not to his brother and heir, William, but to his sister, Mrs Catharine Matcham (1767-1842), who received it after her brother's death at Trafalgar. Following Catharine's death, the token passed to her son, 'George Eyre Matcham, Esq', who deposited the sword in the Royal United Services Museum (RUSM), Whitehall, for safe-keeping, and where it was listed in the RUSM's *Catalogue* of 1916 as No. 3031. Following the closure of the RUSM, many of the objects were privately sold off, but Nelson's City of London sword was saved for the nation by Lord Wakefield, who presented it to the Guildhall Museum whose collection subsequently became part of the Museum of London (in 2024 renamed The London Museum).<sup>7</sup>

## Observation

The next three swords awarded by the City of London in 1799 were all gold mounted dress-swords of 100 guinea value commissioned from three well-known London retailers. Although the whereabouts of the swords are not known, the archives of the City of London and various contemporary published sources, all confirm that they were of dress small-sword design, mounted in gold and inset with enamel coats of arms and battle scenes and, in design, comparable to the sword awarded to Vice Admiral Onslow in 1797 (No. 3 above).

## Joint Military Expedition to the Coast of Holland, 27-30 August 1799

### 5. Vice Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell, KB, Commander Naval Forces

Gold and enamel-hilted Dress-Sword of 100-guinea value unanimously resolved to be awarded with the Freedom of the City by a Court of Common Council held before the Lord Mayor, Sir Richard Carr Glyn, at the Guildhall on 13 September 1799, to **Vice Admiral of the Blue, Sir Andrew Mitchell, KB (1757-1806)** (fig. 67), Officer Commanding Naval Forces, in the joint military and naval attack along the Coast of Holland, Texel. On that day:

*'Resolved That the thanks of this Court be given to Andrew Mitchell, Esq., Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and the captains, officers, seamen, and marines under his command, for their zealous and able conduct in compelling the Dutch Fleet in the Texel to surrender to the Squadron of British Ships under his command, and that the Admiral, as a token of their sense of the important services he thereby rendered to his country, be presented by this Court with the Freedom of this City, and a Sword of the value of One Hundred Guineas'.*



Fig. 67.  
Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell, KB (1757-1806)

<sup>7</sup> *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 2 October 1798, pp. 915-917; The Corporation of London Records above; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1800 (No. 70, Pt. 2), pp. 1100-1; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884), pp. 82-3; *Royal United Services Museum Catalogue* of 1916, No. 3031; May & Annis (1970) I, p. 109 and colour plate 2; Blair (1972) No. 22, p. 48; Spalding (1979) pp. 422-3; Southwick (1983), pp. 33-4, Fig. 3; Southwick (1990), No. 4, p. 177, Plate LXVB; *Exhibited Treasures & Trinkets, Jewellery in London from Pre-Roman Times to the 1930s*, Museum of London (5 Feb. 1991-26 Jan. 1992); Southwick (1997), No. 29, pp. 329-30; Comfort (2014) pp. 83-87; Southwick (2020) No. 44 (ill), pp. 50-51; Southwick (2023), fig. 72. The Museum of London (Inv. no. 11, 952).

### Action Report for which the Sword was awarded

News of this joint naval and military success against the Dutch, a major ally of Revolutionary France, arrived in London only a few days after the victorious exploit and published in *The London Gazette Extraordinary* on Tuesday, September 3, 1799 (No. 15174, pp. 871-2):

Admiralty-Office, September 2, 1799

Captain Hope, of His Majesty's Ship *Kent*, and Captain Oughton, of His Majesty's Ship *Isis*, arrived this Afternoon with a Dispatch from Admiral Lord Viscount Duncan [C-in-C North Sea Station, fig. 43] of which the following is a Copy:<sup>8</sup>

*Kent*, off Aldborough, Sunday 1st Sept. 1799

SIR,

I Transmit, for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a Letter to me from Vice-Admiral Mitchell, giving a distinct Detail of the great Success with which it has pleased Almighty God to crown His Majesty's Arms. The Boldness of the Vice-Admiral in running in on an open Shore with so numerous a Fleet, and in so very unsettled Weather, could only be equalled by the Gallantry of Sir Ralph Abercromby and his brave Troops, landing in the Face of a most formidable Opposition. During the whole of the Conflict on Tuesday I could plainly perceive the vast superiority of the British Troops over those of the Enemy, though opposed with Obstinacy; and, in Justice to both Land and Sea Service, I must say that I never in my Life witnessed more Unanimity and Zeal that has pervaded all Ranks to bring the Expedition to its present happy Issue.

