



### **Marmaduke Philip Smyth WARD (1825-1885)**

Despite the plethora of publications on Nelson, Britain's naval hero, there has been less attention paid to his genetic family. Admiral Nelson's scandalous relationship with Lady Emma Hamilton produced a daughter, Horatia who, after his death at Trafalgar and in her teens, grew up within his wider family. In turn she married and had a large family, one of whom pursued medical training and joined the Royal Navy as a surgeon. His name was Marmaduke Philip Smyth Ward and this is his story.

Possibly it was the significant head injury Nelson sustained at the Battle of the Nile in August 1798 that marks the beginning of Marmaduke's story. On his return to Naples a traumatised Nelson fell hopelessly for Lady Emma Hamilton, wife of the British Ambassador, Sir William Hamilton. In 1800, distanced from his wife, regarded with ridicule, his judgement questionable and with his mistress pregnant they returned to London. Their daughter, Horatia, was born secretly in January 1801. Horatia was Nelson's only surviving child and in his last four years she brought him intense joy. In a codicil to his final will he left the welfare of Emma and Horatia to the nation, a wish largely unfulfilled until the Nelson Memorial Fund was launched in 1850.

Emma, widowed from Sir William in 1803 and lacking Nelson's support after his death in 1805, lost control of her finances. To escape further imprisonment for her debts in 1804, Emma and Horatia fled to Calais. Emma's health deteriorated and she died in poverty in 1815. Horatia, then 14 years old, returned to England to be taken in by the families of Horatio Nelson's sisters, now Catherine Matcham in Sussex and Susannah Bolton in Norfolk. Horatia had been well-grounded in languages and deportment by her mother so her continued academic and social education prepared her well for marriage. At the age of 21 Horatia Nelson married the Rev Philip Ward at Burnham Westgate Church, where Ward was curate, near her father's home village in north Norfolk on 19 February 1822. A third-generation Anglican clergyman, Philip was a poet and scholar, and the couple were described at their wedding as being handsome and intelligent. In their happy marriage, Philip and Horatia produced ten children. Marmaduke Philip Smyth Ward, their third child was born on 27 May 1825 and christened on the same day by his father, now the new rector of the Church of All Saints in Bircham Newton, Norfolk.

#### **Marmaduke's Education**

Marmaduke grew up in the large family where financial security was marginal, all the children being educated by their father. Yet, Marmaduke spent time with his uncle and aunt in Wells-next-the-Sea, especially after his parents moved to Tenterden, Kent, for a better living [*Philip Ward was Vicar of Tenterden from 10 August 1830 until his death on 16 January 1859. He came to Tenterden with 5 children and increased his family by another 5. He immediately maintained that the existing vicarage was in a poor state of repair and was not suitable for his large family, the Wards living in The Pebbles for 2 years. Both Philip and Horatia gained a good reputation for helping the poor. Philip himself, within a few years of becoming the incumbent, became embroiled in a 10-year litigation about payment of tithe money. Philip was buried in St Mildred's churchyard adjacent to the path that runs by the side of the Woolpack Hotel*]. The marriages of Nelson's sisters, especially Susannah to Tom Bolton, established a secure family network. Ann Bolton Girdlestone (Marmaduke's aunt) living in Wells-next-the-Sea married James Young, a surgeon who had served abroad in the Honourable East India Company Service. Their son, Henry John Girdlestone Young was a few months older than his cousin, Marmaduke. Marmaduke became apprenticed to his uncle James and lodged with the family. In this medical environment Marmaduke's ambitions and career were fostered. Cousin Henry appears to have been gifted. He matriculated at University College London (1842), was examined by College and Hall, finally graduating MD at the University of Glasgow in 1846. Marmaduke, perhaps less academic, attended Glasgow University but although without record of him there, he secured enough approved credits to enable him to take the MRCS examination in London which he passed on 30 June 1848, aged 23.

#### **Early Naval Career**

Marmaduke's service record retrieved from the National Archives reveals that he was appointed assistant surgeon on 22 July 1848 when he arrived at the naval medical base in Chatham. He spent over 2 years on board three ships there and in January 1851 he was placed on HMS Spy for three years as 'assistant surgeon in charge'. Spy was a small brigantine tasked with anti-slave duties off the west coast of Africa. On his return in 1854 he spent nine months ashore at the Naval Hospital at Plymouth.