Finding the *Kent* with several of the Russian Seventy four Gun Ships to draw too much water to be able to get into the Harbour, I have returned with them to this Anchorage; but previous to my getting under Weigh at Eight o'Clock on Friday Morning, I have the Pleasure to see Vice-Admiral Mitchell, with the Men of War, Transports, and Armed Vessels in a fair way of entering the Texel, with a fair Wind, and have not the least Doubt but the Whole of the Dutch Fleet were in our Possession by Noon on that Day.

These Dispatches will be delivered to Captains Hope and Oughton, both able and Intelligent Officers, and who will give their Lordships more satisfactory Information relative to our successful Operations.

I shall now only add my sincere Congratulations to their Lordships on this great Event, which, I think, in its Consequences may be ranked among One of the greatest that has happened during the War

I am Sir, &c

DUNCAN

P.S. The Winds having proved unfavourable, has occasioned my Anchorage here; but I shall proceed to Yarmouth as soon as the Weather moderates.

Mitchell's dispatch followed Duncan's in the same *Gazette Extraordinary* (pp. 871-2):

*Isis*, at Anchor off the Texel  
August the 29th, 1799

My Lord

In a former letter I had the Honor to write your Lordship, I there mentioned the Reasons that had determined Sir Ralph Abercromby and myself not to persevere longer than the 26th in our Resolution to attack the Helder and the Port of the Texel unless the Wind became more moderate.

<sup>8</sup> Mitchell was operating under the command of Admiral Duncan, C-in-C North Sea (see No. 2 above), so he sent, as required, his dispatches to his commanding officer, Duncan, who forwarded them to the Admiralty (with an accompanying letter in praise of Mitchell's services). In contrast, Jervis and Duncan were in overall command of their stations and they wrote and sent dispatches directly to the Secretary of the Lords of the Admiralty at Whitehall in London.

## Details of the Award

The whereabouts of this important sword for a distinguished naval and military expedition are not at present known, but relevant details have been found and are included here in case this historic token of achievement ever comes to light.

Following the Lord Mayor informing Mitchell of his Honorary Freedom and his Sword for his achievement on 13 September 1799, the Admiral's reply was laid before a Court of Common Council on 11 October 1799:

*His Majesty's Ship, Babet, off Enkhaison, 25th September 1799*

MY LORD,

*I have to-day received the letter you have done me the honor to send, of the 13th instant, and I have to request, my Lord, to accept for yourself as Lord Mayor, and convey to the Aldermen and Commons in Council assembled on that day, my sincere acknowledgments of gratitude for their very great goodness to me. I have also to request that you will assure them that it will ever be the constant study of my life in the best manner I am able for the service of my most gracious Sovereign, my country, and the prosperity of the City of London.*

*I shall take the earliest opportunity of acquainting the different captains, officers, seamen, and marines of the ships then under my command, now much divided, of the very honorable testimony of the approbation of the City of London of their conduct.*

*The very particular honor the City has done me by presenting me with the Freedom of the first City in the World, and the very handsome token of the Sword, I must ever feel in the most lively and sensible manner, and be ever remembered with gratitude to the latest period of my life.*

*I have the honor to be, &c.,*

*A. Mitchell*

Commissioned from the royal goldsmiths and jewellers, Rundell & Bridge, Ludgate Hill, City, the sword and the retailer's invoice were delivered to the Office of the Lord Mayor on 8 October 1799, less than a month after the Court's resolution and only six weeks after the expedition to the Texel had been completed. Rundell's invoice reads:

*An elegant chased Gold enamelled Sword for Admiral Mitchell, with a fine painted device representing the surrender of the Dutch to the English Fleet, in the Texel, the Arms of the City of London on one side, the Admirals Arms on the reverse with Warlike Trophies.*

Four months later, *The St James's Chronicle* of Saturday 25 January 1800 (No. 6569) recorded:

The Sword to be presented to Admiral Mitchell by the City of London is valued at 100 guineas. On one side is represented the surrender of the Dutch fleet, and on the other, the Admiral's Arms and trophies. On the hilt are engraved the arms of the City of London; and on the point of the sword is emblematically portrayed, the eye of Providence looking down on the British Flag.

Created a Knight of the Order of the Bath (KB) by the King for his services along the coast of Holland, Mitchell, Vice Admiral of the Blue Squadron of His Majesty's Fleet, was invested into the Order at St James's Palace by George III on Wednesday, 8 January 1800. A month later, he was admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his sword (a dress small-sword comparable to that presented to Admiral Onslow, No. 3 above) and an Illuminated Address at the Guildhall on 6 February 1800 (fig. 68), which reads:



Fig. 68.

The Court of Common Council's Illuminated Address awarded with his 100 guinea sword of honour and Freedom of the City to Vice Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell on 13 September 1799. © The London Archives (COL/CHD/FR/08/01/017)

GLYN, Mayor

A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall of the City of London on Friday the thirteenth day of September 1799.

Resolved that the Thanks of this Court

be given to ANDREW MITCHELL, ESQR, Vice Admiral of the Blue,

And to the Captains, Officers, Seamen and Marines under his Command

For their Zealous and able Conduct in compelling the Dutch Fleet in the Texel to surrender to the Squadron of British Ships under his Command

And that the Admiral as a Token of their Sense

Of the important services thereby rendered to his Country be presented by this

Court with the FREEDOM of this CITY and a SWORD of the value of One Hundred Guineas.

The records show that the retailer's invoice was paid on 20 May 1800 and recorded in the *City Cash Accounts for 1800* (3/69, p.267). Moreover, the date of the awarding of the sword, its delivery, payment and presentation, confirm that it would have been struck with London Assay Marks and the date-letter 'D' for 1799-1800.<sup>9</sup>

## 6. Lt.-General Sir Ralph Abercromby, KB, Commander Land Forces

Gold and enamel-hilted Dress-Sword of 100-guinea value unanimously resolved to be awarded with the Freedom of the City by the Court of Common Council before the Lord Mayor, Sir Richard Carr Glyn on 13 September 1799 to **Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Abercromby, KB (1734-1801)** (fig. 69), Officer Commanding Land Forces in the successful joint expedition along the coast of Holland, 27-30 August 1799. Awarded the same day as that of Mitchell's sword (No. 5 above), it was:

*Resolved That the thanks of this Court be given to Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Abercromby KB, and to the officers and soldiers under his command, for their gallant and eminent services in effecting a landing on the Coast of Holland, and driving the enemy from their strongly-fortified situations, thereby rendering it practicable for the Squadron of His MAJESTY'S Ships to compel the surrender of the Dutch Fleet in the Texel; and that he be presented by this Court, as a token of their sense of the important services thereby rendered to his country, with the Freedom of this City, and a Sword of the value of One Hundred Guineas.*

As with Admiral Mitchell's sword above, the whereabouts of General Abercromby's token is not known. However, various important details have been found and are included here in case this distinguished token of achievement ever comes to light.

Following on from the victorious dispatches published in *The London Gazette Extraordinary* of Tuesday, September 3, 1799,



Fig. 69.  
General Sir Ralph Abercromby, KB (1734-1801)

<sup>9</sup> *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, Sept. 3 1799, No. 15174 and 15176; Corporation of London Records above; City's Illuminated Address (LA: 'COL/CHD/FR/08/01/017'); *The St James's Chronicle*, 8 January 1800 and 25 January 1800; *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) pp. 91-92; Spalding (1979) pp. 423-4; Southwick (1990) No. 5, pp. 177-8; Southwick (2020), p. 65. *Present whereabouts unknown.*

and the awarding of both the Freedom of the City and a sword of honour to the two commanders of the expedition on 13 September 1799, the Lord Mayor of London wrote to Abercromby on the day of the awards informing him of the Court of Common Council's decision. Twelve days later, Abercromby replied from his Headquarters at Schason on 25 September, a letter which the Lord Mayor laid before a Court of Common Council, on 11 October 1799:

*British Headquarters, Schason, 25th September 1799.*

*My Lord,*

*In obedience to your Lordship's commands, I did not fail to take the earliest opportunity to communicate to the generals, officers, and soldiers, who effected a landing on the coast of Holland on the 27th of August, the highly distinguished honor which the City of London had conferred on them in their Resolutions of the 13th instant.*