#### **Crimean War Service (1854-56)**

Marmaduke's service record locates him from 23 October 1854 to 7 August 1856 on the muster roll of The Royal Albert (flagship of Rear Admiral Edmund Lyons) on 14 February 1855. This suggests that he may have seen action during the

siege of Sebastopol. Additionally, he was posted to the naval hospital in Therapia, north of Constantinople on the western shore of the Bosphorus. There Dr John Davidson was the Medical Superintendent, Mr Thomas Bellot FRCS, the senior surgeon and Mrs Eliza Mackenzie, the highly respected matron appointed by the Admiralty. Mrs Mackenzie is accepted as the fine example upon which the Naval Nursing Service, later the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) was founded. Marmaduke could not have had better training under such expert supervision, in a fine hospital, in that beautiful setting, during the Crimean War. In August 1856 Marmaduke returned home to become assistant surgeon at the Royal Marine Artillery Infirmary at Portsmouth. Whilst there on 25 May 1857 he presented himself to the Royal College of Surgeons of England and 'passed his examination for Naval Surgeon' on 26 August 1857.

### Service in the 'Opium Wars' in China

He was posted next to Nimrod, via Calcutta, from February 1858 until August 1861 in the Far East, during the Second Anglo-Chinese (opium) war. Nimrod participated in the three battles of the Peiho (Taku) forts; the second battle in June was challenging and unsuccessful. Marmaduke's medical and surgical journals, with those of his assistant surgeon, William O'Roberts, include documentation of amputations of upper and lower limbs from gunshot wounds. For his participation he received the Second China War Medal. The General Medical Council was set up in 1858 and Marmaduke registered his MRCS at the first opportunity in August 1861. The remainder of Marmaduke's naval career over a total of 33 years mirrored that of other successful naval surgeons serving abroad as well as on-station. At the age of 47 he was promoted to Staff Surgeon and then to Fleet Surgeon in 1875. After 33 years of service and aged 55, he retired 'with permission to assume the rank and title of Deputy Inspector-General on the Retired List'.

### The Final Years

Marmaduke's widowed mother Horatia moved from Tenterden to Pinner in 1859, which was convenient for family visits. Marmaduke, still a bachelor and nearing retirement, moved in with her. Horatia's biographer, Winifred Gerin, had unprecedented access to the family's records and private papers. She wrote 'In Marmaduke, Horatia found indeed, a companion of exceptional warmth of heart, devotion, cheerfulness and generosity..... he was the most good-natured man that ever lived, unselfish to a fault'. Horatia died on 6 March 1881, aged 80 and Marmaduke was with her to the end. She is buried in Pinner Cemetery, a short distance from the churchyard. He was the sole remaining executor of his mother's will, also the sole beneficiary of her estate. He moved to live with his sister, Horatia Johnson, at 6, Gower Street, London [*Horatia married William Johnson at Tenterden in 1858. Their granddaughter Marjorie Horatia Johnson (1880-1974), the daughter of William Horatio Johnson and Mary Tress Curteis, spent her final years at 10 Craythorne Road, Tenterden*]. Characteristically, when he had sold his mother's belongings, he divided the proceeds amongst his remaining relatives, keeping little for himself.

Nothing is documented of his remaining years living in London. He would visit his elder brother, the Rev Horatio Nelson Ward, the much-loved rector of St Nicholas Church in Radstock, Somerset (1853-88) [*Previously curate at Tenterden to his father and married his sister Horatia in 1858 when their father gave her away*]. During a stay there in November 1885 Marmaduke became unwell and died aged 60. Horatio conducted his burial service. Two years later Horatio himself died and their matching graves lie side by side at St Nicholas Church, Radstock.

### Conclusion

Competition was fierce amongst assistant surgeons in the Royal Navy and preferment based on nepotism was rife. So did Marmaduke's family history and social connections favour him? Unlike his elder brother, he did not carry Horatio Nelson in his given names. Admittedly, his parents did have influential friends such as Sir Thomas Hardy, Sir William Beatty and Sir William Burnett. However, Hardy and Beatty were both dead before Marmaduke passed the MRCS and joined the Royal Navy. When Marmaduke was promoted surgeon in 1857 Burnett was aged 78 and retired. Also, his mother, Horatia, was always discreet and guarded concerning her parentage, using the link only to lend support to the Nelson Memorial Fund in May 1850 when finances were in a critical condition.

Marmaduke, unmarried did not have the family interest which might have established a legacy from which we could judge more of his character. There is no image of him in the public sector or in the papers of the Ward Family. Despite gaps in his life history this account secures both a medical and naval connection in Admiral Nelson's family history. The record suggests he 'did his duty' as his grandfather might have expected.

### Reference

This newsletter is based nearly entirely on the article *Horatio Nelson's medical legacy: his grandson, Mr Marmaduke Ward MRCS RN* by Ian Douglas Fraser which appeared in the Journal of the Retired Fellows of The Royal Society of Medicine, April 2022.



Graves of Marmaduke Ward (left) and Rev Horatio Nelson Ward at St Nicholas Church, Radstock. Photograph by Ian Fraser