*The marked approbation of so respectable a body of their countrymen must be most gratifying to them.*

*Your Lordship may judge how deeply I am impressed with the same sentiments of gratitude in receiving from the City of London so honorable a token of the favourable opinion they have been pleased to entertain of any part of my conduct.*

*I beg your Lordship will accept of my best acknowledgments for those expressions of politeness and attention so highly flattering to me in your Lordship's letter, which accompanied the Resolutions of the City of London.*

*I have the honor to be, &c.,  
R. Abercromby*

General Abercromby's sword was the sixth awarded by the City and the first to be given to an army officer. It was commissioned from Thomas Goldney of 4 St James's Street, Westminster (active at this address from 1793-1828). The retailer delivered the sword and submitted his invoice to the Corporation on 4 January 1800. Goldney's bill reads: '*Elegant chas'd gold Sword with fine painted enamel Medallions, trophies etc* £105- -'.

General Abercromby was admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his sword on 2 May 1800 (a 100-guinea token almost certainly similar to Onslow's sword, No. 3 above), together with an Illuminated Address, which reads (fig. 70):

#### GLYN MAYOR

A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall of the City of London  
on Friday the 13th day of Sept 1799.

Resolved *That the Thanks of this Court be given to*

*Lieutenant General SIR RALPH ABERCROMBIE [sic] KB, and to the General / Officers and Soldiers under his command for their Gallant and Eminent Services / in effecting a Landing on the Coast of HOLLAND and driving the Enemy from their / strongly fortified situations thereby rendering it practicable for the Squadron of his Majesty's SHIPS to / compel the Surrender of the Dutch Fleet in the TEXEL; and that he be presented / by this Court as a Token of their sense of the important Services thereby rendered to his Country with Freedom of this City and a SWORD of the value of One Hundred Guineas.*



Fig. 70.

The Court of Common Council's Illuminated Address awarded with his 100 guinea sword of honour and Freedom of the City to General Sir Ralph Abercromby on 13 September 1799. © The London Archives (COL/CHD/FR/08/01/016)

The records show that the retailer's bill was paid on 20 May 1800 and recorded in the *City Cash Accounts for 1800* (3/69, p. 267). Moreover, the date of the awarding of the sword, its delivery, payment and presentation, confirm that it would have been struck with London Assay Marks and with the date-letter 'D' for 1799-1800.<sup>10</sup>

## Defence of St Jean D'Acre, Ottoman province of Syria, 1799

### 7. Captain Sir William Sidney Smith, RN, Acting Commodore

Gold and enamel-hilted Dress-Sword of 100-guinea value unanimously resolved to be awarded with the Freedom of the City by a Court of Common Council held before the Lord Mayor, Sir Richard Carr Glyn, on 11 October 1799 to **Captain (acting Commodore) Sir William Sidney Smith, Knight Grand Cross of the Swedish Order of the Sword, RN (later Admiral and GCB, 1764-1840)** (fig. 71)<sup>11</sup> for his gallant and successful defence of St Jean d'Acre (with the help of the Turks in the then Ottoman province of Syria) against a French Army under the command of Napoleon Bonaparte, who besieged the town on 17th March 1799 (until May 1799). The Court's resolution of 11 October 1799 reads:

*Resolved unanimously That the thanks of this Court be given to Captain Sir William Sidney Smith, for his gallant and successful defence of St Jean D'Acre against the desperate attacks of the French Army, under the command of General Bonaparte.*

*That the thanks of this Court be also given to the British officers, seamen, and troops under the command of Captain Sir William Sidney Smith, for their cordial co-operation in the defence of St Jean D'Acre.*

*That the Freedom of this City be presented to Captain Sir William Sidney Smith, with a Sword of the value of One Hundred Guineas, for his great display of valour in the successful defence of St Jean D'Acre.*

The sword was commissioned by the Corporation from the prominent goldsmith, Robert Makepeace of Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields (see Nos. 1-4 above). Makepeace's invoice for the sword was submitted to the Corporation on 20 February



Fig. 71.  
Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith, GCB (1764-1840)

1800, the day the gift was delivered to the Guildhall. The invoice reads:

*A rich chased Gold sword with painted enamel'd medallions and engraved with inscription for Capt'n Sir Sidney Smith.*

The *Common Council Journal* (No. 79) records payment for the sword was made on 20 May 1800, confirmation of which is found in the *City Cash Accounts for 1800* (3/69, p. 267). Moreover, the date of the awarding of the sword, its delivery, payment and presentation, confirm that it would have been struck with London Assay Marks and with the date-letter 'D' for 1799-1800.

Sir William Sidney Smith was thanked by both Houses of Parliament and granted a pension of £1,000 a year. He was admitted into the Freedom of the City and presented with his sword at a special ceremony at the Guildhall on 17 December 1801 (a dress small-sword similar to that awarded to Admiral Onslow, No. 3 above) and an Illuminated Address (fig. 72), which reads:<sup>12</sup>

10 *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, 3 September 1799, No. 15174, pp. 869-872; Corporation of London Records above; City's Illuminated Address (LA: 'COL/CHD/FR/08/01/016'); *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) pp. 91-2; Southwick (1990) No. 6, p. 178; Southwick (2020), pp. 65-66. *Present whereabouts unknown*.

11 Sidney Smith was permitted to use his 'Swedish Order of the Sword' knighthood by George III. Later, he was appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath (GCB) in the Coronation Honours of Queen Victoria (LG, 20 July 1838).

12 Corporation of London Records above; Illuminated Address (LA: 'COL/CHD/FR/08/01/027'); *London's Roll of Fame* (1884) p. 93; Spalding (1979) p. 424-5; Southwick (1990) No. 7 p. 178; Southwick (2020), pp. 66-7. *Present whereabouts unknown*.



Fig. 72.

The Court of Common Council's Illuminated Address awarded with his 100 guinea sword of honour and Freedom of the City to Captain Sir William Sidney Smith on 11 October 1799. © The London Archives (COL/CHD/FR/08/01/018)

## GLYNN MAYOR

*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall of the  
City of London on Friday the eleventh day of October 1799*

*Resolved Unanimously that the Thanks of this Court  
be given to Captain SIR WILLIAM SIDNEY SMITH, for his gallant and  
successful defence of St Jean D'Acre against the desperate attacks of the French Army under  
the Command of  
General Bonaparte*

*Resolved Unanimously that the Thanks of this Court  
Be also given to the British Officers, SEAMEN and Troops under the Command of / Captain  
SIR WILLIAM SIDNEY SMITH for their cordial co-operation in the defence of St Jean  
D'Acre.*

*Resolved unanimously that the Freedom of this City  
Be presented to Captain Sir William Sidney Smith with a Sword of  
the value of one hundred Guineas for his great display of  
valour in the successful defence of St Jean D'Acre.*

## Conclusion

James Morisset officially retired in the Spring of 1800 in his sixty-second year and did not make another sword for the City of London after that date (Southwick 1997). He is known, however, to have made one other distinctive sword after 1800 (figs 73-74). This is the elaborate silver-gilt mounted dress sabre awarded to Brig.-General Hugh Lyle Carmichael (rec. 1782-1813), Commander of the Garrison on the Island of Tobago, who acted to suppress a slave conspiracy during the Christmas holidays of 1801 and who was awarded this sword for his services, a sword inscribed:<sup>13</sup>

*Presented to Brigadier General H. L. Carmichael  
by a Unanimous Vote of the 4th February 1802 of  
Both Houses of the Legislature of the Island of Tobago  
in gratitude for his services to the colony.*

The next swords resolved to be awarded by the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of the City of London for distinguished service (after those of 1799 above), were the three resolved to be awarded for naval and land operations in the Mediterranean in November 1801 (Southwick 1990 and 2014). Morisset had officially retired by this date, but the swords were subcontracted from his successors and former employees, John Ray and James Montague (active in partnership 1800-1821), and made at his well-known workshop of 22 Denmark Street, St Giles's (Southwick 1997 and 2014). However, as Morisset remained living nearby at his private residence of 10 Denmark

Street until 1806 and actually owned 22 Denmark Street, his advice and expertise would have been available to his successors in a very busy period of historic production (ibid). It is also clear that the quality and standard of his work and known reputation in the London decorative art trade over three decades, greatly benefitted his successors operating from the same location in East Soho (ibid).

Once established, Ray and Montague were much in demand and subcontracted to make thirteen City of London swords (and four others now lost) over the next sixteen years by several prominent London retail goldsmiths and jewellers commissioned to provide the Corporation with high-quality tokens of achievement, such as Thomas Ayres, Rundell & Bridge, James Birt, Thomas Harper, William Moore, Goodbehere, Wigan & Bult, Charles Aldridge and Green, Ward & Green, (cf. figs 75-80) (ibid).

Like those by Morisset, Ray and Montague's swords for the City are all of 'dress small-sword form', although other designs were made by the partnership for other institutions and for personal presentation.<sup>14</sup> They are, however, a little different from those of Morisset, having less enamelled ornament overall and more chasing over the gold surface. However, the dress small-sword design, which Ray and Montague manufactured for particular City swords, was a continuance of the pattern created by their predecessor in 1797, a splendid officer dress pattern (modelled on the classic eighteenth-century small-sword) to reward the much-respected victor of the second major naval victory of the French Revolutionary War (No. 1 above, figs 3, 34-35).

13 For the events of 1801, in which Carmichael was involved, see *The St James Chronicle*, No. 6807, 2 March 1802 and No. 6904, 16 March 1802; and for a later view, see K. O. Laurence, 'The Tobago Slave Conspiracy of 1801', *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (September 1982), p. 8.

14 Southwick 1997 and 2014. A small number of other City swords, such as stirrup- and Mameluke-hilted sabres and naval spadrons, were also commissioned from leading retailers later in the French wars, but these were made by Richard Teed and Thomas Price, not Ray and Montague (Southwick 1990).



Fig. 73.  
Silver-gilt mounted dress sabre awarded by both Houses of the  
Legislature of the Island of Tobago to Brigadier General Hugh Lyle  
Carmichael (rec. 1782-1813) on 4 February 1802. James Morisset,  
commissioned from Henry Osborn, Birmingham hallmarks, 1802-3.  
By courtesy of Peter Finer



Fig. 74.  
Inside face of Carmichael's dress sabre, fig. 73



Fig. 75.  
A 100-guinea City of London gold and enamel dress small-sword awarded with the Freedom of the City to Rear Admiral Sir James Saumarez, Bart, KB (1757-1836) for two actions against a combined Spanish and French squadron on 6 and 13 July 1801. Ray & Montague, commissioned from James Birt, London 1801-2. Possession of the recipient's descendants



Fig. 76.  
A 200-guinea City of London gold, enamel and diamond-set dress small-sword awarded with the Freedom of the City to Vice Admiral Cuthbert, 1st Baron Collingwood (1748-1810) for services at Trafalgar, 21 October 1805. Ray & Montague, commissioned from Thomas Harper, London 1806-7. Royal Armouries (IX.909)



Fig. 77.

A 100-guinea City of London gold and enamel dress small-sword awarded with the Freedom of the City to Rear Admiral the Earl of Northesk, Third-in-Command at Trafalgar. Ray & Montague, commissioned from William Moore, London 1806-7. National War Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (M.1998.16). © Sotheby's Images 1994



Fig. 78.

A 100-guinea City of London gold and enamel dress small-sword awarded with the Freedom of the City to Rear Admiral the Hon. Alexander Forrester Inglis Cochrane (1758-1832), Second-in-Command at the capture and destruction of a French squadron off Saint Domingo, 6 February 1806. Ray & Montague, commissioned from Goodbehere, Wigan & Bult, London 1806-7. By courtesy of Peter Finer



Fig. 79.  
A 200-guinea City of London gold, enamel and diamond-set dress-sword of honour awarded with the Freedom of the City to Brigadier General Sir Samuel Auchmuty (1756-1822) for the capture of Montevideo, 3 February 1807. Ray & Montague, commissioned from Thomas Harper, London 1807-8. National War Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (M.2000.103). © Christie's Images 1984



Fig. 80.  
A 100-guinea City of London gold and enamel dress small-sword awarded with the Freedom of the City to Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke, RN (1776-1841), HMS *Shannon*, for the capture of the American frigate, *Chesapeake*, 1 June 1813, War of 1812. Ray & Montague, commissioned from Ayres & Bennett, London 1813-14. Author's Image

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## Abbreviations

CLRO. Corporation of London Record Office (records formerly located at the Guildhall, Aldermanbury, now deposited at The London Archives)

ICOMAM. International Committee for Museums and Collections of Arms and Military History

LA. The London Archives

LG. The London Gazette

RUSM. Royal United Services Museum, Whitehall

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